

# “AND UNTO GOD WHAT IS GOD’S”

AMERICAN CATHOLICS, POLITICAL  
CHALLENGES & MORAL RESPONSIBILITIES

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## PART I: HOW DO WE FORM OUR CONSCIENCE?

### 1. ‘LIVING THE GOSPEL OF LIFE’: A HIDDEN GEM

- a. Statement by USCCB (1998). Nearly 20 years ago – and very relevant.
- b. Subtitled, “A Challenge to American Catholics.”
- c. Available online: [www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/human-life-and-dignity/abortion/living-the-gospel-of-life.cfm](http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/human-life-and-dignity/abortion/living-the-gospel-of-life.cfm).
- d. Truly an important Church document – about which His Excellency Archbishop Charles Chaput said, “No other document ever issued by the American bishops on political responsibility has the clarity, coherence and force of *Living the Gospel of Life*.”<sup>1</sup> Unfortunately, as he adds, so few Catholics seem to know about it.
- e. Arch. Chaput offered that comment in his own excellent book, *Render Unto Caesar: Serving the Nation by Living our Catholic Faith in Political Life*. That was in 2004, and I’d surmise that not too many more American Catholics have read the USCCB’s *Living the Gospel of Life* – or for that matter, the Archbishop’s book. Let’s change that over the next month!

### 2. LIVING THE GOSPEL OF LIFE—OVERVIEW

- a. A Sainly Beginning:
  - i. Begins with the words of Saint Pope John Paul II, at the end of his 1995 visit to the United States:
  - ii. “Your country stands upon the world scene as a model of democratic society at an advanced stage of development. Your power of example carries with it heavy responsibilities. Use it well America!”
- b. A Positive Beginning:
  - i. The U.S. Bishops begin by stating, “This nobility of the American spirit endures today in those who struggle for social justice and equal opportunity for the disadvantaged. The United States has thrived

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<sup>1</sup> Arch. Charles Chaput, *Render Unto Caesar* (New York: Image, 2008), 3.

because, *at its best*, it embodies a commitment to human freedom, human rights and human dignity” (LGL, 2).

- c. Followed by substantial critiques:
  - i. “But success often bears the seeds of failure” (LGL, 3).
  - ii. “Grave injustices” overseas.
  - iii. “Self-absorption, indifference” and materialism at home.
  - iv. “Overconfidence in power ... has created the illusion of a life without natural boundaries and actions without consequences.”
  - v. Becoming a “culture where moral questions are submerged by a river of goods and services ...”
- d. Identifying the vulnerable:
  - i. At particular risk: the poor, elderly, disabled, who don’t pass the “usefulness” test: “*Those who are unborn, infirm and terminally ill have no such advantage*” (LGL, 4),
  - ii. “When American political life becomes an experiment on people rather than for and by them, it will no longer be worth conducting. *We are arguably moving closer to that day.*”
  - iii. Saint Pope John Paul II: “The right to life is being denied or trampled upon, especially at the more significant moments of existence: the moment of birth and the moment of death” (*Evangelium Vitae*, 18).
  - iv. “...Abortion and euthanasia have become preeminent threats to human dignity because *they directly attack life itself*, the most fundamental human good and the condition for all others” (LGL, 5).
- e. **RENEWING OUR IDENTITY AS FOLLOWERS OF CHRIST:**
  - i. *Declaration of Independence*: “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with *certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness*. That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just Powers from the consent of the governed, — That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness” (July 4, 1776).
  - ii. “God, the Father of all nations, has blessed the American people with a tremendous reservoir of goodness. He has also graced our founders with the wisdom to establish political structures enabling all citizens to participate in promoting *the inalienable rights of all*” (LGL, 6).

- iii. “As Americans, as Catholics we ... *call our fellow citizens back to our country's founding principles*, and most especially to *renew our national respect for the rights of those who are unborn, weak, disabled and terminally ill*. Real freedom rests on the inviolability of every person as a child of God. The inherent value of human life, at every stage and in every circumstance, is not a sectarian issue any more than the Declaration of Independence is a sectarian creed” (LGL, 6).
- iv. USCCB calls on all U.S. Catholics—especially leaders—“to recover their identity as followers of Jesus Christ and to be leaders in the renewal of American respect for the sanctity of life” (LGL, 7).

**f. PROCLAIMING THE GOSPEL IS A RESPONSIBILITY WE ALL SHARE**

- i. “Every Catholic is a missionary of the Good News of human dignity redeemed through the cross ... Jesus calls each of us to be a leaven in society, and we will be judged by our actions” (LGL, 7).
- ii. “No one, least of all someone who exercises leadership in society, can rightfully claim to share fully and practically the Catholic faith and yet act publicly in a way contrary to that faith.”

**g. LEGACY OF ROE V WADE**

- i. “Nations are not machines or equations. They are like ecosystems. A people's habits, beliefs, values and institutions intertwine like a root system. Poisoning one part will eventually poison it all” (LGL, 9).”
- ii. Roe “effectively *rendered the definition of human personhood flexible and negotiable*” (LGL, 10).
- iii. On partial birth abortion: “Revising the name ... *reduces its perceived gravity* ... Bad law and defective moral reasoning produce the evasive language to justify evil. Nothing else can explain the *verbal and ethical gymnastics* required by elected officials to justify their support for partial-birth abortion, a procedure in which infants are brutally killed during the process of delivery ... The same sanitized marketing is now deployed on behalf of physician-assisted suicide, fetal experimentation and human cloning. Each reduces the human person to a problem or an object. Each can trace its lineage in no small part to *Roe*.”
- iv. C. S. Lewis (*Abolition of Man*, 1943): “the power of Man to make himself what he pleases means...*the power of some men to make other men what they please*.”

**h. “MEN WITHOUT CHESTS” (More from C.S. Lewis, *Abolition of Man*)**

- i. “We make men without chests and expect from them virtue and enterprise. We laugh at honor and are shocked to find traitors in our midst.”
- ii. [On education] ““Aristotle says that the aim of education is to make the pupil like and dislike what he ought.””

- iii. [On education] “The task of the modern educator is not to cut down jungles but to irrigate deserts. The right defence against false sentiments is to inculcate just sentiments. By starving the sensibility of our pupils we only make them easier prey to the propagandist when he comes. For famished nature will be avenged and a hard heart is no infallible protection against a soft head.”
- iv. [On “tolerance” and “open-mindedness”] ““An open mind, in questions that are not ultimate, is useful. But an open mind about the ultimate foundations either of Theoretical or of Practical Reason is idiocy. If a man's mind is open on these things, let his mouth at least be shut. He can say nothing to the purpose.”
- v. [On double-standards] “A great many of those who 'debunk' traditional...values have in the background values of their own which they believe to be immune from the debunking process”
- vi. [On “creating” values] “The human mind has no more power of inventing a new value *than of imagining a new primary colour*, or, indeed, of creating a new sun and a new sky for it to move in.”

### 3. ABORTION: SCRIPTURE AND TRADITION SPEAK

- a. JER. 1:5 “Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you.”
- b. PSA. 22:10 “Upon thee was I cast from my birth, and since my mother bore me thou hast been my God.”
- c. PSA. 139: 13, 15-16 “For thou didst form my inward parts, thou didst knit me together in my mother’s womb ...Thou knowest me right well; my frame was not hidden from thee, when I was being made in secret, intricately wrought in the depths of the earth. Thy eyes beheld my unformed substance; in thy book were written, every one of them, the days that were formed for me, when as yet there was none of them.”
- d. CCC 2271 “*Since the first century* the Church has affirmed the moral evil of every procured abortion. *This teaching has not changed and remains unchangeable.* Direct abortion, that is to say, abortion willed either as an end or a means, is gravely contrary to the moral law.”
  - i. *Didache*, 2 “You shall not kill the embryo by abortion and shall not cause the newborn to perish.”
- e. CCC 2272 “Formal cooperation in an abortion constitutes a grave offense. The Church attaches the canonical penalty of excommunication to this crime against human life. “A person who procures a completed abortion incurs excommunication *latae sententiae*, ‘by the very commission of the offense,’ and subject to the conditions provided by Canon Law.”
- f. CCC 2273 “The *inalienable rights of the person* must be recognized and respected by civil society and the political authority. These human rights

depend *neither on single individuals nor on parents*; nor do they represent a concession made by society and the state; *they belong to human nature and are inherent in the person by virtue of the creative act from which the person took his origin*. Among such fundamental rights one should mention in this regard *every human being’s right to life and physical integrity from the moment of conception until death*.

- g. *Donum vitae* I, 5. “It is immoral to produce human embryos intended for exploitation as disposable biological material.”

#### 4. “GENUINE” PLURALISM

- a. USCCB: “Some Catholic elected officials have adopted the argument that, while they personally oppose evils like abortion, they cannot force their religious views onto the wider society. This is seriously mistaken on several key counts” (*LGL*, 23).
  - i. When life begins is not mere religious belief but “scientific fact.”
  - ii. Sanctity of life *not only* Catholic doctrine but: (a) “global ethical heritage” and (b) “our nation’s founding principle” (*LGL*, 23).
  - iii. Democracy not served “by silence.”
- b. “Most Americans would recognize the contradiction in the statement, “While I am personally opposed to slavery or racism or sexism I cannot force my personal view on the rest of society” (*LGL*, 23).
- c. “Real pluralism depends on *people of conviction struggling vigorously to advance their beliefs by every ethical and legal means at their disposal*” (*LGL*, 23).

#### 5. “GENUINE” RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

- a. USCCB “In a striking way, we see today a heightening of the tension between our nation's founding principles and political reality. We see this in diminishing respect for the inalienable right to life and in the elimination of legal protections for those who are most vulnerable. *There can be no genuine justice in our society until the truths on which our nation was founded are more perfectly realized in our culture and law*” (*LGL*, 14).
- b. Vatican II: “The political community . . . exists for the common good: This is its full justification and meaning, and the source of its specific and basic right to exist. The common good embraces all those conditions of social life which enable individuals, families and organizations to achieve complete and efficacious fulfillment” (*GS*, 74).
- c. Vatican II: “The Church should have the true freedom to teach the faith, to proclaim its teaching about society, to carry out its task among men without hindrance, *and to pass moral judgment even in matters relating to politics, whenever the fundamental rights of man or the salvation of souls requires it*” (*GS*, 76).

- d. Saint Pope John Paul II: “The human being is entitled to such rights in every phase of development, from conception until natural death, whether healthy or sick, whole or handicapped, rich or poor . . . [Moreover, if,] indeed, everyone has the mission and responsibility of acknowledging the personal dignity of every human being and of defending the right to life, some lay faithful are given particular title to this task: such as *parents, teachers, healthworkers and the many who hold economic and political power*” (Apostolic Exhortation *Christifideles Laici*, 38 [1988]).
- e. “We believe that the Gospel of Jesus Christ is a ‘Gospel of life.’ It invites all persons and societies to a new life lived abundantly in respect for human dignity. *We believe that this Gospel is not only a complement to American political principles, but also the cure for the spiritual sickness now infecting our society.* As Scripture says, ‘no house can stand divided against itself’ (Luke 11:17). We cannot simultaneously commit ourselves to human rights and progress while eliminating or marginalizing the weakest among us. Nor can we practice the Gospel of life only as a private piety. American Catholics must live it *vigorously* and publicly, as a matter of national leadership and witness, or we will not live it at all” (*LGL*, 19).

## 6. A DAUNTING – BUT VITAL TASK

- a. *We must begin with a commitment never to intentionally kill, or collude in the killing, of any innocent human life, no matter how broken, unformed, disabled or desperate that life may seem*” (*LGL*, 20).
- b. “... The choice of certain ways of acting is *always and radically incompatible* with the love of God and the dignity of the human person created in His image.”
- c. “Direct abortion is *never* a morally tolerable option. It is *always* a grave act of violence against a woman and her unborn child. This is so even when a woman does not see the truth because of the pressures she may be subjected to, often by the child's father, her parents or friends.”
- d. “Similarly, euthanasia and assisted suicide are *never* acceptable acts of mercy. They *always* gravely exploit the suffering and desperate, extinguishing life in the name of the ‘quality of life’ itself.
- e. “This same teaching against direct killing of the innocent condemns *all direct attacks on innocent civilians in time of war.*”
- f. Capital punishment: “No matter how serious the crime, punishment that does not take life is ‘more in conformity with the dignity of the human person’ (*Evangelium Vitae*, 56-7). Our witness to respect for life shines most brightly when we demand respect for each and every human life, including the lives of those who fail to show that respect for others. *The antidote to violence is love, not more violence*” (*LGL*, 21.)

## 7. THE SEARCH FOR THE COMMON GOOD

- a. USCCB: “The key to a renewal of public life is reorienting politics to reflect better the search for the common good (i.e., *reconciling diverse interests for the*

*well-being of the whole human family*) and a clear commitment to the dignity of every person” (Political Responsibility: Proclaiming the Gospel of Life, Protecting the Least Among Us, and Pursuing the Common Good, 1995).

- b. “If politics ignores this fundamental task, it can easily become little more than an arena for *partisan gamesmanship*, the search for power for its own sake, or interest group conflict.”

## 8. OUR RESPONSIBILITY: POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

- a. USCCB: “The Catholic community is very diverse. We are Democrats, Republicans, and Independents. We come from differing ideological and political persuasions ... political life [must serve] the common good and the human person. *Our call to political responsibility is neither a partisan nor a sectarian appeal*, but a call to reinvigorate the democratic process as a place for debate about what kind of society we want to be, about what values and priorities should guide our nation” (Political Responsibility: Proclaiming the Gospel of Life, Protecting the Least Among Us, and Pursuing the Common Good, 1995).
- b. USCCB: “... Political responsibility *does not involve* religious leaders telling people how to vote or religious tests for candidates. These would be, in our view, *pastorally inappropriate, theologically unsound, and politically unwise*. Rather, we seek to lift up the moral and human dimensions of public issues for our own community and for the broader society. *We encourage people to use their voices and votes to enrich the democratic life of our nation and to act on their values in the political arena.*”
- c. “We hope American Catholics, as both believers and citizens, will use the resources of our faith and the opportunities of this democracy *to help shape a society more respectful of the life, dignity, and rights of the human person*, especially the poor and vulnerable.
- d. USCCB: “In the Catholic tradition, *citizenship is a virtue*; participation in the political process is an *obligation*. We are not a sect fleeing the world, but a community of faith called to renew the earth.”

## 9. WHAT KIND OF HOUSE WILL WE BUILD?

- a. MATT. 7:24-27 “Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house upon the rock; and the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat upon that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock. And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not do them will be like a foolish man who built his house upon the sand; and the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell; and great was the fall of it.”
- b. USCCB: “. If we understand the human person as the ‘temple of the Holy Spirit’ —the living house of God—then these latter issues fall logically into

place as the crossbeams and walls of that house. *All direct attacks on innocent human life, such as abortion and euthanasia, strike at the house's foundation. These directly and immediately violate the human person's most fundamental right -- the right to life. Neglect of these issues is the equivalent of building our house on sand” (LGL, 22).*

## 10. WHAT SPECIFICALLY IS THE CHURCH CALLED TO DO?

- a. USCCB: “The Church’s role in the political order includes the following:
  - i. *Educating the faithful* regarding the teachings of the Church and their responsibilities;
  - ii. *Analyzing issues* for their social and moral dimensions;
  - iii. *Measuring public policy* against Gospel values;
  - iv. *Participating with other concerned parties in debate* over public policy;
  - v. *Speaking out with courage, skill, and concern* on public issues involving human rights, social justice, and the life of the Church in society” (Political Responsibility: Proclaiming the Gospel of Life, Protecting the Least Among Us, and Pursuing the Common Good, 1995)

## 11. THE NEED TO ACTIVATE OUR CHRISTIAN WITNESS

- a. JAMES 1:22-25 “*But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who observes his natural face in a mirror; for he observes himself and goes away and at once forgets what he was like. But he who looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and perseveres, being no hearer that forgets but a doer that acts, he shall be blessed in his doing.*”
- b. Vatican II: “The laity, by their very vocation, seek the kingdom of God by engaging in temporal affairs and by ordering them according to the plan of God ...They live in the ordinary circumstances of family and social life, from which the very web of their existence is woven ...They are called there by God so that by exercising their proper function and being led by the spirit of the Gospel, *they can work for the sanctification of the world from within, in the manner of leaven*” (LG, 31).
- c. USCCB: “Life in Christ is a life of *active witness*. It demands *moral leadership*. Each and every person baptized in the truth of the Catholic faith is a member of the "people of life" sent by God to evangelize the world” (LGL, 25)

## 12. THE EXAMPLE OF SAINT THOMAS MORE

- a. *A Man for All Seasons* (1966 film)
  - b. Archbishop Charles Chaput “More’s appeal springs from the desire we all share to lead a life of conviction, courage and love ... [Today] something seems lacking in public life. More reminds us of what that “something” is. He was a man of genuine Catholic faith at a moment when the assumptions that had sustained Christendom for centuries were unraveling into turmoil.” (*Render Onto Caesar*, 159).
  - c. “More was a brilliant lawyer, gifted author, and a loving father and husband. But most importantly, he was a person with the courage to say ‘no’ even when saying so meant humiliation and suffering. [He] was a man of *principle* guided by a properly formed *conscience*, who died rather than betray either. And this is the reason More’s life is relevant today” (*Render Onto Caesar*, 163).
  - d. St. Thomas More:
    - i. “I die the king's faithful servant, but God's first.”
    - ii. “You must not abandon the ship in a storm because you cannot control the winds....What you cannot turn to good, you must at least make as little bad as you can.”
    - iii. “To be educated, a person doesn't have to know much or be informed, but he or she does have to have been exposed vulnerably to the transformative events of an engaged human life.”
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## PART II: “RENDER UNTO CAESAR”

### INSIGHTS FROM AN AMERICAN ARCHBISHOP

#### DR. STEVEN SMITH

“Then the Pharisees went and took counsel how to entangle him in his talk. And they sent their disciples to him, along with the Herodians, saying, ‘Teacher, we know that you are true, and teach the way of God truthfully, and care for no man; for you do not regard the position of men. Tell us, then, what you think. Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar, or not?’ But Jesus, aware of their malice, said, ‘Why put me to the test, you hypocrites? Show me the money for the tax.’ And they brought him a coin. And Jesus said to them, ‘Whose likeness and inscription is this?’ They said, ‘Caesar’s.’ Then he said to them, ‘*Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s.*’ When they heard it, they marveled; and they left him and went away.”

MATT. 22:15-22

1. ANALYSIS OF THE GOSPEL TEXT, ‘RENDER UNTO CAESAR’ (MATT. 22)

- a. Part of a larger narrative of Jesus and various opponents, unfolding over the entire chapter of *Matt. 22*:
  - i. Jesus Opposed by “Pharisees and Herodians” (vv. 15-22)
  - ii. Jesus Opposed by “Sadducees” (vv. 23-33)
  - iii. Jesus Opposed by a “Pharisaic Lawyer” (vv. 34-40)
  - iv. Jesus Opposed by “Pharisees” (vv. 41-46)
- b. *Sent their disciples* (v. 15) Maldanatus: “the Pharisees, who were the chief supporters of Jewish liberty, and were opposed to Herod, as Josephus says, pretended to constitute Christ judge of the question, the better to conceal their own hatred, and to show that they referred to Him for the purpose, not of trying Him, but of putting an end to the question; whereas their real object was to excite ill-will against Him.”<sup>2</sup>
- c. *Herodians* (v. 15). Allison: “It is possible they were Essenes, for Josephus tells us that the Essenes won the favour of Herod the Great.”<sup>3</sup>
- d. *We know that you are true* (v. 16). Allison: “...The words serve to distinguish Jesus from his adversaries: unlike him they are not ‘true’ but rather ‘hypocrites.’”<sup>4</sup>
- e. *Is it lawful ...* (v. 17). Allison: “The line emphasizes not what the law says but what Jesus himself thinks—which is what the opponents want.”<sup>5</sup>
- f. *To pay taxes to Caesar* (v. 17). Allison: “[Taxes] refers to the Roman *census*, a tax upon agricultural yield (*tributum soli*) and personal property (*tributum capitis*). The *tributum capitis* was collected through census, or registration (Lk 2:1–5; Acts 5:37), and probably amounted to one denarius a year.”<sup>6</sup>
- g. *But Jesus, aware of their malice ...* (v. 18) Allison: “Jesus recognizes the daggers in the men’s smiles.”
- h. *Show me the coin* (v. 19)
  - i. St. Jerome: “Wisdom always acts wisely. Thus the tempters are confuted chiefly by their own words. ‘Show me,’ he says, the denarius. This kind of coin ... bore the image of Caesar.”<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> John Maldonatus, *A Commentary on the Holy Gospels*, ed. George J. Davie, trans. George J. Davie, Second Edition., vol. 2, Catholic Standard Library (London: John Hodges, 1888), 233 (emphasis added).

<sup>3</sup> W. D. Davies and Dale C. Allison Jr., *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel according to Saint Matthew*, vol. 3, International Critical Commentary (London; New York: T&T Clark International, 2004), 212.

<sup>4</sup> Davies and Allison, *Matthew* vol. 3, 213.

<sup>5</sup> Davies and Allison, *Matthew* vol. 3, 214.

<sup>6</sup> Davies and Allison, *Matthew* vol. 3, 214.

<sup>7</sup> St. Jerome, *Commentary on Matthew*, ed. Thomas P. Halton, trans. Thomas P. Scheck, vol. 117, The Fathers of the Church (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2008), 252.

- ii. Allison: “Many Jews would have used the coin without much thought, despite its having a ‘graven image’. Certainly that is the pre-supposition of our verse: Jesus’ hearers will have a silver coin to hand.”<sup>8</sup>
- i. *Whose likeness* (v. 20) Allison: “Jesus clearly speaks while holding up the coin, showing no hesitation in handling or looking at Caesar’s coin.”<sup>9</sup>
- j. *Render therefore ...* (v. 21)
  - i. “Render” (*apodidomi*) – to give back.
  - ii. John Maldonatus: “For if He had answered that the tribute was not to be paid, they would have accused Him of [disloyalty], as they afterwards did (*S. Luke* 23:2). If He had said that it ought to be paid, He would not have been thought to be Christ, and the promised king of the Jews; for, so far from freeing them, as they hoped, from the foreign rule, He would rather have brought them under the Gentile power.”<sup>10</sup>
  - iii. Allison: “The thought may well be that in giving the coin to Caesar *one is simply returning to him what is his ...* Jesus’ words distance him from those who opposed supporting Rome. At the same time, the inclusion of giving to God what is his [i.e. temple tax] relativizes the political obligation. *There is here no firm principle of loyal submission to the state. Implied rather is a reservation regarding the state, a lack of reservation regarding God.* While obedience to God can ... coexist with doing what the state requires, obligation to the former obviously overshadows obligation to the latter. So there is no simple yes or no, no straightforward rule, *but the imperative to weigh the demands of two (very unequal) authorities, one of which endures, one of which passes away.* When those demands are not at odds (as here), obligations to both can be met. *In cases of conflict, however, it is manifest which authority requires allegiance.* Our text has rightly been cited to curb the powers of the state. God, who after all determines what is Caesar’s and what is not, is sovereign over the state, albeit in a non-theocratic fashion. *In the end, no one can serve two masters (6:24), and all that truly matters is obedience to God.*”<sup>11</sup>

“America was Born Protestant.”

THEOLOGIAN PAUL JOHNSON

2. “RENDER UNTO CAESAR”—ARCHBISHOP CHARLES J. CHAPUT<sup>12</sup>

a. DIAGNOSING OUR “PROBLEM”

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<sup>8</sup> Davies and Allison, *Matthew* vol. 3, 215.

<sup>9</sup> Davies and Allison, *Matthew* vol. 3, 216.

<sup>10</sup> John Maldonatus, *A Commentary on the Holy Gospels*, ed. George J. Davie, trans. George J. Davie, Second Edition., vol. 2, Catholic Standard Library (London: John Hodges, 1888), 233–234.

<sup>11</sup> Davies and Allison, *Matthew* vol. 3, 216–217.

<sup>12</sup> Archbishop Charles J. Chaput, *Render Unto Caesar: Serving Our Nation by Living Our Beliefs in Political Life* (New York: Doubleday, 2008).

- i. Archbishop Charles Chaput understands that many American Catholics have a problem. We believe we’re *it*. We’re the problem ... or at least, that the antiquated and unrealistic demands of the Catholic Church are the problem.
- ii. Such wrongful “analysis” has led to “paralysis”—and a kind of disengagement of Catholic faith from political issues by more and more Catholics. In other words, such misplaced fears—that the “overbearing and outdated” Catholic Church is the problem—is what drives many Catholics to drive a wedge between “faith” and “political life.”
- iii. ARCHBISHOP JOHN IRELAND: “If great things are not done by Catholics in America, the fault lies surely with themselves—not the republic.”<sup>13</sup>
- iv. Chaput: “Our success *surrounds* us. We take it for granted.”<sup>14</sup>
  1. We have become too *comfortable*.
  2. We have become too *materialistic*.
  3. And we have become too *tolerant* of anything and everything that upsets anyone, anyplace anytime.

Yet “tolerance” is not a Christian virtue. We must return to the true Christian virtues—most of all, *caritas*. Love.

- v. Chaput: “In the past, faced with deep social divisions, Americans have usually turned to God. All of the religious Great Awakenings in our history have followed periods of great national anxiety, like the struggle over slavery. *But today, some people see God as the problem—and with him, believers who claim to follow him.*”<sup>15</sup>
- vi. Victor Frankl (“Man’s Search for Meaning”) “Love is the ultimate and highest goal to which man can aspire ... I grasped the meaning of the greatest secret that human poetry and human thought and belief have to impart: *the salvation of man is through love and in love.*”<sup>16</sup>
- vii. Chaput: “In other words, we were made by Love, to receive love ourselves, *and to show love to others*. That’s why we’re here. And it has very practical consequences—including the political kind.”<sup>17</sup>
- viii. J. R. R. Tolkien (letter to a Jesuit): “All my own small perceptions of *beauty* both in majesty and in simplicity is founded” on the Blessed Virgin Mary ... [my Catholic faith has] nourished me and taught me all the little I know; and that I owe to my mother.”<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Chaput, *Render Unto Caesar*, 6.

<sup>14</sup> Chaput, *Render Unto Caesar*, 18.

<sup>15</sup> Chaput, *Render Unto Caesar*, 25.

<sup>16</sup> Chaput, *Render Unto Caesar*, 35.

<sup>17</sup> Chaput, *Render Unto Caesar*, 35-36.

<sup>18</sup> Chaput, *Render Unto Caesar*, 45.

- ix. CHAPUT: “A truly secularized United States would be a country *without a soul*; a nation *with a hole in its chest* ... American belief in the sanctity of individual rights depends *on a God who guarantees those rights*, and to whom the state is subordinate and responsible.”<sup>19</sup>
- x. Chaput: “If our nation has changed from the land of opportunity to the land of private appetites over the last few decades, one of the reasons is this: *We haven’t lived what we say we believe*. Homelessness, poverty, abortion, the exploitation of undocumented immigrants, the neglect of the elderly — these are brazenly real problems in contemporary America ... our problems can only be solved by people of character who *actively and without apology* take their beliefs into political debates. That includes Catholics. We need to be *stronger* in our public witness, not weaker.”<sup>20</sup>
- xi. Chaput: “As Catholics, how can we uncouple what we do, from what we claim to believe, without killing what we believe and in lying in what we do? The answer is simple. We can’t.”<sup>21</sup>

**b. FORGING A SOLUTION: ENGAGING IN HISTORY — AND FAITH**

- i. CHAPUT: “When Catholics take their Church seriously and act on it in the world, somebody, and often somebody with power, won’t like it.”<sup>22</sup>
- ii. Chaput: “Knowing history *matters* ... its vital to American political life. *If we don’t understand the past, we can’t make sense of the present*.
- iii. Part of what the Archbishop is getting at is that many Catholics are uninformed, indifferent or both to the Church’s role in history in “shaping the public square.”
- iv. Moreover, today’s opponents of the Church, who’s appeals often captivate the media, are able to persuade such Catholics, in part because of such misinformation / indifference about the reality of things. They fail to understand or appreciate what’s at stake, and are ironically driven further and further from the teachings of the Church.
- v. HENRY FORD: “History is more or less *bunk*. Its *tradition*. We want to live in the present, and the only history that [matters] is the history we make today.”
- vi. This American mindset is all to prevalent today, nearly a century after the American icon first said it. Whether it is matters of *American history*, *world* history or *Church* history, many Americans have little time or energy to give it a thought — and certainly do not see any practical reason to do so.

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<sup>19</sup> Chaput, *Render Unto Caesar*, 30.

<sup>20</sup> Chaput, *Render Unto Caesar*, 32-33.

<sup>21</sup> Chaput, *Render Unto Caesar*, 51.

<sup>22</sup> Chaput, *Render Unto Caesar*, 58.

vii. Chaput: “Christianity must stand above and in tension with democracy, while respecting the properly political. By forming people in *virtues the world cannot*, the Church provides a vital public service, *especially* in a democracy.”<sup>23</sup>

viii. Chaput: “America’s founders understood that our political choices in the present *flower out of the past*; that a healthy republic requires a well-informed citizenry; and that part of being well informed means *learning from history*.”<sup>24</sup>

**c. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN NATURAL LAW AND THE “COMMON GOOD”**

- i. ST. THOMAS AQUINAS: “The natural law is nothing other than the light of understanding placed in us by God; through it we know what we must do and what we must avoid. God has given this light or law at the creation.” (See: *Summa* I-II.94).
- ii. POPE LEO III: “The natural law is written and engraved in the soul of each and every man, *because it is human reason ordaining him to do good and forbidding him to sin* ... But this command of human reason would not have the force of law if it were not the voice and interpreter of a higher reason to which our spirit and our freedom must be submitted (*Libertas praestantissimum*, 597).
- iii. CCC 1955 “The ‘divine and natural’ law shows man the way to follow so as to practice the good and attain his end. The natural law states the first and essential precepts which govern the moral life. It hinges upon the desire for God and submission to him, who is the source and judge of all that is good, as well as upon the sense that the other is one’s equal. *Its principal precepts are expressed in the Decalogue. This law is called “natural,” not in reference to the nature of irrational beings, but because reason which decrees it properly belongs to human nature.*”
- iv. CHAPUT: “Natural law is not a sectarian idea. It is much larger and older than that. *It exists in every society*. Natural law teaches that all creation has a ‘nature,’ an inherent order and purpose. By using their *reason*, men and women can know what conforms to their human nature and is therefore good ... When Catholics oppose *abortion*, they do so *not* because of some special Catholic religious doctrine or simply because the Church says so. Rather, the Church teaches that abortion is wrong *because it already is*. Abortion violates *the universal natural law by abusing the inherent human rights of the unborn child*.<sup>25</sup>
- v. VATICAN II: “Men, families and the various groups which make up the civil community are aware that they cannot achieve a truly human life by their own unaided efforts. *They see the need for a wider community, within which each one makes his specific contribution every day toward an ever broader realization of the common good*. For this purpose they set up a political community according to various forms. The political community exists, consequently, *for the sake of the common good*, in which it finds its full justification and significance, and the source of its inherent legitimacy. Indeed, the common good embraces the sum of

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<sup>23</sup> Chaput, *Render Unto Caesar*, 72.

<sup>24</sup> Chaput, *Render Unto Caesar*, 73.

<sup>25</sup> Chaput, *Render Unto Caesar*, 83.

those conditions of the social life whereby men, families and associations more adequately and readily may attain their own perfection” (GS 74).

vi. VATICAN II: “Since, in virtue of her mission received from God, the Church preaches the Gospel to all men and dispenses the treasures of grace, *she contributes to the ensuring of peace everywhere on earth and to the placing of the fraternal exchange between men on solid ground by imparting knowledge of the divine and natural law.* Therefore, to encourage and stimulate cooperation among men, *the Church must be clearly present in the midst of the community of nations both through her official channels and through the full and sincere collaboration of all Christians*—a collaboration motivated solely by the desire to be of service to all.

vii. CCC 1901 “The diversity of political regimes is morally acceptable, provided they serve the legitimate good of the communities that adopt them. Regimes whose nature is *contrary to the natural law, to the public order, and to the fundamental rights of persons* cannot achieve the common good of the nations on which they have been imposed.”

viii. ALEXIS DE TOCQUEVILLE (DEMOCRACY IN AMERICA)

1. “America is great because she is good. If America ceases to be good, America will cease to be great.”
2. “In matters of dogma the Catholic faith places all intellects on the same level; the learned man and the ignorant, the genius and the common herd, must all subscribe to the same details of belief; rich and poor must follow the same observances, and it imposes the same austerities upon the strong and the weak; *it makes no compromise with any mortal*, but applying the same standard to every human being, *it mingles all classes of society at the foot of the same altar, just as they are mingled in the sight of God.* Thus, *American Catholics are both the most obedient of the faithful and the most independent citizens.*”
3. “I do not know if the people of the United States would vote for superior men if they ran for office, but there can be no doubt that such men do not run.”
4. “Society will develop a new kind of servitude which covers the surface of society with a network of complicated rules, through which the most original minds and the most energetic characters cannot penetrate. It does not tyrannise but it compresses, enervates, extinguishes, and stupefies a people, till each nation is reduced to nothing better than a flock of timid and industrious animals, of which the government is the shepherd.”

**d. VATICAN II (AND BEYOND): FACING THE ERRORS, REQUIREMENTS AND OPPORTUNITIES OF OUR TIME**

i. Tremendous Social Changes in the Years Before the Council:

1. Chaput: “The decade between 1945 and 1955 saw the end of the Second World War; the Marshall Plan; the Nuremberg trials; public revelations about the Holocaust; the end of colonialism; the founding of the United Nations; the founding of the State of Israel; the First Arab-Israeli War ... the Greek Civil War; the Iron Curtain; the Cold War; the Chinese Civil

War ... the Korean War; jet travel; the first computers; the polio vaccine; nuclear bombs; the arms race and television.”<sup>26</sup>

ii. Pope John XXIII on the reasons for convening Vatican II:

1. To assert once again the Magisterium, which is unfailling and [continues] until the end of time, in order that this Magisterium, taking into account the errors, the requirements and the opportunities of our time, *might be presented in exceptional form to all men throughout the world*” (Oct. 11, 1962).

iii. Two key principles guiding the Council:

1. *Aggiornamento* (Italian) “Bringing up to date.”
  - a. Chaput: “Catholics see salvation history as a continuing, organic story. *The past was made by human beings shaped by the good and evil, the knowledge and ignorance, of their specific time ... Aggiornamento* called for a fresh way of thinking. It called for the Church to listen to the times.”<sup>27</sup>
2. *Ressourcement* (French) “a returning to the sources”
  - a. Chaput: “[*Ressourcement*] gave a framework to *aggiornamento*. The Council knew that a pristine ancient Christianity never really existed. The Gospel has always been lived *by real people in real circumstances*, with all the human sins, virtues, and conflicts that real life involves. *Reinventing the Christian faith has never worked ...* Thus the Council sought to *renew Catholic life* by revisiting the ancient sources of Christian belief for answers posed by modern life.”<sup>28</sup>

iv. RATZINGER: “Today an illusion is dangled before us: that a man can find himself without first conquering himself, without the patience of self-denial and the labor of self-control; that there is no need to endure the discomfort of upholding tradition, or to continue suffering the tension between the ideal and the actual in our nature. *The presentation of this illusion constitutes the real crisis of our times. A man who has been relived of all tribulation and led off into a never-never land has lost what makes him what he is; [he] has lost himself.*”<sup>29</sup>

**e. WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE**

- i. CARDINAL AVERY DULLES: “The Greatest danger facing the Church in our country today is that of an *excessive and indiscreet accommodation.*”<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Chaput, *Render Unto Caesar*, 101-02 (edited).

<sup>27</sup> Chaput, *Render Unto Caesar*, 107.

<sup>28</sup> Chaput, *Render Unto Caesar*, 108.

<sup>29</sup> Joseph Ratzinger, *Why I am Still in the Church*, 1973.

<sup>30</sup> Avery Cardinal Dulles, “Catholicism and American Culture: The Uneasy Dialogue” (*America*, Jan, 27, 1990).

- ii. CHAPUT: “American Catholics now face a crisis of faith, mission and leadership —and the task of fixing it falls *equally* on Catholic laypeople and their bishops. Too many Catholics, including too many clergy, seem to assume a *guaranteed grounding of success, stability, energy and security for the Church in the United States*. In fact the Church in the United States faces very serious questions about her future ...”<sup>31</sup>

**1. A Return to Jesus Christ, the Gospel and the Church.**

- a. “Many [Catholics] don’t believe we need a savior. In fact, we don’t see anything we need to be saved from.”<sup>32</sup>
- b. “Most Catholics since Vatican II have recoiled almost instinctively from traditional images of the ‘Church militant.’ But like it or not, that is exactly what we are—or should be. *We ae in a struggle for the souls of our people and our country. We ignore this at our own peril.*”<sup>33</sup>

**2. Fight Complacency—Beginning With Ourselves.**

- a. “American Catholics face none of the direct persecution that so many Christians around the world routinely endure. *We might be more alive if we did.*”<sup>34</sup>
- b. “People should come away from *every encounter with every American Catholic knowing they have met a true Catholic ...* If the secular world is to be redeemed, it must happen *from the inside out*, which means the task belongs primarily to *faithful, well-informed, committed Catholic laypeople.*”<sup>35</sup>

**3. Resist “Keeling Before the World” (Jacques Maritain)**

- a. “We can find ourselves *softening the Christian message—the Cross, the call to holiness, the reality that all men and women are under the judgment of God—because these truths are considered respectful* in a secularized, pluralistic society.”<sup>36</sup>
- b. “People, not words, make converts. This is because the Catholic faith is much more than a set of principles we agree to, *but rather an entirely new way of life. People must see that new life*

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<sup>31</sup> Chaput, *Render Unto Caesar*, 182.

<sup>32</sup> Chaput, *Render Unto Caesar*, 182.

<sup>33</sup> Chaput, *Render Unto Caesar*, 187.

<sup>34</sup> Chaput, *Render Unto Caesar*, 188.

<sup>35</sup> Chaput, *Render Unto Caesar*, 189-90.

<sup>36</sup> Chaput, *Render Unto Caesar*, 191.

*is being lived ... They must see the union of the believer with Jesus Christ.”<sup>37</sup>*

#### **4. Embrace True Catholic Social Doctrine**

- a. “Catholic social doctrine is the *concrete public expression of the Gospel*” (See *I John* 4:20).<sup>38</sup>
- b. “We need to root the social dimension of our Catholic faith, and everything else we do, in God’s love, which is the fuel for our mission of *evangelization*. We can’t offer Catholic social action to the men and women of the world without at the same time offering them Jesus Christ.”<sup>39</sup>

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## **PART III: MORAL ISSUES FACING AMERICAN CATHOLICS TODAY (1 OF 2) DR. STEVEN SMITH**

### **1. FORMING CONSCIENCES FOR FAITHFUL CITIZENSHIP: THREEFOLD TEACHING FROM THE US CATHOLIC BISHOPS<sup>40</sup>**

- a. Part I: *The U.S. Bishops’ Reflection on Catholic Teaching and Political Life*
- b. Part II *Applying Catholic Teaching to Major Issues (Summary of Positions of USCCB)*
- c. Part III: *Goals for Political Life: Challenges for Citizens, Candidates, and Public Officials*

### **2. INTRODUCTION—CRISES UNDERNEATH THE DOCUMENT**

- a. Ongoing destruction of *over one million innocent human lives* each year by abortion
- b. Physician-assisted *suicide*

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<sup>37</sup> Chaput, *Render Unto Caesar*, 190.

<sup>38</sup> Chaput, *Render Unto Caesar*, 192.

<sup>39</sup> Chaput, *Render Unto Caesar*, 193.

<sup>40</sup> Note: This reflection is draw largely (but not solely) from the following document of the US Bishops (2015): *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship: Threefold Teaching from the US Catholic Bishops*. Available here: <http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/faithful-citizenship/forming-consciences-for-faithful-citizenship-title.cfm>. (The document will be abbreviated as FCFC here.)

- c. The *redefinition of marriage*—the vital cell of society—by the courts, political bodies, and increasingly by American culture itself
- d. The excessive consumption of *material goods* and the destruction of *natural resources*, which harm both the environment and the poor
- e. The *deadly attacks on fellow Christians* and religious minorities throughout the world
- f. The narrowing redefinition of *religious freedom*, which threatens both individual conscience and the freedom of the Church to serve
- g. *Economic policies* that fail to prioritize the poor, at home or abroad;
- h. A broken *immigration system* and a worldwide *refugee crisis*
- i. *Wars, terror, and violence* that threaten every aspect of human life and dignity

**3. PART I: THE U.S. BISHOPS’ REFLECTION ON CATHOLIC TEACHING AND POLITICAL LIFE**

- a. **POPE FRANCIS:** “Our redemption has a social dimension because “God, in Christ, redeems not only the individual person, but also . . . social relations” . . . To believe that the Holy Spirit is at work in everyone means realizing *that he seeks to penetrate every human situation and all social bonds* . . . Accepting the first proclamation, which invites us to receive God’s love and to love him in return with the very love which is his gift, brings forth in our lives and actions a primary and fundamental response: to desire, seek and protect the good of others.” (*Evangelii Gaudium*, §178)
- b. **POPE FRANCIS:** “An authentic faith . . . *always involves a deep desire to change the world, to transmit values, to leave this earth somehow better than we found it* . . . If indeed “the just ordering of society and of the state is a central responsibility of politics,” the Church, “cannot and must not remain on the sidelines in the fight for justice.” (*Evangelii Gaudium*, §183)
- c. **US BISHOPS SEEK TO ADDRESS FOUR QUESTIONS:**
  - i. Why does the Church teach about issues affecting public policy?
  - ii. Who in the Church should participate in political life?
  - iii. How does the Church help the Catholic faithful to speak about political and social questions?
  - iv. What does the Church say about Catholic social teaching in the public square? (see: *FCFC* §6)

**4. Q#1 WHY DOES THE CHURCH TEACH ABOUT ISSUES AFFECTING PUBLIC POLICY?**

- a. **FCFC §9** “The Church’s obligation to participate in shaping the moral character of society is a requirement of our faith. It is a basic part of the mission we have received from Jesus Christ, who offers a vision of life revealed to us in Sacred Scripture and Tradition.”

- b. **VATICAN II:** “ “The truth is that only in the mystery of the incarnate Word does the mystery of man take on light. For Adam, the first man, was a figure of Him Who was to come, namely Christ the Lord. Christ, the final Adam, by the revelation of the mystery of the Father and His love, fully reveals man to man himself and makes his supreme calling clear. It is not surprising, then, that in Him all the aforementioned truths find their root and attain their crown” (*Gaudium et Spes* §22)
- c. **VATICAN II:** “The Christian man, conformed to the likeness of that Son Who is the firstborn of many brothers, received "the first-fruits of the Spirit" (Rom. 8:23) by which he becomes capable of discharging the new law of love.(28) Through this Spirit, who is "the pledge of our inheritance" (*Eph.* 1:14), the whole man is renewed from within, even to the achievement of "the redemption of the body" (*Rom.* 8:23). (*GS* §22)
- d. **VATICAN II:** “Such is the mystery of man, and it is a great one, as seen by believers in the light of Christian revelation. Through Christ and in Christ, the riddles of sorrow and death grow meaningful. Apart from His Gospel, they overwhelm us. Christ has risen, destroying death by His death; He has lavished life upon us(33) so that, as sons in the Son, we can cry out in the Spirit; Abba, Father.” (*GS* §22)
- e. **POPE BENEDICT XVI:** “*Charity in truth* places man before the astonishing experience of *gift* ... The human being is *made for gift*, which expresses and makes present his transcendent dimension. Sometimes modern man is wrongly convinced that *he is the sole author of himself, his life and society. This is a presumption that follows from being selfishly closed in upon himself, and it is a consequence – to express it in faith terms – of original sin.* The Church's wisdom has always pointed to the presence of original sin in social conditions and in the structure of society: “Ignorance of the fact that man has a wounded nature inclined to evil gives rise to serious errors in the areas of education, politics, social action and morals” [CCC 407]. *In the list of areas where the pernicious effects of sin are evident, the economy has been included for some time now. We have a clear proof of this at the present time.* The conviction that man is self-sufficient and can successfully eliminate the evil present in history by his own action alone has *led him to confuse happiness and salvation* with immanent forms of *material prosperity and social action*” (*Caritas et Veritate* § 34).
- f. **POPE BENEDICT XVI:** “Charity is at the heart of the Church's social doctrine. Every responsibility and every commitment spelt out by that doctrine is derived from charity which, according to the teaching of Jesus, is the synthesis of the entire Law. It gives real substance to the personal relationship with God and with neighbour; *it is the principle not only of micro-relationships (with friends, with family members or within small groups) but also of macro-relationships (social, economic and political ones).* For the Church, instructed by the Gospel, charity is everything because, as Saint John teaches (cf. 1 Jn 4:8, 16) and as I recalled in my first Encyclical Letter, “God is love” (*Deus Caritas Est*): *Everything has its origin in God's love, everything is shaped by it, everything is directed towards it.* Love is

God’s greatest gift to humanity, it is his promise and our hope” (*Caritas et Veritate* § 2).

- g. FCFC §10** “What *faith* teaches about the dignity of the human person, about the sacredness of every human life, and about humanity's strengths and weaknesses helps us see more clearly the same truths that also come to us through the gift of *human reason*. At the center of these truths is respect for the dignity of every person. *This is the core of Catholic moral and social teaching*. Because we are people of both *faith and reason*, it is appropriate and necessary for us to bring this essential truth about human life and dignity to the public square. We are called to practice Christ's commandment to ‘love one another’ (*John 13:34*).”
  - h. FCFC §12** “The Catholic community brings important assets to the political dialogue about our nation's future. We bring a consistent *moral framework*-drawn from basic human reason that is illuminated by Scripture and the teaching of the Church—for *assessing issues, political platforms, and campaigns*. We also bring broad *experience* in serving those in need-educating the young, serving families in crisis, caring for the sick, sheltering the homeless, helping women who face difficult pregnancies, feeding the hungry, welcoming immigrants and refugees, reaching out in global solidarity, and pursuing peace. We celebrate, with all our neighbors, the historically robust commitment to *religious freedom* in this country that has allowed the Church the freedom to serve the common good.”
- 5. Q#2 WHO IN THE CHURCH SHOULD PARTICIPATE IN POLITICAL LIFE?**
- a. FCFC §13** “In the Catholic Tradition, responsible citizenship is a *virtue*, and participation in political life is a *moral obligation*.”
  - b. CCC 1913** “Participation is the *voluntary and generous engagement of a person in social interchange*. It is necessary that all participate, each according to his position and role, in promoting the common good. This obligation is inherent in the dignity of the human person.”
  - c. CCC 1914** “Participation is achieved first of all *by taking charge of the areas for which one assumes personal responsibility*: by the care taken for the education of his family, by conscientious work, and so forth, man participates in the good of others and of society.”
  - d. CCC 1915** “As far as possible citizens should take an active part in *public life*. The manner of this participation may vary from one country or culture to another. ‘One must pay tribute to those nations whose systems permit the largest possible number of the citizens to take part in public life in a climate of genuine freedom.’”
  - e. FCFC §13** “Unfortunately, politics in our country often can be a contest of powerful interests, partisan attacks, sound bites, and media hype. The Church calls for a different kind of political engagement: *one shaped by the moral convictions of well-formed consciences and focused on the dignity of every human*

*being, the pursuit of the common good, and the protection of the weak and the vulnerable.”*

- f. **POPE FRANCIS:** “Politics, though often denigrated, remains a lofty vocation and one of the highest forms of charity, inasmuch as it seeks the common good ... I beg the Lord to grant us more politicians who are genuinely disturbed by the state of society, the people, the lives of the poor!” (*Evangelii Gaudium*, §205).
  - g. **POPE BENEDICT XVI:** “The Church wishes to help form consciences in political life and to stimulate greater insight into the authentic requirements of justice as well as greater readiness to act accordingly, *even when this might involve conflict with situations of personal interest* ... The Church cannot and must not take upon herself the political battle to bring about the most just society possible. She cannot and must not replace the State. *Yet at the same time she cannot and must not remain on the sidelines in the fight for justice*” (*Caritas et Veritate* §28).
  - h. **FCFC §16** “Forming their consciences in accord with Catholic teaching, Catholic lay women and men can become actively involved: *running for office; working within political parties; communicating their concerns and positions to elected officials; and joining diocesan social mission or advocacy networks, state Catholic conference initiatives, community organizations, and other efforts* to apply authentic moral teaching in the public square. *Even those who cannot vote have the right to have their voices heard on issues that affect their lives and the common good.*”
- 6. HOW DOES THE CHURCH HELP THE CATHOLIC FAITHFUL TO SPEAK ABOUT POLITICAL AND SOCIAL QUESTIONS?**

#### A WELL-FORMED CONSCIENCE

- a. **FCFC §17** “Catholics have a serious and lifelong obligation to form their consciences in accord with human reason and the teaching of the Church. Conscience is not something that allows us to justify doing whatever we want, nor is it a mere *feeling* about what we should or should not do. Rather, *conscience is the voice of God resounding in the human heart, revealing the truth to us and calling us to do what is good while shunning what is evil. Conscience always requires serious attempts to make sound moral judgments based on the truths of our faith.*”
- b. **CCC 1778** “Conscience is a judgment of reason whereby the human person recognizes the moral quality of a concrete act that he is going to perform, is in the process of performing, or has already completed. In all he says and does, man is obliged to follow faithfully what he knows to be just and right. It is by the judgment of his conscience that man perceives and recognizes the prescriptions of the divine law.”
- c. **CCC 1779** “It is important for every person to be sufficiently present to himself in order to hear and follow the voice of his conscience. This requirement of *interiority* is all the more necessary as life often distracts us from any reflection, self-examination or introspection: Return to your conscience,

question it.... Turn inward, brethren, and in everything you do, see God as your witness” [citing St. Augustine]

- d. **CCC 1780** The dignity of the human person implies and requires *uprightness of moral conscience*. Conscience includes the perception of the principles of morality; their application in the given circumstances by practical discernment of reasons and goods; and finally judgment about concrete acts yet to be performed or already performed. The truth about the moral good, stated in the law of reason, is recognized practically and concretely by the *prudent judgment* of conscience. We call that man prudent who chooses in conformity with this judgment.”
- e. **CCC 1781** “Conscience enables one to assume *responsibility* for the acts performed. If man commits evil, the just judgment of conscience can remain within him as the witness to the universal truth of the good, at the same time as the evil of his particular choice. The verdict of the judgment of conscience remains a pledge of hope and mercy. In attesting to the fault committed, it calls to mind the forgiveness that must be asked, the good that must still be practiced, and the virtue that must be constantly cultivated with the grace of God:
  - i. **I JOHN 3:19-20** We shall ... reassure our hearts before him whenever our hearts condemn us; for God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything.”
- f. **CCC 1782** “Man has the right to act in conscience and in freedom so as personally to make moral decisions. He must not be forced to act contrary to his conscience. Nor must he be prevented from acting according to his conscience, especially in religious matters.”

#### THE VIRTUE OF PRUDENCE

- g. **CCC 1806** “*Prudence* is the virtue that disposes practical reason to discern our true good in every circumstance and to choose the right means of achieving it; “the prudent man looks where he is going” (*Prov.* 14:15).

- i. **ST. THOMAS:** “Keep sane and sober for your prayers” (*Summa Theologica* II–II, 47, 2).

Prudence is ‘right reason in action,’ writes St. Thomas Aquinas, following Aristotle. It is not to be confused with timidity or fear, nor with duplicity or dissimulation. It is called *auriga virtutum* (*the charioteer of the virtues*); it guides the other virtues by setting rule and measure. It is prudence that immediately guides the judgment of conscience. The prudent man determines and directs his conduct in accordance with this judgment. With the help of this virtue we apply moral principles to particular cases without error and overcome doubts about the good to achieve and the evil to avoid.”

- h. **FCFC §17** “The Church's teaching is clear that a good end does not justify an immoral means ... We have a responsibility to discern carefully which public

policies are morally sound. Catholics may choose different ways to respond to compelling social problems, but we cannot differ on our moral obligation to help build a more just and peaceful world through morally acceptable means, so that the weak and vulnerable are protected and human rights and dignity are defended.”

#### DOING GOOD AND AVOIDING EVIL

- i. **FCFC §22** “There are some things we must never do, as individuals or as a society, because they are always incompatible with love of God and neighbor. Such actions are so deeply flawed that they are always opposed to the authentic good of persons. These are called ‘intrinsically evil’ actions. They must always be rejected and opposed and must never be supported or condoned. A prime example is the intentional taking of innocent human life, as in abortion and euthanasia. In our nation, "abortion and euthanasia have become preeminent threats to human dignity because they directly attack life itself, the most fundamental human good and the condition for all others" (*Living the Gospel of Life*, no. 5). It is a mistake with grave moral consequences to treat the destruction of innocent human life merely as a matter of individual choice. A legal system that violates the basic right to life on the grounds of choice is fundamentally flawed.”
- j. **FCFC §23** “Similarly, human cloning, destructive research on human embryos, and other acts that directly violate the sanctity and dignity of human life are also intrinsically evil. These must always be opposed. Other direct assaults on innocent human life, such as genocide, torture, and the targeting of noncombatants in acts of terror or war, can never be justified. Nor can violations of human dignity, such as acts of racism, treating workers as mere means to an end, deliberately subjecting workers to subhuman living conditions, treating the poor as disposable, or redefining marriage to deny its essential meaning, ever be justified.”
- k. **FCFC §27-29** “Two temptations in public life can distort the Church's defense of human life and dignity.
  - i. The first is a moral equivalence that makes no ethical distinctions between different kinds of issues involving human life and dignity. The direct and intentional destruction of innocent human life from the moment of conception until natural death is always wrong and is not just one issue among many. It must always be opposed ...
  - ii. The second is the misuse of these necessary moral distinctions as a way of dismissing or ignoring other serious threats to human life and dignity. The current and projected extent of environmental degradation has become a moral crisis especially because it poses a risk to humanity in the future and threatens the lives of poor and vulnerable human persons here and now. Racism and other unjust discrimination, the use of the death penalty, resorting to unjust war, the use of torture, war crimes, the failure to respond to those who are suffering from hunger or a lack of health care, pornography, redefining civil marriage, compromising religious liberty, or

an unjust immigration policy are all serious moral issues that challenge our consciences and require us to act. These are not optional concerns which can be dismissed. Catholics are urged to seriously consider Church teaching on these issues.”

### MAKING MORAL CHOICES

- l.** FCFC §32 “Decisions about political life are complex and require the exercise of a well-formed conscience aided by prudence. This exercise of conscience begins with outright opposition to laws and other policies that violate human life or weaken its protection. ... Sometimes morally flawed laws already exist. In this situation, the process of framing legislation to protect life is subject to prudential judgment and ‘*the art of the possible.*’ At times this process may restore justice only partially or gradually.
    - i.** For example, St. John Paul II taught that when a government official who fully opposes abortion cannot succeed in completely overturning a pro-abortion law, he or she may work to improve protection for unborn human life, ‘limiting the harm done by such a law’ and lessening its negative impact as much as possible (*Evangelium Vitae*, no. 73).
  - m.** FCFC §32 (Continued) “Such incremental improvements in the law are acceptable as steps toward the full restoration of justice. However, Catholics must never abandon the moral requirement to seek full protection for all human life from the moment of conception until natural death.”
  - n.** FCFC §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 favors a policy promoting an intrinsically evil act, such as abortion, euthanasia, assisted suicide, deliberately subjecting workers or the poor to subhuman living conditions, redefining marriage in ways that violate its essential meaning, or racist behavior, 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.”
  - o.** FCFC §36 “When all candidates hold a position that promotes an intrinsically evil act, the conscientious voter faces a dilemma. The voter may decide to take the extraordinary step of not voting for any candidate or, after careful deliberation, may decide to vote for the candidate deemed less likely to advance such a morally flawed position and more likely to pursue other authentic human goods.”
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## PART IV: MORAL ISSUES FACING AMERICAN CATHOLICS TODAY (2 OF 2)

DR. STEVEN SMITH

ON “FORMING CONSCIENCES FOR FAITHFUL CITIZENSHIP: THREEFOLD TEACHING  
FROM THE U.S. CATHOLIC BISHOPS” (CONTINUED)<sup>41</sup>

### 1. INTRODUCTION.

- a. In the last session, we worked through Part I of the document (*The U.S. Bishops’ Reflection on Catholic Teaching and Political Life*).
- b. We looked at 3 of the 4 key questions that the U.S. Bishops raise in the document:
  - i. Why does the Church teach about issues affecting public policy?
  - ii. Who in the Church should participate in political life?
  - iii. How does the Church help the Catholic faithful to speak about political and social questions?

### 2. WHAT DOES THE CHURCH SAY ABOUT CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING IN THE PUBLIC SQUARE? FOUR PRINCIPLES OF CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING

#### a. DIGNITY OF THE HUMAN PERSON

- i. FCFC §40 “Direct attacks on innocent persons are never morally acceptable, at any stage or in any condition. In our society, human life is especially under direct attack from abortion, which some political actors mischaracterize as an issue of ‘women’s health.’ Other direct threats to the sanctity of human life include *euthanasia* and *assisted suicide* (sometimes falsely labelled as ‘death with dignity’), human cloning, in vitro fertilization, and the destruction of human embryos for research.”
- ii. CCC 2277 “Whatever its motives and means, direct euthanasia<sup>42</sup> *consists in putting an end to the lives of handicapped, sick, or dying persons*. It is morally unacceptable.”<sup>43</sup>

#### iii. CONCERNING *IN VITRO* FERTILIZATION:

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<sup>41</sup> Note: This reflection is drawn largely (but not solely) from the following document of the US Bishops (2015): *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship: Threefold Teaching from the US Catholic Bishops*. Available here: <http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/faithful-citizenship/forming-consciences-for-faithful-citizenship-title.cfm>. (The document will be abbreviated as FCFC here.)

<sup>42</sup> CCC 2277 continues: “Thus an act or omission which, of itself or by intention, causes death in order to eliminate suffering *constitutes a murder gravely contrary to the dignity of the human person and to the respect due to the living God, his Creator*. The error of judgment into which one can fall in good faith *does not change the nature of this murderous act*, which must always be forbidden and excluded.”

<sup>43</sup> CCC 2276 “Those whose lives are diminished or weakened deserve special respect. Sick or handicapped persons should be helped to lead lives as normal as possible.” See also CCC 2278-79.

1. **DONUM VITAE §3:** “*No biologist or doctor can reasonably claim, by virtue of his scientific competence, to be able to decide on people's origin and destiny. This norm must be applied in a particular way in the field of sexuality and procreation, in which man and woman actualize the fundamental values of love and life. God, who is love and life, has inscribed in man and woman the vocation to share in a special way in his mystery of personal communion and in his work as Creator and Father.*”<sup>44</sup>
2. John Haas: *In vitro* fertilization brings about new life in a petri dish. Children engendered through IVF are sometimes known as ‘test tube babies.’ Several eggs are aspirated from the woman's ovary after she has taken a fertility drug which causes a number of eggs to mature at the same time.”<sup>45</sup>
3. “Obviously, IVF *eliminates* the marriage act as the means of achieving pregnancy, instead of *helping* it achieve this natural end. *The new life is not engendered through an act of love between husband and wife, but by a laboratory procedure performed by doctors or technicians. Husband and wife are merely sources for the ‘raw materials’ of egg and sperm, which are later manipulated by a technician to cause the sperm to fertilize the egg.*”<sup>46</sup>

iv. **CONCERNING TORTURE:**

1. **CCC 2297** “*Terrorism* threatens, wounds, and kills indiscriminately; it is gravely against justice and charity. *Torture* which uses physical or moral violence to extract confessions, punish the guilty, frighten opponents, or satisfy hatred is contrary to respect for the person and for human dignity.”
2. **FCFC §45** “Catholic teaching about the dignity of life calls us to *oppose torture, unjust war, and the indiscriminate use of drones for violent purposes; to prevent genocide and attacks against*

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<sup>44</sup> CDF Document *Donum Vitae (The Gift of Life)*. “Instruction on Respect for Human Life in Its Origin and on the Dignity of Procreation.” Available here: [http://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc\\_con\\_cfaith\\_doc\\_19870222\\_respect-for-human-life\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_19870222_respect-for-human-life_en.html).

<sup>45</sup> From “*Begotten Not Made: A Catholic View of Reproductive Technology*.” John M. Haas, Ph.D., S.T.L. Available at the USCCB website here: <http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/human-life-and-dignity/reproductive-technology/begotten-not-made-a-catholic-view-of-reproductive-technology.cfm>.

Dr. Haas explains: “Semen is collected from the man, usually through masturbation. The egg and sperm are ultimately joined in a glass dish, where conception takes place and the new life is allowed to develop for several days. In the simplest case, embryos are then transferred to the mother's womb in the hope that one will survive to term.”

<sup>46</sup> Haas, *Begotten Not Made*. “Not infrequently, ‘donor’ eggs or sperm are used. This means that the genetic father or mother of the child could well be someone from outside the marriage. This can create a confusing situation for the child later, when he or she learns that one parent raising him or her is not actually the biological parent.”

*noncombatants; to oppose racism; to oppose human trafficking; and to overcome poverty and suffering ... We revere the lives of children in the womb, the lives of persons dying in war and from starvation, and indeed the lives of all human beings as children of God. We stand opposed to these and all activities that contribute to what Pope Francis has called ‘a throwaway culture.’”*

**b. SUBSIDIARITY<sup>47</sup>**

- i. **DIGNATITIS HUMANAЕ §4:** “Religious communities also have the right *not to be hindered, either by legal measures or by administrative action on the part of government*, in the selection, training, appointment, and transfer of their own ministers, in communicating with religious authorities and communities abroad, in erecting buildings for religious purposes, and in the acquisition and use of suitable funds or properties.”<sup>48</sup>
- ii. “Religious communities also have the right *not to be hindered in their public teaching and witness to their faith, whether by the spoken or by the written word ...* Such a manner of action would have to be considered an abuse of one's right and a violation of the right of others.”<sup>49</sup>

**c. THE COMMON GOOD**

- i. **GAUDIUM ET SPES §26:** The common good indicates “*the sum total of social conditions which allow people, either as groups or as individuals, to reach their fulfilment more fully and more easily.*”
- ii. **FCFC §50** “Work is *more than a way to make a living; it is a form of continuing participation in God's creation.* Employers contribute to the common good through the services or products they provide and by creating jobs that uphold the dignity and rights of workers—to productive work, to decent and just wages, to adequate benefits and security in their old age, to the choice of whether to organize and join unions, to the opportunity for legal status for immigrant workers, to private property, and to economic initiative.”

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<sup>47</sup> “Subsidiarity” refers to *an organizing principle that matters ought to be handled by the smallest, lowest or least centralized competent authority.* “It is impossible to promote the dignity of the person without showing concern for the family, groups, associations, local territorial realities; in short, for that aggregate of economic, social, cultural, sports-oriented, recreational, professional and political expressions to which people spontaneously give life and which make it possible for them to achieve effective social growth.” (Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church, §185)

<sup>48</sup> Pope Paul VI, *Dignatitit Humanae* (Latin: *Of the Dignity of the Human Person*). Second Vatican Council, Declaration on Religious Freedom (1965). Available here: [http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist\\_councils/ii\\_vatican\\_council/documents/vat-ii\\_decl\\_19651207\\_dignitatis-humanae\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decl_19651207_dignitatis-humanae_en.html).

<sup>49</sup> *Dignatitit Humanae* §4.

- iii. **FCFC §50** “Workers *also have responsibilities*-to provide a fair day's work for a fair day's pay, to treat employers and co-workers with respect, and to carry out their work in ways that contribute to the common good. *Workers, employers, and unions should not only advance their own interests but also work together to advance economic justice and the well-being of all.*”
- iv. **FCFC §51** “The threats to the environment are many. Pope Francis, consistent with both St. John Paul II and Pope Benedict XVI has recently lifted up *pollution, climate change, lack of access to clean water, and the loss of bio-diversity* as particular challenges. [Francis] speaks of an ‘*ecological debt*’ (*Laudato Si* §51) owed by wealthier nations to developing nations and he laments the weakness of many responses to the ecological challenges rooted in ‘*complacency and a cheerful recklessness*’ (*LS* §59). In the face of this, we should aim for ‘*a new lifestyle*’ (*LS* §203-208), one that strives to live simply to meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs, and one that brings ‘*healthy pressure to bear on those who wield political, economic and social power.*’” (*LS* §206).

d. **SOLIDARITY**

- i. **SAINT POPE JOHN PAUL II:** “... Among the actions and attitudes opposed to the will of God, the good of neighbor and the "structures" created by them, two are very typical: on the one hand, the all-consuming desire for profit, and on the other, the thirst for power, with the intention of imposing one's will upon others. In order to characterize better each of these attitudes, one can add the expression: ‘*at any price.*’ In other words, we are faced with the *absolutizing* of human attitudes with all its possible consequences” (*Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* §36).<sup>50</sup>
- ii. **SAINT POPE JOHN PAUL II:** “Obviously, not only individuals fall victim to this double attitude of sin; *nations and blocs can do so too.* And this favors even more the introduction of the ‘*structures of sin*’ of which I have spoken. If certain forms of modern ‘imperialism’ were considered in the light of these moral criteria, we would see that hidden behind certain decisions, apparently inspired only by economics or politics, are *real forms of idolatry: of money, ideology, class, technology*” (*Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* §37).
- iii. **FCFC §52** “Solidarity also includes the scriptural call to welcome the stranger among us-including immigrants seeking work-by ensuring that they have opportunities for a safe home, education for their children, and a decent life for their families and by ending the practice of separating families through deportation. In light of the Gospel's invitation to be peacemakers, our commitment to solidarity with our neighbors-at home

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<sup>50</sup> Available here: [http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_enc\\_30121987\\_sollicitudo-rei-socialis.html](http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_30121987_sollicitudo-rei-socialis.html).

and abroad-also demands that we promote peace and pursue justice in a world marred by terrible violence and conflict.”

- iv. **FCFC §53** “...A special emphasis must be given to the Church's *preferential option for the poor*. While the common good embraces all, those who are weak, vulnerable, and most in need deserve preferential concern. *A basic moral test for any society is how it treats those who are most vulnerable.*”
- v. **CCC 2448**: “...*Human misery* is the obvious sign of the inherited condition of frailty and need for salvation in which man finds himself as a consequence of original sin. This misery elicited the compassion of Christ the Savior, who willingly took it upon himself and identified himself with *the least of his brethren* ...those who are oppressed by poverty are the object of a *preferential love* on the part of the Church which ...has not ceased to work for their relief, defense, and liberation through numerous works of charity which remain indispensable always and everywhere.”

### 3. Part II Applying Catholic Teaching to Major Issues (Summary of Positions of USCCB)

- a. **FCFC §63** “To engage in politics, then, is more than getting involved in current polemics and debates; *it is about acting with others and through institutions for the benefit of all*. [Although] much of our political rhetoric has become very negative and that political polarization [has] grown should not dissuade us from the high calling to work for a world that allows everyone to thrive, a world in which all persons, all families, have what they need to fulfill their God-given destiny.”
- b. **FCFC §63** “In this brief summary [that follows], we bishops call attention to issues with significant moral dimensions that should be carefully considered in each campaign and as policy decisions are made in the years to come.”
- c. **HUMAN LIFE**
  - i. **FCFC §65** “Laws that legitimize any of these practices are *profoundly unjust and immoral*. Our Conference supports laws and policies to protect human life to the maximum degree possible, including constitutional protection for the unborn and legislative efforts to end *abortion, assisted suicide, and euthanasia*. We also promote a culture of life by supporting laws and programs that encourage childbirth and *adoption over abortion* and by addressing poverty, providing health care, and offering other assistance to pregnant women, children, and families.”
  - ii. **FCFC §65** “The end of life is a *holy moment*, a moment that marks a preparation for life with God, and it is to be treated *with reverence and accompaniment*. The end of life is as sacred as the beginning of life and requires treatment that honors the true dignity of the human person as created in the image of the living God.”
- d. **PROMOTING PEACE**

- i. **FCFC §68** “Catholics must also work *to avoid war and to promote peace*. This is of particular importance, as there is a danger in the present time of *becoming indifferent to war because of the number of armed conflicts*.”
- ii. **FCFC §68** “War is never a reflection of what ought to be but *a sign that something more true to human dignity has failed*. The Catholic tradition recognizes the legitimacy of just war teaching when defending the innocent in the face of grave evil, but we must never lose sight of the cost of war and its harm to human life.”
- iii. **FCFC §69** “Even when military force can be justified as a last resort, it should not be indiscriminate or disproportionate ... The use of weapons of mass destruction or other means of warfare that do not distinguish between civilians and soldiers *is fundamentally immoral*. The United States has a responsibility to work to reverse the spread of *nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons*, and to reduce its own reliance on weapons of mass destruction by pursuing progressive nuclear disarmament.”

**e. MARRIAGE AND FAMILY LIFE**

- i. **FCFC §70** “*The family founded upon marriage is the basic cell of human society. The role, responsibilities, and needs of families should be central national priorities. Marriage must be defined, recognized, and protected as a lifelong exclusive commitment between a man and a woman, and as the source of the next generation and the protective haven for children.*”
- ii. **FCFC §70** “The institution of marriage is undermined by the ideology of ‘gender’ that dismisses sexual difference and the complementarity of the sexes and falsely presents ‘gender’ as *nothing more than a social construct or psychological reality*, which a person may choose at variance with his or her biological reality.”<sup>51</sup>
- iii. **FCFC §71** “We oppose contraceptive and abortion mandates in public programs and health plans, *which endanger rights of conscience and can interfere with parents' right to guide the moral formation of their children.*”

**f. RELIGIOUS FREEDOM**

- i. **FCFC §72** “US policy should promote *religious liberty vigorously*, both at home and abroad: our first and most cherished freedom is rooted in the very dignity of the human person, *a fundamental human right that knows no geographical boundaries*” (see: *Dignitatis Humanae*, §2).

**g. PREFERENTIAL OPTION FOR THE POOR AND ECONOMIC JUSTICE**

- i. **FCFC §73** “Economic decisions and institutions should be assessed according to whether they protect or undermine the dignity of the human

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<sup>51</sup> FCFC §70 “Policies on taxes, work, divorce, immigration, and welfare should uphold the God-given meaning and value of marriage and family, help families stay together, and reward responsibility and sacrifice for children.”

person. Social and economic policies should foster the creation of jobs for all who can work with decent working conditions and *just wages*. Barriers to equal pay and employment for women and those facing unjust *discrimination must be overcome*. Catholic social teaching supports the *right of workers to choose whether to organize, join a union, and bargain collectively, and to exercise these rights without reprisal*. It also affirms *economic freedom, initiative, and the right to private property.*”

**h. HEALTH CARE**

- i. FCFC §80** “*Affordable and accessible health care* is an essential safeguard of human life and a fundamental human right ... Health care coverage remains an urgent national priority. *The nation's health care system needs to be rooted in values that respect human dignity, protect human life, respect the principle of subsidiarity, and meet the needs of the poor and uninsured, especially born and unborn children, pregnant women, immigrants, and other vulnerable populations.*”
- ii. FCFC §80** “The USCCB supports measures to strengthen Medicare and Medicaid [and] advocates *effective, compassionate care* that reflects Catholic moral values for those suffering from HIV/AIDS and those coping with addictions.”

**i. MIGRATION**

- i. FCFC §81** “Comprehensive reform is urgently necessary to fix a broken immigration system and should include *a broad and fair legalization program with a path to citizenship; a work program with worker protections and just wages; family reunification policies; access to legal protections, which include due process procedures; refuge for those fleeing persecution and violence; and policies to address the root causes of migration*. The right and responsibility of nations to *control their borders* and to maintain *the rule of law* should be recognized but pursued in a just and humane manner.”

**j. CATHOLIC EDUCATION**

- i. FCFC §82** “Parents—the first and most important educators—have a fundamental *right to choose the education* best suited to the needs of their children, including public, private, and religious schools.”
- ii. FCFC §83** “All persons have a right to receive a quality *education*. Young people, including those who are poor and those with disabilities, need to have the opportunity to develop intellectually, morally, spiritually, and physically, allowing them to become good citizens who make socially and morally responsible decisions. *This requires parental choice in education.*”

**k. PROMOTING JUSTICE AND COUNTERING VIOLENCE**

- i. FCFC §84** “A *humane and remedial* rather than a *strictly punitive* approach to offenders should be developed ... [including] supporting efforts that justly reduce the prison population, help people leaving prison to reintegrate into their communities, combat recidivism, promote just

sentencing reform, and strengthen relationships between the police and the communities they serve.”

**I. COMBATTING UNJUST DISCRIMINATION**

**i. FCFC §85** “It is important for our society to continue to combat *any unjust discrimination, whether based on race, religion, sex, ethnicity, disabling condition, or age*, as these are grave injustices and affronts to human dignity.”

**m. CARE FOR OUR COMMON HOME**

**i. FCFC §86** “Our Conference offers a distinctive call to seriously address *global climate change*, focusing on the virtue of *prudence*, pursuit of the *common good*, and the *impact on the poor*, particularly on vulnerable workers and the poorest nations. *The United States should lead in contributing to the sustainable development of poorer nations and promoting greater justice in sharing the burden of environmental blight, neglect, and recovery.*”

**n. COMMUNICATIONS, MEDIA, AND CULTURE**

**i. FCFC §87** “Print, broadcast, and electronic media *shape the culture*. To protect children and families, *responsible regulation is needed* that respects *freedom of speech* yet also addresses policies *that have lowered standards, permitted increasingly offensive material, and reduced opportunities for non-commercial religious programming.*”

**ii. FCFC §89** “Because access to *pornographic and violent material* is becoming easier, vigorous enforcement of obscenity and child pornography laws is necessary, as well as technology that assists parents, schools, and libraries in blocking unwanted or undesirable materials.”

**o. GLOBAL SOLIDARITY**

**i.** “The United States has the responsibility to take the lead in addressing the scandal of *poverty and underdevelopment*. Our nation should help to *humanize globalization*, addressing its negative consequences and spreading its benefits, especially among the world's poor. The United States also has a unique opportunity to use its power in partnership with others to build a more just and peaceful world.”

**4. PART III: GOALS FOR POLITICAL LIFE: CHALLENGES FOR CITIZENS, CANDIDATES, AND PUBLIC OFFICIALS [FCFC §92]**

**a.** “...Protect the weakest in our midst—*innocent unborn children*—by restricting and bringing to an end the destruction of unborn children through abortion and providing women in crisis pregnancies the supports they need to make a decision for life.”

**b.** “*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.”

- c. “*Protect the fundamental understanding of marriage as the life-long and faithful union of one man and one woman and as the central institution of society; promote the complementarity of the sexes and reject false ‘gender’ ideologies; 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.*”
- d. “*Achieve comprehensive immigration reform that offers a path to citizenship, treats immigrant workers fairly, prevents the separation of families, maintains the integrity of our borders, respects the rule of law, and addresses the factors that compel people to leave their own countries.*”
- e. “*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.*”
- f. “*Provide health care while respecting human life, human dignity, and religious freedom in our health care system.*”
- g. “*Continue to oppose policies that reflect prejudice, hostility toward immigrants, religious bigotry, and other forms of unjust discrimination.*”
- h. “*Encourage families, community groups, economic structures, and government to work together to overcome poverty, pursue the common good, and care for creation.*”
- i. “*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—with a special view to seeking a responsible and effective response for ending the persecution of Christians and other religious minorities in the Middle East and other parts of the world.*”
- j. “*Join with others around the world to pursue peace, protect human rights.*”

## PART V – CONCLUSION / Q & A

DR. STEVEN SMITH