

Writing Guide for Homilies encouraging Catholics to Vote

A resource for the Catholic Action voter engagement campaign

Introduction

Reverend Father:

First thing first: thank you. Our Catholic Action program aims to organize and inspire Catholics to exercise their duty to vote and their responsibility to participate in our democracy, a responsibility reinforced by Catholic social teaching.

This brief guidebook is designed to help you as you write and edit your homily for the upcoming election.

We hope you find this guide useful and thank you again for your support. We are so excited to help you encourage your parishioners to bring the love of God and their Catholic values to their citizenship.

God bless,

Matthew Marquardt & Brendan Steven
Co-Chairs, Catholic Action Voter Engagement Campaign

Key Messages

As you write your homilies in advance of an election—no matter what you write—consider touching on these three key messages:

1. As Catholics, we have a Christian duty to participate in society, in order to create a properly just and charitable community. For those of us given the privilege of living in democracies, that means we must exercise our responsibility to vote.
2. Our faith is fundamentally communal, and oriented toward the full and authentic development of every individual. We live our faith in our personal lives, but also in how we interact with one another—and that means our faith must also inform how we conduct ourselves as citizens.
3. We are called to develop well-formed consciences by thoughtfully and prayerfully considering the issues in the election, learning about the political parties' proposals, and voting with Catholic social teaching in mind. You can refer parishioners to www.CatholicConscience.org, where among other resources they will find a party platform comparison tool which includes relevant Catholic social teaching across a wide array of issues.

As you put together your homilies, we wanted to provide you with material you can reference or use to inspire your writing.

GAUDIUM ET SPES [↗](#)

This Council exhorts Christians, as citizens of two cities, to strive to discharge their earthly duties conscientiously and in response to the Gospel spirit. They are mistaken who, knowing that we have here no abiding city but seek one which is to come, think that they may therefore shirk their earthly responsibilities. For they are forgetting that by **the faith itself they are more obliged than ever to measure up to these duties...** Nor are they any less wide of the mark who think that religion consists in acts of worship alone and in the discharge of certain moral obligations, and who imagine they can plunge themselves into earthly affairs in such a way as to imply that these are altogether divorced from the religious life. This split between the faith which many profess and their daily lives deserves to be counted among the more serious errors of our age. Long since, the Prophets of the Old Testament fought vehemently against this scandal and even more so did Jesus Christ Himself in the New Testament threaten it with grave punishments. **Therefore, let there be no false opposition between professional and social activities on the one part, and religious life on the other.** Christians who neglect their temporal duties, jeopardizes their eternal salvation.

All citizens, therefore, should be mindful of the right and also the duty to use their free vote to further the common good.

POPE FRANCIS [↗](#)

“A good Catholic doesn’t meddle in politics.”

“That’s not true. That is not a good path,” he said, according to Vatican Radio. **“A good Catholic meddles in politics, offering the best of himself, so that those who govern can govern.”**

“None of us can say, ‘I have nothing to do with this, they govern,’” Pope Francis told those present for the Mass. Rather, citizens are responsible for participating in politics according to their ability, and in this way are responsible for their leadership.

“Politics, according to the Social Doctrine of the Church, is one of the highest forms of charity, because it serves the common good,” he explained. “I cannot wash my hands, eh? We all have to give something!” He noted that it is sometimes common for people to speak only critically of their leaders, to complain about “things that don’t go well.”

Instead of simply complaining, we should offer ourselves – our ideas, suggestions, and most of all our prayers, the Holy Father said.

“You can’t govern without loving the people and without humility!”

“And every man, every woman who has to take up the service of government, must ask themselves two questions: **‘Do I love my people in order to serve them better? Am I humble and do I listen to everybody, to diverse opinions in order to choose the best path?’**”

“If you don’t ask those questions, your governance will not be good,” Pope Francis continued. “The man or woman who governs – who loves his people is a humble man or woman.”

*Homily of September 16, 2013 at Santa Marta
Reported by Catholic News Agency*

CANADIAN CONFERENCE OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS [↗](#)

2015 Federal Election Guide

Canadian Catholics are being called upon as citizens to exercise their right to vote. The Church encourages and reasserts its belief in “the political freedom and responsibility of citizens.” **By exercising their right to vote, citizens fulfill their duty of choosing a government and at the same time send a clear signal to the candidates being presented by the political parties.** Political candidates are citizens too. In addition, they assume responsibility for the well being of the public. Their commitment and dedication are a generous contribution to society’s common good. Indeed, **the purpose of the political community is the common good.** What is the common good? It is “the sum of those conditions of ... social life whereby people, families and associations more adequately and readily may attain their own perfection.”