

August 2008

Dear Pastors, Deacons, Parish Staff and Parish Leaders:

You are receiving this packet as an important resource in your efforts to help your parishioners develop well-formed consciences as Election Day approaches. The U.S. bishops' statement, *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship* describes the conscience as “the voice of God resounding in the human heart, revealing the truth to us and calling us to do what is good while shunning what is evil” (no 17).

Soon, we will have the privilege to choose our local and national leaders. Rather than leaving ourselves to be burnt out by endless political campaign advertisements, we hope that this election season will be an opportunity to remind Catholics to bring the light of the Gospels to the world on a more regular, everyday basis. But how do we properly form our consciences to seek the truth and to shun evil for this task? Again, the bishops instruct us. We must do three things:

- 1) Study Sacred Scripture and the teaching of the Church;
- 2) Examine the facts and background information about the issues and choices; and
- 3) Prayerfully reflect to discern the will of God (no.18).

In this packet, you will find a collection of resources to assist you in forming consciences for faithful citizenship. We do not anticipate that any parish community will make use of everything offered here, but it was our intention to provide a variety of options. The following resources can also be found in electronic form at [www.catholicsocialaction.org](http://www.catholicsocialaction.org) :

**For Study of Church Teaching and Facts about Issues:**

- ✚ “Questions for Voting “and “Candidate Issues and Questions” from the Catholic Conference of Ohio;
- ✚ Educational resources for the seven key themes of Catholic Social Teaching;
- ✚ Calendar of upcoming events sponsored by Archdiocesan offices, which can be useful in forming our consciences;
- ✚ Sample bulletin inserts from *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship* and other Church documents.

**For Prayerful Reflection to Discern the Will of God:**

- ✚ Catholic Social Teaching catechesis (to be used as a call to worship before the liturgy);
- ✚ Sample intercessions;
- ✚ Homily helps from U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops for September 21 and October 26

We have provided a possible framework for promoting Catholic Social Teaching on a variety of Sundays between now and Election Day. These

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suggestions are based on certain concurring events or scriptural readings that can help us give due attention to each particular Catholic principle. On these Sundays, we hope you will utilize the **Catholic Social Teaching catechesis, sample intercessions, homily helps** and **sample bulletin inserts** as well as promote the **educational resources** and **upcoming events** that are relevant to each Sunday’s Catholic Social Teaching theme. Please know that, while we are providing you with a suggested chronological framework for educating Catholics about Faithful Citizenship and the Church’s social teaching, most of these resources are appropriate for use anytime of the year.

<b>DATE</b>	<b>CST PRINCIPLE</b>	<b>REASON</b>
August 31	Dignity of Work and the Rights of Workers	Sunday before Labor Day
September 21	Family, Community and Participation	USCCB Homily Suggestion on “Conscience Formation for Citizens”
September 28	Care for Creation	First Sunday of Autumn
October 5	Life and Dignity of the Human Person	Respect Life Sunday
October 12	Option for the Poor and Vulnerable	Greater Cincinnati Ecumenical Poverty Sunday
October 19	Solidarity	Mission Sunday
October 26	Rights and Responsibilities	USCCB Homily Suggestion on “Our Commitment to Faithful Citizenship”

The information in this packet has been authorized by Archbishop Daniel Pilarczyk for use in the parish and affiliated Catholic institutions to help us implement *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship*. It is Archdiocesan policy that parishes should not distribute voter education materials that are not authorized and distributed by the Archdiocese, Catholic Conference of Ohio or U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops.

May the Holy Spirit continue to bless your leadership which guides us to heed God’s voice resounding in our hearts.

Sincerely,

Tony Stieritz  
 Director  
 Catholic Social Action Office

Karen Kane  
 Director  
 Worship Office

Mary Anne Boyd  
 Coordinator  
 Respect Life