



The Season of Creation Webinar:

Putting our Faith into Action through Voting

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A BETTER KIND OF POLITICS

Civilize It



Overview

- Focus on each person as a beloved child
- Call to active participation all year
- Faithful citizenship is an exercise in accompaniment
- Hear and respond to our brothers and sisters



Philip Laubner/CRS

FORMING  **CONSCIENCES** **FOR** **FAITHFUL**
CITIZENSHIP

Creating a Culture of Encounter

*“Although there are many reasons to be discouraged, amid many prophets of destruction and condemnation, and so many negative and despairing voices, **may you be a positive force, for this society.***

*Like the engine of a train, may you be the **driving force leading all towards their destination.***

May you be sowers of hope, builders of bridges and agents of dialogue and harmony.”

Pope Francis, Apostolic Journey, April 29th, 2017 (*emphasis added*)



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**FORMING
CONSCIENCES**



**FOR
FAITHFUL
CITIZENSHIP**



Photo: Somos Un Pueblo Unido. Used with permission.

“In the Catholic Tradition, **responsible citizenship** is a **virtue**, and **participation** in political life is a **moral obligation**.”

- Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship, no. 13

“Even those who cannot vote have the right to have their voices heard on issues that affect their lives and the common good.”

- Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship, no. 16



**FORMING
CONSCIENCES**

**FOR
FAITHFUL
CITIZENSHIP**

Participation in political life in light of fundamental moral principles is an essential duty for every Catholic and all people of good will.

- Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship, no. 57

“People in every nation enhance the social dimension of their lives by acting as committed and responsible citizens.”

- Evangelii Gaudium, no. 220

FORMING CONSCIENCES



FOR FAITHFUL CITIZENSHIP

CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING

The Church's social teaching is a rich treasure of wisdom about building a just society and living lives of holiness amidst the challenges of modern society. Modern Catholic social teaching has been articulated through a tradition of papal, conciliar, and episcopal documents. The depth and richness of this tradition can be understood best through a direct reading of these documents. In these brief reflections, we highlight several of the key themes that are at the heart of our Catholic social tradition.



LIFE AND DIGNITY OF THE HUMAN PERSON

The Catholic Church proclaims that human life is sacred and that the dignity of the human person is the foundation of a moral vision for society. This belief is the foundation of all the principles of our social teaching. In our society, human life is under direct attack from abortion and euthanasia. Human life is threatened by cloning, embryonic stem cell research, and the use of the death penalty. The intentional targeting of civilians in war or terrorist attacks is always wrong. Catholic teaching calls on us to work to avoid war. Nations must protect the right to life by finding effective ways to prevent conflicts and resolve them by peaceful means. We believe that every person is precious, that people are more important than things, and that the measure of every institution is whether it threatens or enhances the life and dignity of the human person.



CALL TO FAMILY, COMMUNITY, AND PARTICIPATION

The person is not only sacred but also social. How we organize our society—in economics and politics, in law and policy—directly affects human dignity and the capacity of individuals to grow in community. Marriage and family are the central social institutions that must be supported and strengthened, not undermined. We believe people have a right and a duty to participate in society, seeking together the common good and well-being of all, especially the poor and vulnerable.



RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Catholic tradition teaches that human dignity can be protected and a healthy community can be achieved only if human rights are protected and responsibilities are met. Therefore, every person has a fundamental right to life and a right to those things required for human decency. Corresponding to these rights are duties and responsibilities—to one another, to our families, and to the larger society.



OPTION FOR THE POOR AND VULNERABLE

A basic moral test is how our most vulnerable members are faring. In a society marred by deepening divisions between rich and poor, our tradition recalls the story of the Last Judgment (Mt 25:31-46) and instructs us to put the needs of the poor and vulnerable first.



THE DIGNITY OF WORK AND THE RIGHTS OF WORKERS

The economy must serve people, not the other way around. Work is more than a way to make a living; it is a form of continuing participation in God's creation. If the dignity of work is to be protected, then the basic rights of workers must be respected—the right to productive work, to decent and fair wages, to the organization and joining of unions, to private property, and to economic initiative.



SOLIDARITY

We are one human family whatever our national, racial, ethnic, economic, and ideological differences. We are our brothers' and sisters' keepers, wherever they may be. Loving our neighbor has global dimensions in a shrinking world. At the core of the virtue of solidarity is the pursuit of justice and peace. Blessed Pope Paul VI taught that "if you want peace, work for justice." The Gospel calls us to be peacemakers. Our love for all our sisters and brothers demands that we promote peace in a world surrounded by violence and conflict.



CARE FOR GOD'S CREATION

We show our respect for the Creator by our stewardship of creation. Care for the earth is not just an Earth Day slogan, it is a requirement of our faith. We are called to protect people and the planet, living our faith in relationship with all of God's creation. This environmental challenge has fundamental moral and ethical dimensions that cannot be ignored.

FORMING CONSCIENCES



FOR FAITHFUL CITIZENSHIP

www.USCCB.org/twofeet

The Two Feet of Love in Action

"The conscience is called by this social teaching to recognize and fulfill the obligations of **justice** and **charity** in society."
—Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church, no. 82

"**Social justice** . . . concerns the social, political, and economic aspects and, above all, the structural dimension of problems and their respective solutions."
—Compendium, no. 202

"To [those who lack what they need to live a dignified life] are proclaimed glad tidings that God loves them . . . and comes to visit them through the **charitable works** that the disciples of Christ do in his name. . . . As we can read in Matthew 25, we shall all be judged on this."
—Pope Francis, Address to Pastoral Convention, 6/17/13

SOCIAL JUSTICE

**REMOVE ROOT CAUSES
IMPROVE STRUCTURES**

- Expand access to affordable housing
- Work to improve the education system
- Extend legal protection to unborn children
- Support environmental protection laws
- Participate in a living wage campaign
- Promote peace
- Advocate for international assistance

CHARITABLE WORKS

**MEET BASIC NEEDS
AID INDIVIDUALS**

- Volunteer at homeless shelters
- Tutor children
- Assist women who face a crisis pregnancy
- Participate in a community beautification program
- Donate to food pantries and clothing closets
- Sponsor a refugee family
- Raise money for an overseas development project

KINGDOM OF GOD

PATH OF CHARITY

The Two Feet of Love in Action

Session for Teens

Session Outline (90 minutes)

- I. Icebreaker Game – 15 min.
- II. Opening Prayer – 5 min.
- III. Stack of the Deck Game – 15 min.
- IV. Introduction to the Two Feet of Love in Action – 15 min.
- V. Discussion – 15 min.
- VI. Walking the Path of Love – 15 min.
- VII. Sending – 10 min.
- VIII. Closing Prayer – 2 min.

Introduction
 In *Deus Caritas Est*, Pope Benedict XVI describes the "unbreakable bond between love of God and love of neighbor" (no. 16). The experience of God's love, he says, should move us to love our neighbors, in whom God is present.

Who are our neighbors? In the Gospels, Jesus answers the question with the parable of the Good Samaritan—the beaten man on the road who had no one else to care for him. Pope Benedict XVI tells us that the "extraordinary force" of love should propel us, as disciples of Christ, to action on behalf of such neighbors (*Caritas in Veritate*, no. 1). In the same way, Pope Francis notes: "A prayer that does not lead you to practical action for your brother—the poor, the sick, those in need of help, a brother in difficulty—is a sterile and incomplete prayer" (*Angelus, 7/21/13*).

What should our loving action look like? The Catholic tradition recognizes two types of necessary responses that we call the Two Feet of Love in Action.

This facilitator's guide can help you as you lead a group of high school age participants to learn about and reflect on living out the call to discipleship through these two distinct, but complementary, ways of responding in love to the needs of our neighbors. If there are participants with disabilities in your group, be sure to consult "Tips to Adapt Activities for Participants with Disabilities" on pages 42-43 before you begin.

Materials Needed
Italicized items are for non-classroom settings, such as a youth group.

- Dry erase board, flipchart, or chalkboard
- Markers or chalk
- Icebreaker quotes, copied and cut apart (pp. 12-17) and construction paper and glue *OR materials for relay race (p. 3), including these items for each group: full cup of water; toy building blocks; Band-aids; and math worksheet (p. 18)*
- Untied shoe (To make things harder you could have shoes with knots in the laces that the participants must untie, put on, then retie)
- 3 decks of cards (for the "Stack of the Deck" Game, pp. 22-27)

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The Process of Conscience Formation



- Approaching issues with an **openness** to seek the truth.
- Studying **Sacred Scripture** and the **teaching** of the Church.
- **Examining facts** and background information.
- **Prayerful reflection**

- FCFC, no. 18

Two Duties

“Both opposing evil and doing good are essential obligations.”

- FCFC, no. 24





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**FOR FAITHFUL
CITIZENSHIP**

Called to Engage

- Requires knowing what the church teaches
- Firm in our commitment to our faith
- Seeing the other truly as a beloved child of God
- And know that not all viewpoints hold same weight
- Resources for authentic conscience formation

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FOR FAITHFUL CITIZENSHIP



As executions continue, youth pray for life and dignity

Our youth pro-life team organizes prayer for our parish community when an execution takes place.
[MORE >](#)



Reflecting on racism, affirming the dignity of all God's children

Our youth and adult formation efforts include reflection on the bishops' writings on racism, and help parishioners affirm the dignity of all God's children.
[MORE >](#)



Empowering victims of human trafficking

With help from the Amistad Movement, we are working to educate and fight against human trafficking.
[MORE >](#)



**Catholic
Social
Ministry
Gathering**

What does ongoing participation look like?
Examples from USCCB's WeAreSaltAndLight.org

One Human Family

“In today’s world, the sense of belonging to a single human family is fading and the dream of working together for justice and peace seems an outdated utopia.”



-Fratelli Tutti, no. 30





Helping Catholics Respond

- Be beacons of light by bringing the best of our faith to “work boldly and creatively to initiate processes of healing and renewed encounter.” (*Fratelli Tutti*, no. 225)
- *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship* previously instructed about the value of ongoing engagement.
- Regular ongoing conscience formation is critical.




I PLEDGE



To affirm through my words and actions the dignity of every person, each made in God's image. Even those with whom I disagree are made in his image.

To respectfully listen in order to understand experiences different from my own.

CHARITY



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I PLEDGE

To engage in critical examination to ensure that my perspectives are rooted in truth, that my sources of information are unbiased, and that I do not open myself to manipulation by partisan interests.

To be open to the process of dialogue that can require change of perspective—my own and others'—in service to the inviolable dignity of all and the common good.

CLARITY



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I PLEDGE

To be a bridgebuilder who participates in constructive dialogue based in shared values, a mutual exchange of gifts, and the humility to together seek the good.

To see differences in perspective as opportunities for creative tension which can yield solutions for the common good.

CREATIVITY



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Civilize It: A Better Kind of Politics - Pledge

Charity

- To affirm through my words and actions the dignity of every person, each made in God's image. Even those with whom I disagree are made in his image.
- To respectfully listen in order to understand experiences different from my own.

Clarity

- To engage in critical examination to ensure that my perspectives are rooted in truth, that my sources of information are unbiased, and that I do not open myself to manipulation by partisan interests.
- To be open to the process of dialogue that can require change of perspective—my own and others'—in service to the inviolable dignity of all and the common good.

Creativity

- To be a bridgebuilder who participates in constructive dialogue based in shared values, a mutual exchange of gifts, and the humility to together seek the good.
- To see differences in perspective as opportunities for creative tension which can yield solutions for the common good.





- Presents an *actual framework* for Catholics to engage with one another and with people of good will.
- Pledge is an opportunity for *both* outward and inward action
- Opportunity for evangelization!



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Tips for Dialogue

- Begin with prayer
- Establish guidelines for the conversation
- Identify core values for each party
- Listen attentively and commit to no interruptions
 - Use "I" statements
- Be charitable and assume the best intentions
- Ask questions to understand
- Use agreed upon language



Practical Resources

- Prayer, Reflection, and Practical tools
- *Civilize It* Prayer
- Group or individual reflection guides
 - 5 Tips from Pope Francis
 - Loving our Neighbor through Dialogue
- Examination of Conscience
- All available bilingually and culturally adapt
- All at www.CivilizeIt.org

796 pledges of 5,000 goal

First Name Last Name

Your name to appear on the pledge page

City State

Enter your email

Sign up to receive Civilize It campaign updates and resources.

Don't display my name publicly on the campaign.

I'm not a robot

SHARE IT

TAKE THE PLEDGE

Michael A Meehan
Madison, WI · 9/28/2021

Kathleen Basi
COLUMBIA, MO · 9/28/2021

Ellie Hidalgo
Miami, FL · 9/28/2021

See All

A BETTER KIND OF POLITICS
Civilize It

A polarized Church. A divided nation. Pope Francis calls for "a better kind of politics." How will you respond?

As Catholics, we take to heart Jesus' invitation to follow the example of the Good Samaritan, who challenges us to "become neighbors to all" (no. 80). As a Church and a nation, we are polarized and divided. But as Pope Francis writes in *Fraternità Tutti*, we can seek "a better kind of politics, one truly at the service of the common good" (no. 154). We can see ourselves as members of one family. We can seek to encounter and to grow. We can identify common values. We can listen to understand. We can seek the truth together. We can jointly come up with creative solutions to the problems that face our world.

[Read more](#)

I PLEDGE:

Charity

- To affirm through my words and actions the dignity of every person, each made in God's image. Even those with whom I disagree are made in his image.
- To respectfully listen in order to understand experiences different from my own.

Clarity

- To engage in critical examination to ensure that my perspectives are rooted in truth, that my sources of information are unbiased, and that I do not open myself to manipulation by partisan interests.



Thank you!

Questions?

