

PEACE AND JUSTICE



Article – 1

The following is an excerpt from: <https://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/faithful-citizenship/forming-consciences-for-faithful-citizenship-title>

As a nation, we share many blessings and strengths, including a tradition of religious freedom and political participation. However, as a people, we face serious challenges that are both political and moral. This has always been so and as Catholics we are called to participate in public life in a manner consistent with the mission of our Lord, a mission that he has called us to share. As Pope Francis teaches, an authentic faith . . . always involves a deep desire to change the world, to transmit values, to leave this earth somehow better than we found it. We love this magnificent planet on which God has put us, and we love the human family which dwells here, with all its tragedies and struggles, its hopes and aspirations, its strengths and weaknesses. The earth is our common home and all of us are brothers and sisters. If indeed "the just ordering of society and of the state is a central responsibility of politics," the Church, "cannot and must not remain on the sidelines in the fight for justice." (*Evangelii Gaudium*, no. 183). In this fight for justice, God gives us a special gift, hope, which Pope Benedict describes in *Caritas in Veritate* as "burst[ing] into our lives as something not due to us, something that transcends every law of justice" (no. 34). Thus we take up the task of serving the common good with joy and hope, confident that God, who "so loved the world that he gave his only Son," walks with us and strengthens us on the way (Jn 3:16). God is love, and he desires that we help to build a "civilization of love"-one in which all human beings have the freedom and opportunity to experience the love of God and live out that love by making a free gift of themselves to one another. Pope Francis encourages us in *Evangelii Gaudium* to meditate on the inseparable bond between our acceptance of the message of salvation and genuine fraternal love . . . God's word teaches that our brothers and sisters are the prolongation of the incarnation for each of us: "As you did it to one of these, the least of my brethren, you did it to me" (Mt 25:40). The way we treat others has a transcendent dimension: "The measure you give will be the measure you get" (Mt 7:2). It corresponds to the mercy which God has shown us: "Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful. Do not judge, and you will not be judged; do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven; give, and it will be given to you . . . For the measure you give will be the measure you get back" (Lk 6:36-38). What these passages make clear is the absolute priority of "going forth from ourselves toward our brothers and sisters" as one of the two great commandments which ground every moral norm and as the clearest sign for discerning spiritual growth in response to God's completely free gift. (no. 179). Love compels us "to 'go into all the world and proclaim the good news to the whole creation' (Mk 16:15)" (*Evangelii Gaudium*, no. 181). "Here," Pope Francis continues, "'the creation' refers to every aspect of human life; consequently, 'the mission of proclaiming the good news of Jesus Christ has a universal destination. Its mandate of charity encompasses all dimensions of existence, all individuals, all areas of community life, and all peoples. Nothing human can be alien to it'" (*Evangelii Gaudium*, no. 181). This "mandate" includes our engagement in political life.

In Christ,
Deacon Joe Fragale – jfragale@stambroseonthehill.com