

## ***Rejoice in the Lord***

**By Cardinal Joseph W. Tobin, C.Ss.R.  
Archbishop of Newark**

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### **Faithful Citizenship**

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Whom should we vote for in the upcoming election?  
Can faithful Catholics who are conscientious about their religious beliefs and fundamental human values vote for candidates or political parties that have taken positions that are contrary to our deepest convictions?

Like many Catholics, I have spent considerable time prayerfully contemplating the untenable nature of such questions, because both of the national party platforms contain seriously flawed moral positions. While I cannot and do not endorse one candidate over another, I think faithful Catholics, and all Americans, must challenge key planks of both the Republican and Democratic platforms, noting that one party seeks to remove the unborn child from the moral equation and the other party endorses capital punishment and fails to treat migrants with human dignity by taking away their faces, their significance. Both candidates must be held accountable for their past actions and proposed plans. This can never be reduced to a single issue—as gravely serious as these issues are. Instead, we must pray, reflect and act based on applying Gospel values to the full range of moral and social issues that are at stake. Our faith must inform our politics.



Our Church never tells anyone who to vote for, and we don't tell faithful Catholics who they should not, or "cannot," vote for. Instead, the Church asks that everyone have a properly formed conscience in accordance with the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the clear and consistent teachings of our Church. This sometimes frustrates those who wish that Church leaders would make things simple for voters by telling them who to vote for, but that is simply not possible or advisable. Every responsible adult must make his or her own decisions when it comes time to vote. The place where such decisions are made is the sanctuary of each one's conscience.

The U.S. bishops have published a statement entitled "*Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship*" that provides valuable guidance regarding the exercise of our rights and duties as participants in

our democracy. Number 35 of that statement teaches, “A Catholic who rejects a candidate’s unacceptable position on policies promoting an intrinsically evil act may decide to vote for that candidate for other morally grave reasons. Voting in this way would be permitted only for truly grave moral reasons, not to advance narrow interests or partisan preferences or to ignore a fundamental moral evil.” This means that a candidate’s position on one or more fundamental moral issues must be considered seriously, but it does not automatically determine how we should vote. “Other morally grave reasons” may persuade us to vote for someone even if his or her position on an important issue is unacceptable to us.

Catholic social teaching provides an excellent framework for reflecting on fundamental social principles including:

- The sanctity of human life (including abortion, euthanasia, assisted suicide, capital punishment, respect for strangers)
- The dignity of family life (based on marriage between a man and a woman) and the protection and formation of our children
- Just and compassionate immigration reform and care for migrants and their families
- Protection for the poor and vulnerable through healthcare, housing and just wages
- Racial equality and special concern for the rights of minorities
- The dignity of work and the rights of workers
- The pursuit of peace and social justice here at home and internationally
- Religious liberty for people of all faiths and cultures both here at home and throughout the world
- The stewardship of God’s creation (care for the environment)

These issues, and many others, are vitally important to the health and well-being of our society, and they must be considered carefully in the exercise of an informed conscience whether in a voting booth or in completing a mail-in ballot.

Consistent with the teaching of the Second Vatican Council, and in continuity with 2,000 years of Christian faith and practice, our Church vigorously renews its call for a manner of political discourse that does not involve name calling, class warfare or divisive tactics. We urge faithful Catholics, and all people of good will, to exercise faithful citizenship by focusing on three guiding moral principles: 1) the defense of life, 2) the needs of the weakest members of our society, and 3) the pursuit of the common good.

To paraphrase the teaching of Vatican II, as followers of Jesus Christ and faithful citizens of this great nation, nothing that is genuinely human fails to find an echo in our hearts (cf. *Gaudium et Spes*, #1). We participate actively in shaping the world we live in because this type of moral and political engagement reflects both the social teaching of our Church and the best traditions of the United States of America.

The fact is that as faithful Catholics and responsible citizens we must make difficult choices. That’s why we turn to Mary, Mother of the Church, and to all the saints to show us the way. There are no easy solutions to the dilemmas we face today. There is only our solemn obligation to participate in

the governance of our nation as co-responsible members of a free society and as missionary disciples called by Jesus Christ to transform our society and care for our common home.

May Our Lady of Guadalupe, Patroness of the Americas, intercede for us as we exercise our sacred duty as faithful citizens of this beloved nation.

Sincerely yours in Christ the Redeemer,



Cardinal Joseph W. Tobin, C.Ss.R.  
Archbishop of Newark

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## Statement on the Death of Most Reverend John J. Myers, J.C.D., D.D., Archbishop Emeritus of Newark

Sept. 24, 2020

The Most Reverend John J. Myers, J.C.D., D.D., Archbishop Emeritus of Newark, entered into eternal life on Thursday, September 24, 2020. He was 79 years old.



Upon hearing the news of Archbishop Myers' passing, Cardinal Joseph W. Tobin, C.Ss.R., Archbishop of Newark, said, "On behalf of my brother Bishops and the entire family of God here in our local Church of Newark, I extend my heartfelt prayers and condolences to his family. Let us thank God for Archbishop Myers' service and his love of our Church. I entrust him to the loving arms of our Blessed Mother Mary, and I pray that Our Lord grant him peace."

Archbishop Myers, who was born in Ottawa, Illinois and was the eldest of seven children, was ordained to the priesthood in 1966 and consecrated coadjutor Bishop of Peoria, Illinois, in 1987.

On July 24, 2001, His Holiness, Saint John Paul II, called then-Bishop Myers to serve as the fifth Metropolitan Archbishop of Newark, NJ. He was installed as Archbishop of Newark on

October 9, 2001. His Holiness conferred the Pallium on Archbishop Myers on June 29, 2002.

In addition to his responsibilities as Metropolitan Archbishop of Newark, Archbishop Myers had also served as the Ecclesial Superior, *missio sui iuris*, of the Turks & Caicos Islands.

Upon reaching the mandatory retirement age of 75, Archbishop Myers submitted his letter of resignation as Archbishop of Newark. His resignation was accepted on November 7, 2016. Upon the installation of Cardinal Joseph W. Tobin, C.Ss.R., on January 6, 2017, Archbishop Myers was granted the title Archbishop Emeritus of Newark.

Archbishop Myers' episcopal motto, *Mysterium Ecclesiae Luceat* ("Let the Mystery of the Church Shine Forth") is a summary of the central theme of the Second Vatican Council's Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen Gentium*. He often said, "I cannot make someone believe. I can, however, explain what the Church teaches and the reasons for that teaching, and then invite him or her to be open to that teaching and embrace it."



For a full biography, please visit [www.rcan.org/offices-and-ministries/archbishops-office/biography](http://www.rcan.org/offices-and-ministries/archbishops-office/biography).

Please remember Archbishop Myers and his family in your prayers.

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## Archdiocese of Newark Statement on Faithful Citizenship

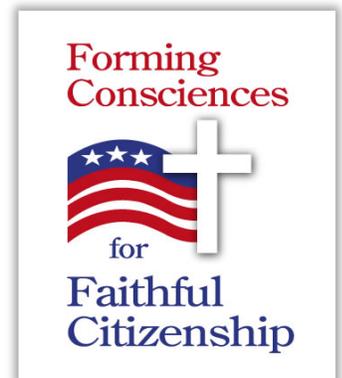
Sept. 16, 2020

The following statement references a dialogue during a Sept. 15 webinar discussion co-sponsored by Boston College's Boisi Center for Religion and American Public Life, Trinity College's Greenberg Center for the Study of Religion in Public Life and St. Anselm College's New Hampshire Institute of Politics on "The Church and Catholic Voters in the 2020 Election" (webinar link: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=1thbKAQRX6c&feature=youtu.be](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1thbKAQRX6c&feature=youtu.be)).

### Statement

Cardinal Tobin has neither endorsed nor opposed any candidate running for public office. He has simply reminded Catholics of our responsibility to take part in the elective process.

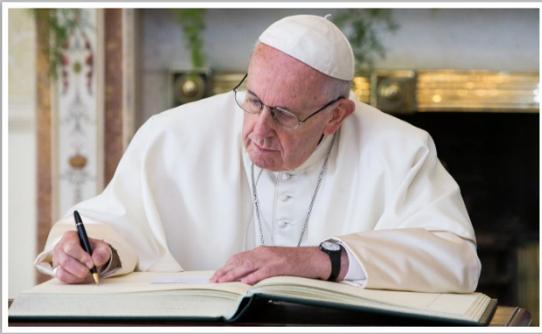
Cardinal Tobin echoes the USCCB's guidance on "Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship," which recognizes that Catholics often face difficult decisions about how to vote as well as the need for a properly formed conscience in order to make a selection that respects the tenets of our faith. A Catholic cannot vote for a political candidate because he or she supports an issue considered an intrinsically evil act, such as abortion, euthanasia, deliberately subjecting workers or the poor to subhuman living conditions or assisted suicide. 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. 'A Catholic who rejects a candidate's unacceptable position on policies promoting an intrinsically evil act may decide to vote for that candidate for other morally grave reasons. Voting in this way would be permitted only for truly grave moral reasons, not to advance narrow interests or partisan preferences or to ignore a fundamental moral evil' (cf. "Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship" nn. 34, 35).



(United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship. <https://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/faithful-citizenship/upload/forming-consciences-for-faithful-citizenship.pdf>)

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## A Message from Pope Francis: Words of Encouragement and Hope



We need to participate for the common good. Sometimes we hear: a good Catholic is not interested in politics. This is not true: good Catholics immerse themselves in politics by offering the best of themselves so that the leader can govern (Address to members of the U.S. Congress, September 16, 2015)

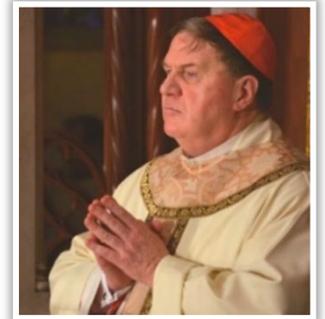
Indifference, self-centeredness, division and forgetfulness are not words we want to hear at this time. We want to ban these words for ever! They seem to prevail when fear and death overwhelm us, that is, when we do not let the Lord Jesus triumph in our hearts and lives. May Christ, who has already defeated death and opened for us the way to eternal salvation, dispel the darkness of our suffering humanity and lead us into the light of his glorious day, a day that knows no end. (Pope Francis, April 2020)

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### My Prayer for You

“Beloved Mother, help us realize that we are all members of one great family and to recognize the bond that unites us, so that, in a spirit of fraternity and solidarity, we can help to alleviate countless situations of poverty and need” (Pope Francis).

Holy Mary, during this election season, when our differences seem to divide us irreconcilably, help us to come together as sisters and brothers and to genuinely seek what is best for our nation. Help us to defend human life and dignity, to meet the needs of the weakest members of our society, and to work together in pursuit of the common good of all. Amen. †



Cardinal Joseph W. Tobin, C.Ss.R.  
Archbishop of Newark

