



Mary's Notebook

October-November 2008

www.legionofmarytidewater.com

Special Election Edition

Issue 29

Section	Page
Front Page	1
News & Events	2
Handbook Study	3
Election Article	4-9
Election Article	10-13
Pres Voter Guide	14

Voter Education Resources

The Virginia Catholic Conference now has election resources available online at

<http://www.vacatholic.org/ElectionResources2008TitlePage.htm>, please consider reviewing these resources.

Prayers Needed

Prayer is, among other things, a school for hope. In a sense, even when no one listens to a person's needs, God still listens. If you or someone you care about are in need of prayers, e-mail webmaster@legionofmarytidewater.com - we'll add you to our prayer list. [CC p.2]

U.S. Elections November 4th

On Tuesday, November 4th, Americans will vote cast votes that will help determine the future of the country. Candidates for office have different views on life, family, and freedom of religion. Catholics, and all voters, are encouraged to educate themselves on these issues and to consider them when voting. For an excellent Catholic voter guide and election information, please visit www.priestsforlife.org/elections.

Voting For Life

By Chris Miller

We do not have exact data on the number of unborn U. S. children murdered in the womb, but we do know that the number is over 50 million, with an estimated 48.6 million being performed after *Roe v Wade*. With nearly 1 million children in the U.S. alone being killed by abortion every year, and with many countries around the world facing increased pressure to follow the U.S.'s extreme abortion policy, the need to take a stand to protect the lives of innocents is present.

Across the nation, many elections will be held between candidates with different views on abortion. While individual voters need to make their own decisions on who to vote for and how to assess the gravity of various issues, all voters have a duty to consider life as an important issue in deciding their vote.

Ceteris paribus, whenever a pro-life candidate runs against a pro-choice candidate, Catholics, and all other voters, have a moral duty to vote for the pro-life candidate.

News and Events

Please Pray For:

Pope's Prayer Intentions

October

Pope Benedict's general prayer intention is: That the Synod of Bishops may help bishops and theologians as well as catechists and pastoral workers engaged in the service of the Word of God transmit with courage the truth of the faith in communion with the entire Church.

Pope Benedict's mission prayer intention is: That in this month dedicated to the missions, through the promotional activities of the Pontifical Missionary Works and other organisms, the Christian may feel the need to participate in the Church's universal mission with prayer, sacrifice and concrete help.

November

Pope Benedict's general prayer intention is: That the testimony of love offered by the Saints, may fortify Christians in their service to God and neighbor, imitating Christ who came not to be served but to serve.

Pope Benedict's mission prayer intention is: That Christian communities in Asia, contemplating the face of Christ, may find the most suitable way to announce Him in full fidelity to the Gospel to the peoples of that vast continent so rich in culture and ancient forms of spirituality.

Also Please Pray for:

The repose of the soul of the father of Fr. Thomas Vander Woude, who died on Monday, the feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Please also pray for Fr. Vander Woude, Pastor of Queen of Apostles Catholic Church and a Legion priest, and the Vander Woude family.

Please pray for the repose of the soul of Bill O'Donnell, an active member of the Piedmont Curia.

Please pray for the repose of the soul of the father of Mary Bowes, Ivan Andrus

Please pray for the repose of the soul of the mother of Andy Tkac, who passed away on Friday, 26 Sep. Andy resigned as treasurer of the Rapahannock Curia to take care of his mother.

Election is November 4th

Election day is Tuesday, November 4th. In many states it is possible to vote by absentee ballot before that date. It is recommended that voters who may be out-of-town or sick that day should vote absentee. This is especially true for older voters, voters who travel frequently for their job, and voters with small kids at home.

Handbook Study

NO POLITICS IN THE LEGION

According to the Handbook:

No legionary body shall allow its influence or its premises to be used for any political purpose or to aid any political party.

This statement is not one that says that politics are bad, nor one that objects to political parties. Rather, it is a statement that helps to define the fundamental charism of the Legion of Mary. The Legion of Mary does not seek to collect money for the poor, to protect the lives of the unborn, to create a more just society, or to raise the morality of an area as its immediate goal.

The Legion of Mary works by the belief that it is of no value to gain the world, but to lose a soul. It seeks not to make, convince, force, or persuade people to make the right choices in life – rather it seeks to bring each soul to God, and trusts in the Holy Spirit to renew that soul.

Many organizations work to improve the outsides of people. To make them vote for the ‘right’ candidate, support the ‘right’ party, or do the ‘right’ thing. The Legion of Mary works with the inside of a person. To help them renew their soul and have a closer relationship with their mother and with their God.

It trusts that by cleaning the insides of a person, that the outsides will also be clean.

The Legion of Mary continues to work to bring people towards God, through His holy spouse, mother, and daughter. As a soul approaches God, that soul will approach all holiness and the outsides will also begin to conform to God’s will.

If the Legion of Mary were to involve itself in politics, it would appear to make great progress, but the real progress made would only be a shadow of the true progress that is currently being made by the Legion. First, the very existence of politics in the Legion would turn off many of the people the Legion is trying to reach. Secondly, advocating for candidates brings with it the risk of compromise on areas where the candidate does not agree with the faith. Thirdly, the election cycle of wins and losses, down periods and high-stress periods leads to erratic effort whereby gains from one month are not followed-up on the next, and contacts are lost and volunteer levels would be high right before elections and low the rest of the year. Fourthly, such action would cause the Legion to not be allowed to be supervised by a priest. The important role of the priest in the Legion makes it impossible to have a Legion without clergy – as the Legion is the very extension of the priest.

by Chris Miller

Little Murder's

by Denver Archbishop Charles Chaput

I want to do three things with my time tonight. First, Terry asked me to talk a bit about my book, "Render Unto Caesar," and I'm happy to do that. Second, I want to talk about some of the lessons we can already draw from this year's election. And third, I want to talk about the mission of ENDOW.

Before I do any of that though, I need to say what a friend of mine calls my "Litany to the IRS." Here it is.

I'm not here tonight to tell you how to vote. I don't want to do that, I won't do that, and I don't use code language -- so you don't need to spend any time looking for secret political endorsements.



I plan to speak candidly, but I can only do that if you remember that I'm here as an author and private citizen. I'm not speaking for the Holy See, or the American bishops, or any other bishop, or even officially for the Archdiocese of Denver. So the things I say tonight are my personal views, nothing more. I think they're pretty solidly grounded in Catholic teaching and the heart of the Church, but it's your task as Catholics and citizens to listen, evaluate and then act as you judge best.

As adults, each of us needs to form a strong Catholic conscience. Then we need to follow

that conscience when we vote. And then we need to take responsibility for the consequences of the vote we cast. Nobody can do that for us. That's why really knowing and living our Catholic faith is so important. It's the only reliable guide we have for acting in the public square as disciples of Jesus Christ.

So let's talk for a few minutes about "Render Unto Caesar." When people ask me about the



book, the questions usually fall into three categories. Why did I write it? What does the book say? And what does the book mean for each of us as individual

Catholics? This last question will be a good doorway into talking about the 2008 election, but let's start at the beginning first. Why did I write this book, now?

One answer is simple. A friend asked me to do it. Back in 2004, a young attorney I know ran for public office as a prolife Democrat. He nearly won in a heavily Republican district. But he also discovered how hard it can be to raise money, run a campaign and stay true to your Catholic convictions, all at the same time. After the election he asked me to put my thoughts about faith and politics into a form

that other young Catholics could use who were thinking about a political vocation -- and it really is a "vocation."

That's where the idea started. But I also had another reason for doing the book. Frankly, I just got tired of hearing outsiders and insiders tell Catholics to keep quiet about our religious and moral views in the big public debates that involve all of us as a society. That's a kind of bullying, and I don't think Catholics should accept it.

Another reason for writing the book is that when I looked around for a single source that explains the Catholic political vocation in an easy, authentic and engaging way, it just didn't exist. So I thought I might as well try to write it, because a friend told me it would "practically write itself."

Unfortunately, writing a new book is a bit like childbirth. You forget that it hurts until you're living the labor. I didn't remember the experience of my first book until after I signed the contract with Doubleday for my second.

So what does the book say? I think the message of "Render Unto Caesar" can be condensed into a few basic points.

Here's the first point. For many years, studies have shown that Americans have a very poor sense of history, and that's very dangerous, because as Thucydides and Machiavelli and Thomas Jefferson have all said, history matters. It matters because the past shapes the present, and the present shapes the future. If American Catholics don't know history, and especially their own history as Catholics, then somebody else -- and usually somebody not very friendly -- will create their history for them.

Let me put it another way. A man with amnesia has no future and no present because he can't remember his past. The past is a man's anchor in experience and reality. Without it, he may as well be floating in space. In like manner, if we American Catholics don't remember and defend our religious history as a believing people, nobody else will, and then we won't have a future because we won't have a past. If we don't know how the Church worked with or struggled against political rulers in the past, then we can't think clearly about the relations between Church and state today.

Here's the second point. America is not a secular state. As historian Paul Johnson once said, America was "born Protestant." It has uniquely and deeply religious roots. Obviously it has no established Church, and it has non-sectarian public institutions. It also has plenty of room for both believers and non-believers. But the United States was never intended to be a "secular" country in the radical modern sense. Nearly all the Founders were either Christian or at least religion-friendly. And all of our public institutions and all of our ideas about the human person are based in a religiously shaped vocabulary. So if we cut God out of our public life, we cut the foundation out from under our national ideals.

Here's the third point. We need to be very forceful in defending what the words in our political vocabulary really mean. Words are important because they shape our thinking, and our thinking drives our actions. When we subvert the meaning of words like "the common good" or "conscience" or "community" or "family," we undermine the language that sustains our thinking about the

law. Dishonest language leads to dishonest debate and bad laws.

Here's an example. We need to remember that tolerance is not a Christian virtue, and it's never an end in itself. In fact, tolerating grave evil within a society is itself a form of evil. Likewise, democratic pluralism does not mean that Catholics should be quiet in public about serious moral issues because of some misguided sense of good manners. A healthy democracy requires vigorous moral debate to survive. Real pluralism demands that people of strong beliefs will advance their convictions in the public square -- peacefully, legally and respectfully, but energetically and without embarrassment. Anything less is bad citizenship and a form of theft from the public conversation.

Here's the fourth point. When Jesus tells the Pharisees and Herodians in the Gospel of Matthew (22:21) to "render unto the Caesar the things that are Caesar's and to God the things that are God's," he sets the framework for how we should think about religion and the state even today. Caesar does have rights. We owe civil authority our respect and appropriate obedience. But that obedience is limited by what belongs to God. Caesar is not God. Only God is God, and the state is subordinate and accountable to God for its treatment of human persons, all of whom were created by God. Our job as believers is to figure out what things belong to Caesar, and what things belong to God -- and then to put those things in right order in our own lives, and in our relations with others.

So having said all this, what does the book mean, in practice, for each of us as individual Catholics? It means that we each have a duty to study and grow in our faith, guided by the

teaching of the Church. It also means that we have a duty to be politically engaged. Why? Because politics is the exercise of power, and the use of power always has moral content and human consequences.

As Christians, we can't claim to love God and then ignore the needs of our neighbors. Loving God is like loving a spouse. A husband may tell his wife that he loves her, and of course that's very beautiful. But she'll still want to see the evidence in his actions. Likewise if we claim to be "Catholic," we need to prove it by our behavior. And serving other people by working for justice and charity in our nation's political life is one of the very important ways we do that.

The "separation of Church and state" does not mean -- and it can never mean -- separating our Catholic faith from our public witness, our political choices and our political actions. That kind of separation would require Christians to deny who we are; to repudiate Jesus when he commands us to be "leaven in the world" and to "make disciples of all nations." That kind of separation steals the moral content of a society. It's the equivalent of telling a married man that he can't act married in public. Of course, he can certainly do that, but he won't stay married for long.

I began work on "Render Unto Caesar" in July 2006. I made the final changes to the text in November 2007. That's a long time before anyone was nominated for president, and it was Doubleday, not I, that set the book's release date for August 2008. So -- unlike Prof. Douglas Kmiec's recent book, "Can a Catholic Support Him? Asking the Big Question about Barack Obama," which argues a Catholic case for Senator Obama -- I wrote "Render Unto

Caesar" with no interest in supporting or attacking any candidate or any political party.

The goal of "Render Unto Caesar" was simply to describe what an authentic Catholic approach to political life looks like, and then to encourage Americans Catholics to live it.

Prof. Kmiec has a strong record of service to the Church and the nation in his past. He served in the Reagan administration, and he supported Mitt Romney's campaign for president before switching in a very public way to Barack Obama earlier this year. In his own book he quotes from "Render Unto Caesar" at some length. In fact, he suggests that his reasoning and mine are "not far distant on the moral inquiry necessary in the election of 2008." Unfortunately, he either misunderstands or misuses my words, and he couldn't be more mistaken.

I believe that Senator Obama, whatever his other talents, is the most committed "abortion-rights" presidential candidate of either major party since the Roe v. Wade abortion decision in 1973. Despite what Prof. Kmiec suggests, the party platform Senator Obama runs on this year is not only aggressively "pro-choice;" it has also removed any suggestion that killing an unborn child might be a regrettable thing. On the question of homicide against the unborn child -- and let's remember that the great Lutheran pastor Dietrich Bonhoeffer explicitly called abortion "murder" -- the Democratic platform that emerged from Denver in August 2008 is clearly anti-life.

Prof. Kmiec argues that there are defensible motives to support Senator Obama. Speaking for myself, I do not know any proportionate reason that could outweigh more than 40 million unborn children killed by abortion and

the many millions of women deeply wounded by the loss and regret abortion creates.

To suggest -- as some Catholics do -- that Senator Obama is this year's "real" pro-life candidate requires a peculiar kind of self-hypnosis, or moral confusion, or worse. To portray the 2008 Democratic Party presidential ticket as the preferred "pro-life" option is to subvert what the word "pro-life" means. Anyone interested in Senator Obama's record on abortion and related issues should simply read Prof. Robert George's essay of earlier this week, "Obama's Abortion Extremism," at thepublicdiscourse.com. It says everything that needs to be said.

Of course, these are simply my personal views as an author and private citizen. But I'm grateful to Prof. Kmiec for quoting me in his book and giving me the reason to speak so clearly about our differences. I think his activism for Senator Obama, and the work of Democratic-friendly groups like Catholics United and Catholics in Alliance for the Common Good, have done a disservice to the Church, confused the natural priorities of Catholic social teaching, undermined the progress pro-lifers have made, and provided an excuse for some Catholics to abandon the abortion issue instead of fighting within their parties and at the ballot box to protect the unborn.

And here's the irony. None of the Catholic arguments advanced in favor of Senator Obama are new. They've been around, in one form or another, for more than 25 years. All of them seek to "get beyond" abortion, or economically reduce the number of abortions, or create a better society where abortion won't be necessary. All of them involve a misuse of the seamless garment imagery in Catholic

social teaching. And all of them, in practice, seek to contextualize, demote and then counterbalance the evil of abortion with other important but less foundational social issues.

This is a great sadness. As Chicago's Cardinal Francis George said recently, too many Americans have "no recognition of the fact that children continue to be killed [by abortion], and we live therefore, in a country drenched in blood. This can't be something you start playing off pragmatically against other issues."

Meanwhile, the basic human rights violation at the heart of abortion -- the intentional destruction of an innocent, developing human life -- is wordsmithed away as a terrible crime that just can't be fixed by the law. I don't believe that. I think that argument is a fraud. And I don't think any serious believer can accept that argument without damaging his or her credibility. We still have more than a million abortions a year, and we can't blame them all on Republican social policies. After all, it was a Democratic president, not a Republican, who vetoed the partial birth abortion ban -- twice.

The truth is that for some Catholics, the abortion issue has never been a comfortable cause. It's embarrassing. It's not the kind of social justice they like to talk about. It interferes with their natural political alliances. And because the homicides involved in abortion are "little murders" -- the kind of private, legally protected murders that kill conveniently unseen lives -- it's easy to look the other way.

The one genuinely new quality to Catholic arguments for Senator Obama is their packaging. Just as the abortion lobby fostered "Catholics for a Free Choice" to challenge

Catholic teaching on abortion more than two decades ago, so supporters of Senator Obama have done something similar in seeking to neutralize the witness of bishops and the pro-life movement by offering a "Catholic" alternative to the Church's priority on sanctity of life issues. I think it's an intelligent strategy. I also think it's wrong and often dishonest.

It's curious that nobody seems to worry about the "separation of Church and state," or religious interference in the public square, when the religious voices that speak up support a certain kind of candidate. In his book, Prof. Kmiec complains about the agenda and influence of what he terms RFPs -- Republican Faith Partisans. But he also seems to pay them the highest kind of compliment: imitation. If RFPs are bad, is it unreasonable to assume that DFPs -- Democratic Faith Partisans -- are equally dangerous?

As I suggest throughout "Render Unto Caesar," it's important for Catholics to be people of faith who pursue politics to achieve justice; not people of politics who use and misuse faith to achieve power. I have no doubt that Prof. Kmiec belongs to the former group. But I believe his arguments finally serve the latter.

For 35 years I've watched thousands of good Catholic laypeople, clergy and religious struggle to recover some form of legal protection for the unborn child. The abortion lobby has fought every compromise and every legal restriction on abortion, every step of the way. Apparently they believe in their convictions more than some of us Catholics believe in ours. And I think that's an indictment of an entire generation of American Catholic leadership.

The abortion conflict has never simply been about repealing Roe v. Wade. And the many pro-lifers I know live a much deeper kind of discipleship than “single issue” politics. But they do understand that the cornerstone of Catholic social teaching is protecting human life from conception to natural death. They do understand that every other human right depends on the right to life. They did not and do not and will not give up -- and they won't be lied to.

So I think that people who claim that the abortion struggle is “lost” as a matter of law, or that supporting an outspoken defender of legal abortion is somehow “pro-life,” are not just wrong; they're betraying the witness of every person who continues the work of defending the unborn child. And I hope they know how to explain that, because someday they'll be required to.

Before I conclude and we go to questions, let me say just a couple of things about ENDOW. When you're a bishop, you meet a lot of very good people with very good ideas. You meet a lot fewer people who know how to make good ideas work, or who have the generosity, brains, stubbornness and endurance to lead and grow a good idea into a whole movement of good people who can make a much wider difference.

Betsy Considine, Marilyn Coors, Terry Polakovic and the other women who founded ENDOW are exactly that kind of leader. And the success of ENDOW is a testimony not just to their enthusiasm and hard work, but to yours.

ENDOW succeeds because its message for women is true. ENDOW succeeds because in forming women in the truth of Jesus Christ, it serves the Church and opens the door to the most powerful kind of renewal -- the kind that comes from a Christ-based friendship between husband and wife; the kind that comes from a family shaped by Christian love; the kind that comes from real Catholic leadership by lay and religious women in their communities, in business, in education, in medicine and in public life.

These are difficult times for our country. Even within our Church, the economy, the Iraq War, the life issues in general, and this election in particular, have created a deep spirit of conflict and anxiety. But I do believe Scripture when it tells us not to be afraid. God uses each of us to renew the world if we let him. The genius of women is their capacity to love; to blend talent, intelligence and energy with patience, understanding, respect for the sacredness of life and compassion for others.

That's the kind of leadership we need, in our communities of faith, in our public service and throughout our country. Whatever happens next month and in the years ahead, ENDOW will have a hand in sustaining and refreshing the heart of the Church. That's not a bad achievement for an organization so young. I'm proud of your witness, proud of what you've accomplished and very, very grateful for your service to the Church.

God bless you.



Voting with a Well-Formed Conscience:

A Letter from the Catholic Bishops of Virginia to the Faithful of Their Dioceses

October 2008

Every four years, widespread interest in the U.S. Presidential election provides a special opportunity for Catholics across our nation to make essential connections between the principles of their faith and many critical issues under debate. Mindful of this teaching moment, we were especially pleased to join our brother U.S. bishops last November in adopting *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship*, a statement on the baptismal calling we all share to participate in the political life of our country. We encourage you to read the entire statement, which can be viewed either at www.faithfulcitizenship.org or on the website of the Virginia Catholic Conference (www.vacatholic.org).

Through the Virginia Catholic Conference, we have also joined together with one voice to offer a variety of additional resources on faithful citizenship for all parishes in our two dioceses, most notably a video in which we explain seven key themes of Catholic social teaching, the duty to vote with a well-formed conscience, and opportunities for Virginia Catholics to help shape policy decisions through prayer and action. We now wish to supplement those resources with some further reflections about the right and responsibility to vote with a well-formed conscience.

Paragraph 7 of *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship* states,

In this statement, we bishops do not intend to tell Catholics for whom or against whom to vote. Our purpose is to help Catholics form their consciences in accordance with God's truth. We recognize that the responsibility to make choices in political life rests with each individual in light of a properly formed conscience, and that participation goes well beyond casting a vote in a particular election.

As this paragraph makes clear, the Church's role is to teach the truth that is revealed to us by Christ in Sacred Scripture and Tradition. This teaching is what we endorse, rather than candidates or political parties. And it is this teaching that should serve as the yardstick by which to measure candidates and party platforms.

Equipped with the Church's timeless truths, it is the responsibility of each individual to make the best voting decisions that he or she can, with the recognition that we live in a culture that does not fully embrace our values and are faced with flawed party platforms and candidates who do not share all of our policy goals. To ground those choices in a rightly formed conscience, paragraphs 40 and 41 of the bishops' *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship* statement offer an essential moral framework:

40. The consistent ethic of life provides a moral framework for principled Catholic engagement in political life and, rightly understood, 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, from conception until natural death, in the fundamental moral obligation to respect the dignity of every person as a child of God. It unites us as a "people of life and for life" (*Evangelium Vitae*, no. 6) pledged to build what Pope John Paul II called a "culture of life" (*Evangelium Vitae*, no. 77). This culture of life begins with the preeminent obligation to protect innocent life from direct attack and extends to defending life whenever it is threatened or diminished.

41. Catholic voters should use the framework of Catholic teaching to examine candidates' positions on issues affecting human life and dignity as well as issues of justice and peace, and they 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" (*Living the Gospel of Life*, no. 33).

This general framework makes clear that, to correctly form our consciences, we must recognize the importance of all issues affecting human rights and dignity – from the moment of conception until natural death and at every stage in between – and appreciate that such issues are not abstractions but rather realities that determine whether families thrive or struggle, whether individuals are respected or exploited, and even whether people live or die. At the same time, the proper formation of conscience also means discerning the differences in moral gravity among various issues. Disregarding the right to life

itself – the foundation upon which all other human rights are based and without which no other right could possibly exist – is more serious than any other human rights violation.

Once our consciences are correctly formed within this consistent and comprehensive moral framework, paragraphs 34 and 35 of the U.S. bishops' statement serve to provide specific guidance on evaluating candidates and weighing their many policy positions, especially when those positions involve intrinsically evil actions – that is, actions that are always incompatible with love of God and neighbor:

34. Catholics often face difficult choices about how to vote. This is why it is so important to vote according to a well-formed conscience that perceives the proper relationship among moral goods. A Catholic cannot vote for a candidate who takes a position in favor of an intrinsic evil, such as abortion or racism, if the voter's intent is to support that position. In such cases a Catholic would be guilty of formal cooperation in grave evil. At the same time, a voter should not use a candidate's opposition to an intrinsic evil to justify indifference or inattentiveness to other important moral issues involving human life and dignity.

35. There may be times when a Catholic who rejects a candidate's unacceptable position may decide to vote for that candidate for other morally grave reasons. Voting in this way would be permissible only for truly grave moral reasons, not to advance narrow interests or partisan preferences or to ignore a fundamental moral evil.

This guidance applies precisely to the question we hear most often from members of our two dioceses: "What if I reject a candidate's stance in favor of legalized abortion but wish to vote for that candidate for other reasons?" In assessing whether such reasons would justify such a decision, we first observe that such reasons would certainly need to be not only morally grave but also proportionately grave – that is, equally serious or even more serious than abortion. In other words, one would need to compare the gravity of abortion against the gravity of the other considerations. And making that comparison would necessarily involve examining just how serious abortion is in terms of its very nature and in terms of its impact on members of the human family. That means we must appreciate the difference in moral gravity between policies which are intrinsically unjust (*e.g.*, abortion, euthanasia, and the deliberate destruction of human embryos) and policies involving prudential judgments about which people of good will may disagree concerning various means of promoting economic

justice, public safety, and fair opportunities for every person. As paragraph 37 of the U.S. bishops' statement explains, "[T]he moral obligation to oppose intrinsically evil acts has a special claim on our consciences and our actions." Moreover, we must fully understand that so-called "abortion rights" deny the most fundamental human right (and hence all rights) to an entire class of people, and we must confront the almost incomprehensible fact that abortions extinguish the lives of nearly 4,000 children per day (and well over one million per year) in the United States alone.

In closing, we offer for your reflection one additional excerpt, from paragraph 38 of the November 2007 statement:

Pope Benedict XVI, in his recent reflection on the Eucharist as "the sacrament of charity," challenged all of us to adopt what he calls "a Eucharistic form of life." This means that the redeeming love we encounter in the Eucharist should shape our thoughts, our words, and our decisions, including those that pertain to the social order.

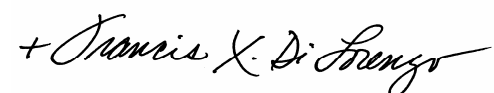
There is no more appropriate way to approach the formation of conscience and the many decisions we must make in our daily lives than by opening our mind and heart to the Lord in the Eucharist. When we receive Christ's Body and Blood with the proper disposition, we prepare the way for Him to transform us. Once we allow this transformation to take place, we are better able to discern the mind of Christ in all the moral judgments we must make.

As together we seek to exercise our civic responsibility as followers of Christ united in the Eucharist, let us pray for each other, for our Commonwealth, and for our country.

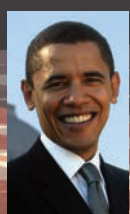
Faithfully Yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "+ Paul S. Loverde". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Most Reverend Paul S. Loverde
Bishop of Arlington

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "+ Francis X. DiLorenzo". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Most Reverend Francis X. DiLorenzo
Bishop of Richmond



Where Do the Candidates Stand on Key Issues?

A non-partisan guide to the positions
of the 2008 Presidential Candidates
on various issues of concern to the electorate.



BARACK OBAMA	KEY ISSUE	JOHN McCain
Supports <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-sponsor of the "Freedom of Choice Act" * • "I have consistently advocated for reproductive choice and will make preserving women's rights under Roe v. Wade a priority as President." <p>*Note: The "Freedom of Choice Act" is a bill that would invalidate virtually all state and federal limitations on abortion, including partial-birth abortion. **</p>	Roe V Wade	Opposes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Voted to oppose Roe v. Wade, the Supreme Court decision that allows abortion for any reason. • "...We would be better off by having Roe v. Wade return to the states...I don't believe the ...Court should be legislating in the way that they did on Roe v. Wade."
Opposes Ban <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "I am extremely concerned that [Gonzales v. Carhart*] will embolden state legislatures to enact further measures to restrict a women's right to choose, and that the conservative Supreme Court justices will look for other opportunities to erode Roe v. Wade." <p>*Note: Gonzales v. Carhart is the April 2007 Supreme Court decision upholding the constitutionality of the federal Partial-Birth Abortion Act.</p>	Partial Birth Abortion Ban <p>The partial-birth abortion procedure, used from the fifth month on, involves pulling a living baby feet-first out of the womb, except for the head, puncturing the skull and suctioning out the brain. The great majority of partial-birth abortions are performed on healthy babies of healthy mothers.</p>	Supports Ban <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Voted for the partial-Birth Abortion Ban Act. • "Today's Supreme Court ruling (in Gonzales v. Carhart*) is a victory for those who cherish the sanctity of life."
Supports <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Voted against legislation in the Illinois State Senate that prohibited taxpayer dollars from being used to pay for abortion. • His campaign has stated that he "does not support" the Hyde Amendment, which prohibits taxpayer funding of abortion through the Medicaid program. 	Taxpayer Funding of Abortion	Opposes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Voted in favor of the Hyde Amendment, which prohibits taxpayer funding of abortion through the Medicaid program. • Voted consistently against federal funding of abortion.
Opposes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Voted to block a bill that would have required an abortionist to notify at least one parent before performing an abortion on a minor girl from another state. 	Parental Notification Law	Supports <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Voted to support a bill that would have required an abortionist to notify at least one parent before performing an abortion on a minor girl from another state.
Opposed <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Voted three times against a bill in the Illinois State Senate that would have provided protection for babies who survive abortions equal to protection received by babies who are spontaneously born prematurely. 	Protecting Abortion Survivors	Supported <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Voted for legislation that provides protection for babies who survive abortions equal to protection received by babies who are spontaneously born prematurely.
Supports <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-sponsored a bill (S. 1520) in 2005 that would allow the cloning of human embryos to be used in research, but prohibit placing them in wombs. 	Human Cloning	Opposes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • His campaign website states that he "opposes the intentional creation of human embryos for research purposes."
Obama: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Voted in favor of funding embryonic stem cell research. • "Embryonic stem cells can obtain from a number of sources including in vitro fertilization...We should expand and accelerate research using these embryos..." 	Embryonic Stem Cell Research	McCain: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Voted in favor of funding embryonic stem cell research. • "I believe that skin stem cell research has every potential very soon of making that discussion [embryonic stem cell research] academic."
Obama: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Voted against confirming Chief Justice Roberts and Justice Alito. • "With one more vacancy on the Supreme Court, we could be looking at a majority hostile to a women's fundamental right to choose for the first time since Roe v. Wade. The next president may be asked to nominate that Supreme Court justice. That is what is at stake in this election." 	Judges	McCain: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Voted to confirm Chief Justice John Roberts and Justice Samuel Alito to the Supreme Court. • Pledged to appoint judges like John Roberts and the late William Rehnquist. • Believes that the moral authority of our judiciary depends on judicial self-restraint. He believes judges should strictly interpret the law, and not legislate.
Obama: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supports full civil unions that give same-sex couples equal legal rights and privileges as married couples. • Obama voted against the Federal Marriage Amendment, which would have defined marriage as between a man and a woman. 	Gay Marriage	McCain: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Believes that marriage must be protected as a sacred institution of a man and a woman. • Co-chaired the Arizona Marriage Protection Amendment campaign in 2006.
Obama: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "We need stronger enforcement on the border and at the workplace..." 	Immigration	McCain: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "As president, I will secure the border. Tight border security includes not just the entry and exit of people, but also the effective screening of cargo at our ports and other points of entry."
Obama: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Let me be clear: there is no military solution in Iraq, and there never was. The best way to protect our security and to pressure Iraq's leaders to resolve their civil war is to immediately begin to remove our combat troops. Not in six months or one year - now." 	Iraq	McCain: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "I do not want to keep our troops in Iraq a minute longer than necessary to secure our interests there. Our goal is an Iraq that can stand on its own as a democratic ally and a responsible force for peace in its neighborhood. Our goal is an Iraq that no longer needs American troops." • Strongly disagrees with those who advocate withdrawing American troops before Iraq has become capable of governing itself and safeguarding its people.
Obama: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "We had a situation surrounding Terri Schiavo...that eventually allowed Congress to interject itself into that decision-making process of the families. It wasn't something I was comfortable with, but it was not something that I stood on the floor and stopped. And I think that was a mistake." 	Terri Schiavo	McCain: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "It's an American tragedy and I hope that the next time we're presented with one of these situations we'll perhaps approach it in a more measured and reasoned fashion."