



FAITHFUL CITIZENSHIP 2016

This series has been prepared by the Wisconsin Catholic Conference as a guide for those who wish to inform their consciences in order to participate more fully in the political process. To learn more about the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship* (FCFC), visit www.faithfulcitizenship.org and www.wisconsinatholic.org.

Fifth in a five-part series

MARRIAGE & FAMILY

Why are marriage and family essential?

“The family founded upon marriage is the basic cell of human society. The role, responsibilities, and needs of families should be central national priorities. Marriage must be defined, recognized, and protected as a lifelong exclusive commitment between a man and a woman, and as the source of the next generation and the protective haven for children. The institution of marriage is undermined by the ideology of ‘gender’ that dismisses sexual difference and the complementarity of the sexes and falsely presents ‘gender’ as nothing more than a social construct or psychological reality, which a person may choose at variance with his or her biological reality (see *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, no. 224). As Pope Francis has taught, ‘the removal of [sexual] difference creates a problem, not a solution’ (General Audience, April 22, 2015). ... This affirmation in no way compromises the Church’s opposition to unjust discrimination against those who experience ‘deep-seated homosexual tendencies,’ who ‘must be accepted with respect, compassion, and sensitivity’ (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 2358).” (FCFC, 70)

Which public policies help families?

Policies on taxes, work, divorce, immigration, and welfare should uphold the God-given meaning and value of marriage and family, help families stay together, and reward responsibility and sacrifice for children. Wages should allow workers to support their families, and public assistance should be available to help poor families to live in dignity. Such assistance should be provided in a manner that promotes eventual financial autonomy. (FCFC, 70)



George Martell (cropped/shaded)

What rights do children have?

“Pope Francis has stressed, ‘Children have a right to grow up in a family with a father and a mother capable of creating a suitable environment for the child’s development and emotional maturity’ (Address on the Complementarity Between Man and Woman, Nov. 17, 2014). Children who may be placed in foster care or with adoptive parents have a right to be placed in homes with a married man and woman, or if not possible, in environments that do not contradict the authentic meaning of marriage. Child welfare service providers, consistent with their religious beliefs, have a right to place children in such homes rather than in other environments. We oppose contraceptive and abortion mandates in public programs and health plans, which endanger rights of conscience and can interfere with parents’ right to guide the moral formation of their children.” (FCFC, 71)

CARE FOR CREATION

What can we do to protect the natural environment and to assist the poor?

“Protecting the land, water, and air we share is a religious duty of stewardship and reflects our responsibility to born and unborn children, who are most vulnerable to environmental assault. ... There are many concrete steps we can take to assure justice and solidarity between the generations. ... Our Conference offers a distinctive call to seriously address global climate change, focusing on the virtue of prudence, pursuit of the common good, and the impact on the poor, particularly on vulnerable workers and the poorest nations. The United States should lead in contributing to the sustainable development of poorer nations and promoting greater justice in sharing the burden of environmental blight, neglect, and recovery. It is important that we address the rising number of migrants who are uprooted from their homeland as a consequence of environmental degradation and climate change. They are not currently recognized as refugees under any existing international convention and are thus not afforded legal protections that ought to be due to them.” (FCFC, 86)



Carlos ZGZ (cropped/shaded)

What about ensuring that fewer people are born into poverty?

As Pope Francis explains, “Instead of resolving the problems of the poor and thinking of how the world can be different, some can only propose a reduction in the birth rate. At times, developing countries face forms of international pressure which make economic assistance contingent on certain policies of ‘reproductive health’.... To blame population growth instead of extreme and selective consumerism on the part of some, is one way of refusing to face the issues. It is an attempt to legitimize the present model of distribution, where a minority believes that it has the right to consume in a way which can never be universalized, since the planet could not even contain the waste products of such consumption. Besides, we know that approximately a third of all food produced is discarded, and ‘whenever food is thrown out it is as if it were stolen from the table of the poor’. Still, attention needs to be paid to imbalances in population density, on both national and global levels, since a rise in consumption would lead to complex regional situations, as a result of the interplay between problems linked to environmental pollution, transport, waste treatment, loss of resources and quality of life.” (*Laudato Si'*, 50)

ALONG WITH THE IMPORTANCE OF
LITTLE EVERYDAY GESTURES, SOCIAL
LOVE MOVES US TO DEVISE LARGER
STRATEGIES TO HALT
ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION AND
TO ENCOURAGE A ‘CULTURE OF CARE’
WHICH PERMEATES ALL OF SOCIETY.

(Pope Francis, *Laudato Si'*, 231)

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