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Faithful Citizenship: Voting & Holiness

Nicholas P. Cafardi

When Mother Teresa won the Nobel Peace Prize, a reporter, cameras rolling, asked her if she were a holy person. She looked right at him and said, “It’s my job to be holy. It’s your job to be holy, too. Why do you think God put us on this earth?”

What does it mean to be holy? We know Jesus’ answer: “Love the Lord your God with your whole heart, your whole soul and your whole mind; and love your neighbor as yourself.” Jesus defines holiness in terms of love. How can this apply to the voting process?

To start, holiness requires us to inform our consciences. “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.”¹ Untethered feelings are not conscience. Conscience is based on truth—Scripture, the church’s traditions

This does not mean that complex issues should paralyze us...

and teachings, and the guidance of the Holy Spirit. We are obliged to apply all of these to moral choices like voting.

Discerning Answers

A first characteristic of holiness in the voting process is that it does not think that there are easy and readily apparent answers to complex political questions.

This does not mean that complex issues should paralyze us or lead us to believe that every answer is equally correct. That is not the case. It does mean that we have to strive to be holy in discerning those answers.

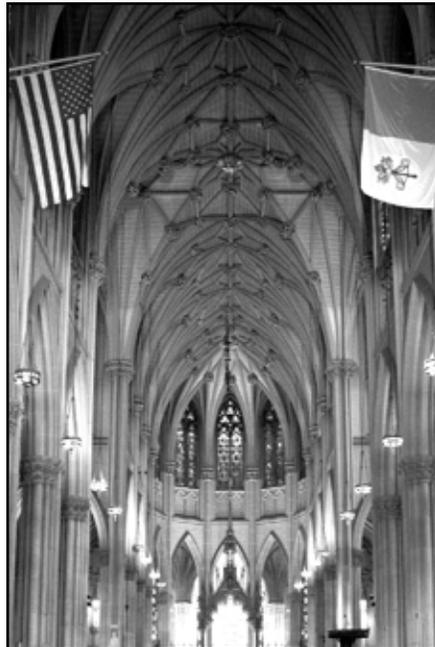
The church must leave the political answer, the “how” of solving political problems, even when those political problems have a moral component, to the informed consciences of the laity. Political strategy is not a question of holiness or even of faith.

Choosing Candidates

It follows then that the church cannot, legally or morally, tell us which candidates to vote for. In “Faithful Citizenship,” their guide to Catholic participation in the political process, the U.S. bishops write about the single-issue voter: “A Catholic cannot vote for a candidate who takes a position in favor of an intrinsic evil, such as abortion or racism, if the voter’s intent is to support that position.”

If you grant them their premise, then the bishops’ conclusion follows: the Catholic voter who votes for such a candidate has done something terribly wrong. But how likely is the prospect that a voter chooses a candidate for one reason only, and that reason is an evil one?

Normally the basis on which we choose one candidate over another is multifaceted, just as life is multifaceted. We weigh the candidates against each other, evaluating their character as well as their



St. Patrick's Cathedral, New York City

We cannot use our church as a political question and answer machine. When the scribes and the Pharisees tried to trick Jesus into a political debate about Roman power, he, knowing there was no good answer, refused to offer a specific response. Instead, he said, “Render to Caesar what is Caesar’s; and to God, what is God’s.”

In holiness, when pastors speak to the morality of an issue, they should not choose political sides.

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stances on issues, agreeing with some of the candidate's positions, perhaps not agreeing on others, but preferring one candidate over another after weighing complex alternatives.

Respect for Others

Next, holiness does not let us demonize the other, those candidates we do not like, those people on the other side of a political issue. For example, I do not know anyone who belongs to the "party of death," that is, someone who joins a political party because that party sees death as a social good to be pursued. This does not mean that a criticism of the "culture of death" is inappropriate, but on the list of "life issues"—such as abortion, racial discrimination, contraception, embryonic stem

cell research, euthanasia, capital punishment, care for the lives of the poor, unjust war, immigration, lack of chastity, lack of marital fidelity—no one political party has it all right or all wrong. It may be difficult for us to accept that some people do not agree with all of our church's teachings on life issues, but they are not, by that fact, "supporters of death."

Finally, holiness does not seek to control others. People, even if they are in error, have rights, rights that Catholics seeking to be holy in the political process cannot ignore. In doubt, we bring faith, not coercion. And we bring faith primarily by example, by our respect for those who disagree with us.

Where does that bring us? To a final proposition: This world is imperfect and imperfectable. The kingdom is here and not yet here. The transcendent interacts with the immanent, but the immanent endures. Holiness understands this and puts up with it. This is perhaps the devil's greatest tool: He has brought us to a place in our politics where the only choice is a Hobson's choice: we either participate in a political process that allows wrong choices, some might even say immoral choices, or we withdraw from our democracy.

Trying to control someone with a morality they do not perceive is not holiness. It certainly is not reflective of the Lord who calls

but never compels, the Lord who said, "Take the log out of your eye before you tell your brother to remove the splinter from his."

Visit www.ipjc.org/FC.html to read a web-only article by Angela Senander, PhD on **faithful citizenship and religious liberty.**

Love & Vote

Human freedom, given us by our Creator, is the proper intermediary of holiness. In the political process holiness endures actions by political society that might be wrong, perhaps even evil, because to do otherwise requires that we violate the consciences and the God-given freedom of others.

...holiness does not let us demonize the other...

Be wary of anyone who claims to know exactly what political choices God wants you to make. Our pastors can tell us the ethical and moral principles that should govern human behavior; they can tell us the values that should be defended; and we must learn from them on these matters in order to inform our own consciences. We also have an obligation to look at Scripture, the teachings and traditions of the church, the people of God, over the centuries. And we need to pray, to ask the Spirit for guidance.

None of this can be dodged. You cannot be holy in voting and fail to do these things. But once your conscience is properly formed, then—to paraphrase St. Augustine who said, "Love and do what you will"—I would say, "Love"—which means to be holy—"and vote how you will." ~

¹ USCCB, Faithful Citizenship, 7

Raising Voices for Social Change

Imagine that you have found your way into transitional housing after experiencing homelessness. You are pregnant or a new mother. You keep hearing about looming cuts to programs you rely on. What would you do?

The women of the Women's Justice Circle at Harrington House, a transitional housing program for homeless pregnant women and new mothers in Bellevue, WA, decided to share their stories with legislators considering budget cuts. "I am already struggling, so the possibility of any of these programs being cut scares me," wrote one woman. "I am writing this with the hope that you will consider my story when making budget decisions."

"Housing is very limited, and it's a long process to get into," wrote another resident. "Even though I am receiving these benefits and I'm stable, I'm terrified of what's to come. All I want is to give my daughter a secure and stable home, and provide for her."

The women wrote a joint letter to their legislators, accompanied by separate personal testimonials.

Learn more about Women's Justice Circles at www.ipjc.org



U.S. Elections: The Whole World is Watching

Jean Stokan

The choice we make in our presidential elections has real life effects on the entire global community. While the debate is most often centered on domestic issues, the impact of U.S. economic, political, and military policies reaches to the far corners of the world.

Two presidential elections ago—in 2004—I was working on the national staff of Pax Christi when we issued a call to our international partners to participate in elections monitoring in Florida. Given the voter fraud controversy of 2000, we partnered with the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People to place international observers in several Florida counties.

Striking was that so many internationals were eager to come—from 15 countries across five continents! I clearly remember the first evening's ice breaker when participants shared why they came. The resounding sentiment was that whoever is elected president of the U.S. is, in essence, the "president of the world." They spoke to the power and dominance of the U.S. abroad and how the U.S. president, in many ways, has more impact on their daily lives than their respective presidents.

Eyes from Outside

Such international "eyes from the outside" have much to offer the political discourse in our country, if we would position ourselves to listen. Their perspectives are mostly absent, yet sorely needed,

in the development of national policies such as immigration and militarization.

Immigration. In the heated debates around immigration reform, we witness the scapegoating of immigrants and a focus on militarizing the US-Mexico border. Rarely are the roots of migration acknowledged, including U.S. economic policies that produce immigrants by the thousands every day. For example, the U.S.



U.S. Army Staff Sergeant trains member of elite Honduran unit.

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promotion of free trade, as well as large farm agriculture subsidies in this country, means that it is now cheaper for people in El Salvador to buy corn imported from Iowa than from their own country. Left without work options and facing dramatically increasing violence in their countries, families are torn apart as some feel forced to migrate North. Yet we blame them for conditions U.S. policy helped produce.

Impact of US militarization. After the attacks of 9-11, the Bush Administration initiated a "war on terror" and developed a national security strategy built on U.S. military dominance, including pre-emptive action to eliminate threats. After 10 years of war in Afghanistan, it's increasingly clear that overreliance on a military

strategy has been a failure. The U.S. invasion of Iraq also ignited a spiral of violence which tore apart the social fabric of an ancient nation, destroyed its infrastructure, and resulted in untold suffering and death on all sides. A remilitarization of Central America is also underway, with the expressed goal of defeating drug cartels and organized crime. The chance of success is highly unlikely.

Engaging the Voices

Rarely do our political leaders sufficiently engage the perspectives of civil society groups in other countries, yet these voices could help us chart policies to ensure long-term peace. Let me illustrate with two short stories.

Shortly after the revelations of U.S. military involvement in the abuse of prisoners in Abu Ghraib in Iraq, Pax Christi organized a Capitol Hill briefing in which its international partners from Pakistan, India, Philippines and several African countries testified on how the U.S. war on terror was creating more terror and destabilization in their parts of the globe. A Pakistani spoke to how each time a bomb dropped in Afghanistan, a Christian Church in Pakistan

... the U.S. president, in many ways, has more impact on their daily lives than their respective presidents.

would be attacked, because Christianity was identified with the West and as a symbol of the U.S. military presence. I remember how the Congressional aides in attendance were riveted with the many stories.

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Life in the Cracks: Emerging Citizen Movements

Christopher Matthias

“The tax system is broken!”

“The election system is broken!”

“The two-party system is broken!”

“The welfare system is broken!”

“The immigration system is broken!”

It seems that we have a lot of broken systems these days. Do we simply love the blues, or have we have mastered the art of pointing out the flaws and rendering them irreparable?

There are two responses that the American system usually employs to patch the fissures. The first is to go back to a time when the system was intact; when things were “working.” The second is to reform the system, to re-envision it with the absence of flaws. Each approach has its champions, and rarely do they hold common ground except to assert the brokenness of said system.



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Police guard Wall St. statue from protesters

Before becoming a justice advocate, I was a landscaper. There was a system there too. Some of the work followed the rhythm of the seasons. Some of these things, such as fertilizing and mowing depended on a broken system. The grass would be mowed down, then the clippings would be thrown into the back of the truck to be taken away and either composted or

burnt. After repeating this process throughout the season, the lawn would be depleted of nutrients. We would then fertilize it, with petrochemicals. Very efficient ... on a scale of immediacy. Very inefficient on a long term scale. It became clear that this is one of the underpinnings of our economy. In order to sell a good or service, a natural functioning system is interrupted and the producer of goods or services inserts themselves into the cycle where they can fulfill the need. So when we look at today’s “broken” systems, what exactly is emerging in the cracks? How do we discern what is new life and what is a weed?

Emerging Movements

The *Tea Party*, according to its website, “spontaneously formed in 2009 from the reaction of the American people to fiscally irresponsible actions of the federal government, misguided ‘stimulus’ spending, bailouts and takeovers of private industry. Within the first few weeks of the movement, Tea Party Patriots formed to support the millions of Americans seeking to improve our great nation through renewed support for fiscal responsibility, constitutionally limited government, and free market economic policies.”

The *Occupy Wall Street* movement began in September of 2011. Self labeled as the *ninety-nine percent*, it began in Manhattan’s finan-

cial district in opposition to the 1% where the greatest concentration of wealth siphons. The movement emerged in the wake of both the Arab Spring and Citizens United v. F.E.C.—a ruling by the supreme court granting first amendment rights to corporations and unions, specifically the right to unlimited political spending. While criticized for not having a clear platform or conventional structure, the core values of the movement are advocacy for people-centric governance, which includes corporate and political transparency at every tier.

Discerning Truth

How do we appraise what is a movement that is life giving, and one that is life consuming? In his work *On God*, Mohandas K. Gandhi offers this insight:

“I do dimly perceive that whilst everything around me is ever changing, ever dying there is underlying all that change a living power that is changeless, that holds all together, that creates, dissolves and recreates. That informing power of spirit is God, and since nothing else that I see merely through the senses can or will persist, He alone is. And is this power benevolent or malevolent? I see it as purely benevolent, for I can see that in the midst of death life persists, in the midst of untruth truth persists, in the midst of darkness light persists.”

To paraphrase, the unshakeable underpinnings of truth are fundamentally good, what degrades is fallible untruth. Truth however, is creative, dissolves what is not true, and recreates itself.

There are commonalities be-

tween the two movements. Both claim to speak for the masses, and both are concerned about the relationship between government and business. They contrast however, in how to respond to the shared concerns. The Tea Party holds the position that regulations have bound the hands of business and stifled economic flow. Whereas, the Occupy movement believes that deregulation has led to political influence within the government, which favors corporate interest over the citizen.

The Tea Party's approach is much more aligned with the "go back" paradigm, and the Occupy Movement has a greater alignment with a "re-envision" paradigm. Does taking refuge in a golden age put us on the right tack, or should

we invest in some new invention?

Finding Hope

While the two responses to systemic collapse are strong, the truth does not wait to emerge. Here is where there is hope. The emergence of the "localization" of power, community and resources is rising where "globalization" is limited in its sustainability. While the revolution continues to happen around and through us, the ultimate call is for extraordinary acts of the ordinary.

The system that is naturally emerging is one where the common citizen recognizes both their access in a representative democracy, and their influence through conscientious consumerism. While it would be irresponsible

to abdicate responsibility for systemic change onto the shoulders of the individual rather than the collective, both citizenry and consumerism can be elements of

... the ultimate call is for extraordinary acts of the ordinary.

change when we are engaged in them. That means using our time, treasure and talent not only at the ballot box, but also at the dinner table, at the letter desk, and at the market. Now, connect yourself with the underlying goodness of everything, and do not be afraid of what overlying untruth is washed away. ~

"U.S. Elections" from pg 3

It was as if it was the first time they heard the perspectives of victims of war and recipients of US foreign policies.

In Honduras, the blood sister of one of our Honduran Sisters of Mercy was disappeared in 2010—Nora, a nursing mother of three. It happened nearly a year after a coup in Honduras, which the U.S.

Nora's body has never been found; her case never investigated. Her sister pleaded for us to tell our government to stop funding their security forces until the structures of impunity—put in place in the early 80s—are dismantled. For two years, Honduran human rights and civil society organizations have been calling for the same, yet the money is still flowing.

our liturgies and "prayers of the faithful."

We can ask candidates about their commitment to global fairness given the deadly pursuit of limited resources and the important role of government to attend to the "global common good."

We can probe if their leadership stance is one of exerting U.S. dominance abroad, or one that commits to multi-lateral cooperation to address areas of conflict or urgent global problems like climate change.

We can challenge the fanning of fears around "national security" and offer a framework of "inclusive security."

Mostly, we can call on our fellow citizens to shift outward and listen to voices from around the world, those who have much to offer, and much at stake in who becomes the next "president of the world." ~

Their stories have a claim on our lives.

Their Stories, Our Call

In this electoral period, the faith community has an opportunity to bring the faces of people from around the world into the heated political discourse, just as "Veronica's veil" carried the face of Jesus on Calvary. Their stories have a claim on our lives.

We're needed to pose questions to candidates, call in to talk radio shows, write letters to the editor, and include the scope of human suffering both here and abroad in

did little to reverse. A litany of human rights abuses has continued, both from generalized crime and the targeting of human rights and opposition activists. The U.S. has been pouring money into training and equipping the Honduran police and military, many of whom are implicated in human rights violations at the highest levels.

Network of Mutuality: Voter Discernment

| | Economics | Environment | Health Care |
|-------------------------------------|--|---|---|
| One Personal Story Related to Issue |  <p>Brandi Wells was struggling, but getting by, working as a waitress in West Virginia. She worked throughout her pregnancy, up until the day she delivered her son Logan. Living “paycheck to paycheck,” she returned to work just one week later.</p> <p>She had a hard time finding reliable childcare, however, and eventually lost her job after missing too many shifts. Soon she was homeless as well; her subsidized apartment required that she hold down a job. “I didn’t realize that it could go so bad so fast. I was working. I was trying. I felt like I was doing everything I could.”</p> |  <p>Maura Mares-Alatorre’s son Emmanuel was born with facial clefts and brain damage. While multiple surgeries have corrected his facial clefts, Emmanuel often loses his balance and is slow to learn basic words like “Mama.” He is one of eleven children born with birth defects in the same 15 month period in Kettleman City, CA. Three of the infants died.</p> <p>Concerned residents and advocates point to contaminated wells and a nearby hazardous waste landfill, which handles chemicals and byproducts from manufacturing and agriculture, as the likely causes of the birth defects. “It’s toxic waste,” said Maura. “It’s got to affect you.”</p> |  <p>Barbara and Bob Reinhardt ran a dog kennel and goat farm in rural Tennessee until health problems made it difficult to manage. Bob suffers from epilepsy and petit mal seizures. Barbara has multiple chronic conditions. “We do work, depending on who’s less sick,” said Barbara.</p> <p>With a limited income, they turned to public assistance to help pay for medications. That helped, until budget cuts slashed the assistance program. The couple started rationing medications, choosing which were “necessary.” Barbara stopped taking some of her pills so that Bob could have his anti-seizure medications. “I am not going to let him die.”</p> |
| Insights From Our Traditions | <p>☾ “The poor will never suffer from starvation or lack of clothes unless the rich neglect their due.” —Hadith (Islamic Tradition)</p> <p>✚ “Every economic decision and institution must be judged in light of whether it protects or undermines the dignity of the human person.”—USCCB (Economic Justice for All)</p> <p>✚ “The economy needs ethics in order to function correctly — not any ethics whatsoever, but an ethics which is people-centered.”—Benedict XVI (Caritas in Veritate)</p> | <p>✚ “Rabbi Levi ben Hiyata said to teach that without earth, there is no rain, and without rain, the earth cannot endure, and without either, humans cannot exist.”—Genesis Rabbah (Jewish Tradition)</p> <p>✚ “The environment is God’s gift to everyone, and in our use of it we have a responsibility towards the poor, towards future generations and towards humanity as a whole.”—Benedict XVI (Caritas in Veritate)</p> <p>☸ “If we could see the miracle of a single flower clearly, our whole life would change.”—Buddha</p> | <p>✚ “Affordable and accessible health care is an essential safeguard of human life and a fundamental human right.” —USCCB (Faithful Citizenship)</p> <p>✚ “Health and wholeness in our communities cannot be achieved piecemeal nor can access to health care be regarded as the privilege of some.”—National Council of Churches</p> <p>☾ “The right of every individual to adequate health care flows from the sanctity of human life and that dignity belongs to all human beings.” —Imam Sa’dullah Khan, The Islamic Center of Southern California</p> |
| Reflection & Discernment | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Reflect on our economic system. Who bears the burden during times of crisis or economic downturns? ❑ How are the needs of people who are poor and vulnerable addressed by the candidate’s economic policies? ❑ Does the candidate have plans to reform national and international economic policies in “people-centered” ways? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Reflect on our lifestyle, economic and political systems. How do our choices impact the environment, especially in low-income communities? ❑ What are the candidate’s policies for ethical, responsible, and sustainable use of land and resources? ❑ Do the environmental positions of the candidate express preference for future generations and people who are poor? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Reflect on the ongoing health care debate. What role does life and human dignity play in the various positions? ❑ Do the health care policies of the candidate meet the needs of people who are poor and vulnerable? ❑ What is the position of the candidate on the role and responsibility of the individual, private sector, and government in health care? |

Sources: BBC, Death Penalty Information Center, Dream Activist, Environmental Justice Now, Faithful Reform in Health Care, Families USA, Harvesting Health, Houston Reform Judaism, USCCB, Vatican, www.unification.net

"In a real sense, all life is interrelated. All people are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly affects all indirectly. I can never be what I ought to be until you are what you ought to be, and you can never be what you ought to be until I am what I ought to be." —Martin Luther King Jr., *Strength to Love*, 1963

| Immigration | Life & Human Dignity | Peace | One Personal Story Related to Issue |
|--|---|--|-------------------------------------|
|  <p>Gabe came to the U.S. with his parents from Mexico as a child. In his junior year in high school, he realized that "without status and with no money," his options were limited.</p> <p>He worked odd jobs and saved enough money to enroll in community college and later a state university. Working full time and going to school at night, he graduated Cum Laude with a degree in Industrial Engineering. "Graduation was a bittersweet day. Still being undocumented, I had no prospects other than to stay in the underground economy and let my degree lose value as the time passes."</p> |  <p>Anthony Graves spent 18 years on death row in Texas before he was exonerated of all charges in 2010. He had been convicted of murder based on statements by another inmate.</p> <p>His accuser later recanted before his own execution. His case was then reopened and studied for five months before all charges were dropped. "He's an innocent man," said District Attorney Bill Parnham.</p> <p>"I hugged him and I hugged him and I cried and we hugged and we cried," says his mother Doris Curry. "He said: 'Mama, it's over. Mama, 18 years we've fought this a long time. It's over. Justice has been done for me.'"</p> |  <p>Rafif is an Iraqi refugee, living with her mother and brother in Syria. Unable to work legally, the family quickly ran out of money. "A woman came and spoke to my mother, who agreed to send me to these places. We needed money." At 14 years old, Rafif supports her family by working in a strip club.</p> <p>The UN reports that 1.2 million Iraqi refugees now live in neighboring Syria. Many are female-headed households and unaccompanied women whose fathers, husbands, and brothers were killed in the war. Thousands of women are working in the sex industry, many by force, fraud or coercion.</p> | |
| <p>✧ "You shall love the alien as yourself; for you too were once aliens in the land of Egypt."—Leviticus 19:34</p> <p>✦ Governments must address "the root causes of forced migration, such as extreme poverty, unemployment, political persecution, armed conflicts, genocide, environmental degradation, religious intolerance, trade policies, and other forms of injustice."—Evangelical Lutheran Church of America</p> <p>✦ "Every migrant is a human person who, as such, possesses fundamental, inalienable rights that must be respected by everyone and in every circumstance."—Benedict XVI (<i>Caritas in Veritate</i>)</p> | <p>✦ "Whatever is opposed to life itself, such as any type of murder, genocide, abortion, euthanasia, or willful self-destruction, whatever violates the integrity of the human person ... whatever insults human dignity, such as subhuman living conditions, arbitrary imprisonment, deportation, slavery, prostitution, the selling of women and children ... all these things and others like them are infamies indeed."—Vatican II (<i>Gaudium et Spes</i>)</p> <p>ॐ "Every being is an abode of God, worthy of respect and reverence."—Hindu Scriptures</p> <p>✦ "The right to life implies and is linked to other human rights—to the basic goods that every human person needs to live and thrive."—USCCB (<i>Faithful Citizenship</i>)</p> | <p>✧ "The whole of the Torah is for the purpose of promoting peace."—Babylonian Talmud (<i>Jewish Tradition</i>)</p> <p>✦ "In light of the Gospel's invitation to be peacemakers, our commitment to solidarity with our neighbors—at home and abroad—also demands that we promote peace and pursue justice in a world marred by terrible violence and conflict."—USCCB (<i>Faithful Citizenship</i>)</p> <p>✦ "The elimination of world hunger has also, in the global era, become a requirement for safeguarding the peace and stability of the planet."—Benedict XVI (<i>Caritas in Veritate</i>)</p> | Insights From Our Traditions |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Reflect on who benefits from our current immigration policy. Who suffers? What is the impact on our community? ❑ Do the immigration policies of the candidate treat the migrant with respect and dignity? ❑ What is the position of the candidate on international trade policy and poverty reduction programs to address the root causes of immigration? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Reflect on the list of "infamies" opposed to life listed by the Second Vatican Council. What would you add to this list today? ❑ How is the promotion of a culture of life evident in the policies and programs of the candidates? ❑ How does the candidate address the right to life and human rights for all members of our local and global community? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Reflect on the human impact of war. What happens to the families left behind or soldiers who are forever changed due to injury or trauma? ❑ Do the candidate's international positions foster peace and security for all? ❑ What are the candidate's policies for poverty reduction and global development programs? | |

on Chronicle, Huffington Post, Interfaith Environmental Network, Minnesota Without Poverty, National Council of Churches, New York Times, Religious Action Center for

Citizens United and the Changing Elections Landscape



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Janice Thompson and Susan Francois, CSJP

Political advertisements are part and parcel of our electoral process. And yet, if it seems like the number and tenor of television advertisements have changed in recent years, you are not imagining things.

Our nation's political landscape shifted noticeably in 2010 with the Supreme Court's ruling in *Citizens United v. Federal Elections Commission*. This decision focused on independent expenditures—payments for advertising in support of or against a candidate produced independently of the candidate—by corporations in federal elections.

"It changed the law dramatically," said retired Justice John Paul Stevens, author of the dissenting opinion, during an appearance on the *Colbert Report* earlier this year. "It gave corporations generally much more leeway in spend-

ing money in electoral campaigns than they had in the past."

Corporate Personhood

Before *Citizens United* there was a history of regulation of corporate political spending that began with the 1907 Tillman Act. In 1947, the Taft-Hardly Act barred corporations and labor unions from making expenditures and contributions in federal elections. The 2002 McCain-Feingold Act also restricted the timing of advertising paid for with corporate treasury dollars.

The Supreme Court reversed this course with *Citizens United*, holding that corporations and unions could use corporate treasury dollars for independent expenditures regarding federal candidates. It equated corporations with people or groups with a first amendment right to free speech.

In the dissenting opinion, Stevens called this analysis a "conceit," arguing that there is a "significant" distinction between corporate and human speakers in elections. "Although they make enormous contributions to our society, corporations are not actually members of it. They cannot vote or run for office."

Increased Spending

As a result of the majority opinion, however, corporations can now spend

unlimited money on independent expenditures. The Center for Responsive Politics reports a spending spike by corporations in 2010, with 72% of money spent on federal political advertisements coming from groups previously prohibited from such spending. The 2012 Presidential election will be even more dominated by money flowing in new ways from new types of groups.

SuperPACs can then spend unlimited sums...

The presence of independent expenditures is not new—before *Citizens United* they could legally be made by individuals and Political Action Committees (PACs). The new volume, however, is due to the new availability of corporate money. This trend got worse when, due to *Citizens United*, previous limits on the size of contributions to PACs making independent expenditures were overturned by a lower court.

That decision led to the formation of SuperPACs, which can raise unlimited sums of money from any source, including corporate dollars. SuperPACs can then spend unlimited sums to advocate for or against candidates. In 2010, 84 were formed. As of January 2012, 277 SuperPACs had been formed, with more no doubt on the way. Each of the Presidential candidates is supported by SuperPACs. President Obama, a critic of *Citizens United*, recently signaled his support to a Democratic SuperPAC. One of his fundraisers, Robert Zimmer-

Recent Immigrants Make Their Voice Heard

Immigrant parents in Lost Hills, CA were concerned about the quality of education their children were receiving in local public schools. They were unable to express those concerns to the school board, however, because meetings took place in the middle of the day when most were at work. 88% of students in the district qualify for free-lunch. Latinos make up 97% of the population.

"They said it was not for us to come with concerns to the school," said Margarita, one of the parents. "But that is exactly what we should be doing." With the assistance of Catholic Charities, mothers collected signatures to successfully change the meeting time to the evening. Now able to attend, they made their voice heard and effected changes in school policies and personnel. Three Latina mothers were later elected to the school board.

Read more stories of civic participation by recent immigrants at tiny.cc/immigrantcivicpart.

man, acknowledged “it is essential in 2012.”

Public Opposition

Essential or not, there is increasing opposition to this new reality. A Washington Post-ABC News poll found that 80% of Americans oppose Citizens United. Voters in Madison, WI, Boulder, CO and Missoula, MT have approved referrals urging a federal constitutional amendment to reflect that money is not speech and corporations are not people. The “yes” votes ranged from 74 to 84%. That such advisory questions could be successful in more conservative communities is indicated by these words by Dale Robertson, Houston-based leader of TeaParty.org: “Corporations are not like people. Corporations exist forever, people don’t. Our founding fathers never wanted them; these behemoth organizations that

... the bulk of the messaging for or against candidates for elected office is paid for by millionaires or corporations ...

never die, so they can collect an insurmountable amount of profit. It puts the people at a tremendous disadvantage.”

The movement against Citizens United is gaining momentum. Cities such as Portland, OR, New York, NY and Los Angeles, CA recently passed resolutions objecting to corporations being given undue constitutional protections and calling for limits on political campaign spending.

Learning to be Engaged Citizens

Students from Patti McMaster’s AP Government class at Evergreen High School in Vancouver, WA paid close attention to the 2011 campaign finance disclosure bill as it worked its way through the state legislature. They researched the bill, worked with their own volunteer lobbyist, and participated directly in the legislative process via the internet to monitor committee meetings, offer testimony and meet with legislators. It was all part of the “Capitol Classroom” program, which McMasters says is an “exciting way to help students understand the legislative process and to inspire them to become active, engaged citizens.”



“Democracy depends on an involved and engaged citizenry,” says lobbyist Vicki Christophersen who represented the Evergreen students. “We must find ways to interest the next generation in the process. Learn more at <http://www.teachwithtw.org/capitolclassroom>.”

Profit or Common Good?

The primary purpose of the corporation, as summed up by the American Law Institute, is “corporate profit and shareholder gain.” Most of us raised in a capitalist society would not question this statement. And yet, recent Popes have done just that in the wake of globalization, environmental destruction and the increasing gap between rich and poor. In *Centesimus Annus*, John Paul II stated that “the purpose of a business firm is not simply to make a profit,” but should also be “oriented towards the common good.”

More recently, Benedict XVI has looked at the “grave deviations and failures” of our economic system in *Caritas in Veritate*, with a critical eye towards the role of corporations. “Without doubt, one of the greatest risks for businesses is that they are al-

most exclusively answerable to their investors, thereby limiting their social value.”

What then is the risk for our democratic process, when the bulk of the messaging for or against candidates for elected office is paid for by millionaires or corporations answerable to their investors?

This election year, as you sort through the variety of messages clogging up the air waves, consider the source. Rather than taking the message at face value, ask yourself: What is the goal of this advertisement—profit or the common good? ~

www.factcheck.org

University of Pennsylvania website that monitors factual accuracy of what is said in political ads and messaging.

www.opensecrets.org

Center for Responsive Politics website that tracks money in U.S. politics.

www.storyofcitizensunited.org

Video that tells the story of Citizens United in eight minutes.



intercommunity

One God, Three Faiths: Building Community Through Prayer Second Series



Another opportunity to participate in prayer and learn about the Jewish, Muslim and Christian traditions.

In response to an overwhelming interest and request for a second series. Join us if:

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- ∞ You want to continue your pilgrimage to new Synagogue, Mosque and Church experiences

☆ Temple B'nai Torah ■ Bellevue ■ Friday, April 13 ■ 7:30—9:30 pm

☾ Masjid Ar-Rahmah Muslim Association of Puget Sound ■ Redmond ■ Thursday, April 26 ■ 7:00—9:30 pm

✝ Holy Spirit Lutheran Church ■ Kirkland ■ Wednesday May 9th ■ 6:00—8:00pm

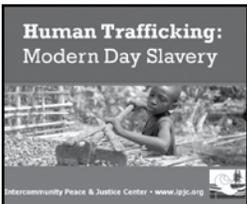
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“The students were on task and loved it.” —Segina Bach, Academy of the Holy Names, Tampa, FL

“Our students were interested, engaged and participatory.” —Todd O'Connor, St. Louise, Bellevue, WA

Tell a teacher, sign up your school today!



Young Adult Justice Cafés

Spirituality, Justice and Community Building



New Jersey: Kate Walsh says “For one hour at the Rockn’ Joe Coffeehouse we are able to put down the distractions of our lives to reflect on the wider world. We pray, share, laugh and struggle together. Only through strengthening community, engaging conversation, and taking action can we witness injustices righted.”



North Carolina: Avery Haller says “Tuesday was Davidson College’s first ever Justice Café! We talked about actions we could take and places to serve within our own community that promote the well-being of those who are poor.”

March—Access to Education / April—Common Good

March Interfaith Book Groups

Two book groups are convening in Seattle—*The Tent of Abraham: Stories of Hope and Peace for Jews, Christians, and Muslims* by Joan Chittister, OSB, Murshid Saadi Shakur Chishti and Rabbi Arthur Waskow

Call IPJC to begin a Muslim, Jewish, Christian book gathering in your region

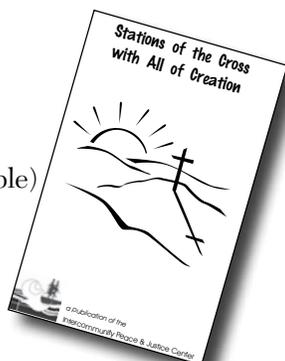
Stations of the Cross with All of Creation

English ■ Spanish ■ French

Cost \$2:00 (volume discount available)

See sample online at www.ipjc.org

call 206.223.1138



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- ∞ To make IPJC a world class Peace and Justice Center we **need your support!**
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peace & justice center



Left to Right: Imelda Vera, Bishop Jaime Soto, Maria Villagrana, Giselle Cárcamo and Sr. Linda Haydock, SNJM

Justice Circles National Award Winners!

Our IPJC Justice Circles received the national Sr. Margaret Cafferty Development of People Award from the Catholic Campaign for Human Development. The award was given to IPJC for:

- ⌘ Effective work in breaking the cycle of poverty
- ⌘ Development of innovative strategies to accompany low-income persons to change structures that impoverish them
- ⌘ Creation of community-based organizing that can be replicated around the country
- ⌘ Involvement in bringing about significant human development and social change
- ⌘ Witness to Gospel values and action on behalf of justice

At the awards ceremony Maria Villagrana, immigrant Justice Circle leader, said “Thanks to our Justice Circle organizing and collaboration with others, Washington state is one of only two states in the country where immigrants can get a driver’s license without a social security number.” Imelda Vera told the crowd of 400. “The Justice Circles have given me the strength to speak truth to power, to recognize my value and dignity as a woman and to advocate for the rights of my community.”

Justicia para la Mujer:

¡Latinas Conectadas para el Cambio!

Women’s Justice Circles

Latina Conference Report—View recommendations in English and Spanish at www.ipjc.org

Catholic Advocacy Day Success

- ⌘ 425 advocates go to Olympia
- ⌘ 120 legislative appointments
- ⌘ Legislators told us that the quality of presence, preparation and politeness made an impression with them.
- ⌘ At press time for AMOS the session was not over but already we know of the difference we made



Vote Your Proxy

ASK CORPORATIONS TO ACCOUNT FOR \$1.1 BILLION SPENT ON LOBBYING

NWCRI is among a coalition of investors who have filed shareholder resolutions at 40 corporations urging them to report on lobbying expenditures. The investors believe that shareholders have the right and need to understand how company resources are spent in efforts to change both elections and public policy.

A November 2011 study by the Investor Responsibility Research Center (IRRC), “Corporate Governance of Political Expenditures,” found that in 2010, S&P 500 companies spent a total of \$1.1 billion on political contributions and lobbying, with \$979.3 million in federal lobbying expenditures comprising 87 percent of this spending.

Out of the S&P 500, the IRRC study found 64 percent of companies make no mention of lobbying activities, policies or oversight. Furthermore, the study found that only 13 companies provide investors information on how much they spend on lobbying.

Timothy Smith of Walden Asset Management, a coordinator of this initiative, stated, “Whether the issue is environmental impact, consumer protection, financial reform or shareholder rights, it is important for investors to understand how company dollars are spent to influence our laws and regulations by lobbying activities.”

Among the companies receiving the shareholder resolution on lobbying are AT&T; Bank of America; Chevron; Coca-Cola; ConocoPhillips; Goldman Sachs; Johnson & Johnson; JPMorgan Chase; PepsiCo; Target and United Health.

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Faithful Citizenship Resources

WEBSITES

USCCB Faithful Citizenship

www.usccb.org/faithfulcitizenship
Resources and text of
*Forming Consciences for
Faithful Citizenship: A Call
to Political Responsibility*

IPJC Legislative Action Center

www.ipjc.org
Send emails to Congress on
key issues

Catholics Vote for the Common Good

<http://commongood2012.org/>
Coalition of Catholic organizations working to
mobilize U.S. Catholics

National Council of Churches

<http://www.nccusa.org/votingprinciples/>
Election year principles and study guide

Center of Concern

<https://www.coc.org/election2012>
Frames issues in the context of globalization and
common good

ONLINE PUBLICATIONS

Citizenship & Civic Participation Toolkit

<http://cliniclegal.org/citizenship>

Ideas to help immigrants overcome language and
cultural barriers to civic
participation



It's Our World, Too! Community service Projects for Young People to Make a Difference

<http://tiny.cc/ourworldtoo>
Middle School Curriculum,
includes ideas for civic
participation

BOOKS

Cafardi, Nicholas P. *Voting and Holiness: Catholic
Perspectives on Political Participation*. Paulist Press
(2012)

Cochran, Clarke E. & David Carroll. *The Catholic Vote: A
Guide for the Perplexed*. Orbis Books (2008)

Palmer, Parker. *Healing the Heart of Democracy: The
Courage to Create a Politics Worthy of the Human Spirit*.
Jossey Bass (2011)

A Matter of Spirit
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