

# Public Policy Manual

2009

by

Dr. Marcella Colbert  
Director, Respect Life Office  
Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston, Texas

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## *Mission Statement*

**Indeed, the Lord Jesus, when He prayed to the Father, “that all may be one...as we are one” (Jn 17:21-22) opened up vistas closed to human reason, for He implied a certain likeness between the union of the divine Persons, and the unity of God’s sons in truth and charity. This likeness reveals that man, who is the only creature on earth which God willed for itself, cannot fully find himself except through a sincere gift of himself.**

*Gaudium et Spes (24)*

The Respect Life Office has been formed to assist Cardinal DiNardo in his evangelical task of bringing the fundamental truth that **“human life is sacred from the moment of conception to the moment of natural death”** to the Archdiocese and to help bring about a conversion of heart and mind for all to be open to God’s special gift of life. The church, in truth and love, presents a challenge to the moral disorder of our time and the terrible suffering of so many caught up in a way of life unfit for the human person.

Respect Life Volunteers understand their apostolate as

A work of **Evangelization**, meeting those who suffer where they are, helping them to come to the Church for help and support, by meeting Christ in the person of the volunteer. The ultimate purpose of respect life work is **to bring people to God** and particularly to help those separated from Christ and the Church as a result of abortion, euthanasia, etc., so that they come to know God’s infinite love and mercy through the Church and particularly in the sacraments of Reconciliation and Eucharist. Respect for Life is at the heart of the new evangelization. The sacredness of human life from the moment of conception to the moment of natural death is a central part of the Christian message. It is God who gives life and only He may take life.

Encourage the lay faithful involved in respect life activities to come to **understand and live the lay vocation**; to understand the salvific role of work in their human and spiritual formation; to engage in those apostolic endeavors only they are positioned to do, so that they bring about a transformation and renewal of the temporal order in Christ. Illustrate and live out the **like-with-like** apostolate of the laity through an apostolate of friendship and of presence, relying on the special gifts of the laity.

Encourage collaborative **ministry** working in solidarity with all the other ministries and apostolates in the parish and Archdiocese, i.e., parish social ministry, Catholic Charities, CHRISTUS HealthCare, etc.

**Accepting the universal call to holiness** for all Christians, encourage the laity involved in respect life work to actively engage in a program of personal sanctification through the local parish, a third order or one of the lay movements. Encourage the volunteers **to come closer to God**, through acts of self giving to the other and through a greater reliance on prayer and worship in their own lives.

Offer **Sacramental reconciliation and healing** needed by so many today.

To **“focus the public discussion where it must ultimately focus – on the morality and legality of abortion”** and the other life issues by developing and teaching, in cooperation with the appropriate Archdiocesan institutions, a comprehensive curriculum in the moral teachings of the Church.

To implement the **“Pastoral Plan for Pro-Life Activities: A Campaign in Support of Life”** by the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, December, 2001 (third edition) Programs are parish based to encourage solidarity, subsidiary, and collaborative ministry among parishioners. Respect for Life is for all people and all groups in the parish.

# Yearly Calendar for Parish Coordinators

## Prayer & Worship

**Prayers at Mass & Bulletin Inserts** – Arrange for priests or deacons to add pro-life intentions to “prayers of the faithful” at Mass. Suitable prayers are included in the monthly Archdiocesan mailing to pastors or are available from the USCCB website. Bulletin Inserts are ready to place in Bulletin weekly. Available in Spanish and English at:  
<http://www.usccb.org/prolife/liturgy/wolarchive.shtml>

**Weekly**

**Annual Mass for Life** – Encourage attendance at this special Mass celebrated by the Cardinal annually in January or February.

**January or February**

**Homilies** – Ask parish homilists to give pro-life homilies, especially on the 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday in October (Respect Life Sunday) and January (anniversary of Roe v. Wade Jan 22). Homily outlines are available in USCCB Respect Life packets distributed by the Archdiocesan Respect Life Office to each parish in August/September, or from the USCCB website at [www.USCCB.org](http://www.USCCB.org)

**October & January**

**Helpers of God’s Precious Infants** - Encourage participation in these Mass and Rosary processions to Houston abortion clinics. The sessions are held several times a year. For information contact **Vicky Whynott** at 832-875-5126.

**Weekly clinics  
Processions  
monthly**

**Rosary For Life** – Encourage parishioners to pray the Rosary for the pro-life cause. An easy way to do this is to introduce the Decade-A-Day for Life project. For information contact **Jim Connors** at 281 557-8480.

**Ongoing**

**Divine Mercy Sunday** - Our Holy Father is constantly reminding us of the need for Reconciliation and healing in our world and in our own lives. The Chaplet of Divine Mercy is one way to do this, at the abortion sites and in our own lives. <http://www.archgh.org/RespectLife/index.htm>

**1<sup>st</sup> Sunday after  
Easter**

**A Particular Day of Penance and Prayer for January 22 is mandated by the Bishops for each parish.** Arrange for a special Mass or other observance on January 22 with a pro-life liturgy and homily. Strongly encourage parishioners to attend. <http://www.usccb.org/prolife/fastpray.shtml>

**January 22**

**Adoration before Blessed Sacrament** – Several parishes solicit 30 or 31 volunteers during one month of the year with each volunteer spending 15 minutes on his or her assigned day praying for the pro-life cause before the Blessed Sacrament. Nearby parishes select different months with the intention of having 12 parishes covering the entire year.

**Ongoing**

**Day of the Unborn** - observance on the feast of the Annunciation, the day Our Lord was conceived. Also special day for NFP.  
[http://www.kofc.org/un/eb/en/leadership\\_institute/surge\\_with\\_service/church\\_activities/day\\_of\\_unborn/](http://www.kofc.org/un/eb/en/leadership_institute/surge_with_service/church_activities/day_of_unborn/)

**March 25**

## **A. Prayer & Worship**

**Spiritual Adoption** – This is a nine-month education and prayer project. Parishioners are urged to “spiritually adopt” an unknown baby who has just been conceived and is beginning life in the womb and is in danger of abortion. During the next nine months volunteers pray each day for their spiritually adopted child. Each month posters showing fetal development for that month can be displayed in the church vestibule and explanatory paragraphs on the developing baby can be shown in the parish bulletin. At the end of nine months there can be a parish birthday party in celebration. See website below for further information:

<http://www.archbalt.org/respect-life/spiritual-adoption/index.cfm>

**Nine Months**

**Parish Reconciliation Services**—During Advent and Lent most parishes hold reconciliation services. This is a very good time to inform others about the Gabriel, Rachel and Courage outreaches, which offer true reconciliation and healing with Christ.

**Lent  
Advent**

## B. Education

**Respect Life Program** is prepared by the USCCB Pro-Life Office for use throughout the year, educational materials, liturgy guide, and clip art catalog. Contact **Dr. Marcella Colbert** at 713-741-8728.

**Collect August/September. Use all year**

**Certificate in Life, Justice & Peace** - This new course in the basic teaching of the Church in personal and social morality and its application is for all who are interested in a more in-depth understanding. It takes 11 sessions on Monday evenings starting in February and September. Contact **Dr. Marcella Colbert** at 713-741-8728.

**Starting January or February and September**

**Parish Bulletins – Word of Life series** Frequently insert pro-life messages into parish bulletins. These can be obtained from , or from the parish secretary who has access to bulletin items included in monthly Archdiocesan mailings to the pastor. These inserts should include announcements of upcoming pro-life events.

**Weekly**

<http://www.usccb.org/prolife/liturgy/wolarchive.shtml>

**Parish Organizations** – Offer to provide a pro-life speaker or brief pro-life reports at meeting of all parish organizations. Contact **Dr. Marcella Colbert** at 713-741-8728.

**As needed**

**Information Table** with pro-life literature outside Mass weekly.

**Ongoing**

**Parish Ministry Weekend** - Most parishes have a weekend set aside in August/September, to inform parishioners of the opportunities to become involved in ministry. Have a Respect Life table.

**August/September**

**Literature**– Provides a selection of pro-life flyers on parish pamphlet rack and in parish library. These are available from the Archdiocesan Respect Life Office. Contact **Dr. Marcella Colbert** at 713-741-8728.

**Ongoing**

**Fairs or Bazaars** – Have a Respect Life information booth at parish fairs or bazaars.

**September/October**

**Youth For Life, Justice & Peace** service projects for Youths throughout the Archdiocese. See Brochure at:

**Ongoing**

<http://www.archgh.org/RespectLifeyouthforlifejustice&peace.htm>

## C. Pastoral Care

**Gabriel Project®** – Contact **Cathy McConn**, Archdiocesan Gabriel Coordinator at 713-741-8729. See The Gabriel Angel and Resource Manual<sup>©</sup> at: <http://www.archgh.org/RespectLife/gabrielproject.htm> **Ongoing**

**Project Rachel** – Place Rachel flyers in church pamphlet rack. Also, periodically insert Rachel “ads” in parish bulletin. Give priests and deacons information on the Rachel Project located at: <http://www.archgh.org/RespectLife/projectrachel.htm> **Ongoing**

**Natural Family Planning** – Maintain flyers and literature in the parish pamphlet rack and library. See website at: <http://www.archgh.org/RespectLife/naturalfamilyplanning.htm> **Ongoing**

**Mother and Baby Assistance** – Conduct a parish-wide baby shower during the year, preferably on Mothers Day the 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday in May, to collect baby and maternal goods (and financial help) for mothers in need. Coordinate with Project Gabriel®. How to instructions in The Gabriel Angel and Resource Manual<sup>©</sup>. See website at: <http://www.archgh.org/RespectLife/mother&babyassistance.htm> **Ongoing**

**Courage** - Pastoral care for homosexual persons within the Catholic Church. Brochure at: <http://www.archgh.org/RespectLife/courage.htm> **Ongoing**

## D. Public Policy and Legislative Change

**Voter Registration** – Conduct a voter registration drive outside Church six weeks before major elections on first Tuesday in November. Make available literature on importance of voting pro-life. See website at: <http://www.archgh.org/RespectLife/voterregistration.htm>

**February/August  
May for High  
School Grads**

**Write For Life** – Periodically recruit parishioners to participate in the Archdiocesan Write For Life organized letter-writing project. For info contact **Jim Connors** at 281-557-8480.

**Monthly**

**District Action Committee** – Meet with legislators and candidates to stress the importance of pro-life legislation. Publicize the results of meetings in the parish, perhaps by means of bulletin inserts. Be sure to adhere to the “Dos and Don’ts” of political involvement shown in the appendix. **Call Joe Kral** at 281-799-8040.

**Occasionally**

**Rally For Life** – In January on the Sunday following Jan 22, encourage parishioners to attend the pro-life rally in Austin. Organized by Texas Catholic Conference and other groups. See website at: <http://www.archgh.org/RespectLife/rallyforlife.htm>

**January**

**Petitions and Post Card Campaigns** – Participate in Archdiocesan or national campaigns to solicit petition or postcard signatures asking legislators to support pro-life legislation. See website at: <http://www.usccb.org/postcard/index.shtml>

**Occasionally**

## E. Miscellaneous

<b>Fund raising</b>	Christmas card sales	<b>September</b>
	Baby Shower	<b>May</b>
	Collections at pro-life events	
	Help from parish organizations	<b>Ongoing</b>
	Kroger Neighbor to Neighbor Program and Randall's Cards	

**Recruiting** – The Respect Life Committee can recruit new members by periodically asking for help in the parish bulletin. Also, have an information table at parish ministry recruiting drives. New converts are also a source for likely candidates.

**Publicity**-There are many wonderful resources available from the Respect Life Office, brochures, posters, bumper stickers, business cards, note cards. Use them.

### Websites:

[www.usccb.org/prolife](http://www.usccb.org/prolife) (everything)  
<http://www.nchla.org> (public policy and legislative change)  
[www.txcatholic.org](http://www.txcatholic.org) (Texas Catholic Conference)  
[http://www.archgh.org/pastoral\\_respectlife.htm](http://www.archgh.org/pastoral_respectlife.htm) Respect Life Office for the Archdiocese of Galveston Houston

## Parishes by Vicariate and Deanery

### Central Vicariate

#### Central Deanery

All Saints  
Annunciation  
Blessed Sacrament  
Christ the King  
Holy Name  
Holy Rosary  
Our Lady of Guadalupe  
Sacred Heart Co-Cathedral  
St. Anne de Beaupre  
St. Joseph  
St. Mary  
St. Nicholas  
St. Patrick  
St. Stephen

#### Northeast Deanery

Assumption  
Our Lady of Fatima, Galena Park  
Our Lady of St. John  
Our Lady of Sorrows  
Our Lady, Star of the Sea  
Our Mother of Mercy  
Resurrection  
St. Charles Borromeo  
St. Francis of Assisi  
St. Gregory the Great  
St. Leo the Great  
St. Peter Claver  
St. Philip of Jesus

#### Southeast Deanery

Blessed Juan Diego, Pasadena  
Immaculate Conception  
Immaculate Heart of Mary  
Our Lady of Grace, South Houston  
Our Lady of Mount Carmel  
Queen of Peace  
St. Alphonsus  
St. Augustine  
St. Christopher  
St. Francis Xavier  
St. Peter the Apostle  
St. Philip Neri  
St. Pius V, Pasadena  
Vietnamese Martyrs

### Northern Vicariate

#### Northern Deanery

Sacred Heart, Conroe  
St. Mary, Plantersville  
St. Matthias, Magnolia  
St. Joseph Mission, Stoneham  
St. Joseph, New Waverly  
Christ our Light, Navasota  
St. Stephen the Martyr Mission, Point Blank  
St. Stanislaus, Anderson  
St. Thomas the Apostle, Huntsville

#### Eastern Deanery

Holy Family, McNair  
Our Lady of Guadalupe, Baytown  
Sacred Heart, Crosby  
St. Andrew, Channelview  
St. Dominic  
St. John the Evangelist, Baytown  
St. Joseph, Baytown  
St. Jude Thaddeus, Highlands  
St. Martin de Porres, Barrett Station  
St. Philip, Huffman

#### San Jacinto Deanery

Christ the Good Shepherd, Spring  
Our Lady of Lavang  
Prince of Peace  
St. Anne, Tomball  
St. Edward, Spring  
St. Ignatius Loyola, Spring  
St. James the Apostle, Spring  
St. John of the Cross, New Caney  
St. John Neumann  
St. Martha, Kingwood  
St. Mary, Humble  
Sts. Simon & Jude, The Woodlands  
St. Anthony of Padua, The Woodlands



## Southern Vicariate

### **Galveston/Mainland Deanery**

Holy Rosary, Galveston  
Mary, Star of the Sea Mission, Jamaica Beach  
Our Lady of Lourdes, Hitchcock  
Our Mother of Mercy, Port Bolivar  
Queen of Peace Mission, Galveston  
Queen of Peace, La Marque  
Sacred Heart, Galveston  
St. Mary Cathedral, Galveston  
St. Mary, Texas City  
St. Patrick, Galveston  
St. Peter the Apostle, Galveston  
Shrine of the True Cross, Dickinson

### **Bay Area Deanery**

Mary Queen, Friendswood  
St. Bernadette Soubirous, Clear Lake  
St. Clare of Assisi, Clear Lake  
St. Frances Cabrini  
St. Helen, Pearland  
St. Hyacinth, Deer Park  
St. Luke the Evangelist  
St. Mary, La Porte  
St. Mary, League City  
St. Paul, Nasa Area

### **Southern Deanery**

Our Lady of Perpetual Help, Sweeny  
Sacred Heart, Manvel  
St. Anthony, Danbury  
St. Basis, Angleton  
St. Jerome, Clute  
St. John the Baptist, Alvin  
St. John the Apostle Mission, West Columbia  
St. Joseph, Brazoria  
St. Mary, Star of the Sea, Freeport  
St. Michael, Lake Jackson

## Western Vicariate

### **Bluebonnet Deanery**

Sts. Peter & Paul, Bellville  
Sacred Heart, Brookshire  
St. Mary, Frydek  
St. Mary, Hempstead  
St. Katherine Drexel, Hempstead  
Immaculate Conception Mission, Industry  
St. Bartholomew, Katy  
St. Edith Stein, Katy  
Immaculate Conception, Sealy  
Guardian Angel, Wallis

### **Western Deanery**

Holy Family, Missouri City  
Holy Rosary, Rosenberg  
Our Lady of Guadalupe, Rosenberg  
Sacred Heart, Richmond  
Sts. Cyril and Methodius, Damon  
St. John Fisher, Richmond  
St. Michael, Needville  
St. Theresa, Sugar Land  
St. Laurence, Sugar Land  
St. Thomas Aquinas, Sugar Land  
St. Wenceslaus Mission, Beasley

### **Southwest Deanery**

Ascension Chinese Mission  
Christ, The Incarnate Word  
Corpus Christi  
Holy Ghost  
Notre Dame  
St. Albert  
St. Anne  
St. Benedict  
St. Cyril of Alexandria  
St. Francis de Sales  
St. Justin  
St. Mark the Evangelist  
St. Michael  
St. Raphael  
St. Thomas More  
St. Vincent de Paul

### **Northwest Deanery**

Christ the Redeemer  
Epiphany of the Lord, Katy  
Our Lady of Czestochowa  
Our Lady of Lourdes  
Our Lady of Walsingham  
St. Ambrose  
St. Andrew Kim  
St. Catherine of Siena  
St. Cecilia  
St. Elizabeth Anne Seton  
St. Jerome  
St. John Vianney  
St. Matthew the Evangelist  
St. Maximilian Kolbe  
St. Monica  
St. Rose of Lima  
St. Theresa

## How to Get Organized

The pastor must approve the creation of a Respect Life group and appoint a Respect Life Coordinator. The establishment of a Respect Life Group usually goes before the Parish Council.

Once the coordinator is appointed, advertise for members for the group by pastor promotion at mass through fliers and bulletin announcements

When a group forms make decisions about what programs the group will work with and appoint one or two people to each program. See Mission & Apostolate brochure. **It is very important to start small, establish a program and then move on to another program**

The Respect Life Director will come to the parish to outline the programs, and help in whatever way is necessary.

**Respect Life Coordinators** meet four times a year in March, June, August and November.

Remember, Respect Life is a parish initiative, include **everyone and every group** in the program.

Some groups in the parish to work with

Knights of Columbus  
Catholic Daughters  
Young Mothers Club  
St. Vincent de Paul Society  
Parish Social Ministry  
Natural Family Planning  
Youth Groups  
Catholic School Children  
Legion of Mary  
Familia  
Knight of Peter Claver  
Ladies Auxiliary  
Guadalupanos

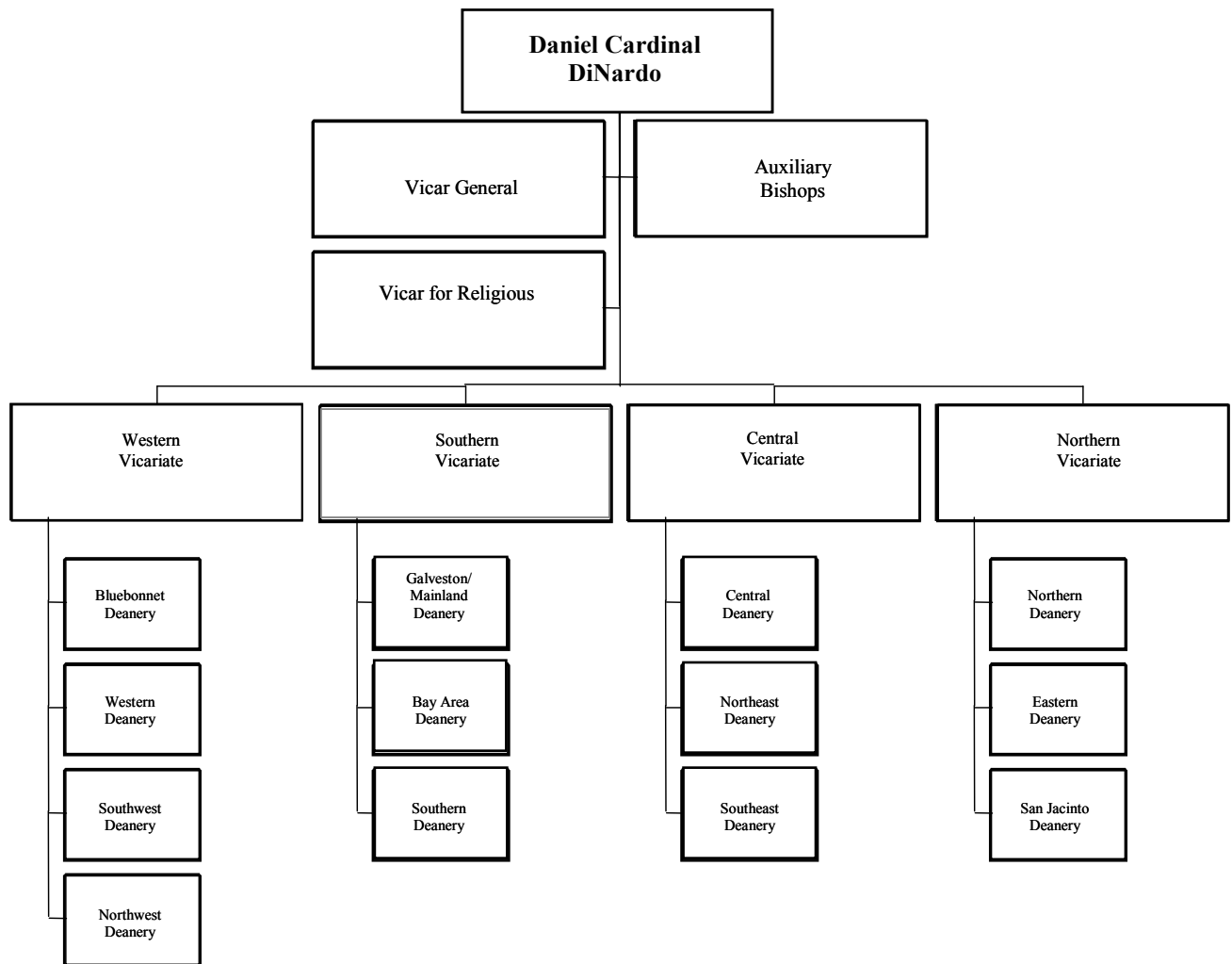
**\*\*This list does not include all groups that may be in your parish.**

# Archdiocesan Organization

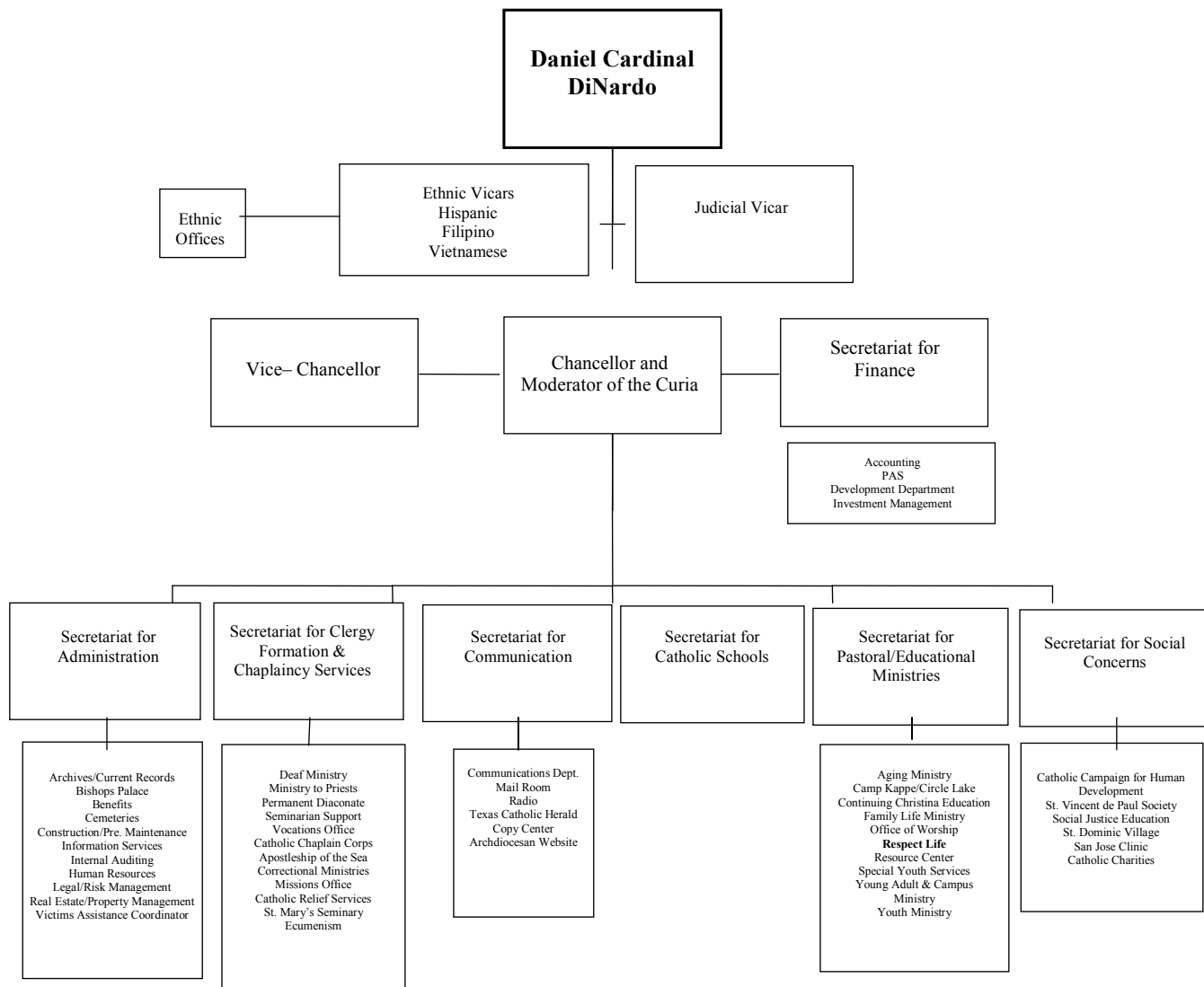
The Church is the institution founded by Christ to continue His saving mission, to teach, to sanctify and to govern. The Archbishop called by God, as direct successor of the Apostles, is head of the Church in His Diocese. He shares his mission to teach, sanctify and govern with those who work for him directly, e.g., pastor in his parish and the Archdiocesan Offices.

The Archdiocesan Church has an internal and external structure to ensure the orderly administration of the Archdiocese under the Archbishop. The internal structure is the Archdiocesan offices; the external structure is the pastor and his parish. Volunteers in parishes, including Gabriel Project® volunteers, are **Lay Ecclesial Ministers** and part of the external structure under the pastor and assigned staff members.

## External Organization



# Internal Organization



## DO's and DON'Ts for Catholic Institutions

from "A Call to Political Responsibility" by the U.S. Catholic Bishops

Parishes, schools, and other Catholic institutions should encourage active participation by voter registration and voter education efforts that are genuinely non-partisan. This kind of religious political responsibility can strengthen our nation and renew our Church.

Individual Catholics are called to be active and informed citizens running for office, participating in political parties and campaigns, and voting for candidates of their choice.

They are part of diocesan legislative networks and a wide variety of community organizations and advocacy groups. The Church as an institution has important but limited roles in the political process. As a tax-exempt organization, the Church is not permitted to engage in partisan activities, support of opposing candidates and parties. These DO's and DON'Ts can help guide an appropriate program of voter education and political responsibility.

### **DO**

- Address the moral and human dimension of public issues
- Share Church teaching on human life, human rights, and justice and peace
- Apply Catholic values to legislation and public issues
- Invite all candidates for public office to a church-sponsored public forum, debate, or candidate night
- Conduct a non-partisan voter registration drive on church property
- Distribute unbiased candidate questionnaires covering issues of human life, justice and peace

### **DON'T**

- Endorse/oppose candidates for political office
- Distribute partisan campaign literature under church auspices
- Arrange for groups to work for a candidate for public office
- Invite only selected candidates to address your church-sponsored group
- Conduct voter registration slanted toward one party
- Distribute a biased candidate

## Guidelines for Pastors and Parishes on Advocacy and Political Participation

Texas Catholic Conference  
1625 Rutherford Lane, Bldg. D.  
Austin, Texas 78754  
<http://www.txcatholic.org/>

**Introduction** The Catholic Bishops of Texas recognize the need to distribute guidelines for parishes concerning advocacy and electioneering in election years. The Church speaks often to issues that are both moral and political, but it directs its attention to the issues, not to political parties or candidates.

### **The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops has addressed this issue:**

We bishops have the primary responsibility to hand on the Church's moral and social teaching. Together with priests and deacons, assisted by religious and lay leaders of the Church, we are to teach fundamental moral principles that help Catholics form their consciences correctly, to provide guidance on the moral dimensions of public decisions, and to encourage the faithful to carry out their responsibilities in political life. In fulfilling these responsibilities, the Church's leaders are to avoid endorsing or opposing candidates or telling people how to vote.

As Catholics we are not single-issue voters. Our cause is **the defense of human life and dignity** and the protection of the weak and vulnerable. Catholic voters should use the framework of Catholic teaching to examine candidates' positions on issues affecting human life and dignity as well as issues of justice and peace, and they should consider candidates' integrity, philosophy, and performance.

### **The Vatican Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith iterates:**

It must be noted also that a well-formed Christian conscience **does not permit one to vote for a political program or an individual law which contradicts the fundamental contents of faith and morals**. The Christian faith is an integral unity, and thus it is incoherent to isolate some particular element to the detriment of the whole of Catholic doctrine. A political commitment to a single isolated aspect of the Church's social doctrine does not exhaust one's responsibility towards the common good.<sup>1</sup>

The Church calls for a different kind of political engagement: one shaped by the moral convictions of well formed consciences and focused on the dignity of every human being, the pursuit of the common good, and the protection of the weak and the vulnerable.

The Catholic call to faithful citizenship affirms the importance of political participation and insists that public service is a worthy vocation. As Catholics, we should be guided more by our moral convictions than by our attachment to a political party or interest group. Decisions about political life are complex and require the exercise of a well-formed conscience aided by prudence. This exercise of conscience begins with outright opposition to laws and other policies that violate human life or weaken its protection. In making these decisions, it is essential for Catholics to be guided by a well-formed conscience that recognizes that **all issues do not carry the same moral weight and that the moral obligation to oppose intrinsically evil acts has a special claim on our consciences and our actions**. These decisions should take into account a candidate's commitments, character, integrity, and ability to influence a given issue. In the end, this is a decision to be made by each Catholic guided by a conscience formed by Catholic moral teaching.

Building a world of respect for human life and dignity, where justice and peace prevail, requires more than just political commitment. Individuals, families, businesses, community organizations, and government all have a role to play. Catholic teaching challenges voters and candidates, citizens and elected officials, to consider the moral and ethical dimensions of public policy issues. Participation in political life in light of fundamental moral principles is an essential duty for every Catholic and all people of good will.

Faithful Citizenship: A Call to Political Responsibility  
United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, November 2007

## GUIDELINES

**I. Parishes and other institutions may, and in some cases should, engage in issue-oriented activities and advocacy.** As a rule, limitations on the extent of such advocacy would not be a problem for parishes or other institutions, since advocacy would not be a substantial part of their endeavors.

The following are examples of such acceptable activity:

- **Educational efforts** about issues and in support or opposition of specific legislation.
- **Encouragement of letter writing campaigns** and other contacts with state or federal legislators designed to educate them and to develop support for legislation.
- **Distribution of flyers** containing a statement about an issue or issues before the Congress or the Texas Legislature, and containing the names and addresses of senators and representatives.
- **Preaching**, with emphasis on deepening the understanding of the sanctity of human life and distribution of pertinent information concerning particular issues, especially those affecting human life.

**II.** Nonpartisan voter registration and get-out-the-vote campaigns are an allowable activity for parishes and church organizations.

**III.** Materials prepared for use in educating citizens, including surveys or polls, must emphasize educational objectives not support or opposition to specific candidates or parties. All Materials should be approved by USCCB, TCC, or the local ordinary (Diocesan Bishop).

**IV. Evaluations of candidates or political parties should be avoided.**

Example of objectionable evaluations would be:

- Those that encourage readers or listeners (e.g., homily) to vote for or against a particular candidate or party;
- Those which label a candidate of party as “pro-school choice” or “anti-life”; such a practice removes objectivity by not allowing readers to evaluate a candidate’s position themselves;  
Those which use plus or minus signs to evaluate the candidate or party;
- Rating Candidates or parties on a scale of “one to ten” for example, or otherwise saying “X is good,” “Y” is better”;
- Those which use marked sample ballots.

V. No (arch) diocesan or parish entity or organization should endorse, oppose or campaign for or against any political party or candidate for public office; nor should any funds of any such entity or organization be contributed to any political candidate, party, campaign or political action committee.

VI. Pastors or other religious leaders are urged to avoid endorsements or other political activity, contributions, or electioneering. Although not prohibited, it may be difficult to separate their personal activity from their role as a representative of the Church

VII. Catholic facilities shall not be used for campaign rallies or events. Signs or leaflets supporting a particular candidate should not be located/distributed on Church property.

For complete text of the USCCB office of Government Liaison Political Activity Guidelines for Catholic Organizations, March 15, 2004, go to <http://www.usccb.org/ogc/>.  
Question that might arise from these guidelines should be referred to the appropriate office (arch) diocesan or to the Texas Catholic Conference at (512)339-9882 or at <http://www.txcatholic.org/>.

<sup>1</sup> Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, Doctrinal Note on Some Questions Regarding the Participation of Catholics in Political Life, no. 6.  
(Spring 2008)

## Know Your State and Federal Legislators

For more information on your Representative or Senator email <http://www.house.state.tx.us/members/welcome.php>

### Texas U.S. Senators

U.S. Senators represent the entire state. Texas' current U.S. Senators are **Senator John Cornyn** and **Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison**.

### Texas U.S. Representatives

Congressional District 18--Congressman Sheila Jackson Lee  
District Address: 2435 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING  
WASHINGTON DC 20515  
Phone: (202) 225-3816  
District Offices

1919 Smith St., Ste 1180  
Houston, TX 77002  
Phone: (713) 655-0050

420 West 19th Street  
Houston, TX 77008  
Phone: (713) 861-4070

6719 West Montgomery, Suite 204  
Houston, TX 77091  
Phone: (713) 691-4882

Congressional District 14--Congressman Ron Paul  
District Address: 203 CANNON HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING  
WASHINGTON DC 20515  
Phone: (202) 225-2831  
District Offices

122 West Way, Suite 301  
Lake Jackson, TX 77566  
Phone: (979) 285-0231

601 25th Street, Suite 216  
Galveston, TX 77550  
Phone: (409) 766-7013

1501 Mockingbird Lane, Suite 229  
Victoria, TX 77904  
Phone: (361) 576-1231

## Texas U. S. Representatives Continued

Congressional District 10--Congressman Michael T. McCaul  
District Address: 131 CANNON HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING  
WASHINGTON DC 20515  
Phone: (202) 225-2401  
District Offices

5929 Balcones Drive, Suite 305  
Austin, TX 78731  
Phone: (512) 473-2357

2000 S. Market Street, Suite 303  
Brenham, TX 77833  
Phone: (979) 830-8497

1550 Foxlake, Suite 120  
Houston, TX 77084  
Phone: (281) 398-1247

990 Village Square, Suite B  
Tomball, TX 77375  
Phone: (281) 255-8372

Congressional District 8--Congressman Kevin Brady  
District Address: 301 CANNON HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING  
WASHINGTON DC 20515  
Phone: (202) 225-4901  
District Offices

200 River Pointe Dr., Suite 304  
Conroe, TX 77304  
Phone: (936) 441-5700

1202 Sam Houston Avenue, Suite 8  
Huntsville, TX 77340  
Phone: (936) 439-9542

420 Green Ave  
Orange, TX 77630  
Phone: (409) 883-4197

Congressional District 9--Congressman Al Green  
District Address: 425 CANNON HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING  
WASHINGTON DC 20515  
Phone: (202) 225-7508  
District Offices

3003 South Loop West, Suite 460  
HOUSTON, TX 77054  
Phone: (713) 383-9234

## Texas U. S. Representatives Continued

Congressional District 29--Congressman Gene Green  
District Address: 2335 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING  
WASHINGTON DC 20515  
Phone: (202) 225-1688  
District Offices

256 N. Sam Houston Pky. E., Ste 29  
Houston, TX 77060  
Phone: (281) 999-5879

11811 I-10 East, Ste 430  
Houston, TX 77029  
Phone: (713) 330-0761

10 North Gaillard  
Baytown, TX 77520  
Phone: (281) 420-0502

Congressional District 22--Congressman Pete Olson  
District Address: 514 CANNON HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING  
WASHINGTON DC 20515  
Phone: (202) 225-5951  
District Offices  
10701 Corporate Dr #118  
Stafford, TX 77477  
Phone: (281) 240-3700

Congressional District 7--Congressman John Culberson  
District Address: 428 CANNON HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING  
WASHINGTON DC 20515  
Phone: (202) 225-2571  
District Offices

10000 Memorial Drive, Suite 620  
Houston, TX 77024  
Phone: (713) 682-8828

Congressional District 2--Congressman Ted Poe  
District Address: 1605 LONGWORTH HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING  
WASHINGTON DC 20515  
Phone: (202) 225-6565  
District Offices

20202 US HWY 59 NORTH, STE 105  
HUMBLE, TX 77338  
Phone: (281) 446-0242

505 Orleans Street, Suite 100  
Beaumont, TX 77701  
Phone: (409) 212-1997

## Texas Senate

Senate District 18--Senator Glenn Hegar  
Capitol Office: EXT E1.808  
Capitol Phone: (512) 463-0118  
Capitol Address: P.O. Box 12068, Capitol Station  
Austin, TX 78711  
District Address: P.O. Box 1008  
Katy, TX 77492  
Phone: (281) 391-8883

Senate District 4--Senator Tommy Williams  
Capitol Office: CAP GE.7  
Capitol Phone: (512) 463-0104  
Capitol Address: P.O. Box 12068, Capitol Station  
Austin, TX 78711  
District Address: P. O. Box 8069  
The Woodlands, TX 77387  
Phone: (281) 364-9426

Senate District 7--Senator Dan Patrick  
Capitol Office: CAP 3S.3  
Capitol Phone: (512) 463-0107  
Capitol Address: P.O. Box 12068, Capitol Station  
Austin, TX 78711  
District Address: 11451 Katy Fwy, Suite 209  
Houston, TX 77079  
Phone: (713) 464-0282

Senate District 15--Senator John Whitmire  
Capitol Office: CAP 1E.13  
Capitol Phone: (512) 463-0115  
Capitol Address: P.O. Box 12068, Capitol Station  
Austin, TX 78711  
District Address: 803 Yale Street  
Houston, TX 77007  
Phone: (713) 864-8701

Senate District 6--Senator Mario Gallegos  
Capitol Office: EXT E1.804  
Capitol Phone: (512) 463-0106  
Capitol Address: P.O. Box 12068, Capitol Station  
Austin, TX 78711  
District Address: P.O. Box 41  
Galena Park, TX 77547  
Phone: (713) 678-8600

## Texas Senate Continued

Senate District 17--Senator Joan Huffman  
Capitol Office: CAP GE.5  
Capitol Phone: (512) 463-0117  
Capitol Address: P.O. Box 12068, Capitol Station  
Austin, TX 78711

Senate District 5--Senator Steve Ogden  
Capitol Office: CAP GE.4  
Capitol Phone: (512) 463-0105  
Capitol Address: P.O. Box 12068, Capitol Station  
Austin, TX 78711  
District Address: 3740 Copperfield Dr., Suite 103  
Bryan, TX 77802  
Phone: (979) 776-0521

Senate District 3--Senator Robert Nichols  
Capitol Office: EXT E1.708  
Capitol Phone: (512) 463-0103  
Capitol Address: P.O. Box 12068, Capitol Station  
Austin, TX 78711  
District Address: 329 Neches Street  
Jacksonville, TX 75766  
Phone: (903) 589-3003

Senate District 11--Senator Mike Jackson  
Capitol Office: CAP 3E.2  
Capitol Phone: (512) 463-0111  
Capitol Address: P.O. Box 12068, Capitol Station  
Austin, TX 78711  
District Address: 1109 Fairmont Parkway  
Pasadena, TX 77504  
Phone: (713) 948-0111

Senate District 13--Senator Rodney Ellis  
Capitol Office: CAP 3E.6  
Capitol Phone: (512) 463-0113  
Capitol Address: P.O. Box 12068, Capitol Station  
Austin, TX 78711  
District Address: 440 Louisiana, Suite 575  
Houston, TX 77002  
Phone: (713) 236-0306

## State District Offices

House District 136--Representative Beverly Woolley  
Capitol Office: CAP GS.2  
Capitol Phone: (512) 463-0696  
Capitol Address: P.O. Box 2910  
Austin, TX 78768  
District Address: 2400 Augusta Drive, Suite 266  
Houston, TX 77057  
Phone: (713) 629-6313

House District 145--Representative Carol Alvarado  
Capitol Office: EXT E2.820  
Capitol Phone: (512) 463-0732  
Capitol Address: P.O. Box 2910  
Austin, TX 78768  
District Address: 8145 Park Place, Suite 100  
Houston, TX 77017  
Phone: (713) 649-6563

House District 143--Representative Ana E. Hernandez  
Capitol Office: EXT E1.220  
Capitol Phone: (512) 463-0614  
Capitol Address: P.O. Box 2910  
Austin, TX 78768  
District Address: 1233 Mercury Drive  
Houston, TX 77029  
Phone: (713) 675-8596

House District 126--Representative Patricia Harless  
Capitol Office: EXT E2.714  
Capitol Phone: (512) 463-0496  
Capitol Address: P.O. Box 2910  
Austin, TX 78768  
District Address: 6605 Cypresswood Drive, #240  
Spring, TX 77379  
Phone: (281) 376-4114

House District 129--Representative John E. Davis  
Capitol Office: CAP 4S.4  
Capitol Phone: (512) 463-0734  
Capitol Address: P.O. Box 2910  
Austin, TX 78768  
District Address: 1350 NASA Parkway,, Suite 212  
Houston, TX 77058  
Phone: (281) 333-1350

## State District Office Continued

House District 138--Representative Dwayne Bohac  
Capitol Office: EXT E2.904  
Capitol Phone: (512) 463-0727  
Capitol Address: P.O. Box 2910  
Austin, TX 78768  
District Address: 2600 Gessner, Suite 212  
Houston, TX 77080  
Phone: (713) 460-2800

House District 28--Representative John Zerwas  
Capitol Office: EXT E2.316  
Capitol Phone: (512) 463-0657  
Capitol Address: P.O. Box 2910  
Austin, TX 78768  
District Address: P.O. Box 434  
Simonton, TX 77476  
Phone: (281) 533-9042

House District 150--Representative Debbie Riddle  
Capitol Office: EXT E2.306  
Capitol Phone: (512) 463-0572  
Capitol Address: P.O. Box 2910  
Austin, TX 78768  
District Address: 3648 F.M. 1960 West, Suite 106  
Houston, TX 77068  
Phone: (281) 537-5252

House District 133--Representative Kristi Thibaut  
Capitol Office: EXT E2.404  
Capitol Phone: (512) 463-0514  
Capitol Address: P.O. Box 2910  
Austin, TX 78768  
District Address: P.O. Box 2910  
Austin, TX 78701  
Phone: (512) 463-0514

House District 27--Representative Dora F. Olivo  
Capitol Office: CAP GN.7  
Capitol Phone: (512) 463-0494  
Capitol Address: P.O. Box 2910  
Austin, TX 78768  
District Address: P.O. Box 2130  
Missouri City, TX 77459  
Phone: (281) 208-8806

## State District Office Continued

House District 131--Representative Alma A. Allen  
Capitol Office: EXT E2.722  
Capitol Phone: (512) 463-0744  
Capitol Address: P.O. Box 2910  
Austin, TX 78768  
District Address: 10101 Fondren Road, Suite 500  
Houston, TX 77096  
Phone: (713) 776-0505

House District 141--Representative Senfronia Paige Thompson  
Capitol Office: CAP 3S.6  
Capitol Phone: (512) 463-0720  
Capitol Address: P.O. Box 2910  
Austin, TX 78768  
District Address: 10527 Homestead Road  
Houston, TX 77016  
Phone: (713) 633-3390

House District 16--Representative Brandon Creighton  
Capitol Office: EXT E1.424  
Capitol Phone: (512) 463-0726  
Capitol Address: P.O. Box 2910  
Austin, TX 78768  
District Address: 326 1/2 Main Street  
Conroe, TX 77301  
Phone: (936) 539-0028

House District 142--Representative Harold V. Dutton  
Capitol Office: CAP 3N.5  
Capitol Phone: (512) 463-0510  
Capitol Address: P.O. Box 2910  
Austin, TX 78768  
District Address: 8799 N. Loop East, Suite 305  
Houston, TX 77029  
Phone: (713) 692-9192

House District 139--Representative Sylvester Turner  
Capitol Office: CAP 1W.6  
Capitol Phone: (512) 463-0554  
Capitol Address: P.O. Box 2910  
Austin, TX 78768  
District Address: 6915 Antoine Street, Suite E  
Houston, TX 77091  
Phone: (713) 683-6363

## State District Office Continued

House District 135--Representative Gary Elkins

Capitol Office: EXT E1.408

Capitol Phone: (512) 463-0722

Capitol Address: P.O. Box 2910

Austin, TX 78768

District Address: 9601 Jones Road, Suite 215

Houston, TX 77065

Phone: (832) 912-8380

House District 144--Representative Ken Legler

Capitol Office: EXT E2.304

Capitol Phone: (512) 463-0460

Capitol Address: P.O. Box 2910

Austin, TX 78768

District Address: P.O. Box 2910

Austin, TX 78768

House District 127--Representative Joe Crabb

Capitol Office: CAP 1W.5

Capitol Phone: (512) 463-0520

Capitol Address: P.O. Box 2910

Austin, TX 78768

District Address: 1110 Kingwood Drive, #200

Kingwood, TX 77339

Phone: (281) 359-1270

House District 146--Representative Al Edwards

Capitol Office: CAP 1W.9

Capitol Phone: (512) 463-0518

Capitol Address: P.O. Box 2910

Austin, TX 78768

District Address: P.O. Box 2910

Austin, TX 78768

House District 26--Representative Charlie Howard

Capitol Office: CAP 4S.5

Capitol Phone: (512) 463-0710

Capitol Address: P.O. Box 2910

Austin, TX 78768

District Address: 1 Fluor Daniel Building

Sugar Land, TX 77478

Phone: (281) 565-9500

## State District Office Continued

House District 132--Representative William A. 'Bill' Callegari

Capitol Office: EXT E2.806

Capitol Phone: (512) 463-0528

Capitol Address: P.O. Box 2910

Austin, TX 78768

District Address: 1550 Foxlake Drive, Suite 120

Houston, TX 77084

Phone: (281) 578-8484

House District 147--Representative Garnet F. Coleman

Capitol Office: CAP GW.17

Capitol Phone: (512) 463-0524

Capitol Address: P.O. Box 2910

Austin, TX 78768

District Address: 5445 Almeda, Suite 501

Houston, TX 77004

Phone: (713) 520-5355

House District 134--Representative Ellen Cohen

Capitol Office: EXT E2.320

Capitol Phone: (512) 463-0389

Capitol Address: P.O. Box 2910

Austin, TX 78768

District Address: 1535 West Loop South, Suite 320

Houston, TX 77027

Phone: (713) 627-0134

House District 15--Representative Rob Eissler

Capitol Office: EXT E1.414

Capitol Phone: (512) 463-0797

Capitol Address: P.O. Box 2910

Austin, TX 78768

District Address: P.O. Box 9494

The Woodlands, TX 77387 Phone: (281) 681-9655

House District 128--Representative Wayne Smith

Capitol Office: EXT E2.214

Capitol Phone: (512) 463-0733

Capitol Address: P.O. Box 2910

Austin, TX 78768

District Address: 909 Decker Drive, Suite 104

Baytown, TX 77520

Phone: (832) 556-2002

## State District Office Continued

House District 25--Representative Dennis Bonnen

Capitol Office: CAP 4N.5

Capitol Phone: (512) 463-0564

Capitol Address: P.O. Box 2910

Austin, TX 78768

District Address: 122 East Myrtle

Angleton, TX 77515

Phone: (979) 848-1770

House District 57--Representative Jim Dunnam

Capitol Office: CAP 4S.2

Capitol Phone: (512) 463-0508

Capitol Address: P.O. Box 2910

Austin, TX 78768

District Address: 713 Elm Street, Suite 101

Waco, TX 76704

Phone: (254) 753-8546

House District 130--Representative Allen Fletcher

Capitol Office: EXT E2.804

Capitol Phone: (512) 463-0661

Capitol Address: P.O. Box 2910

Austin, TX 78768

District Address: P.O. Box 2910

Austin, TX 78768

House District 13--Representative Lois W. Kolkhorst

Capitol Office: EXT E2.318

Capitol Phone: (512) 463-0600

Capitol Address: P.O. Box 2910

Austin, TX 78768

District Address: P.O. Box 1867

Brenham, TX 77834

Phone: (979) 251-7888

House District 12--Representative Jim McReynolds

Capitol Office: CAP 1W.3

Capitol Phone: (512) 463-0490

Capitol Address: P.O. Box 2910

Austin, TX 78768

District Address: 203 South First, Suite A

Lufkin, TX 75904

Phone: (936) 634-9786

House District 18--Representative John C. Otto

Capitol Office: EXT E2.906

Capitol Phone: (512) 463-0570

Capitol Address: P.O. Box 2910

Austin, TX 78768

District Address: P. O. Box 965

Dayton, TX 77535

Phone: (936) 258-8135

## State District Office Continued

House District 24--Representative Larry Taylor

Capitol Office: EXT E2.610

Capitol Phone: (512) 463-0729

Capitol Address: P.O. Box 2910

Austin, TX 78768

District Address: 174 Calder Road, Suite 116

League City, TX 77573

Phone: (281) 338-0924

House District 148--Representative Jessica Cristina Farrar

Capitol Office: CAP 4N.7

Capitol Phone: (512) 463-0620

Capitol Address: P.O. Box 2910

Austin, TX 78768

District Address: P.O. Box 30099

Houston, TX 77249

Phone: (713) 691-6912

House District 140--Representative Armando Walle

Capitol Office: EXT E1.312

Capitol Phone: (512) 463-0924

Capitol Address: P.O. Box 2910

Austin, TX 78768

District Address: P.O. Box 2910

Austin, TX 78768

House District 137--Representative Scott Hochberg

Capitol Office: CAP 4N.8

Capitol Phone: (512) 463-0492

Capitol Address: P.O. Box 2910

Austin, TX 78768

District Address: 7011 Harwin, Suite 230

Houston, TX 77036

Phone: (832) 252-7336

House District 149--Representative Hubert Vo

Capitol Office: EXT E2.208

Capitol Phone: (512) 463-0568

Capitol Address: P.O. Box 2910

Austin, TX 78768

District Address: 7474 South Kirkwood, Suite 202

Houston, TX 77072

Phone: (281) 988-0212

## Effectiveness in Lobbying

For Catholics, public virtue is as important as private virtue in building up the common good. In the Catholic tradition, responsible citizenship is a virtue; participation in the political process is a moral obligation. Every believer is called to faithful citizenship, to become an informed, active, and responsible participant in the political process.

United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Faithful Citizenship: Civic Responsibility for a New Millennium*(2000) available at: [www.nccbuscc.org/faithfulcitizenship](http://www.nccbuscc.org/faithfulcitizenship)

The Texas House and Senate meet every other year on odd years. Below are some suggestions to insure that your efforts are successful.

### Remember the Multiplier Effect

Legislators recognize that voters often do not take the time to express their opinions. Therefore they give added weight to the opinions of those who take the time to contact them.

- **1 Telephone Call** = another **10** people hold the same or similar views
- **1 Original Letter** = another **20** people hold the same or similar views
- **1 Visit to the Home Office** = another **50** people support the views being presented
- **1 Visit to the State Capitol** = another **100** people hold the same or similar views

### How to Contact Your Legislator

The website of the Texas Legislature can be found at <http://www.capitol.state.tx.us>. If you are uncertain about who represents you, enter your address or zip code on the page “Who represents me?” (also titled “Find Your Incumbent”). A list of your elected representatives will be displayed.

**Remember that the state legislature redistricted Texas in accordance with the 2000 Census, so some legislative districts have changed.**

The **mailing address** of all state senators’ offices in the capitol is The Honorable (name of the Senator), P.O. Box 12068, Capitol Station, Austin, Texas, 78711.

The **mailing address** of all state representatives’ offices in the capitol is Representative (name of the Representative), P.O. Box 2910, Austin, Texas, 78768-2910.

### General Guidelines to Successful Lobbying

1. **Act together.** Section 1905 of the CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.) quotes the *Epistula* (Letter) of Barnabas in urging that we act together to promote the common good. “Do not live, entirely isolated, having retreated into yourselves, as if you were already justified, but gather instead to seek the common good together.” *Ep. Barnabae*, 4, 10: PG 2, 734. When we act together, our public officials know our concerns are not merely those of an isolated individual, but rather represent an important part of the community.

2. **Act on time.** When you receive a message that action is needed (an “action alert”), try to do what is asked as near as possible to the time requested. Legislators are particularly likely to pay attention right before various votes on a bill. Therefore it is important that they hear from you at those times.
3. **Be specific.** Know the bill number you are contacting the legislator about, and be clear in asking for the action you want taken. For example, “Senator, this is Susan Q. Public, and I am calling to urge you to **vote yes on the passage of Senate Bill 102** banning all cloning in the state of Texas.”
4. **Be consistent.** When legislation is being considered, certain concerns or arguments begin to be heard repeatedly. It is important that legislators hear a consistent message about these concerns, so use the materials provided with an action alert in writing or talking with your Representative or Senator.
5. **Be positive in your message.** Scripture teaches “The wise man is esteemed for his discernment, yet pleasing speech increases his persuasiveness.” Prov. 16:21. Avoid threatening language of any kind. Public officials have already won at least one election, and they almost universally believe they can do it again. “We are pleased to work to elect those who share our position,” is much more effective than “We will work to defeat you in the next election if you don’t vote our way on this bill.”

## Guidelines for Lobbying in Person

1. **Always make an appointment.** Legislators and their staff members are busy people, particularly during the legislative session. Make an appointment before going to see them. When making the appointment, ask for the name of the staff member who deals with the issue. Don’t be put off if you only meet with the staff member. Often these people are the real decision makers, since legislators cannot know every bill that has been proposed in a session.
2. **Be prepared.** Always bring two copies of information; one for the legislator and one for the staff member. Know the bill number, and what action you want the legislator to take.
3. **Be on time.**
4. **Lobby in pairs.** Meetings go smoother if you have one person to speak and the other to listen and take notes. Try to get a commitment.
5. **Write a summary immediately after your meeting.** Memories fade, and get jumbled when meeting with more than one legislator.
6. **Write a thank-you note.** Be sure to include the date, place and subject of your meeting, confirm any action the legislator (or staff member) agreed to take, and repeat your request that the legislator take a specific action (i.e. support or oppose a bill).

## Guidelines for Writing Legislators

1. **Be timely.** **Communicating with a legislator is particularly important when a bill is placed on the committee or legislative calendar to come up for a vote. If your letter arrives after the vote, it has little or no effect.**
2. **Write in your own words.** Legislators give more weight to letters that seem to be written in the words of the sender, rather than copied from a form. If you are writing in response to an action alert, take a few minutes before writing to think about how to say things in your own words.
3. **Be concise.** Public officials get lots of mail, so limit your letter to one or two brief paragraphs and never more than two pages if at all possible.
4. **Be respectful.** Legislators want to make voters happy. Tell him or her what you want them to do, and why. Never threaten or personally attack the legislator, even when expressing disappointment with his or her vote. “I was saddened to learn that you voted against women receiving information regarding the risks to abortion” is much more effective than “Only a fool would believe abortionists tell women about the risks of abortion.”
5. **Follow through.** Find out what action your legislator took related to your request, and send a follow-up note when possible. “I was delighted to see that you voted in favor of the proposed moratorium on the death penalty” lets the legislator know that you are keeping track of his or her vote.

## Guidelines for Lobbying by Email

1. **Recognize legislators weigh email differently.** Since the Anthrax scare of last year, legislators are more responsive to email. However, because of the possibility of sending multiple messages with little effort, it is sometimes considered less representative of voters’ views.
2. **Use the subject line to state your message.** As staff members review email, they can clearly distinguish your email from spam if you put your message in the subject line. For example, “Please support House Bill 17” lets the staff member know the relevance of your message and the action you want taken.
3. **Avoid attaching files.** State your message in the email, rather than attaching a file since files are the most common source of destructive viruses. If you want to send supporting documents with your message, consider faxing the message instead.

## Guidelines for Lobbying by Telephone

1. **Identify yourself clearly.** The most effective phone calls are those from people who live in the district of the senator or representative receiving the call. “Hello. This is John Q. Citizen, and I live in \_\_\_\_\_, which is in your legislative district.”
2. **Be prepared.** Know the bill number your are calling about, why you support it, and what action you want the legislator to take.
3. **Ask for a written response.** At the end of the call, ask for a written response explaining how the legislator voted on the legislation you are calling about.

## Finding Contact Information for Your Legislator

### State Legislators

The website of the Texas Legislature can be found at <http://www.capitol.state.tx.us>. If your are uncertain about who represents you, enter your address or zip code on the page “Who represents me?” (also titled “Find Your Incumbent”). A list of your elected representatives will be displayed. **Remember that the state legislature redistricted Texas in accordance with the 2000 Census, so some legislative districts have changed.**

The **mailing address** of all state senators’ offices in the capitol is The Honorable (name of the Senator), P.O. Box 12068, Capitol Station, Austin, Texas, 78711.

The **mailing address** of all state representatives’ offices in the capitol is Representative (name of the Representative), P.O. Box 2910, Austin, Texas, 78768-2910.

### Federal legislators

You can identify your congressman by entering your zip code on the House of Representatives website at <https://writerep.house.gov/writerep/welcome.shtml>. Members of the United States Congress can be reached through the general switchboard (202) 224-3121, or by writing to them at United States House of Representatives, Washington D.C. 20515. The House of Representatives website at <http://www.house.gov/> contains additional contact information, including the address and phone numbers for district offices in Texas.

# *Write For Life August, 2008*

A Legislative Effort of the Respect Life Directors of the Dioceses of Texas

**PROCEDURE:** WRITE FOR LIFE involves two steps: a) write the target a letter, and b) send or e-mail the reporting form below. This newsletter gives info on a current theme, identifies the target, and provides the address. For info call Jim Connors, 281-557-8480.

**EARLIER TARGETS:** In June we complained to the Susan G. Komen (breast cancer) Foundation about their giving money to Planned Parenthood. Their replies tried to justify the gifts by saying they would be used by PP only for breast exams, etc. They ignored our point that any donation to PP frees up other money for their abortion business. In July we wrote to the presidential candidates McCain and Obama urging them to be more pro-life. No replies yet.

**AUGUST TARGET:** It's Olympics time and China is in the news every day. Thanks to Congressman Chris Smith of New Jersey, our Congress has gone on record with a resolution (HR Res 1370) highly critical of China's forced abortion policy that prevents mothers from having more than one child. The resolution, which also covers other forms of human rights abuses in China, passed by a 419 to 1 vote in late July. Chris Smith is the leader of the pro-life caucus in the House, and has been instrumental in passing every piece of pro-life legislation since he was first elected in 1980. He is a Republican from what was formerly a solid Democratic district encompassing Trenton, NJ. His pro-life enthusiasm carries him to election victories despite the pressure from national feminist and pro-abortion groups. Even though Chris is not a Texan, it's time to say thank you for what he has done for the pro-life cause.

**HOW TO ADDRESS:** Hon. Chris Smith, House Office Bldg., Washington, DC 20515. For e-mail go to <http://chrissmith.house.gov/zipauth.html>.

**BODY OF LETTER:** Use own words. Be brief. See samples below.

1. Thank you for sponsoring the recently passed resolution critical of China's forced abortion policy. We in Texas are aware of and grateful for your pro-life leadership.
2. Thanks to you the nation and the world are becoming more aware of China's human rights abuses, especially their forcing mothers to have abortions,
3. Your efforts led to the Resolution calling for the nation of China to stop its brutal campaign of forced abortions. Thank you for your constant pro-life leadership.

**REPORTING:** Return stub to Write For Life, 722 Rufina Street, League City, TX 77573, or e-mail to [seamuscon@aol.com](mailto:seamuscon@aol.com). I sent letter for month of \_\_\_\_\_ Reply was \_\_\_ was not \_\_\_ favorable. Please delete my name \_\_\_\_\_.



Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston  
Respect Life Office

Encourage your fellow Parishioners to  
**Register to Vote**

Voter Registration Drive  
Each Parish  
September 13<sup>th</sup> & 14<sup>th</sup>, 2008

To vote, you must register by October 6, 2008.  
Elections will take place on the First Tuesday in November.  
This year November 4, 2008

Voter Registration Materials will be available outside the  
Church after each Mass

**You must be 18 yrs to Vote in November.**

For more information contact the Respect Life Office at

**713-743-8728**

# Voting: A Moral Obligation

## Why Should I Vote?

In Faithful Citizenship, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops wrote “participation in the political process is a moral obligation” of Catholics.

[www.nccbuscc.org/faithfulcitizenship](http://www.nccbuscc.org/faithfulcitizenship)

The 2000 Presidential Election provides striking proof that every vote counts. This is especially true in “off-year elections” when there is not a Presidential race, since traditionally voter turnout is low.

## How Do I Vote?

If your voter registration card is easily accessible, bring it. It makes finding your name on the voter registration rolls easier for the poll workers. However, you ARE NOT REQUIRED to have your voter registration card with you. You can vote by showing your Texas Driver’s license, preprinted checks from a Texas Bank, etc.

## When Can I Vote?

From 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. on the first Tuesday in November. If you are in line at your polling place at 7:00 p.m., the law says you will be able to vote.

## Where Do I Vote?

If you do not know where you can vote, contact the **Office of The Secretary of State/Elections Division toll-free at 1-800-252-8683.**

**If you live in Montgomery County, call 936-539-7843 from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.** on Monday or Tuesday, or consult the list of polling places found at <http://www.co.montgomery.tx.us/election>

If you live in some other Texas county, you can find the name and phone number of your election official on the **Texas Secretary of State website** at <http://www.sos.state.tx.us/elections/voter/county.shtml#C>

## Who Should I Vote For?

The church does not endorse any candidate or political party. You must inform yourself on the different candidates’ voting records.

## The Texas House and Senate

<http://www.house.state.tx.us/welcome.php>

<http://www.senate.state.tx.us/75r/senate/senmem.htm>

## **The Capitol House and Senate**

<http://www.house.gov/>

<http://www.senate.gov/>

## **To find out who represents you click on:**

<http://www.capitol.state.tx.us>

<http://www.gpoaccess.gov/cdirectory/index.html>

Please urge every eligible voter in your parish, your family and on your e-mail list to vote.

## **Voter Registration**

In Texas, the county tax assessor-collector is the voter registrar for the county. The voter registrar may not charge a fee. Leo Vasquez is the voter register at [www.hctax.net/](http://www.hctax.net/) then click voter registration.

The voter registrar shall conduct voter registration activities at all times during regular office hours. The registrar may establish one or more branch offices in the county to conduct voter registration activities for the convenience of persons desiring to register.

## **Office Locations**

In addition to the Downtown Location, there are 15 Tax Office branch office locations in the county.

You will find a map and all pertinent information at: [www.hctax.net/locations/locations.asp](http://www.hctax.net/locations/locations.asp)

The main telephone number for all locations (including downtown) is (713) 368-2000. All locations have business hours of 7:45 A.M. to 4:45 P.M., Monday through Friday.

### **Southeastern Harris County**

Raul C. Martinez

Bay Area/Clear Lake

Kyle Chapman - Pasadena

Pasadena

Palm Center

Baytown

Scarsdale

### **Northwest Harris County**

Cypresswood

Clay Road

Mickey Leland

Spring Branch

Tomball

### **Northeast Harris County**

Humble

Jim Fonteno - Wallisville

### **Southwest Harris County**

Bellaire

The registrar maintains files containing the approved registration applications of the registered voters of the county. These files are kept in the registrar's office at all times in a place and manner ensuring their security.

Before any county elections in each voting year, the registrar must prepare for each county election precinct a certified list of the registered voters in the precinct. The list must contain the name of each voter whose registration will be effective on the date of the first election held in the county in the voting year.

The office of the voter registrar is funded by the Secretary of State. Each year the registrar must prepare and submit to the Comptroller of Public Accounts and to the Secretary of State the total number of initial registrations for the previous voting year and the total number of registrations canceled. This list is to include the deceased, felons, and those who have moved out of the county. The office is to also provide the total number of registrations for information updates.

The office of the voter registrar must provide to the Secretary of State the following information:

- Registration statements
- Suspense lists
- Statement of residence

The voter registrar mails renewal registration certificates to voters, other than those on the suspense list, who are registered in the county in November of odd-numbered years. There are approximately 1.9 million registered voters in Harris County.

You can acquire an applications for Voter Registration in English, Spanish and Vietnamese in two ways:

**You may obtain a Voter Registration application at [www.hctax.net](http://www.hctax.net)  
Applications can be downloaded in English, Spanish and Vietnamese at  
<http://www.hctax.net/voter/voterapp/acquirevoterapp.asp>**

**You may also write to this office:**

**Leo Vasquez,  
Tax Assessor/Collector,  
1001 Preston  
Houston, TX. 77002  
Tel: 713-368-2000 – English  
713-368-2001 – Spanish  
713-368-2002 - Vietnamese**

## Tax Assessor-Collectors By County

**Ro'Vin Garrett**, RTA, Tax Assessor-Collector  
**Brazoria County 020 / HO**  
Mail: 111 E Locust, Angleton, TX 77515  
Addx: 451 N. Velasco, Suite 150, West Annex,  
Angleton, TX 77515  
Tel : 979.864.1838 Fax : 979.864.1346  
[roving@brazoria-county.com](mailto:roving@brazoria-county.com)  
<http://www.brazoria-county.com/>

**Patsy Schultz**, Tax Assessor-Collector  
**Fort Bend County 079 / HO**  
Mail: 500 Liberty St., Richmond, TX , TX 77469  
Addx: 500 Liberty St., Richmond, TX , TX 77469  
Tel : 281.341.3710 Fax : 281.238.3348  
[schulpat@co.fort-bend.tx.us](mailto:schulpat@co.fort-bend.tx.us) [www.co.fort-bend.tx.us](http://www.co.fort-bend.tx.us)  
[https://actweb.acttax.com/act\\_webdev/fbc/tax.jsp](https://actweb.acttax.com/act_webdev/fbc/tax.jsp)

**Cheryl E Johnson**, Tax Assessor-Collector  
**Galveston County 084 / HO**  
Mail: P O Box 1169, Galveston, TX 77553  
Addx: 722 Moody, Galveston, TX 77553  
Tel : 409.766.2285 Fax : 409.766.2479  
[Cheryl.E.Johnson@co.galveston.tx.us](mailto:Cheryl.E.Johnson@co.galveston.tx.us)

**Connie Perry**, Tax Assessor-Collector  
**Grimes County 093 / BT**  
Mail: P O Box 455, Anderson, TX 77830  
Addx: 100 Main & Buffington, Buffington,  
TX 77830  
Tel : 936.873.2111 x231 Fax : 936.873.2623  
[connie-perry@earthlink.net](mailto:connie-perry@earthlink.net)

**Leo Vasquez**, Tax Assessor-Collector  
**Harris County 101 / HO**  
Mail: P O Box 3547, Houston, TX 77210-3547  
Addx: 1001 Preston, Houston, TX , TX 77002  
Tel : 713.368.2000 Fax : 713.368.2699  
[tax\\_office@co.harris.tx.us](mailto:tax_office@co.harris.tx.us)  
<http://www.tax.co.harris.tx.us/>

**J. R. Moore, Jr.**, Tax Assessor-Collector  
**Montgomery County 170 / BT**  
Mail: 400 N. San Jacinto, Conroe, TX 77301  
Addx: 400 N. San Jacinto, Conroe, TX 77301  
Tel : 936.539.7897 Fax : 936.760.6992  
[cethered@co.montgomery.tx.us](mailto:cethered@co.montgomery.tx.us)  
<http://www.co.montgomery.tx.us/>

**Betty Mc Kinzie Davis**, County Tax Assessor-Collector  
**San Jacinto County**  
1 State Hwy 150, Room A2 Coldspring, TX 77331  
Phone: 936-653-2311 Fax: 936-653-2533 **Effective July 17, 2006 New Office Hours** 8:00 AM to 11:30 AM - 12:30 to 4:00 PM Monday Thru Friday

**Ellen Shelburne**, Tax Assessor-Collector  
**Waller County 237 / HO**  
Mail: 730 9th St., Hempstead, TX 77445  
Addx: 730 9th St., Hempstead, TX 77445  
Tel : 979.826.7620 Fax : 979.826.7619  
[e.shelburne-tac@wallercotx.com](mailto:e.shelburne-tac@wallercotx.com)

**Diana L. Mc Rae**, Tax Assessor-Collector  
**Walker County 236 / BT**  
Mail: 1021 University Ave., Huntsville, TX 77340  
Addx: 1021 University Ave., Huntsville, TX 77340  
Tel : 936.295.0502 Fax : 936.436.4951  
[walkerpt@totalzone.com](mailto:walkerpt@totalzone.com)

# Issues for the Texas House & Senate

## Texas Conference of Catholic Bishops

### General

[Bioethics Concerns](#)

[Catholic Social Teaching](#)

[Catholic Statistics - The Church in Texas](#)

[Faithful Citizenship](#)

[Voting by Conscience](#) (USCCB)

[United States Conference of Catholic Bishops Departments and Programs](#) (USCCB)

### Life Issues

[Trigger Ban](#) (TCC policy paper)

[Judicial bypass in parental consent law](#) (TCC policy paper)

[Woman's Right to Know brochures](#) (TCC policy paper)

[Choose Life license plates](#) (TCC policy paper)

[Funding for abortion alternative providers](#) (TCC policy paper)

[Stop state funding for abortion](#) (TCC policy paper)

[Abortion reporting](#) (TCC policy paper)

[Embryonic Stem Cell Research](#) (TCC policy paper)

[Access to Ultrasounds](#) (TCC policy paper)

[Surgical Ambulatory clinic standards for abortion clinics](#) (TCC policy paper)

[Strong Enforcement of abortion provider violations](#) (TCC policy paper)

[Abortion](#)

[Assisted Suicide and Euthanasia](#) (USCCB)

[Cloning/Embryonic Stem Cell Research/Stem Cell Research](#) (USCCB)

[In Vitro Fertilization](#) (USCCB)

[Marriage and Same-Sex Unions](#) (USCCB)

[Partial Birth Abortion](#) (USCCB)

[Pregnant Women Support Act](#) (USCCB)

[Embryonic Stem Cell Research](#)

[USCCB Pro Life Activities](#)

### Immigration

[Comprehensive Immigration Reform](#) (TCC policy paper)

[In-state college tuition for Texas public school students](#) (TCC policy paper)

[Access to education](#) (TCC policy paper)

[Access to healthcare](#) (TCC policy paper)

[Texas-Mexico border fence](#) (TCC policy paper)

[Law enforcement](#) (TCC policy paper)

[Justice for Immigrants](#) (USCCB)

[Church Urges Humane, Comprehensive Solution to Immigration Issue](#) (USCCB)

## Education

[Reinstatement of exemption of accredited private schools from licensure as child care providers](#) (TCC policy paper)

[Expand school breakfast program](#) (TCC policy paper)

[School Choice](#) (TCC policy paper)

[Textbook loan program](#) (TCC policy paper)

[Tax credits or deductions for education expenses](#) (TCC policy paper)

[Reduce high school drop-outs](#) (TCC policy paper)

[Educational Opportunity for All](#) Texas Bishops Statement

[National Catholic Educational Association](#)

[School Choice](#)

## Health & Human Services

[Improvements of the eligibility system, outreach and application assistance, enroll every eligible child in](#)

[CHIP & Medicaid and 12 months continuous eligibility](#) (TCC policy paper)

[CHIP buy-in program for middle income families](#) (TCC policy paper)

[Adequate reimbursement for CHIP & Medicaid providers](#) (TCC policy paper)

[Access to mental health care](#) (TCC policy paper)

[Advance Directives statute reform](#) (TCC policy paper)

[Public Health initiatives](#) (TCC policy paper)

[Conscience clause](#) (TCC policy paper)

[Advance Directives](#)

[Children's Health Care and the Environment](#) (USCCB)

[Climate Change](#) (USCCB)

[End of Life Issues](#)

[Environmental Justice](#) (USCCB)

[Human Trafficking](#)(USCCB)

[Poverty USA: Catholic Campaign for Human Development](#) (USCCB)

[Subprime Mortgage Lending](#) (USCCB)

[Temporary Assistance to Needy Families \(TANF\)](#) (USCCB)

[Treatment-pending-transfer](#)

[USCCB Justice, Peace, and Social Development](#)

## Criminal Justice Reform

[Abolish use of the death penalty](#) (TCC policy paper)

[Death Penalty moratorium](#) (TCC policy paper)

[Ban on executions of mentally retarded](#) (TCC policy paper)

[Funding for Chaplain corps](#) (TCC policy paper)

[Funding for community supervision and parole divisions of TDCJ](#)(TCC policy paper)

[Equitable pay scale for correctional officers](#) (TCC policy paper)

[Indigent defense](#) (TCC policy paper)

[Innocence Commission in Texas](#) (TCC policy paper)

[Office of Capital Writs and Public Defenders offices in Texas](#) (TCC policy paper)

[Opt-out of ban on drug felons receiving food stamps and student loans](#) (TCC policy paper)

[Death Penalty](#)

[Catholic Campaign to End the use of the Death Penalty](#) (USCCB)

## Faithful Citizenship Articles

[Church Urges Humane, Comprehensive Solution to Immigration Issue](#) (USCCB)

[The Election and the Environment](#) (USCCB)

[Voting by Conscience](#) (USCCB)

[Poverty and the 2008 Election](#) (USCCB)

[Moral Questions Regarding](#)

[Iraq in an Election Year](#) (USCCB)

[A Decade Later:](#)

[Time for a Dose of Reality on Stem Cells](#) (USCCB)

[Gay Marriage – Locating the Question](#) (USCCB)

[Abortion and Faithful Citizenship](#) (USCCB)

[Bringing Facts and Principles to the Health Care Debate](#) (USCCB)

[The American Workplace: Economic Policy, Moral Dimensions](#) (USCCB)

## Other Issues

[Amnesty International](#)

[Arms Control](#)

[Coal Fired Plants](#)

[Debt Relief](#)

[Development Assistance](#)

[Federal Budget](#)

[Food and Nutrition](#)

[Global Climate Change](#)

[HIV-AIDS PEPFAR](#)

[Holy Land Peace](#)

[HPV Vaccine Mandate](#)

## [Iraq](#)

[Motu Proprio Summorum Pontificum \(Latin liturgy\)](#)

[National Housing Trust Fund](#)

[Paid Sick Leave](#)

[Religious Liberty](#)

[Rural Life](#)

[Same Sex Marriage](#)

[Trade](#)



The Catholic Church upholds important principles outlined by our bishops' conference in the document "Faithful Citizenship."

### **Issues to Consider**

**1. Protecting Human Life.** Our foundational principle to protect the life and dignity of all human persons calls us to work to end abortion, euthanasia, destruction of human embryos, cloning, assisted suicide, intentional targeting of civilians in war or terrorist attacks and the use of the death penalty. This principle leads us to seek peace, raise serious questions about the preemptive use of force.

**2. Promoting Family Life.** We defend marriage between a man and a woman, work for just wages and the protection of children. We support parental choice in education, responsible use of media, and technology and vigorous enforcement of existing pornography laws.

**3. Pursuing Social Justice.** We show God's special concern for the poor and vulnerable by supporting programs that create living wage jobs, make health care more affordable and accessible, provide income security for low and average wage workers at retirement, offer safe and affordable housing, protect family farmers and farm workers, and bring about just immigration reform. We seek public policies that work to end poverty, hunger and discrimination.

**4. Practicing Global Solidarity.** We work to alleviate poverty worldwide, strengthen barriers against the use of nuclear weapons and reduce the global arms trade, protect refugees and end conflicts around the globe. We bring our vision and values to the changing global economic structures.

We ask you to use these Christian principles to measure the various candidates and what they bring to the service of our government and society at large. We also ask that you consider the following rights and duties as a part of properly forming your conscience. Please pray, think and vote so that we as Christians will exercise the great privilege that is ours to participate in the democratic process and to uphold the values of Christ in our society.<sup>1</sup>

### **Rights and Duties:**

We, the Catholic Bishops of Texas, exercising our role as teachers, offer the following guidelines to help Catholics form their consciences on matters related to our most basic obligation of citizenship: voting.

The following guidelines are intended for educational purposes only. We do not intend to endorse or oppose any particular candidate, political party, or political action committee. Rather, it is our hope that these guidelines will show how our Catholic faith and human reason shapes our thinking, choosing, and acting in daily life.

<sup>1</sup>Prepared by Bishop Gregory Aymond, Bishop of Austin

**THE RIGHT AND DUTY TO VOTE.** Catholics live in the world, but they should not live by worldly values that give too much importance to power, possessions, and pleasure as ends in themselves (cf. *1 John* 2:16). Catholics have the same rights and duties as other citizens, but are called to carry them out in light of the truth of faith and reason as taught by the Catholic Church. For example, they are called to respect human authority and obey those who govern society “for the Lord’s sake” (*1 Peter* 2:13-17).

**THE DUTY TO FORM AND FOLLOW ONE’S CONSCIENCE.** We are conscientious voters when we are guided by our consciences. Conscience is a law “written” by God on our hearts that disposes us to love and to do good and avoid evil (cf. *Romans* 2:12-16). The conscience is like an inner voice that has the authority of the very voice of God. We have a serious duty to follow the guidance of conscience, however our conscience must also be formed in the truths of our faith, the truth of revelation and the truths give by the Church. To act against the judgment of conscience when it is certain about what is good and evil has the same seriousness as disobeying God. It is important to remember however that it is possible for our conscience to be certain and at the same time incorrect about what is good and evil.

**A CONSCIENTIOUS VOTER’S DILEMMA.** In light of the above, it is a correct judgment of conscience that we would commit moral evil if we were to vote for a candidate who takes a permissive stand on those actions that are intrinsically evil when there is a morally-acceptable alternative. What are we to do, though, when there is no such alternative?

Because we have a moral obligation to vote, deciding not to vote at all is not ordinarily an acceptable solution to this dilemma. So, when there is no choice of a candidate that avoids supporting intrinsically evil actions, especially elective abortion, we should vote in such a way as to allow the least harm to innocent human life and dignity. We would not be acting immorally therefore if we were to vote for a candidate who is not totally acceptable in order to defeat one who poses an even greater threat to human life and dignity.

**VOTING IS A MORAL ACT.** It involves duties and responsibilities. Our duty is to vote in keeping with a conscience properly formed by fundamental moral principles. As Bishops we are not telling Catholics which candidates they should vote for. Rather, we simply want to teach how we should form our consciences and consider the issues in light of these fundamental moral principles.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>[Originally approved and released by the Kansas Catholic Conference with signatures of all the bishops.]

[Adopted, approved, and released by the Texas Catholic Conference with signatures of all the bishops of Texas.]

# The Challenge of Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship

*This brief document is a summary of the United States bishops' reflection*

**Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship** (<http://www.faithfulcitizenship.org/>). *It complements the teaching of bishops in dioceses and states.*

Our nation faces political challenges that demand urgent moral choices. We are a nation at war, with all of its human costs; a country often divided by race and ethnicity; a nation of immigrants struggling with immigration. We are an affluent society where too many live in poverty; part of a global community confronting terrorism and facing urgent threats to our environment; a culture built on families, where some now question the value of marriage and family life. We pride ourselves on supporting human rights, but we fail even to protect the fundamental right to life, especially for unborn children.

We bishops seek to help Catholics form their consciences in accordance with the truth, so they can make sound moral choices in addressing these challenges. We do not tell Catholics how to vote. The responsibility to make political choices rests with each person and his or her properly formed conscience.

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## WHY DOES THE CHURCH TEACH ABOUT ISSUES AFFECTING PUBLIC POLICY?

The Church's obligation to participate in shaping the moral character of society is a requirement of our faith, a part of the mission given to us by Jesus Christ. Faith helps us see more clearly the truth about human life and dignity that we also understand through human reason. As people of both faith and reason, Catholics are called to bring truth to political life and to practice Christ's commandment to "love one another" (Jn 13:34). According to Pope Benedict XVI, "charity must animate the entire lives of the lay faithful and therefore also their political activity, lived as 'social charity'" (*Deus Caritas Est*, no. 29)

The United States Constitution protects the right of individual believers and religious bodies to participate and speak out without government interference, favoritism, or discrimination. Civil law should recognize and protect the Church's right and responsibility to participate in society without abandoning our central moral convictions. Our nation's tradition of pluralism is enhanced, not threatened, when religious groups and people of faith bring their convictions into public life. The Catholic community brings to the political dialogue a consistent moral framework and broad experience serving those in need.

## WHO IN THE CHURCH SHOULD PARTICIPATE IN POLITICAL LIFE?

In the Catholic Tradition, responsible citizenship is a virtue, and participation in political life is a moral obligation. As Catholics, we should be guided more by our moral convictions than by our attachment to a political party or interest group. In today's environment, Catholics may feel politically disenfranchised, sensing that no party and few candidates fully share our comprehensive commitment to human life and dignity. Catholic lay women and men need to act on the Church's moral principles and become more involved: running for office, working within political parties, and communicating concerns to elected officials. Even those who cannot vote should raise their voices on matters that affect their lives and the common good.

## HOW DOES THE CHURCH HELP CATHOLICS TO ADDRESS POLITICAL AND SOCIAL QUESTIONS?

### **A Well-Formed Conscience**

The Church equips her members to address political questions by helping them develop well-formed consciences. “Conscience is a judgment of reason whereby the human person recognizes the moral quality of a concrete act. . . . [Every person] is obliged to follow faithfully what he [or she] knows to be just and right” (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 1778). We Catholics have a lifelong obligation to form our consciences in accord with human reason, enlightened by the teaching of Christ as it comes to us through the Church.

### **The Virtue of Prudence**

The Church also encourages Catholics to develop the virtue of prudence, which enables us “to discern our true good in every circumstance and to choose the right means of achieving it” (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 1806). Prudence shapes and informs our ability to deliberate over available alternatives, to determine what is most fitting to a specific context, and to act. Prudence must be accompanied by courage which calls us to act. As Catholics seek to advance the common good, we must carefully discern which public policies are morally sound. A good end does not justify an immoral means. At times Catholics may choose different ways to respond to social problems, but we cannot differ on our obligation to protect human life and dignity and help build through moral means a more just and peaceful world.

### **Doing Good and Avoiding Evil**

There are some things we must never do, as individuals or as a society, because they are always incompatible with love of God and neighbor. These intrinsically evil acts must always be rejected and never supported. A preeminent example is the intentional taking of human life through abortion. It is always morally wrong to destroy innocent human beings. A legal system that allows the right to life to be violated on the grounds of choice is fundamentally flawed. Similarly, direct threats to the dignity of human life such as euthanasia, human cloning, and destructive research on human embryos are also intrinsically evil and must be opposed. Other assaults on human life and dignity, such as genocide, torture, racism, and the targeting of noncombatants in acts of terror or war, can never be justified. Disrespect for any human life diminishes respect for all human life.

As Catholics we are not single-issue voters. A candidate’s position on a single issue is not sufficient to guarantee a voter’s support. **Yet a candidate’s position on a single issue that involves an intrinsic evil, such as support for legal abortion or the promotion of racism, may legitimately lead a voter to disqualify a candidate from receiving support.**

Opposition to intrinsically evil acts also prompts us to recognize our positive duty to contribute to the common good and act in solidarity with those in need. Both opposing evil *and* doing good are essential. As Pope John Paul II said, “the fact that only the negative commandments oblige always and under all circumstances does not mean that in the moral life prohibitions are more important than the obligation to do good indicated by the positive commandment” (*Veritatis Splendor*, no. 52). The basic right to life implies and is linked to other human rights to the goods that every person needs to live and thrive—including food, shelter, health care, education, and meaningful work. The use of the death penalty, hunger, lack of health care or housing, human trafficking, the human and moral costs of war, and unjust immigration policies are some of the serious moral issues that challenge our consciences and require us to act.

For more on the moral challenge of voting, see *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship*, nos. 34-39. Visit <http://www.faithfulcitizenship.org/>

## **Making Moral Choices**

Difficult political decisions require the exercise of a well-formed conscience aided by prudence. This exercise of conscience begins with always opposing policies that violate human life or weaken its protection. “Those who formulate law therefore have an obligation in conscience to work toward correcting morally defective laws, lest they be guilty of cooperating in evil and in sinning against the common good” (*Catholics in Political Life*, 2004).

When morally flawed laws already exist, prudential judgment is needed to determine how to do what is possible to restore justice—even if partially or gradually—without ever abandoning a moral commitment to full protection for all human life from conception to natural death (see *Evangelium Vitae*, no. 73).

Prudential judgment is also needed to determine the best way to promote the common good in areas such as housing, health care, and immigration. When Church leaders make judgments about how to apply Catholic teaching to specific policies, this may not carry the same binding authority as universal moral principles but cannot be dismissed as one political opinion among others. These moral applications should inform the consciences and guide the actions of Catholics.

## **WHAT DOES THE CHURCH SAY ABOUT CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING IN THE PUBLIC SQUARE?—SEVEN KEY THEMES**

**A consistent ethic of life** should guide all Catholic engagement in political life. This Catholic ethic neither treats all issues as morally equivalent nor reduces Catholic teaching to one or two issues. It anchors the Catholic commitment to defend human life and other human rights, from conception until natural death, in the fundamental obligation to respect the dignity of every human being as a child of God.

Catholic voters should use Catholic teaching to examine candidates’ positions on issues and should consider candidates’ integrity, philosophy, and performance. It is important for all citizens “to see beyond party politics, to analyze campaign rhetoric critically, and to choose their political leaders according to principle, not party affiliation or mere self-interest” (*Living the Gospel of Life*, no. 33). The following themes of Catholic social teaching provide a moral framework for decisions in public life.

### **The Right to Life and the Dignity of the Human Person**

Human life is sacred. Direct attacks on innocent human beings are never morally acceptable. Within our society, life is under direct attack from abortion, euthanasia, human cloning, and destruction of human embryos for research. These **intrinsic evils must always be opposed**. This teaching also compels us as Catholics to oppose genocide, torture, unjust war, and the use of the death penalty, as well as to pursue peace and help overcome poverty, racism, and other conditions that demean human life.

These themes are drawn from a rich tradition more fully described in the *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* from the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace (Washington, DC: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2005). For more information on these seven themes, see <http://www.faithfulcitizenship.org/>. For information on how we bishops of the United States have applied Catholic social teaching to policy issues, see <http://www.faithfulcitizenship.org/>.

### **Call to Family, Community, and Participation**

The family, based on marriage between a man and a woman, is the fundamental unit of society. This sanctuary for the creation and nurturing of children must not be redefined, undermined, or neglected. Supporting families should be a priority for economic and social policies. How our society is organized—in economics and politics, in law and public policy—affects the well-being of individuals and of society. Every person and association has a right and a duty to participate in shaping society to promote the well-being of individuals and the common good.

### **Rights and Responsibilities**

Every human being has a right to life, the fundamental right that makes all other rights possible. Each of us has a right to religious freedom, which enables us to live and act in accord with our God-given dignity, as well as a right to access to those things required for human decency—food and shelter, education and employment, health care and housing. Corresponding to these rights are duties and responsibilities—to one another, to our families, and to the larger society.

### **Option for the Poor and Vulnerable**

While the common good embraces all, those who are in greatest need deserve preferential concern. A moral test for society is how we treat the weakest among us—the unborn, those dealing with disabilities or terminal illness, the poor and marginalized.

### **Dignity of Work and the Rights of Workers**

The economy must serve people, not the other way around. Economic justice calls for decent work at fair, living wages, opportunities for legal status for immigrant workers, and the opportunity for all people to work together for the common good through their work, ownership, enterprise, investment, participation in unions, and other forms of economic activity.

### **Solidarity**

We are one human family, whatever our national, racial, ethnic, economic, and ideological differences. Our Catholic commitment to solidarity requires that we pursue justice, eliminate racism, end human trafficking, protect human rights, seek peace, and avoid the use of force except as a necessary last resort.

### **Caring for God's Creation**

Care for the earth is a duty of our Catholic faith. We all are called to be careful stewards of God's creation and to ensure a safe and hospitable environment for vulnerable human beings now and in the future.

### **CONCLUSION**

In light of Catholic teaching, as bishops we vigorously repeat our call for a renewed politics that focuses on moral principles, the defense of life, the needs of the weak, and the pursuit of the common good. This kind of political participation reflects the social teaching of our Church and the best traditions of our nation.

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*The Challenge of Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship* was developed by the chairmen, in consultation with the membership, of the Committees on Domestic Policy, International Policy, Pro-Life Activities, Communications, Doctrine, Education, and Migration of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB). It was approved for publication by the full body of bishops at its November 2007 General Meeting and has been authorized for publication by the undersigned.

*Msgr. David J. Malloy, STD*  
*General Secretary, USCCB*

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*Issued by USCCB, November 14, 2007*

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