

## Knoxville Diocesan Legislative Advocacy Committee Report

September 2010 Patty Johnson, Chair

**Election Day is Coming; Get out and Vote. But before you do learn about what the Church says about our participation in Political Life.**

Tuesday, November 3<sup>rd</sup> is election day and all-American citizens are urged to vote. This begins by confirming your voter registration and, if not registered, to register. Also encourage eligible family members and friends to do the same. Assist families and friends as necessary to accomplish this. Our Church has said that responsible citizenship is a virtue; participation in the political process is a responsibility and a moral obligation. We are called to do good and to shun what is evil.

*The Catechism of the Catholic Church 919-13-15) says, "Everyone living in this country is called to participate in public life and contribute to the common good."*

The core of Catholic social and moral teaching calls for respect for the dignity of every human person. Through our service to those in need we are called to educate, shelter the homeless, care for the sick, feed the hungry, support life from conception to natural death. We must welcome the stranger, the immigrant and support religious freedom.

**Pope Benedict XVI, in his encyclical Deus Caritas Est, says "Charity must animate the entire lives of the lay faithful and therefore also their political activity, lives as "Social Charity." (29)**

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops has issued a teaching document called "*Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship*". This document can be found in its entirety on their web site; [www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/faithfulcitizenship/](http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/faithfulcitizenship/). There are two Bulletin inserts that can be printed and are easy to read.

When speaking about political and social questions one needs a well-formed conscience, the virtue of prudence, and the ability to speak about making good moral choices and avoiding evil.

The things we as Catholics should be most concerned about are human life, marriage, immigration, poverty, education, religious freedom, health care, unjust discrimination, and care for creation.

Prayer is a very important part and most necessary to participate correctly in the political arena. A few sentences from the Election Prayer for Life from the Priests for Life are;

O, God we acknowledge you today as Lord, not only of individuals, but of nations and governments. We thank you for the privilege of being able to organize ourselves politically and of knowing that political loyalty does not have to mean disloyalty to you. We thank you for the opportunity that this election year puts before us. Awaken your people to know that we are called to be a community of faith renewing the world and that we must act as Christians when we enter the voting booth. Awaken your people to a commitment to justice, to the sanctity of

marriage and the family, to the dignity of each individual human life and to the truth that human rights begin when human lives begin. Make us more committed to being faithful citizens through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.