



Prayerfully Prepare to Vote

September 2022

Election Day is November 8, and early voting begins September 23. This year's elections will determine Virginia's representatives in all 11 U.S. congressional districts, and other offices in some localities.

Voting is our sacred duty. To prepare:

First, register to vote if you are not registered already. A Virginia Catholic Conference bulletin insert explains how to register, eligibility and key dates.

Second, prayerfully form your conscience. We recommend reading the VCC's *Four Principles of Catholic Social Teaching* bulletin insert.

Visit www.vacatholic.org to view both inserts.

As we have stated in previous pre-election letters, three foundational principles are essential to conscience formation as it relates to assessing candidates and their positions:

- Many issues are important.
- Not all issues have equal moral weight.
- Protecting life is paramount.

Above all, we are called to pursue “the preeminent requirement to protect the weakest in our midst – innocent unborn children – by restricting and bringing to an end the destruction of unborn children through abortion and providing women in crisis pregnancies the supports they need to make a decision for life” (United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship*, no. 92).

Earlier this year, the U.S. Supreme Court's *Dobbs* decision restored to the people and their elected representatives the power to safeguard life from the moment of conception. Through prayer and action, with our voices and our votes, it is our responsibility as faithful citizens to exercise our power to protect the lives of the powerless.

Faithfully yours in Christ,

Most Reverend Michael F. Burbidge
Bishop of Arlington

Most Reverend Barry C. Knestout
Bishop of Richmond