



Catholics and Election Year Politics

Elections are important. They make a big difference in the prosperity of our country, future decisions of the Supreme Court, and the economic and moral welfare of your family.

Jefferson defends Churches from the State

In a letter to a local Baptist Church in 1801, President Thomas Jefferson reviewed the First Amendment that says, “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof...” He reassured them there was a “wall of separation between Church and State” assuring the free exercise of their faith from state interference.

Jesus agrees with Jefferson, which is why Catholics *freely exercise our faith* as we have done for 2000 years. Jesus freely spoke about the morality of every human activity and so do we today. There is no human behavior or activity that is “off the table” in Church!

However, we *never endorse candidates*. We trust people will make their own wise decisions when voting for candidates.

Catholics use our intelligence to thoughtfully **study** the issues. Then we use our best wisdom to **decide** the right path. Finally, after deciding, we **act**. For Catholics; *acting means voting*.

We need to have our act together!

(Matthew 21: 28) There was a man who had two sons. He went to the first and said, “Son, go and work today in the vineyard.” “I will not,” he answered, but *later changed his mind and went*. Then the father went to the other son and said the same thing. He answered, “I will, sir” *but then he did not go*. Which of the two did what his father wanted? “The first,” they answered.

Both sons do not have their words and actions together. Both make promises and then change their mind, but that only affirms people can—and often do—*change their mind!* We can never really know what politicians will do tomorrow despite their promises today.

Again, that is why the Church never endorses candidates. They often change their mind about important moral issues. However, what never changes is Our Lord, and the faith that His words and actions together reveal.

... We endorse our faith and never candidates.

This has nothing to do with tax laws. Even if they changed the Church would still only endorse moral policies and never candidates. Each Catholic voter should still wisely discern how a proposition ...or a candidate is morally close or far from Our Lord. While the Church can authoritatively say a certain behavior is always sinful, like greed, corruption, or abortion, it

rarely says that a specific person is a sinner. We remember that for any behavior to be sinful, the person must clearly know the behavior is seriously wrong and yet choose it anyway. Well, after all, we can never know what is in the mind of that person. Our faith invites *humility* in presuming we know what is in another's heart.

Are there ever persons the Church endorses?

Yes, but the only people our faith ever formally endorses are ...*all dead!* They are the saints that we so much admire like St. Francis of Assisi or St. Teresa of Avila. That "*endorsement*" process can take years of careful investigation and even scientifically verified miracles. It begins only after their death so that their words and deeds are complete and can never change. Even places like Lourdes and Fatima are only approved after all apparitions have finished, and even then they remain optional beliefs. Humility demands we don't jump to conclusions about what is in a person's heart!

Obviously, we strongly endorse our faith when it is directly addressed by Propositions. Endorsement or opposition of Propositions is simply exercising our unchanging faith that we have received from Our Lord, and which exercise is solidly affirmed in our US Constitution.

At every Sunday Mass, we stand and declare our faith in the Nicene Creed; formed by Catholic Bishops in the city of Nicaea near Istanbul not long after the Gospels were written. That faith still receives our strongest endorsement! In this election year, let us pray we keep our words and deeds together.

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