



FAITHFUL CITIZENSHIP 2012

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.wisconsinccatholic.org.

Fourth in a four-part series

MARRIAGE & FAMILY

Why are marriage and family essential to society?

The human person is not only sacred, but also social; human beings are not mere individuals, they are intrinsically related to one another. Because the most basic social unit is the family, the Church teaches that society must make the needs and concerns of marriage and family a priority.

Marriage makes possible the continuation of the human family, the education and development of children, and the creation of a free and stable society.



A MAN AND WOMAN UNITED IN MARRIAGE AS HUSBAND AND WIFE SERVE AS A SYMBOL OF BOTH LIFE AND LOVE IN A WAY THAT NO OTHER RELATIONSHIP OF HUMAN PERSONS CAN.

Why insist on marriage between a man and a woman?

“Male-female complementarity is intrinsic to marriage. It is naturally ordered toward authentic union and the generation of new life. Children are meant to be the gift of the permanent and exclusive union of a husband and a wife. A child is meant to have a mother and a father.” (U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Marriage: Love and Live in the Divine Plan*, p. 22)

Which public policies help parents?

In the area of education, parents have the primary responsibility to see that their children are prepared for life as adults. From this responsibility flows a right to choose the education best suited to the needs of their children, including religious and independent schools. Social justice demands that poor families should be supported in their efforts to send their children to the school of their choice.

Support for “family values” must also extend to fostering a family-friendly culture outside the home that is free of both physical dangers and other corrosive influences such as pornography and other media that promote violence, pre-marital sex, drugs, and other destructive behaviors. In particular, public policies must promote the safety and well-being of our children, protecting them from all forms of abuse. As Catholics, we affirm our commitment to the protection of children in all settings, as reflected within our Church in the *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*.



ECONOMIC JUSTICE

Does the Church support a specific economic model?

The Church does not offer a specific economic model or technical solutions because different times call for different approaches. (John Paul II, *Centesimus annus (The Hundredth Year)* 43, Benedict XVI, *Caritas in veritate (Charity in Truth)* 9) Rather, she insists on the unconditional worth of every human being. The economy exists for the person, not the person for the economy.

The Church calls on us to use all our spiritual, moral, and intellectual energies to create a new order – “a society of free work, of enterprise and of participation. Such a society is not directed against the market, but demands that the market be appropriately controlled by the forces of society and by the State, so as to guarantee that the basic needs of the whole of society are satisfied.” (*Centesimus annus* 35)



What does the Church teach about economic rights?

“Catholic social teaching supports the right of workers to choose whether to organize, join a union, and bargain collectively, and to exercise these rights without reprisal. It also affirms economic freedom, initiative, and the right to private property.” (FCFC 76)

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**WORKERS AND EMPLOYERS,
ENTREPRENEURS AND UNIONS – ALL
HAVE AN INDISPENSABLE ROLE TO
PLAY IN CREATING HUMANE AND
AUTHENTIC DEVELOPMENT.**

What can we do about poverty?

“A basic moral test for our society is how we treat the most vulnerable in our midst.” (FCFC 50)

For authentic human development and to address poverty, it is critical to create jobs with just wages and decent working conditions; to remove barriers to employment; and to provide access to health care, food, housing, and education. Public policies should reduce dependency by helping families living in poverty strengthen their families and find training, employment, and assistance with child care, housing, and transportation. A safety net and Social Security are needed for low- and average-wage individuals. (FCFC 76-84)

“Faith-based groups deserve recognition and support, not as a substitute for government, but as responsive, effective partners, especially in the poorest communities and countries.” (FCFC 78)

Why does consumerism worry the Church?

As Pope John Paul II has written, “It is not wrong to want to live better; what is wrong is a style of life which is presumed to be better when it is directed towards ‘having’ rather than ‘being’, and which wants to have more, not in order to be more but in order to spend life in enjoyment as an end in itself. It is therefore necessary to create lifestyles in which the quest for truth, beauty, goodness and communion with others for the sake of common growth are the factors which determine consumer choices, savings and investments.” (*Centesimus annus* 36)