



ROMAN CATHOLIC
DIOCESE
OF CHARLESTON

OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

Jan. 23, 2024

My dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

As the time for the primary elections is drawing near, I wanted to offer you some words of encouragement and guidance. In your considerations, I ask that you rely on the Church's teachings, traditions and doctrines.

As Catholics in the United States, we have an obligation to participate in civic life, and this includes voting. *The Catechism of the Catholic Church* states, "It is the duty of citizens to contribute along with the civil authorities to the good of society in a spirit of truth, justice, solidarity, and freedom ... Submission to authority and co-responsibility for the common good make it morally obligatory to pay taxes, to exercise the right to vote, and to defend one's country" (2239-2240).

In considering the common good, we must uphold and protect the dignity of every human person, created in the image and likeness of God, from conception to natural death. We must be led with well-formed consciences in electing leaders that will pass life-affirming legislation and enact laws that uphold the family — the cornerstone of society.

It is tempting during election years for some to make politics or parties a central part of his or her identity. For many in our world, politics take the place of religion, and this is where we can become polarized or led astray. I urge you to lean on the Holy Spirit and the Church at all times.

Remember, when we cast a vote that we have an opportunity to act as witnesses of the Church's goodness and beauty. Let us deepen our knowledge of the faith and cling to the most holy sacraments so that it increases our love of Jesus Christ and his bride. Then, can we truly give to Caesar what is Caesar's and to God what is God's.

We have a duty to make Christ the King of our lives, to remember that he reigns over our nation, world and universe. Enthroned in your heart. Under his divine leadership there is no fear, division or uncertainty, only eternal love, unity and right order.

I pray for you, and I thank you for voting during this primary season.

In Christ's love,

Most Rev. Jacques Fabre-Jeune, CS
Bishop of Charleston