

OPENING REMARKS

In August 2024, approximately fifty social justice ministers gathered at St. Anthony Parish for the retreat. It was endorsed by the Archdiocese of Portland, Oregon.

Yohan Garcia, Catholic Social Teaching Education Manager, Secretariat of Justice and Peace for the USCCB spoke at the retreat. This is summary of his original presentation Faithful Citizens Retreat and additional slides at the end.

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MISSIONARY DISCIPLES

Faithful Citizens

Retreat

Archdiocese of Portland, Oregon
August 9-10, 2024

Yohan Garcia
Catholic Social Teaching Education Manager
Secretariat of Justice and Peace
United States Conference of Catholic Bishops



Called to a Journey of Transformation

Jeremiah's Call from God. ⁴ The word of the LORD came to me, saying:

⁵ Before I formed you in the womb I knew you,
and before you were born I consecrated you.

I appointed you as a prophet to the nations.

⁶ Then I replied, "Ah, Lord GOD! You must be aware that I am not skilled in the art of speaking. I am only a young boy." ⁷ But the LORD said:

Do not say, "I am only a young boy."

You will go to whomever I send you,
and you will speak whatever I command you.

⁸ Do not be afraid of them,
for I am with you to deliver you,
says the LORD.

⁹ Then the LORD stretched forth his hand and touched my mouth, and he said to me:
Behold, I have placed my words into your mouth.

¹⁰ This day I have established you
over nations and kingdoms,
to uproot and to pull down,
to destroy and to demolish,
to build and to plant.

Jeremiah 1:4-10



A Journey of Transformation

1. From Activism to Discipleship
2. From Evangelization to Faithful Citizenship
3. From Individualism to Eucharist



Image:
United States
Conference of Catholic
Bishops

Becoming Missionary Disciples

“A true missionary, who never ceases to be a disciple, knows that Jesus walks with him, speaks to him, breathes with him, works with him. He senses Jesus alive with him in the midst of the missionary enterprise.”

– Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, no. 266



Rooted in:



Relationship with God

Sacred Scripture

Sacramental Life

Encountering the other



Community



Continuous formation



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. ***Gifts of the Spirit.*** What gifts have you been given? How are you called to use those gifts to benefit others?
2. ***Responding to God's call.*** Who are you called to be? What are you called to do with your life?
3. ***Mission in the world.*** What is the mission of the Church? What is your role in carrying it out? To what are you commissioned?
4. ***In your opinion,*** what is missionary discipleship?



**Baptism: Incorporated into Christ's Body,
Sent on Christ's Mission**

**Confirmation: Strengthened by the Spirit,
Called to Action**

**Eucharist: Body of Christ,
Broken for the World**



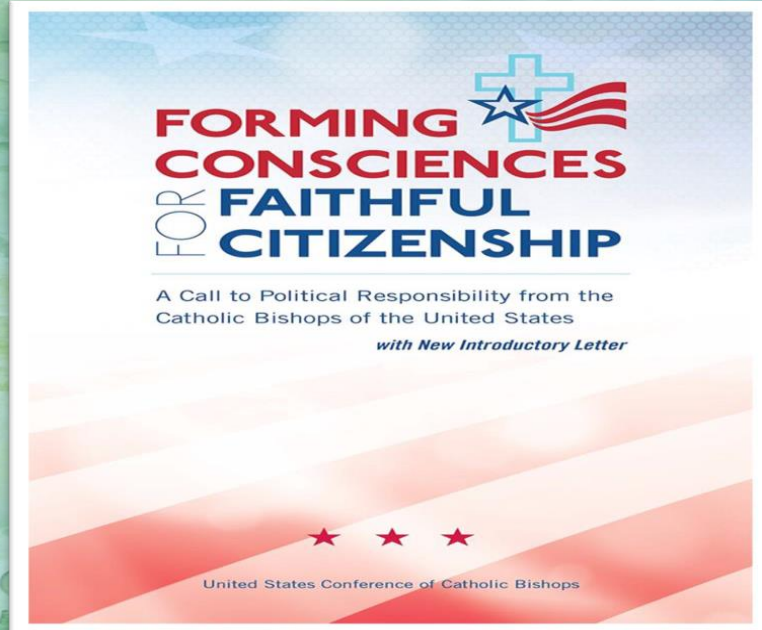
Photo St. Juan Diego by John Kingery



We must go out these doors and
proclaim the Gospel.
- Pope Francis



Becoming Faithful Citizens



“We need to participate for the common good. Sometimes we hear: a good Catholic is not interested in politics. This is not true: good Catholics immerse themselves in politics by offering the best of themselves so that the leader can govern.”
– Pope Francis, Morning Meditation, Sep. 16, 2013



- ❑ In the Catholic Tradition, responsible citizenship is a virtue, and participation in political life is a moral obligation” (FCFC, no. 13).
- ❑ “Even those who cannot vote have the right to have their voices heard on issues that affect their lives and the common good” (FCFC, no. 16).
- ❑ “Prudence shapes and informs our ability to deliberate over available alternatives, to determine what is most fitting to a specific context, and to act decisively” (FCFC, no. 19).
- ❑ “In this statement, we bishops do not intend to tell Catholics for whom or against whom to vote” (FCFC, no. 7).



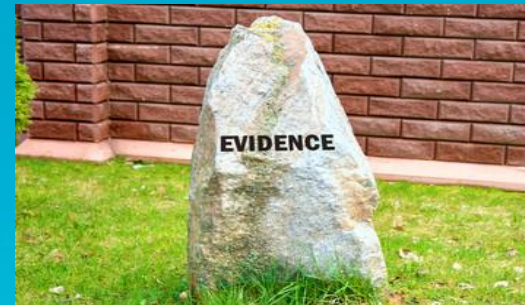
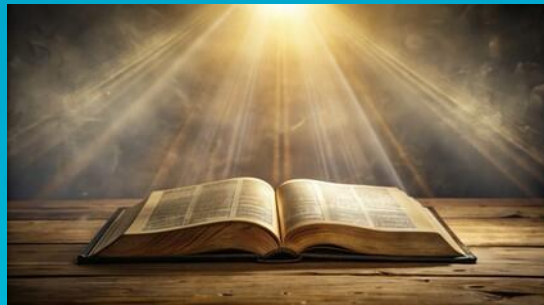
The Process of Conscience Formation

Approaching issues with an **openness** to seek the truth.

Studying **Sacred Scripture** and the **teaching** of the Church.

Examining facts and background information.

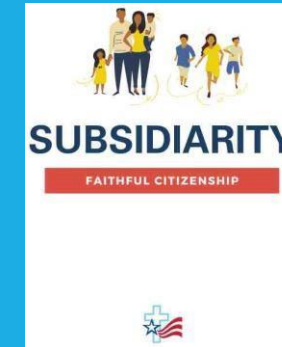
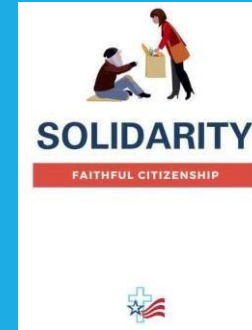
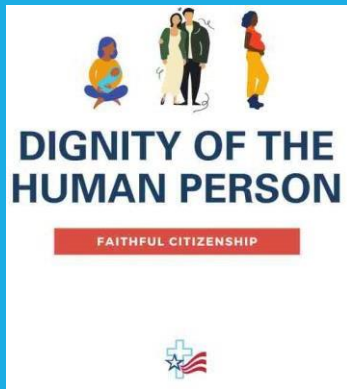
Prayerful reflection.



All photos Adobe Stock



The Catholic Social Teaching Guiding Principles of Faithful Citizenship



Images: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. **How might the Holy Spirit be moving you to join with others to respond to problems in your family, neighborhood, or community?**
2. **What issues or injustices have I felt drawn to work on in my community?**
3. In the past, **how have I engaged or disengaged in efforts to address issues I care about**, including through engagement in the political process as a faithful citizen?
4. **What has drawn me** towards or away from engagement?



Do's and Don'ts of Faithful Citizenship

Do:

- ❑ Address the moral and human dimensions of public issues.
- ❑ Share Church teaching on human life, human rights, and justice and peace.
- ❑ Apply Catholic values to legislation and public issues.
- ❑ Conduct a non-partisan voter registration drive on church property.
- ❑ Check with your diocesan attorney if you have any questions about what is appropriate.



Don'ts:

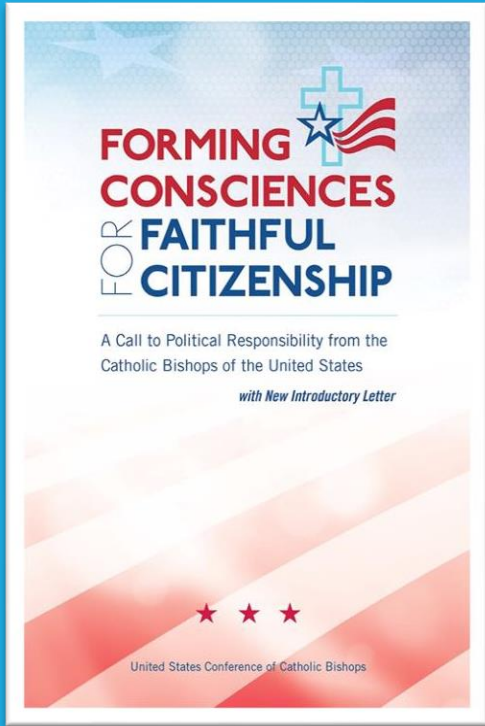
- ❑ Endorse or oppose candidates for political office.
- ❑ Distribute partisan campaign literature under church auspices.
- ❑ Arrange for groups to work for a candidate for public office.
- ❑ Invite only selected candidates to address your church-sponsored group.
- ❑ Conduct voter registration slated toward one party.



What Does the Church Say About Catholic Social Teaching in the Public Square?

- ❑ A consistent ethic of life should guide all Catholic engagement in political life. This Catholic ethic neither treats all issues as morally equivalent nor reduces Catholic teaching to one or two issues. It anchors the Catholic commitment to defend human life and other human rights, from conception until natural death, in the fundamental obligation to respect the dignity of every human being as a child of God.
- ❑ Catholic voters should use Catholic teaching to examine candidates' positions on issues and should consider candidates' integrity, philosophy, and performance.
- ❑ It is important for all citizens "to see beyond party politics, to analyze campaign rhetoric critically, and to choose their political leaders according to principle, not party affiliation or mere self-interest" (USCCB, Living the Gospel of Life, no. 33).





“As Catholics, we are led to raise questions for political life other than those that concentrate on individual, material well-being. Our focus is not on party affiliation, ideology, economics, or even competence and capacity to perform duties, as important as such issues are. Rather, we focus on what protects or threatens **the dignity of every human life.**

– FCFC no. 91



Our Catholic Response to Polarization

Pope Francis' invitation

“By approaching and making himself present, [the Good Samaritan] crossed all cultural and historical barriers. Jesus concludes the parable by saying:

‘Go and do likewise’ (Lk 10:37). In other words, he challenges us to put aside all differences and, in the face of suffering, to draw near to others with no questions asked.



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1. When have I presumed others' intentions or experiences before even hearing their stories or experiences?**
- 2. When have I valued my political affiliation or party more than my identity as a disciple of Christ who is called to model love and charity, even in civil discourse?**
- 3. How is Christ calling me to strive to recognize the human dignity of someone with whom I disagree— even passionately?**



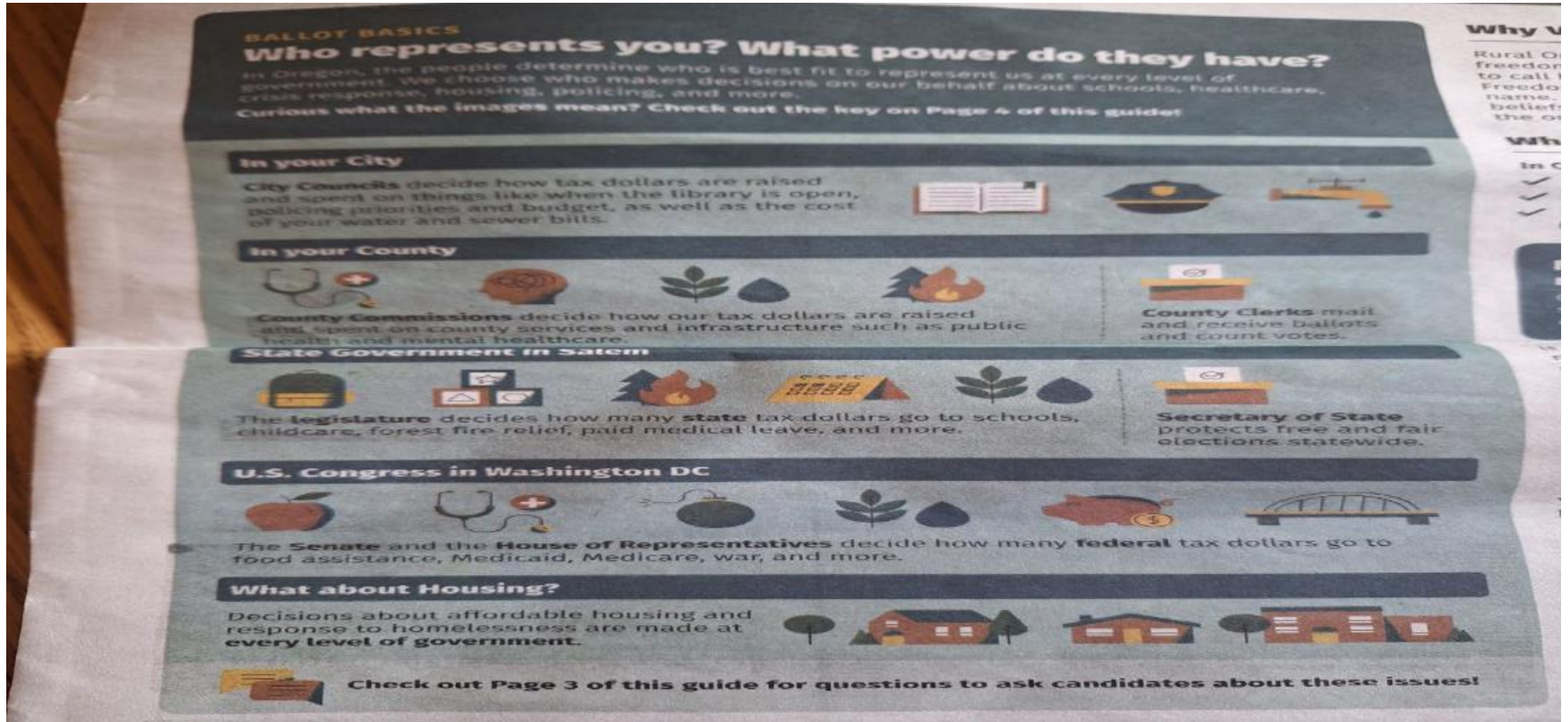
DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1. What perspectives on issues impacting our local and global communities elicit strong negative reactions in me? What is at the root of that feeling or why do I feel the way I do?**
- 2. How might public policies and laws be different if the moral principles from Faithful Citizenship were used as a basis for political decisions?**
- 3. What advice might you give to a friend who is trying to decide between two candidates, neither of which fully shares the Church's commitment to the dignity of the human.**



Know about representation and role.

Small Town Action For a New Democracy rop.org



Know about representation and role.





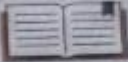


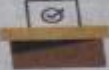





Small Town Action For a New Democracy rop.org

**Hey neighbor!
What's on your mind?**

What issues do you most want politicians to address?

Rural Oregon deserves a seat at the table wherever decisions are being made about us. That's why this guide connects the dots directly between the issues we care about and the local elected officials we're voting for on **November 5th** who have power to help us make our communities work for all of us.

Find the images you care about most throughout this guide and see which elected positions make key decisions about each of them!

Childcare 	Food 	Forest Fire Response 	Healthcare 
Healthy Environment 	Housing 	Law Enforcement 	Libraries 
Mental Health 	Paid Leave 	Right to Vote 	Roads and Bridges 
Schools 	Social Security 	War 	Water and Sewer 

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FINAL PRAYER



Image:
United States
Conference of Catholic
Bishops

“I believe in Politics as a tool for transforming the lives of our brothers and sister.

A Politics based on dialogue, never losing sight of the common good, the true and primary objective. ...

Political leadership must place the common good before any self interests by serving the people and not using the people....

This kind of Politics, with these characteristics, is the only antidote to corruption, polarization, and war.”

**THIS IS WHAT I ASK FOR
IN THE NAME OF GOD.**

AMEN

**POPE FRANCIS, “I AM ASKING IN THE NAME OF GOD”, (IMAGE, NEW YORK, 2023),
CHAPTER 4, PP 33, 43)**



THANKS

Thanks to Yohan Garcia, USCCB for his presentation and help. A sincere thank you to Fr. John Henderson pastor, Danny Rauda, and the St. Anthony Catholic Church for their hospitality. My appreciation to all the other attendees. All are welcome and I felt that way.

Finally, thanks and love to Ann, my caring and compassionate wife of 32 years. She is the Saint, and I am the Sinner.

