

**Wrestling with your vote?** As we approach the election on Tuesday, I offer the following from our Archbishop Michael Jackels. At the end he encourages us to look up the US Bishops' document "Faithful Citizenship" to help with your vote. **Fr. Tom**

*In response to a recent request to speak on Catholic social teaching, I spoke on our right to vote. For every right there is a corresponding duty. And so we also have a duty to vote. The Catholic Church even speaks of a moral obligation to vote. We also have a duty to inform ourselves about issues so as to vote conscientiously. Everyone guides his or her choices by something. For Catholics, that something should be the teachings of Christ and his church.*

*Two teachings in particular are meant to impact all aspects of an individual believer's life, which in turn should impact all aspects of public life. The first is respect for human life and dignity from womb to tomb, as they say. The second is a commitment to the common good, where individual well-being is linked to and personal sacrifices are made for the good of the whole society.*

*These teachings lead us to acknowledge that everyone has a right to what is needed to live in dignity: productive work, fair wages, food, shelter, education, health care, protection from harm, and the right to migrate when these things are unavailable in one's homeland – we might disagree about how people access these things, but not about whether all people have a right to them.*

*And fundamental to all human rights is the right to life. If we don't defend the right to life, advocating for other human rights doesn't make sense. Respect for human life and dignity and a commitment to the common good is a case of both/and, not either/or.*

*These teachings also lead us to acknowledge that we have a duty to provide for and protect people when they are unable to provide for or protect themselves.*

*This responsibility is greatest when others are least able to do for themselves, for example, a child in the womb or a refugee. Our responsibility may decrease as the other person's ability increases, but it never goes away entirely.*

*Back to voting: what to do when, with a conscience rightly informed by the teachings of Christ and the church, there is no candidate that lines up with both respect for human life and dignity and the common good?*

*There will never be a perfect candidate, but that's no excuse not to vote, which would let some other force or voice fill the vacuum left by opting out. Rather, choose the candidate who will do the least harm, or has potential to do the most good.*

*The right and duty to cast an informed vote is an important Catholic social teaching and a great way for us to impact all aspects of public life. Recommended reading: *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship**

*([www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/faithful-citizenship/index.cfm](http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/faithful-citizenship/index.cfm)) +Abp Jackel*

