



Preparing and Voting as Virginia Catholics

September 2023

This year, voters will elect members to all 140 seats in the Virginia General Assembly – 40 in the Senate and 100 in the House of Delegates – as well as other offices in some localities. Early voting begins September 22. Election Day is November 7.

Much is at stake, and it is the sacred duty of each voter to form his or her conscience and participate in these critical decisions. 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. Registration ends October 16.

Second, locate your new districts. New General Assembly district maps are in effect for this year's elections. A VCC bulletin insert explains how to find your new state Senate and House of Delegates districts and who the candidates are.

Third, prayerfully form your conscience. The VCC's *Four Principles of Catholic Social Teaching* bulletin insert provides a helpful overview for reflection, in an easy-to-read format.

Visit www.vacatholic.org to view these materials.

As we have stated in previous pre-election letters, three foundational principles are essential to forming consciences and evaluating candidates:

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

Addressing the tragedy of abortion is the “preeminent priority because it directly attacks life itself, because it takes place within the sanctuary of the family, and because of the number of lives destroyed” (United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, [*Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship*](#), Introductory Letter).

As a Catholic and a voter in Virginia, please respond to the call of faithful citizenship. Prepare and engage in these vitally important elections. Protect life to the fullest extent possible.

Faithfully yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael F. Burbidge".

Most Reverend Michael F. Burbidge
Bishop of Arlington

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Barry C. Knestout".

Most Reverend Barry C. Knestout
Bishop of Richmond