

What if I cannot find a suitable candidate?

If no candidate upholds the right to life and the rights of the family, we are still obligated to vote. We can vote for the candidate who is the least hostile to the right to life and to the family.

In the words of one theologian, "At times, the voter can do no better than make a choice of the lesser of two or more evils. (...) He must choose the group or individual who, everything considered, is the most favorable to faith and morals or is the least hostile."¹³ To quote another theologian, "It is sinful to vote for the enemies of religion or liberty, except to exclude a worse candidate...."¹⁴

When no truly good option is given to voters, we are then forced to use our vote to ensure the least objectionable outcome.



Besides casting a pro-life vote, what else can I do?

Apart from always voting for a greater recognition and protection of the right to life and other human rights, we must also constantly strive to use other means to build a culture of life.

As Christians we are called to evangelize our culture by bringing Christian values into the market place, into every phase of our life in society.

One important way of doing this is by voicing our views publicly and by getting involved in the political process, influencing the nominations of candidates, the setting of party policy and supporting candidates who stand for the Gospel of Life in all its aspects.

A CANADIAN CATHOLIC VOTER'S CATECHISM

Does it matter whether I vote?

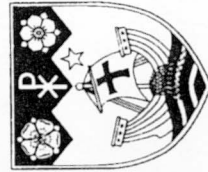
Yes. We have a moral obligation to vote. The Catechism of the Catholic Church says that it is "...morally obligatory to pay taxes, to exercise the right to vote, and to defend one's country."¹

Why is voting obligatory?

"It is the duty of citizens, to contribute along with the civil authorities to the good of society...."² As the Second Vatican Council taught, "every citizen ought to be mindful of his duty to promote the common good by using his vote."³ We are not obliged to vote for the sake of voting but to vote in a way that we think will make our country better for all Canadians.

Does the Church give us specific guidance on how to vote?

Yes. While "the Church...is not identified with any political community nor bound by ties to any political system" and does not endorse a particular party,⁴ the Church does "pass moral judgements even in matters related to politics, whenever the fundamental rights of man or the salvation of souls requires it."⁵



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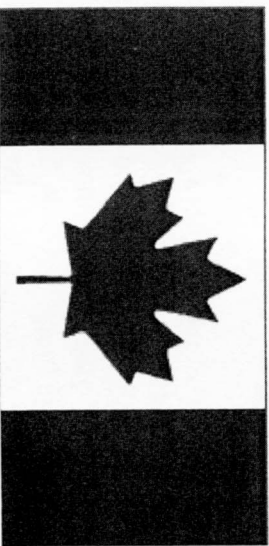
What about separation of Church and state? Is it right for us to vote according to our religious beliefs?

The Second Vatican Council teaches that as Christian “citizens among citizens... everywhere and always (we) have to seek the justice of the kingdom of God.”⁶ We must seek that justice when we vote.

Our activities in the Church and in the state are distinct, but we remain the same Christian people whatever we do. We belong both to Christ and to Canada—and we must not separate ourselves from either when we vote.

What moral judgements has the Church made that affect my vote in Canada today?

The Church has many teachings about social justice, solidarity with our fellow citizens, the common good and human rights. We must take all of these into account. But two basic issues stand out in Canada today: the right to life and the status of marriage and family.



Why is the right to life the most important issue in deciding my vote?

The most basic of all our rights is the right to life — the right from which all other rights flow. Without life, no other right can be enjoyed. Any threat to the right to life, then, is a threat to all our rights.



Any threat to the right to life not only puts human beings at risk of being killed, but also “is a threat capable, in the end, of jeopardizing the very meaning of democratic co-existence.”⁷ Pope John Paul II warns in the Gospel of Life.

This is because “the inalienable right to life of every innocent human individual is a *constitutive element of a civil society and its legislation*.... The moment... (the) law deprives a category of human beings of the protection which civil legislation ought to accord them, the state is denying the equality of all before the law. When the state does not place its power at the service of the rights of each citizen, and in particular the more vulnerable, the very foundations of a state based on law are undermined....”⁸

Why are marriage and family policies also very important?

Pope John Paul II wrote that, “a family policy must be the basis and driving force of all social policies.”⁹ This is simply because the family is “the original cell of social life.”¹⁰ Therefore, “the importance of the family for the life and well-being of society entails a particular responsibility for society to support and strengthen marriage and the family. Civil authority should consider it a grave duty ‘to acknowledge the true nature of the family, to protect and foster them, to safeguard public morality and domestic prosperity.’”¹¹

So what do I look for in a candidate and party?

First, we must vote for candidates and parties that uphold the right to life for all Canadians and for all human beings everywhere.

Second, we must vote for candidates and parties who recognize that a family is “a man and a woman united in marriage, together with their children”¹²; who will enact policies that recognize that children are the responsibility and duty first and foremost of their parents and not of the state; and who will enact policies that assist and do not hamper parents in raising their children.

1. CCC #2240
2. CCC #2239
3. GS #75
4. GS #76
5. CCC #2246
6. AA #7
7. EV #18
8. CCC #2273

9. EV #90
10. CCC #2207
11. CCC #2210
12. CCC #2202
13. Bernard Haering, C.Ss.R., *The Law of Christ*, Vol. II pp. 513-514
14. Davis, *Moral and Pastoral Theology*, vol.2., p. 90