

Pastor's Point

October 18, 2024

ON VOTING AS A DISCIPLE OF CHRIST

First, our Bishops remind us that we have a moral obligation to vote, and to vote our conscience. No one can tell us how to live out our conscience; it's a decision between us and God. I recommend that you read the Bishops' Document on voting as a guide. Learn more about the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops Faithful Citizenship [here](https://www.usccb.org/offices/justice-and-peace/forming-consciences-faithful-citizenship).

(Full link: <https://www.usccb.org/offices/justice-and-peace/forming-consciences-faithful-citizenship>).

I found this piece from Peter Kreeft very helpful. His jumping off point is the epistle of James, where it is written "Be doers of the word and not hearers only, deluding yourselves.' (James 1:22) We can easily deceive ourselves into thinking we are holy because we know and understand and admire God's law even when we don't live it. We often live in our imagination instead of in the real world, and we think we are obeying God's law simply because we imagine ourselves doing it.

"St. James gives two examples of obeying the law and practicing real religion: 'Religion that is pure and undefiled before God and the Father is this: to care for orphans and widows in their affliction and to keep oneself unstained by the world.'

"If we look at today's world and even much of today's religion, we see that half its people specialize in the first of those two things and the other half specialize in the second. Those who focus on caring are usually called the Left, or the 'blue states,' while those who focus on keeping unstained and pure are called the Right, or the 'red states.' The first usually follow the donkey, and the second follow the elephant. But the Book of Revelation describes Christians as those who 'follow the Lamb WHEREVER HE goes' (Rev 14:4). That's why they are hospitable to both the unborn and the born, both natives and immigrants, both nationalists and internationalists, both women and men, both black people and white people, both traditionalists and progressives, both past and future." (FOOD FOR THE SOUL, p. 665)

Pope Francis captured the complexity of this recently when he remarked that when we are casting our votes in the United States, we are choosing between the lesser of two evils (which is probably true in most countries around the world because only the Church would have all the decisions right [and even then, it's tough!]) So, our voting requires discernment, which is often the choice between the greater of two goods or the lesser of two evils. And discernment requires prayer. Prayerfully reflect before casting your vote. And then feel at peace that you have made the best decision that you could.