

# How to Vote as a Catholic

How does a Catholic know if a candidate can earn their vote? Catholics must apply moral principles to real issues that are non-negotiable and cast their vote accordingly. Below, you can find the non-negotiable issues and principles by which Catholics must vote.

“The Church’s teaching is clear that a good end does not justify an immoral means. As we all seek to advance the common good-by defending the inviolable sanctity of human life from the moment of conception until natural death, by promoting religious freedom, by defending marriage, by feeding the hungry and housing the homeless, by welcoming the immigrant and protecting the environment - it is important to recognize that not all possible courses of action are morally acceptable. We have a responsibility to discern carefully which public policies are morally sound. Catholics may choose different ways to respond to compelling social problems, be we cannot differ on our moral obligation to help build a more just and peaceful world through morally acceptable means, so that the weak and vulnerable are protected and human rights and dignity are defended.”

*Paragraph 20 from Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship, USCCB*

## Issues that are non-negotiable for Catholics

*All references to CCC refer to the Catechism of the Catholic Church*

**Respecting Human Life:** Evil acts, by which human life is violated or disrespected, are listed below in order of importance and based on current issues in the United States:

- 1. Abortion and Euthanasia** - These actions directly take the life of an innocent human being and therefore are the most grave evils. (see CCC 2270 and 2277)
- 2. Embryonic Stem Cell Research and Human Cloning** - These actions manipulate human life and directly interfere with God’s plan for human beings. (see CCC 2295)
- 3. Same-sex Marriage** - This violates God’s original plan for man and woman, beginning with the creation of Adam and Eve, and His plan for the structure of the family, upon which society is built. (see CCC 2357)

**Upholding Religious Freedom:** Without religious freedom we are unable to worship God according to His will and teachings made present to us through the Catholic Church. (see CCC 2108)

**Upholding the Education of Children:** Government and school must never interfere with the role of parents in educating their children. They are there to protect the freedoms of parents and their children and to support families in making the best decisions for their children. (see CCC 2221, 2229)

**Rejecting Socialism/Marxism:** This ideology when implemented degrades the worker and creates environments where individual autonomy is violated. It also allows for government to take a tyrannical role in the name of protecting citizens rather than upholding the rights of citizens. (see CCC 2425, 2428, 2429)

## Principles and applying them to the issues

- 1. Not all evils are equal (CCC 1854).** For example, there are many ways that human life can be harmed but the most evil are those that directly take the life of another, such as abortion and euthanasia. Thus, if a candidate supports abortion but is against racism and promotes the protection of the environment, a Catholic cannot vote for this candidate because the candidate supports the more grave evil against human life (abortion>racism or hurting the environment).
- 2. It is a sin to vote for a candidate who will advance grave evils** (see the grave evil issues that our country is currently dealing with in the previous box under **Issues**) (CCC 1761).
- 3. Catholics must vote for a candidate who does more good than evil and who intends only the good (CCC 1752).** Catholics can vote for a candidate if **a)** the intention of the vote is to advance good and mitigate evil and **b)** the good effects of the vote are proportionate to the evil effects.
- Catholics can’t vote for the lesser of two evils. **Catholics can never do an action for the sake of evil, even if it is the lesser evil.** When given a choice, Catholics are required to vote for a candidate who will mitigate the evil of the other candidate even if he/she holds problematic positions, which nonetheless are not as evil as his/her opponents (CCC 1759). For example, the reason you should vote for a candidate who doesn’t support abortion but supports racism, should not be for the reason that they support racism. Your reason for voting for this person can only be that the other candidate support abortion and thus by voting for the one who doesn’t support abortion you would be trying to stop the candidate who supports abortion. This should be your reason for voting this way, and not to vote based on the fact that racism is the lesser evil.
- 5. Catholics can vote for a candidate who will produce both good and evil effects.** What Catholics must consider is the degree of evil or good a candidate will advance compared to the other candidates (CCC 2263)