

- “If we have died with Him we shall also live with Him; if we persevere we shall also reign with Him. But if we deny Him He will deny us. If we are unfaithful He remains faithful, for He cannot deny Himself.”
- These powerful words that we hear from St. Paul today in our 2<sup>nd</sup> reading should inspire both a great deal of hope and trepidation within us.
- While he reminds us of the rewards awaiting those who remain faithful to Christ and His teachings, St. Paul also tells us that there is a punishment that awaits those who are unfaithful, viz., Christ will deny us on Judgment Day – which means eternal damnation.
- In other words, for those who profess the Christian faith, the stakes are high. God very rightly expects our obedience to Him and to the teachings of His Church.
- Thus, it is the duty of every Catholic to learn what the Church teaches so that we can form our conscience according to those teachings and live them out in our daily lives.
- Doing so is not only how each of us “works out his salvation with fear and trembling,” as St. Paul wrote to the Philippians (cf. Phil. 2:12), but it’s also how we form and maintain a Christian society, providing mankind with the best context and circumstances for living out our beautiful Christian faith and getting to Heaven.
- As I’ve mentioned numerous times in recent months, our own American society is in crisis right now, and I submit to you that it’s precisely because we’ve moved whole-heartedly from being a Christian society to a pagan society.
- In recent years we have turned away from God’s commandments by embracing and legalizing behaviors that are objectively evil. Foremost among these evils is abortion, which is the direct and intentional killing of an innocent, unborn child.
- In a few weeks we will have the opportunity to vote for the leadership of our country and thereby help determine our country’s future. Like every other American, Catholics are obliged to participate in the election.
- But voting is not simply a civic duty – a task that we can separate from our duty to be obedient to God and His commandments. To the contrary, we are called to enter into the voting booth with our consciences formed by the teachings of the Church.
- Deciding for whom to vote can be tricky for a Catholic, because neither political party fully conforms to the teachings of the Church, and therefore we never have a perfect candidate. But there are criteria we can use to aid us in our decision-making.
- Moreover, this year is particularly distressing because neither presidential candidate is particularly likeable. Both are offensive in some way. But we don’t have to *like* whom we vote for. We just need to determine whose policies are more in keeping with God’s laws.
- When it comes to voting, our responsibility is to measure candidates by how well they protect or undermine the life, dignity, and rights of the human person.
- While there is a wide spectrum of issues that come to the fore in the run up to any election, the issues that concern the protection of human life and the promotion of human dignity must take precedence in our minds as Catholics.
- While Catholics can legitimately disagree with each other on many important issues that concern human dignity, like immigration and economic policy, there are issues on which Catholics must not compromise. These are the preeminent threats to human life and dignity, and they are non-negotiable.

- The Church has a very definite stance on these issues, and it is the Catholic's *duty* to vote in a way consonant with Church teaching in these areas, and consideration of *these* issues must outweigh considerations of all other issues.
- These issues are non-negotiable because each of them concerns actions that are **always morally wrong**, morally illicit, and must never be promoted or made licit by law.
- These non-negotiable issues are abortion, euthanasia, embryonic stem cell research, human cloning, so-called gay marriage, and the restriction of religious freedom.
- All of these are objectively immoral and unworthy of our support because each of these issues attack the dignity of the human person from conception to natural death and/or the very fabric and foundation of human society: the family.
- The very health of our country depends on a deep respect for human life from the moment of conception until natural death, and the future of our society depends on how well we protect that right to life and the sanctity of marriage and family.
- Moreover, any Catholic who willingly and knowingly votes for a candidate who supports any of these evils when there is another viable candidate who does not support them, commits a grave sin and should not present himself for Holy Communion.
- Let me be clear: willingly and knowingly voting for politicians who support these evils is a matter of formal cooperation with those evils, and you jeopardize your souls by doing so.
- Within the grouping of non-negotiable issues, the issue that is most important is abortion – for nothing is more heinous than the direct killing of the most innocent and vulnerable of persons. As we've learned from the undercover videos that came out last year about Planned Parenthood, abortion is not only barbaric, but it's very profitable for those who practice it.
- While the abortion industry may euphemistically speak of women's rights and women's health, at its core it is evil and it must be opposed in any way possible.
- While abortion was legalized 40 years ago, this is an area where Catholics can make a difference, especially since one of the parties is calling this year for an expansion of abortion availability through the overturning of the Hyde Amendment, which prohibits federal taxpayer money from being used for abortion.
- This same party's platform is aggressively pro-abortion, not only in funding matters, but also in seeking to appoint only those judges who will support abortion and the repealing of the Helms Amendment, which prevents the U.S. from supporting abortion availability overseas.
- Yet the other party's platform is supportive of the Hyde Amendment, is calling for the defunding of abortion giant Planned Parenthood, supports banning dismemberment abortion, and opposes assisted suicide. If you don't know which party is which on this issue, then you need to find out before you go into the voting booth.
- The issue of religious freedom is also a very important this year, especially when we consider how the Obama Administration's Health and Human Services mandate has required the provision of contraceptives, sterilizations and some abortifacients through employer's health plans – in clear violation of Catholic beliefs.
- We see this battle being played out in the litigation between the Obama Administration and the Little Sisters of the Poor, who have insisted upon their God-given right to provide their health care services without this infringement upon our Catholic beliefs.
- As Catholics we believe that it is an unalienable right for people to practice their faith without fear, and for faith-based organizations like the Little Sisters of the Poor, to provide charity and health care services without fear of government interference.

- My point here is that we need to be familiar with the platforms of both major parties and the views of the candidates so that we can vote in a godly way.
- While there are many important human dignity issues, the non-negotiable issues of abortion, euthanasia, embryonic stem cell research, human cloning, so-called gay marriage, and the restriction of religious freedom are by far the most important, and they must be the weightiest issues we consider when decide for whom we are voting.
- I realize all too well that this may be a difficult and unsettling homily for some of you, and it may touch upon very personal issues.
- But in a world dominated by emotions, feelings and passions, we must seek out unchanging truth, which is only found in Jesus Christ and His Church.
- As we prepare for the election, remember that it is our Catholic duty to vote according to a well-formed conscience, refraining from voting for candidates who support issues that do not respect the dignity of the human person from conception until natural death.
- Do your research, go to websites such as Catholicvote.org and read the articles and arguments there. And be sure to pick up the voters guide that we will be providing after Mass over the next few weeks.
- If you'd please now bow your heads and pray with me, I'd like to end with a prayer to Our Blessed Mother for our country:

*O Most Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of Mercy, at this most critical time, we entrust the United States of America to your loving care.*

*Most Holy Mother, we beg you to reclaim this land for the glory of your Son. Overwhelmed with the burden of the sins of our nation, we cry to you from the depths of our hearts and seek refuge in your motherly protection.*

*Look down with mercy upon us and touch the hearts of our people. Open our minds to the great worth of human life and to the responsibilities that accompany human freedom.*

*Free us from the falsehoods that lead to the evil of abortion and threaten the sanctity of family life. Grant our country the wisdom to proclaim that God's law is the foundation on which this nation was founded, and that He alone is the True Source of our cherished rights to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.*

*O Merciful Mother, give us the courage to reject the culture of death and the strength to build a new Culture of Life. Amen.*

*An Election Prayer to Mary;*

[https://www.ewtn.com/Devotionals/prayers/Election\\_mary.htm](https://www.ewtn.com/Devotionals/prayers/Election_mary.htm)