



GOALS FOR POLITICAL LIFE

[From *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship* no. 90]

“Catholic teaching challenges voters and candidates, citizens and elected officials, to consider the moral and ethical dimensions of public policy issues. In light of ethical principles, we bishops offer the following policy goals that we hope will guide Catholics as they form their consciences and reflect on the moral dimensions of their public choices. ...

- Address the preeminent requirement to protect the weakest in our midst—innocent unborn children—by restricting and bringing to an end the destruction of unborn children through abortion.
- Keep our nation from turning to violence to address fundamental problems—a million abortions each year to deal with unwanted pregnancies, euthanasia and assisted suicide to deal with the burdens of illness and disability, the destruction of human embryos in the name of research, the use of the death penalty to combat crime, and imprudent resort to war to address international disputes.
- Define the central institution of marriage as a union between one man and one woman, and provide better support for family life morally, socially, and economically, so that our nation helps parents raise their children with respect for life, sound moral values, and an ethic of stewardship and responsibility.
- Achieve comprehensive immigration reform that secures our borders, treats immigrant workers fairly, offers an earned path to citizenship, respects the rule of law, and addresses the factors that compel people to leave their own countries.
- Help families and children overcome poverty: ensuring access to and choice in education, as well as decent work at fair, living wages and adequate assistance for the vulnerable in our nation, while also helping to overcome widespread hunger and poverty around the world, especially in the areas of development assistance, debt relief, and international trade.
- Provide health care for the growing number of people without it, while respecting human life, human dignity, and religious freedom in our health care system.
- Continue to oppose policies that reflect prejudice, hostility toward immigrants, religious bigotry, and other forms of discrimination.
- Encourage families, community groups, economic structures, and government to work together to overcome poverty, pursue the common good, and care for creation, with full respect for religious groups and their right to address social needs in accord with their basic moral convictions.
- Establish and comply with moral limits on the use of military force—examining for what purposes it may be used, under what authority, and at what human cost—and work for a “responsible transition” to end the war in Iraq.
- Join with others around the world to pursue peace, protect human rights and religious liberty, and advance economic justice and care for creation.”