

ISSUES TO CONSIDER BEFORE VOTING

Catholics are called to consider a wide range of issues important to the common good before voting, weighing each according to its moral importance. During this process, it is beneficial to research the ballot ahead of time, gathering the facts for every question or candidate. The paragraphs below offer information about Catholic teaching, questions to assist voters in evaluating candidate positions or political party platforms, and a list of relevant saints from whom believers can learn before casting their ballot.² Consider using these tools for prayer and reflection during the conscience formation process.



St. Gianna Beretta Molla—an Italian physician—is the patron saint of unborn children. During her fourth pregnancy, St. Gianna chose not to undergo a procedure for her health that would have resulted in the death of her unborn child. She delivered a healthy baby but died from postoperative complications. Her bold decision to put another life before her own is an example of extraordinary and courageous action to protect human dignity. *Other examples:* St. Elizabeth, St. Gerard Majella, St. John Paul II, St. Joseph, and St. Katharine Drexel.

Human Life and Dignity

From the moment an individual is conceived until his or her natural death, that person possesses dignity as a human being made in the image and likeness of God. Together with the frail and elderly, the handicapped and marginalized, the dignity of all human life must be protected, beginning with the unborn child in the womb. Rampant gun violence, maltreatment of the sick and disabled, and the loss of over 60 million children due to legalized abortion illustrate the need for a more just and violence-free society.

- Will the candidate support policies that provide women in difficult pregnancies with pre- and post-natal care, transportation and employment assistance, and other necessary care to help her through and after the pregnancy?
- Will the candidate oppose direct threats to human life, such as abortion, racism, assisted suicide, euthanasia, the death penalty, embryonic stem cell research, and violence?

Religious Liberty

The constitutional freedoms that permit Americans to practice their faith freely and prohibit the government from intruding in religious life are among the foremost principles of the American experiment. This election season reminds us that these sacred principles are no longer paramount to some in the political and civil arena. Elected officials are thus urged to re-invigorate religious liberty for all, thereby promoting peace, understanding, and service to others in the public square.

- Does the candidate support the right of religious individuals and institutions, such as hospitals, charity agencies, and schools, to operate according to their deeply held beliefs?
- Does the candidate oppose restrictions on refugee acceptance and resettlement on the basis of religion?



St. Thomas More is the patron saint of lawyers, statesmen, and politicians. St. Thomas More served in a variety of public roles, including as Lord Chancellor to King Henry VIII. He refused to acknowledge the king's divorce or recognize the king as the head of the Church, which led to