SACREDNESS OF HUMAN LIFE

"In *Rejoice and Be Glad* [Gaudete et Exsultate], Pope Francis writes: The call to holiness requires a "firm and passionate" defense of "the innocent unborn." "Equally sacred," he further states, are "the lives of the poor, those already born, the destitute, the abandoned and the underprivileged, the vulnerable infirm and elderly exposed to covert euthanasia, the victims of human trafficking, new forms of slavery, and every form of rejection."

Introductory Letter, Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship, 2019

APPLYING A CONSISTENT MORAL FRAMEWORK

"Pope Francis has continued to draw attention to important issues such as migration, xenophobia, racism, abortion, global conflict, and care for creation. In the United States and around the world, many challenges demand our attention.

The threat of abortion remains our preeminent priority because it directly attacks life itself, because it takes place within the sanctuary of the family, and because of the number of lives destroyed. At the same time, we cannot dismiss or ignore other serious threats to human life and dignity such as racism, the environmental crisis, poverty and the death penalty."

Introductory Letter, Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship, 2019

PRUDENTIAL DISCERNMENT

"The Church's teaching is clear that a good end does not justify an immoral means. As we all seek to advance the common good—by defending the inviolable sanctity of human life from the moment of conception until natural death, by promoting religious freedom, by defending marriage, by feeding the hungry and housing the homeless, by welcoming the immigrant and protecting the environment—it is important to recognize that not all possible courses of action are morally acceptable. 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."

#20 Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship

SERVE AS MODELS OF CIVIL DIALOGUE

"Our commitment as people of faith to imitate Christ's love and compassion should challenge us to serve as models of civil dialogue, especially in a context where discourse is eroding at all levels of society. Where we live, work, and worship, we strive to understand before seeking to be understood, to treat with respect those with whom we disagree, to dismantle stereotypes, and to build productive conversation in place of vitriol."

Introductory Letter, Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship, 2019

What is the candidate's commitment to protect all human life, from conception to natural death?

What is the candidate's commitment to addressing threats to marriage and family, as understood by the Church, as well as other serious threats to human life and dignity such as 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, or an unjust immigration policy?

How does the candidate measure up in both words and actions with the totality of Catholic Social Teaching?

What would be morally grave reasons to support and/or oppose a candidate? (Please refer to the U.S. Bishops document *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship,* paragraphs 34 through 37).

What is my assessment of the candidate's personal integrity, governing philosophy, performance and ability to influence a given issue?

Has the candidate demonstrated sufficient competency to hold such an elected position?

We encourage prayerful reflection upon reading the entire *Faithful Citizenship* statement which can be found at:
www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/faithful-citizenship