



Invest time each week to expand your vocabulary and deepen your faith.

03 November 2024

## WORD OF THE WEEK

### Faithful Citizenship \ˈfāth-fəl ˈsi-tə-zən-ˈship\

Popular shorthand for the teaching document *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship*, published by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, and drawing from Catholic scripture, tradition, and social teaching. It offers guidance to U.S. Catholics on the political responsibility to participate in their democracy.

**Pronunciation:** <https://tinyurl.com/Take5-faithful-citizenship>

#### CONTEXT

In the Catholic tradition, responsible **citizenship** is a virtue, and participation in political life is a moral obligation.  
—USCCB, Faithful Citizenship

By forming our consciences for **faithful citizenship**, we can better pursue the common good and thus obey the command of our Lord to love our neighbors.  
—USCCB, Faithful Citizenship

#### WHY IT MATTERS

As Pope Francis explains, “Everything, including political life, belongs to Jesus Christ, and so participation in political life belongs to the mission of the Church.” Of course, “The Church cannot and must not replace the State,” says Pope Benedict. “Yet at the same time she cannot and must not remain on the sidelines in the fight for justice.”

From *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship*: How can we meet this challenge of forming our consciences? Saint Paul gives us a way: Put on the “mind of Christ” (1 Cor. 2:16). [Step away from media] and “spend time with Holy Scripture and the Blessed Sacrament. . . . Listen in silence. Volunteer at a soup kitchen, a homeless shelter, a crisis pregnancy center. Serve the poor, the needy, the outcast. Pray often.”

#### RELATED WORDS

Pastoral Letters | Social Responsibility

## QUESTION OF THE WEEK

### What is Catholic decision-making?

Church teaching emphasizes that the common good is an essential component in our decision-making. “The common good is the sum total of social conditions which allow people, either as groups or as individuals, to reach their fulfillment more fully and more easily” (CCC, 1906). If this sounds like a huge responsibility, you’re hearing it right. We advance the common good with five principles: defending human life, strengthening families, providing for the disadvantaged, welcoming the immigrant, and protecting the environment. The gravest imperative is to protect life. Direct assaults on life include abortion, capital punishment, euthanasia, genocide, torture, racism, unjust war, and exploitation of creation. The common good also includes ensuring access to healthcare and education, guaranteeing living wages, addressing hunger, encouraging debt relief, ending discrimination, promoting religious freedom, and pursuing peace.

—Alice Camille, from *Questions Catholics Ask* <http://tinyurl.com/QCA-Catholic-decision-making>

## REFLECTION OF THE WEEK

TUESDAY OF THE THIRTY-FIRST WEEK IN ORDINARY TIME, ELECTION DAY IN THE U.S. (NOVEMBER 5)

### Please do not excuse yourself

In the parable of the wealthy man, the guests invited to a great feast send their regrets one by one with pathetic excuses. With the benefit of hindsight, we know those guests made a serious miscalculation and are now missing out on an everlasting banquet. Similarly, an invitation is offered to citizens in the United States each Election Day to exercise their right to vote. Yet, too many people offer weak rationales for not seizing the opportunity to help establish a more perfect union.

READINGS: Philippians 2:5-11; Luke 14:15-24 (486) <https://bible.usccb.org/bible/readings/110524.cfm>. “But one by one, they all began to excuse themselves.”

#### FAITH IN ACTION

How will future citizens of the world—and, more important, the Creator of the Universe—rate the decisions we’ve made? It’s never too late to accept the invitation to act for justice and peace.