

LIFE DOES NOT END AT BIRTH.

Catholics Called to Vote For the Common Good

“Our moral, political and economic responsibilities do not stop at the moment of birth. Those who defend the right to life of the weakest among us must be equally visible in support of the quality of life of the powerless among us: the old and the young, the hungry and the homeless, the undocumented immigrant and the unemployed worker...consistency means we can't have it both ways.”

- Cardinal Joseph Bernadin, eve of the 1984 presidential elections

The following is a non-partisan statement endorsed by more than 200 Catholic organizations and inspired by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' "Faithful Citizenship" statement.

It is a common misperception of politicians seeking office that the Catholic vote can be courted by addressing a narrow range of issues. In reality, the great majority of Catholics in the U.S., in agreement with the U.S. Catholic Bishops, will vote for candidates based “on the full range of issues, as well as on [the candidate's] personal integrity, philosophy, and performance.” (“Faithful Citizenship,” U.S. Catholic Bishops, 2004).

Members of the media - and indeed a few of our own religious leaders - do a great disservice to our church and nation when they attempt to use one or another issue as the benchmark for Catholic identity.

“The Christian faith is an integral unity, and thus it is incoherent to isolate some particular element to the detriment of the whole of Catholic doctrine. A political commitment to a single isolated aspect of the Church's social doctrine does not exhaust one's responsibility towards the common



- **30,000 OF GOD'S CHILDREN DIE EVERY DAY OF HUNGER AND PREVENTABLE DISEASE**
- **MORE THAN 13,000 CIVILIANS AND 1,000 OF OUR TROOPS HAVE DIED IN AN IRAQ WAR CALLED A 'MORAL FAILURE' BY THE VATICAN**
- **OVER 44 MILLION AMERICANS LACK HEALTH CARE, A 10% INCREASE FROM FOUR YEARS AGO**
- **OVER 1,000 PEOPLE ARE DYING EVERY DAY IN SUDAN'S GENOCIDE**

good” (“Doctrinal Note on Some Questions Regarding the Participation of Catholics in Political Life,” Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, November 2002 and approved by Pope John Paul II).

There are 60 million Catholics in the U.S. We take the responsibility of voting seriously. We will examine the broad range of issues, measuring “all candidates, policies, parties and platforms by how they protect or undermine the life, dignity, and rights of the human person, whether they protect the poor and vulnerable and advance the common good” (“Faithful Citizenship,” U.S. Catholic Bishops, 2004).

In the gospels, Jesus implores us to love our enemies, to feed the hungry, to bless the peacemakers, to set the oppressed free, and to care for the widow, the orphan, and the stranger. This November, we will look for and vote for candidates who take as seriously as we do the teachings and example of Jesus Christ.