

As the 2024 presidential campaign cycle begins, U.S. Catholics will contemplate faithful citizenship in a rapidly changing political environment. Although the political winds in the US may continue to shift, the Church's teachings about how Catholics should engage with civil government do not. In the following reflection on the Gospel Reading- Mark 12:13-17, Bishop Robert Barron provides insight into the relationship between religion, politics and the overarching governance of eternal and natural law.

*Friends, in today's Gospel, Jesus enunciates a principle that is an implicit resolution of the vexing problem of religion and politics: "Repay to Caesar what belongs to Caesar and to God what belongs to God."*

*God is the deepest source and inspiration for everything in life, from sports to law to the arts to science and medicine. Everything comes from God and returns to God. So what about our famous question of religion and politics?*

*Politics is not in a realm separate from the religious; rather, its deepest ground is spiritual. Thomas Aquinas held that law comes from the eternal law, which is identical to the mind of God. This eternal law is reflected in the human mind and heart, those basic principles that are called the natural law. Positive laws—from traffic regulations to antitrust laws—are then concrete applications of the natural law.*

*Hence all law—the very stuff of politics—has to do with God, since positive law nests in the natural law, which nests in the eternal law. This is why we should expect our politicians and judges to be acting in accord with moral and spiritual goods.*

For additional information and resources on Faithful Citizenship and civic responsibilities please go to the Faithful Citizenship tab on the Catholic Social Teaching webpage. <https://stocktondiocese.org/cst>