



Voting as Faithful Citizens

September 2024

Election Day is November 5. Early voting begins September 20. As Americans, we will decide who our next President will be. As Virginians, we will also decide who will represent our Commonwealth in the U.S. Senate and U.S. House of Representatives. As faithful citizens, it is our sacred duty to form our consciences and vote.

World and national events are ever-changing and often tragically alarming. In Ukraine and the Middle East, war, violence, and immense suffering are daily realities. Across our country, extreme and dangerous proposals to expand access to abortion will appear on many states' ballots this November. Seemingly everywhere we look, a “throwaway culture” runs rampant, disregarding dignity and embracing indifference, selfishness, abandonment, and greed.

Yet, we must see beyond all the destruction and despair. The Church's timeless teachings show us how. They shine light in the darkness, providing an anchor for our enduring hope and a sure guide for the formation of our consciences.

As we have stated in previous pre-election letters, these teachings tell us that three principles must guide how we vote:

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

Addressing the tragedy of abortion is the “pre-eminent priority because it directly attacks our most vulnerable and voiceless brothers and sisters and destroys more than a million lives per year in our country alone” (U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, [*Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship*](#), Introductory Letter).

Resources provided by the Virginia Catholic Conference explain the principles, the positions of candidates, and practical tips for voter registration. Visit www.vacatholic.org to view these materials.

Through conscience formation, prayer, and fasting, prepare your minds and hearts to engage in this year's critical voting decisions. United in the Eucharist, let us pray for one another, as Americans, Virginians, and faithful citizens.

Faithfully yours in Christ,

Most Reverend Michael F. Burbidge
Bishop of Arlington

Most Reverend Barry C. Knestout
Bishop of Richmond