LIFE EVERLASTING

The second book of Maccabees tells a powerful story, and a rather gruesome one at that. But central to it, beyond the horrible deaths inflicted upon the brothers and their mother, is their belief in the promise of resurrection and life everlasting in God.

Paul asks the Thessalonians to pray for him as he spreads Christ’s message of love, so that he might be delivered from other nonbelievers anxious to do him harm. The apostle is confident in such prayer, just as he is confident in the everlasting support of Jesus and God the Father.

And there’s that “everlasting” word again. The Sadducees, not buying the idea, ask Jesus an interesting—albeit meaningless—question about the status of married life at the Resurrection. He tells the non-believers that marriage isn’t an issue for the risen children of God. More importantly, he assures them that their ancestors do live on in God, even as evidenced by the Father’s words to Moses.

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**Thirty-second Sunday in Ordinary Time, Cycle C**

**Sunday, November 6, 2016**

**This Sunday’s Readings:**

**First Reading**

2 Maccabees 7:1-2,9-14

Jewish martyrs give witness to their faith, even unto death.

**Responsorial Psalm**

Psalm 17:1,5-6,8,15

The just person will live in God’s presence.

**Second Reading**

2 Thessalonians 2:16—3:5

Paul encourages the Thessalonians and asks for their prayers.

**Gospel Reading**


Jesus answers a question from some Sadducees about the resurrection of the dead. (short form Luke 20:27, 34-38)

**Background on the Gospel Reading**

In today’s Gospel, we hear about an encounter between Jesus and some Sadducees. The Sadducees were a party of Judaism active in Jesus’ time, descended from the priestly family of Zadok. They were literal interpreters of the written Law of Moses, which means that they were in disagreement with the position of the Pharisees, who offered an oral interpretation of the Law of Moses.

The Sadducees are described in this Gospel as opponents to the belief in resurrection. In the dialogue presented here, we see an example of the means of disputation that was common in first century Judaism. The Sadducees use the example of Levirate marriage, found in the Law of Moses, to disprove belief in the resurrection. According to Deuteronomy 25:5-10, if a man died without producing an heir, the man’s brother should marry his wife and the offspring of this union would inherit the property and carry on the name of the man who had died. The Sadducees use this as an example to challenge belief in the resurrection.

Jesus argues from the same written Law of Moses to show that there is resurrection. Using the texts from the Book of Exodus (Chapter 3) that describe Moses’ encounter with God in the burning bush, Jesus shows that God is the God of the living, not the dead. Here Jesus uses the same method and texts of the Sadducees to counter them. As the Gospel text suggests, he beat them at their own game!

More importantly, in this discourse Jesus shows the limits of our imaginations when it comes to eternal life. The Sadducees argued against resurrection because of the limits of earthly existence. They did not imagine another possibility for existence and relationship with God. Jesus proposes that the possibilities of resurrected life are beyond our imaginations. Jesus' conclusion suggests something else as well: To spend time worrying about resurrected life is to miss the point. The point is eternal relationship with God is possible, for God is the God of the living, “. . . for to him all are alive.”

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**Mass Schedule**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DAY</th>
<th>MASS TIMES AND LOCATIONS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SAT.</td>
<td>3:30 Vigil Mass</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>†Elizabeth Rae by Rae Family</td>
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<tr>
<td>SUN.</td>
<td>7:30 People of the Parish</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>†Carolyn Pannone by Husband</td>
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<td></td>
<td>10:30 †Warren &amp; Henrietta Friedl by Friedl Family</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2:15 Latin Mass</td>
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<td></td>
<td>5:15 †Joseph Marino by Family</td>
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<tr>
<td>MON.</td>
<td>8:00 Vera Antico by M/M John Troia</td>
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<tr>
<td>TUE.</td>
<td>8:00 Spec. Intention for Audrey Rhee by Family</td>
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<tr>
<td>WED.</td>
<td>8:00 †Jennie A. Truncale by Joe &amp; Shirley Halizak</td>
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<tr>
<td>THU.</td>
<td>8:00 †Walter Bjorseth by Wife</td>
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<tr>
<td>FRI.</td>
<td>8:00 Vincent Nizza by Kathleen Kay</td>
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<tr>
<td>SAT.</td>
<td>8:00 Poor Souls</td>
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<tr>
<td>SAT.</td>
<td>3:30 Vigil Mass</td>
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<td></td>
<td>†Claude Goyette</td>
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<tr>
<td>SUN.</td>
<td>7:30 People of the Parish</td>
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<td>†Rick Weber by Jane Weber Slaten</td>
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<td></td>
<td>10:30 †Barbara Caramelli by Elizabeth Caramelli</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2:15 Latin Mass</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5:15 †Marie &amp; Harry Shaffer by loving Children</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**CONFESSIONS** - Saturdays 2:15-3:15 or 30 min. before Sunday Masses or by appointment.

**REMEMBER IN YOUR PRAYERS**...all those who have gone before us marked with the sign of faith, especially the faithful of the parish.

**PRAYERS FOR PRIESTS** - Please join us every Thursday immediately after the 8:00 Mass to pray for priests.

**RESURRECTION PRAYER LINE MINISTRY**

For prayer requests or to sign up as a volunteer call: 481-1170.

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**GIFT SHOP HOURS**

Thurs. 7:50 - 10:00 a.m.
Sat: 2:30 - 4:45 p.m.  Sun. 8:00 - 12:00 p.m.

**THE GIFT SHOP IS LOCATED AT THE FRONT ENTRANCE OF THE CHURCH**
WEEKLY OFFERING

October 23, 2016
Offertory: $21,216.16
Hurricane Matthew: $5,378.00
Latin Mass: $643.00
SVDP: $484.00

Thank you!

2016 CATHOLIC FAITH APPEAL
Our assessment for this year is $347,000.00

Payments made thus far Total:
$338,308.60, Thank you!

We still need $8,691.40 to pay our assessment.
Please join our parish in making a donation today!

CATHOLIC EDUCATION FUND

This week a Second collection will be taken up for the Church of the Resurrection Catholic Education Fund.

This fund is specifically designed to provide financial aid to needy and deserving children in our parish who otherwise would not receive a Catholic education.

Our gratitude to all who consistently and generously support this endeavor.

Bishop Verot High School’s “Raise the Roof” Car Raffle

Win the Ford of your choice in the “Raise the Roof” Car Raffle! After years of patching, the Bishop John J. Nevins Gymnasium now requires a complete roof replacement. Your participation in this fundraiser will help Verot raise our goal of $200,000, the amount of the new roof. The “Raise the Roof” Car Raffle winner will have their choice of one of five new Ford’s or a $20,000 cash prize. Tickets will be sold after Mass the weekend of November 12th & 13th or may purchased at BVHS. Tickets are $100 each with the winning ticket being drawn on Monday, December 12th during our Christmas prayer service and streamed live on Facebook. (For complete list of rules, please visit www.bvhs.org) For more information or to purchase tickets please contact BVHS Development Director Ms. Gina Lombardo at 239-274-6730. Thank you so much for your support, we can’t “Raise the Roof” without you!

PLEASE JOIN US FOR ADORATION EVERY FIRST FRIDAY AFTER THE 8:00 MASS

All are welcome and encouraged to attend.

Vocation Awareness Weekend - St. John Vianney College Seminary in Miami is hosting a Vocation Awareness Weekend from Friday, November 11 at 8:00 p.m. to Sunday, November 13 at 12:00 p.m. This seminary visit is open to all young men, juniors in high school and older. Come and experience what life is like for one discerning God’s call to the priesthood! There is no cost for the weekend and transportation is provided. To register, please contact the Vocations Director, Father Eric Scanlan, at scanlan@dioceseofvenice.org or call the Vocations Office at 941-486-4720.
**MINISTRY OF THE SICK**

**IMPORTANT NOTE TO ALL PARISHIONERS AND VISITORS:**

When admitted to the hospital please register as Catholic and notify the parish office immediately, 481-7171. Resurrection priests visit the hospitals daily.

To protect your privacy hospitals do not give out information on patients without their permission.

The following hospitals are attended to by the parish in which they are located:

* Gulf Coast Hospital - visited daily by St. John XXIII Parish, 561-2245
* Lee Memorial Hospital - visited daily by St. Francis Xavier Parish, 334-2161
* Lee Memorial and Hospice at Health Park - visited daily by St. Columbkille Parish, 489-3973

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**RESURRECTION CALENDAR**

**ALL events take place in the Parish Center unless otherwise stated.**

**Adoration**, First Fridays, 8:30 - 9:30 a.m.

**Bereavement & Beyond Ministry**, Every Monday, 8:30 a.m.

For more information call Alouise 481-8168

**Coffee & Donuts**, Sundays after 10:30 Mass

**Craft Club**, Tuesdays, 8:30 - 10:30 a.m.

**Men's Club**, 2nd Monday of month, 7:00 p.m., Sept. - May

**Our Lady of Miraculous Medal Novena**, Saturdays after the 8:00 a.m. Mass, church

**Prayer for Priests**, Thursdays after the 8:00 a.m. Mass, chapel

**RCIA**, Sundays, after the 9:00 a.m. Mass, for info, 482-6883

**Rel. Ed.**, September - May

**Resurrection for Life**, for info, call Judy at 287-1237


**Rosary**, before daily Masses and Tues. & Thurs., 1:30 p.m., chapel

**Rosary Makers**, 3rd Thursdays Oct. thru May , 9-11 a.m.

**St. Vincent DePaul Board Meeting**, 1st Tues. every month, 7:00 pm. For SVDP assistance call 239-600-6749, or email, svdp@resurrectionch.org

**Teams of Our Lady**, call Joann for more information, 482-7982

**Women’s Guild**, 3rd Wednesday every month, 8:30 a.m. Sept. - May

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**VETERAN’S DAY MASS**

**Date:**
Friday, November 11, 2016

**Time:**
Ceremonials - 2:45 p.m.
Mass - 3:00 p.m.

**Place:**
Sarasota National Cemetery,
9810 State Hwy 72, Sarasota, FL

Ample free parking and seating on site
Sunscreen and hats recommended

The Mass will be celebrated by
Bishop Frank J. Dewane along with the Priests and Deacons of the Diocese of Venice.

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**A CHILD’S GIFT**

Give a little love to a child, and you get a great deal back.
—John Ruskin

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**Lighthouse Catholic Media Kiosk**

Check out our newest CD’s, DVD’s, Books and Pamphlets at the front entrance of the church.
Wednesday, Nov. 9
7:00pm - 8:30pm
Key 5
Setting Limits

Join us at Resurrection Parish Center!
This week’s question:
What scratches your itch?
Topics include:
Itches and How we scratch them
Pleasures can get out of hand
Getting comfortably numb
Wisdom of the 12 steps
Minor Exorcism
for people who miss the mark

ALL ARE WELCOME!

This week’s
Sanctuary Candle:
for
Phillip Sgarlata
by a Friend

Altar Flowers This Week:
In loving memory of:
Rick Georgeson
by Family

In loving memory of:
Ernesto & Leonida Bitonio
by Daughter Virginia Alverson & Family

Please join us for Coffee & Donuts, in the Parish Center, after the Sunday 10:30 Mass. All are welcome!!!

Wednesday Mornings
10:00 am - 11:30 am
Join us.....
at the Parish Center

Nov. 9 - Building a Culture of Encuentro

Crisis of Communal Commitment
“I pray not only for them, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, so that they may all be one, as you, Father, are in me and I in you, that they also may be in us, that the world may believe that you sent me.” John 17:20-21

ALL ARE WELCOME!

PLEASE HELP FEED THE HUNGRY!
Your food donations will help St. Vincent DePaul, Catholic Charities, CCMI, Soup Kitchen, South Ft. Myers Food Pantry. Drop food in boxes at vestibules in the church or Parish Center. The following is most needed: Canned fruit and vegetables (corn/peas/carrot/green beans). Canned meat (tuna/chicken/sausages/ham/Spam). Spaghetti noodles and sauce, Macaroni and Cheese, Maseca flour (small bags), Canned diced tomatoes, Tomato sauce, Cereal, Canned soups (prefer chicken), and Dry beans (pinto/red/kidney).

Thank you and God Bless!
“All parishioners and friends are invited to this beautiful inspiring time of prayer for those who desire with all our hearts to save the holy innocents threatened with death in their mother’s womb. It is the final day of 40 Days for Life, but our hope and determination lives on.”

We are very grateful for our parishioners who have faithfully come to pray throughout these 40 days.

Calling All Moms…You are invited to share in a Catholic ministry for mothers!

Ministry for Moms:
Where mothers are nourished, strengthened, cherished, and families are celebrated!
Join other MOMS to celebrate family, parenting and life as Mom!
Every first and third Thursday from 9:30-11:30 in the Parish Hall.
For more information: call 239-222-0452 or email: girlyamanda@yahoo.com

WOMEN’S GUILD FASHION SHOW
Our next meeting will be held on Wednesday November 16 at the Parish Center immediately following the 8:00 a.m. Mass. The refreshments will be ready!! Bring a guest, and enjoy the show featuring fashions from Draper’s and Damon’s. We will have a 50/50 drawing, door prizes and a table of Craft Club items for sale.
Catholic Charities, Clare House, in Fort Myers offers an afterschool program for underprivileged children in elementary school. Each year, RYM delivers a full Thanksgiving dinner to each of the families. It’s a great experience for the teens to meet the families and personally give them the dinners.

On Monday, November 21st we will deliver the dinners, enjoy cake with the children, sing songs, and celebrate the Thanksgiving holiday. They look forward to seeing us and count on us for their Thanksgiving dinners!

Would you kindly help us with any of the following donations:

*FROZEN TURKEY
*Rice * stuffing mix *cranberry sauce *potatoes
*canned sweet potatoes *corn muffin mix *canned veggies,
*gravy *sweets/desserts

If it’s more convenient to make a monetary donation, we’ll grocery shop for you!

No amount of help is to big or too small!

Please drop off your donations at the Parish Center

no later than Tuesday, November 15th.

*And do not neglect doing good and sharing: for with such sacrifices God is pleased. ~Hebrews 13:16*
Babysitting Bonanza

Friday, December 2,  5:30 pm – 9:00 pm
Calling all parents with young children....
plan a quiet date night or get a jump start on your Christmas shopping!
$15 for one child; $25 for 2; $30 for 3 or more

YOUTH MINISTRY will be providing babysitting in the Parish Center for children through 5th grade! Christmas movie, dinner, crafts, stories, games, just a lot of fun, fun, fun!

CALL OR STOP IN TO REGISTER AND SECURE YOUR CHILD’S SPOT...
SPACE IS LIMITED!
Any questions? Contact Vikki with Youth Ministry @ 481-5144

the called & gifted workshop

Register with RESURRECTION Parish
Workshop at: OUR LADY OF LIGHT PARISH CENTER, 19680 Cypress View Dr., Fort Myers, FL 33967 - $30.00 fee, payable to RESURRECTION

TIME: FRIDAY evening, NOVEMBER 11, 7:00pm - 9:30pm

REGISTRATION FORM
NAME _________________________________________________________________
ADDRESS ______________________________________________________________
CITY ___________________________ ZIP _____________________________
DAYTIME PHONE ______________________________________________________
E-MAIL ______________________________________________________________

Return to:
Joanne MacPeek
Resurrection of Our Lord
8121 Cypress Lake Dr.
Fort Myers, FL 33919
239-481-7172
As we sort through the issues in this election, voters who give any weight to the Catholic Church’s newest saint, Mother Teresa, may want to consider her words:

But I feel that the greatest destroyer of peace today is abortion, because it is a war against the child, a direct killing of the innocent child, murder by the mother herself. And if we accept that a mother can kill even her own child, how can we tell other people not to kill one another?...Any country that accepts abortion is not teaching its people to love, but to use any violence to get what they want. This is why the greatest destroyer of love and peace is abortion.

- Speech to the National Prayer Breakfast, Washington, DC

Likewise, Pope Saint John Paul II wrote:

Above all, the common outcry, which is justly made on behalf of human rights—for example, the right to health, to home, to work, to family, to culture—is false and illusory if the right to life, the most basic and fundamental right and the condition for all other personal rights, is not defended with maximum determination.

- Apostolic Exhortation Christifideles Laici (On the Vocation and Mission of the Lay Faithful in the Church and in the World)

And the entire body of US Catholic Bishops published Living the Gospel of Life: A Challenge to American Catholics, which states:

Opposition to abortion and euthanasia does not excuse indifference to those who suffer from poverty, violence and injustice. Any politics of human life must work to resist the violence of war and the scandal of capital punishment. Any politics of human dignity must seriously address issues of racism, poverty, hunger, employment, education, housing and health care. Therefore, Catholics should eagerly involve themselves as advocates for the weak and marginalized in all these areas. Catholic public officials are obliged to address each of these issues as they seek to build consistent policies which promote respect for the human person at all stages of life. But Being ‘right’ in such matters can never excuse a wrong choice regarding direct attacks on innocent human life. Indeed, the failure to protect and defend life in its most vulnerable stages renders suspect any claims to the ‘rightness’ of positions in other matters affecting the poorest and least powerful of the human community. If we understand the human person as the “temple of the Holy Spirit” - the living house of God—then these latter issues fall logically into place as the crossbeams and walls of that house. All direct attacks on innocent human life, such as abortion and euthanasia, strike at the house’s foundation. These directly and immediately violate the human person’s most fundamental right, the right to life. Neglect of these issues is the equivalent of building our house on sand. Such attacks cannot help but lull the social conscience in ways ultimately destructive of other human rights.

- Living the Gospel of Life, n. 23
The Challenge of Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship

Part I of II: Our Call as Catholic Citizens

This brief document is Part I of a summary of the US bishops’ reflection, Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship, which complements the teaching of bishops in dioceses and states.

“...the just ordering of society and of the state is a central responsibility of politics,” the Church “cannot and must not remain on the sidelines in the fight for justice.” So writes Pope Francis, quoting Pope Benedict XVI.

Our nation faces many political challenges that demand well-informed moral choices:

- The ongoing destruction of a million innocent human lives each year by abortion
- Physician-assisted suicide
- The redefinition of marriage
- The excessive consumption of material goods and the destruction of natural resources, harming the environment as well as the poor
- Deadly attacks on Christians and other religious minorities throughout the world
- Efforts to narrow the definition and exercise of religious freedom
- Economic policies that fail to prioritize the needs of poor people, at home and abroad
- A broken immigration system and a worldwide refugee crisis
- Wars, terror, and violence that threaten every aspect of human life and dignity.

As Catholics, we are a part of a community with profound teachings that help us consider challenges in public life, contribute to greater justice and peace for all people, and evaluate policy positions, party platforms, and candidates’ promises and actions in light of the Gospel in order to help build a better world.

Why Does the Church Teach About Issues Affecting Public Policy?

The Church’s obligation to participate in shaping the moral character of society is a requirement of our faith, a part of the mission given to us by Jesus Christ. As people of both faith and reason, Catholics are called to bring truth to political life and to practice Christ’s commandment to “love one another” (Jn 13:34).

The US Constitution protects the right of individual believers and religious bodies to proclaim and live out their faith without government interference, favoritism, or discrimination. Civil law should recognize and protect the Church’s right to participate in society without abandoning its moral convictions. Our nation’s tradition of pluralism is enhanced, not threatened, when religious groups and people of faith bring their convictions into public life. The Catholic community brings to political dialogue a consistent moral framework and broad experience serving those in need.

Who in the Church Should Participate in Political Life?

In the Catholic tradition, responsible citizenship is a virtue, and participation in political life is a moral obligation. As Catholics, we should be guided more by our moral convictions than by our attachment to any political party or interest group. In today’s environment, Catholics may feel politically disenfranchised, sensing that no party and few candidates fully share our comprehensive commitment to human life and dignity. This should not discourage us. On the contrary, it makes our obligation to act all the more urgent. Catholic lay women and men need to act on the Church’s moral principles and become more involved: running for office, working within political parties, and communicating concerns to elected officials. Even those who cannot vote should raise their voices on matters that affect their lives and the common good. Faithful citizenship is an ongoing responsibility, not just an election year duty.

How Can Catholic Social Teaching Help Guide Our Participation?

In the words of Pope Francis, “progress in building a people in peace, justice and fraternity depends on four principles related to constant tensions present in every social reality. These derive from the pillars of the Church’s social doctrine, which serve as ‘primary and fundamental parameters of reference for interpreting and evaluating social phenomena.’” The four principles include the dignity of the human person, the common good, subsidiarity, and solidarity. Taken together, these principles provide a moral framework for Catholic engagement in advancing what we have called a “consistent ethic of life” (Living the Gospel of Life, no. 22).

Rightly understood, this ethic does not treat all issues as morally equivalent; nor does it reduce Catholic teaching to one or two issues. It anchors the Catholic commitment to defend human life and other human rights, from conception until natural death, in the fundamental obligation to respect the dignity of every human being as a child of God.

Catholic voters should use Catholic teaching to examine candidates’ positions on issues and should consider candidates’ integrity, philosophy, and performance. It is important for all citizens “so to see beyond party politics, to analyze campaign rhetoric critically, and to choose their political leaders according to principle, not party affiliation or mere self-interest” (USCCB, Living the Gospel of Life, no. 33). The following summary of the four principles highlights several themes of Catholic social teaching for special consideration: these include human rights and responsibilities, respect for work and the rights of workers, care for God’s creation, and the preferential option for the poor and vulnerable.

The Dignity of the Human Person

Human life is sacred because every person is created in the image and likeness of God. There is a rich and multifaceted Catholic teaching on human dignity summarized in the Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church. Every human being “must always be understood in his irreplaceable and inviolable uniqueness ... This entails above all the respect not only of simple respect on the part of others, especially political and social institutions and their leaders with regard to every man and woman on the earth, but even more, this means that the primary commitment of each person towards others, and particularly of these same institutions, must be for the promotion and integral development of the person” (no. 131). The Compendium continues, “It is necessary to consider every neighbor without exception...
as another self, taking into account first of all his life and the means necessary for living it with dignity' (Gaudium et Spes, no. 27). Every political, economic, social, scientific and cultural program must be inspired by the awareness of the primacy of each human being over society. 15

**Subsidiarity**

It is impossible to promote the dignity of the person without showing concern for the family, groups, associations, and local realities—in short, for those economic, social, cultural, recreational, professional, and political communities to which people spontaneously give life and which make it possible for them to achieve effective social growth. 16 The family, based on marriage between a man and a woman, is the fundamental unit of society. This sanctuary for the creation and nurturing of children must not be redefined, undermined, or neglected. Supporting families should be a priority for economic and social policies. How our society is organized—in economics and politics, in law and public policy—affects the well-being of individuals and of society. Every person and association has a right and a duty to participate in shaping society to promote the well-being of individuals and the common good.

The principle of subsidiarity reminds us that larger institutions in society should not overwhelm or interfere with smaller or local institutions; yet larger institutions have essential responsibilities when the more local institutions cannot adequately protect human dignity, meet human needs, and advance the common good. 17

**The Common Good**

The common good is comprised of “the sum total of social conditions which allow people, either as groups or as individuals, to reach their fulfillment more fully and more easily.” 18 Human dignity is respected and the common good is fostered only if human rights are protected and basic responsibilities are met. Every human being has a right to life, a right to religious freedom, and a right to have access to those things required for human decency—food and shelter, education and employment, health care and housing. Corresponding to these rights are duties and responsibilities—to ourselves, to our families, and to the larger society.

The economy must serve people, not the other way around. An economic system must serve the dignity of the human person and the common good by respecting the dignity of work and protecting the rights of workers. Economic justice calls for decent work at fair, living wages, a broad and fair legal framework program with a path to citizenship for immigrant workers, and the opportunity for all people to work together for the common good through their work, ownership, enterprise, investment, participation in unions, and other forms of economic activity. Workers also have responsibilities—to provide a fair day’s work for a fair day’s pay, to treat employers and coworkers with respect, and to carry out their work in ways that contribute to the common good. Workers, employers, and unions should not only advance their own interests but also work together to advance economic justice and the well-being of all.

We have a duty to care for God’s creation, which Pope Francis refers to in Laudato Si’ as “our common home.” 19 We are all called to be careful stewards of God’s creation and to ensure a safe and hospitable environment for vulnerable human beings now and in the future. Pope Francis, consistent with St. John Paul II and Pope Benedict XVI (World Day of Peace Message, 1990 and 2010), has lifted up pollution, climate change, lack of access to clean water, and the loss of biodiversity as particular challenges. Pope Francis speaks of an “ecological debt” (no. 51) owed by wealthier nations to developing nations. And he calls all of us to an “ecological conversion” (no. 219), by which “the effects of [our] encounter with Jesus Christ become evident in [our] relationship with the world around [us].” 20 Indeed, this concern with “natural ecology” is an indispensable part of the broader “human ecology,” which encompasses not only material but moral and social dimensions as well.

**Solidarity**

Solidarity is “a firm and persevering determination to commit oneself to . . . the good of all and of each individual, because we are all really responsible for all.” It is found in “a commitment to the good of one’s neighbor with the readiness, in the Gospel sense, to ‘lose oneself’ for the sake of the other instead of exploiting him, and to ‘serve him’ instead of oppressing him for one’s own advantage.” 21

We are one human family, whatever our national, racial, ethnic, economic, and ideological differences. Our Catholic commitment to solidarity requires that we pursue justice, eliminate racism, end human trafficking, protect human rights, seek peace, and avoid the use of force except as a necessary last resort.

In a special way, our solidarity must find expression in the preferential option for the poor and vulnerable. A moral test for society is how we treat the weakest among us—the unborn, those dealing with disabilities or terminal illness, the poor, and the marginalized.

**Conclusion**

In light of Catholic teaching, the bishops vigorously repeat their call for a renewed politics that focuses on moral principles, the promotion of human life and dignity, and the pursuit of the common good. Political participation in this spirit reflects not only the social teaching of our Church but the best traditions of our nation.

**Notes**

1 Evangelii Gaudium, no. 183.
2 This specific list of issues is taken from the Introductory Note to Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship, 2015. For a fuller consideration, see the second document in this series, “The Challenge of Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship: Part II: Making Moral Choices and Applying Our Principles” (2016), and the full statement of the bishops’ Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship, 2015.
3 Evangelii Gaudium, no. 221.
4 These principles are drawn from a rich tradition more fully described in the Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church from the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace (Washington, DC: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2005), no. 160. For more information on these principles, see Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship, 2016, nos. 438.
5 Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church, no. 132. This summary represents only a few highlights from the fuller treatment of the human person in the Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church. For the fuller treatment, see especially nos. 124-159 where many other important aspects of human dignity are treated.
6 Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church, no. 185.
7 Centesimus Annus, no. 48; Dignitatis Humanae, no. 4-6.
8 Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church, no. 164.
9 Laudato Si’, no. 77.
10 Laudato Si’, nos. 219 and 217.
11 Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church, no. 193. (See Mt 10:40-42, 20:25; Mk 10:42-45; Lk 22:25-27)
Part II of II: Making Moral Choices and Applying Our Principles
This brief document is Part II of a summary of the US bishops’ reflection, Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship, which complements the teaching of bishops in dioceses and states.

Part I of the summary of the US bishops’ reflection, Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship, considered the core principles that underlie Catholic engagement in the political realm. Part II is a consideration of the process by which these principles are applied to the act of voting and taking positions on policy issues. It begins with the general consideration of the nature of conscience and the role of prudence. The application of prudential judgment does not mean that all choices are equally valid or that the bishops’ guidance and that of other church leaders is just another political opinion or policy preference among many others. Rather, Catholics are urged to listen carefully to the Church’s teachers when they apply Catholic social teaching to specific proposals and situations.

How Does the Church Help the Catholic Faithful to Speak About Political and Social Questions?

A Well-Formed Conscience
The Church equips its members to address political questions by helping them develop well-formed consciences. “Conscience is a judgment of reason whereby the human person recognizes the moral quality of a concrete act... [Every person] is obliged to follow faithfully what he or she knows to be just and right” (Catechism of the Catholic Church, no. 1778). We Catholics have a lifelong obligation to form our consciences in accord with human reason, enlightened by the teaching of Christ as it comes to us through the Church.

The Virtue of Prudence
The Church also encourages Catholics to develop the virtue of prudence, which enables us “to discern our true good in every circumstance and to choose the right means of achieving it” (Catechism of the Catholic Church, no. 1806). Prudence shapes and informs our ability to deliberate over available alternatives, to determine what is most fitting to a specific context, and to act. Prudence must be accompanied by courage, which calls us to act. As Catholics seek to advance the common good, we must carefully discern which public policies are morally sound. At times, Catholics may choose different ways to respond to social problems, but we cannot differ on our obligation to protect human life and dignity and help build, through moral means, a more just and peaceful world.

Doing Good and Avoiding Evil
There are some things we must never do, as individuals or as a society, because they are always incompatible with love of God and neighbor. These intrinsically evil acts must always be rejected and never supported. A preeminent example is the intentional taking of innocent human life, as in abortion. Similarly, human cloning, destructive research on human embryos, and other acts that directly violate the sanctity and dignity of human life including genocide, torture, and the targeting of noncombatants in acts of terror or war, can never be justified. Nor can violations of human dignity, such as acts of racism, treating workers as mere means to an end, deliberately subjecting workers to subhuman living conditions, treating the poor as disposable, or redefining marriage to deny its essential meaning, ever be justified.

Opposition to intrinsically evil acts also prompts us to recognize our positive duty to contribute to the common good and act in solidarity with those in need. Both opposing evil and doing good are essential. As St. John Paul II said, “The fact that only the negative commandments oblige always and under all circumstances does not mean that in the moral life prohibitions are more important than the obligation to do good indicated by the positive commandment.” The basic right to life implies and is linked to other human rights such as a right to the goods that every person needs to live and thrive—including food, shelter, health care, education, and meaningful work.

Avoiding Two Temptations
Two temptations in public life can distort the Church’s defense of human life and dignity: The first is a moral equivalence that makes no ethical distinctions between different kinds of issues involving human life and dignity. The direct and intentional destruction of innocent human life from the moment of conception until natural death is always wrong and is not just one issue among many. It must always be opposed. The second is the misuse of these necessary moral distinctions as a way of dismissing or ignoring other serious threats to human life and dignity. Racism and other unjust discrimination, the use of the death penalty, resorting to unjust war, environmental degradation, the use of torture, war crimes, the failure to respond to those who are suffering from hunger or a lack of health care or housing, pornography, human trafficking, redefining civil marriage, compromising religious liberty,
or unjust immigration policies are all serious moral issues that challenge our consciences and require us to act.

**Making Moral Choices**

The bishops do not tell Catholics how to vote; the responsibility to make political choices rests with each person and his or her properly formed conscience, aided by prudence. This exercise of conscience begins with always opposing policies that violate human life or weaken its protection.

When morally flawed laws already exist, prudential judgment is needed to determine how to do what is possible to restore justice—even if partially or gradually—without ever abandoning a moral commitment to full protection for all human life from conception to natural death (see St. John Paul II, Evangelium Vitae, no. 73).

Prudential judgment is also needed to determine the best way to promote the common good in areas such as housing, health care, and immigration. When church leaders make judgments about how to apply Catholic teaching to specific policies, this may not carry the same binding authority as universal moral principles but cannot be dismissed as one political opinion among others. These moral applications should inform the consciences and guide the actions of Catholics.

As Catholics we are not single-issue voters. A candidate’s position on a single issue is not sufficient to guarantee a voter’s support. Yet a candidate’s position on a single issue that involves an intrinsic evil, such as support for legal abortion or the promotion of racism, may legitimately lead a voter to disqualify a candidate from receiving support.¹

**What Public Policies Should Concern Catholics Most?**

As Catholics, we are led to raise questions about political life other than those that concentrate on individual, material well-being. We focus more broadly on what protects or threatens the dignity of every human life. Catholic teaching challenges voters and candidates, citizens and elected officials, to consider the moral and ethical dimensions of public policy issues. In light of ethical principles, we bishops offer the following policy goals that we hope will guide Catholics as they form their consciences and reflect on the moral dimensions of their public choices:

- **Address the preeminent requirement to protect human life**—by restricting and bringing to an end the destruction of unborn children through abortion and providing women in crisis pregnancies with the supports they need. End the following practices: the use of euthanasia and assisted suicide to deal with the burdens of illness and disability; the destruction of human embryos in the name of research; the use of the death penalty to combat crime; and the impendent resort to war to address international disputes.

- **Protect the fundamental understanding of marriage** as the life-long and faithful union of one man and one woman as the central institution of society; promote the complementarity of the sexes and reject false “gender” ideologies; provide better support for family life morally, socially, and economically, so that our nation helps parents raise their children with respect for life, sound moral values, and an ethic of stewardship and responsibility.

- **Achieve comprehensive immigration reform** that offers a path to citizenship, treats immigrant workers fairly, prevents the separation of families, maintains the integrity of our borders, respects the rule of law, and addresses the factors that compel people to leave their own countries.

- **Help families and children overcome poverty** and ensure access to and choice in education, as well as decent work at fair, living wages and adequate assistance for the vulnerable in our nation, while also helping to overcome widespread hunger and poverty around the world, especially in the policy areas of development assistance, debt relief, and international trade.

- **Ensure full conscience protection and religious freedom** for individuals and groups to meet social needs, and so enable families, community groups, economic structures, and government to work together to overcome poverty, pursue the common good, and care for creation.

- **Provide health care** while respecting human life, human dignity, and religious freedom in our health care system.

- **Continue to oppose policies that reflect racism, hostility toward immigrants, religious bigotry, and other forms of unjust discrimination.**

- **Establish and comply with moral limits on the use of military force**—examining for what purposes it may be used, under what authority, and at what human cost—with a special view to seeking a responsible and effective response for ending the persecution of Christians and other religious minorities in the Middle East and other parts of the world.

- **Join with others around the world** to pursue peace, protect human rights and religious liberty, and advance economic justice and care for creation.

**Notes**

1. *Veritatis Splendor,* no. 52.

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Publication No: 7-346
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The Law Firm of
Levins & Associates LLC
Attorneys
Jess W. Levins, Esq.
Scott A. Cummings, Esq.
Tasha Warnock, Esq. LLM
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