



669/2024  
27 September 2024

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

In the Catholic Tradition of responsible citizenship, we are morally obligated to participate in political life and to make choices based on a properly formed conscience, voting for the candidates who best support the moral teachings of our Catholic faith. As you prepare to cast your ballot for the upcoming November election, I ask that you pray for the guidance of the Holy Spirit and educate yourself on the candidates' positions on the critical issues that will affect us all, both now and in the future.

Before we are members of any political party, we must be faithful followers of Jesus, who told us "By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another" (John 3:35). So, it is incumbent on us who are believers to live our Catholic faith outside the walls of our Churches, putting Christ at the center of our public lives as citizens. Our consciences must be well informed through prayer and fidelity to the teachings of the Catholic Church. Then we must vote our consciences, which I urge you to do, so that your Catholic faith will impact the moral and social fabric of our society.

In the *Introductory Note to Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship*, the document issued by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops to help guide us on our political responsibilities, we bishops again said that the defense of unborn life remains our pre-eminent priority because abortion is a direct attack on the most vulnerable among us. We also recognize that other grave threats to the life and dignity of the human person include euthanasia, gun violence, terrorism, the death penalty, human trafficking, the redefinition of marriage and gender, threats to religious freedom, lack of justice for the poor, the suffering of migrants and refugees, racism, and the lack of care for our common home. All these issues must be considered when voting for the person who will best represent us, placing the interests of the most vulnerable first among others.

At a time when our nation is so polarized by partisanship and ideology, and the issues are so serious and complex, it is of the utmost importance that we persevere in hope, remembering the words found in the Book of Micah, who said, "You have been told, O mortal, what is good, and what the Lord requires of you: Only to do justice and love goodness, and to walk humbly with your God" (Micah 6:8).

For those looking for more information on faithful citizenship, both the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops and the Catholic Conference of Ohio (which outlines topics specific to our state) offer extensive materials and resources to provide guidance.

Please join me in praying for all those who are running for office in the upcoming election. May the Lord inspire and guide them to lift up the dignity of all persons they will serve if chosen by the electorate. May the Lord guide us in these important decisions at this critical time in our history, heal our divisions, and unite us one nation, under God.

May God bless you and those you love.

Your brother in Christ,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Edward C. Malesic". The signature is written in a cursive style with a small cross at the beginning.

Most Reverend Edward C. Malesic, JCL  
Bishop of Cleveland