

EQUALLY SACRED PRIORITIES

FOR POLITICAL CANDIDATES

In recent years, Pope Francis has provided explicit instruction on the many ways we are called to defend, promote, and protect the sacredness of life. In his writing and speaking, Pope Francis makes it clear: **abortion is not the only issue that matters.**



Faith does not fit into political parties neatly. Still, we are called to engage in politics. This is no small feat. It requires us to be informed, to develop our conscience, to connect with like-minded people, and listen to those who think differently.

Here you will find a list of the areas Pope Francis names as "equally sacred" to the defense of the unborn.

We invite you to consider candidates for elected office based on all of the criteria listed below.

Defense of the unborn is clear.

	Yes	No
Seeks to overturn <i>Roe v. Wade</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Supports health care and nutrition for pregnant women	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Equally sacred are those already born.

	Yes	No
Supports families; advocates for domestic violence and sexual assault survivors and Native American tribes; opposes racism, xenophobia, and discrimination against the LGBTQ+ community and people with disabilities; opposes the death penalty	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

General Audience - June 3, 2020

We cannot tolerate or turn a blind eye to racism and exclusion in any form and yet claim to defend the sacredness of every human life.

Equally sacred are...

People and families on the economic margins.

	Yes	No
Seeks to increase funding for housing, nutrition programs, and other economic supports, and prevent predatory lending	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Those who are sick, disabled, and older adults.

	Yes	No
Will increase access to health care, oppose cuts to Medicare & Medicaid, and support people with disabilities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Victims of human trafficking & economic slavery.

	Yes	No
Upholds the Trafficking Victims Protection Act; supports raising the minimum wage and workers' right to organize	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

If we are pro-life...

We cannot ignore economic inequality.

	Yes	No
Seeks to accurately measure and address economic inequality, including the racial wealth and income gap	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

We cannot overlook the situation of migrants.

	Yes	No
Opposes a border wall, supports family in immigration policies and humane treatment of immigrants, and protects Dreamers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

We cannot ignore the threat of climate change.

	Yes	No
Supports policies that address climate change	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Gaudete et Exultate - March 2018

101. Our defense of the innocent unborn, for example, needs to be clear, firm and passionate, for at stake is the dignity of a human life, which is always sacred and demands love for each person, regardless of his or her stage of development. Equally sacred, however, are the lives of the poor, those already born, the destitute, the abandoned and the underprivileged, the vulnerable infirm and elderly exposed to covert euthanasia, the victims of human trafficking, new forms of slavery, and every form of rejection. We cannot uphold an ideal of holiness that would ignore injustice in a world where some revel, spend with abandon and live only for the latest consumer goods, even as others look on from afar, living their entire lives in abject poverty.

102. We often hear it said that the situation of migrants is a lesser issue. Some Catholics consider it a secondary issue compared to the "grave" bioethical questions. That a politician looking for votes might say such a thing is understandable, but not a Christian, for whom the only proper attitude is to stand in the shoes of those brothers and sisters of ours who risk their lives to offer a future to their children.

Laudato Si' - June 2015

67. Each community can take from the bounty of the earth whatever it needs for subsistence, but it also has the duty to protect the earth and to ensure its fruitfulness for coming generations.

Tone: Confident, Unified, Future-Looking: Cynicism and fear demobilize and disengage people; acknowledge people’s fears and frustrations, but don’t fuel them, talk about moving forward together

- **I am a multi-issue voter** who rejects the politics of racism, hatred, and division/white nationalism/ dog-whistles employed/encouraged by [candidate].
 - *If helpful to explain:* A successful dog-whistle is a message that codes or obscures a racist idea, giving the user and the audience plausible deniability that racist ideas are at work. A racist idea hidden in a dog-whistle is still a racist idea.
- I cannot/we cannot support candidates whose policies worsen economic inequality, sow division, and harm our neighbors, family, and friends.
- The harmful policies being proposed are out of step with the majority of voters’ attitudes.
- Politicians (or: candidate) can say whatever they want, but it’s the voters who decide our elections.
- Some candidates’ (or: candidate’s) policies and attitudes contradict the fundamental Catholic teaching (or: moral call) to love one another.

- **Who we elect matters.** As Pope Francis says, “A good Catholic meddles in politics.”
- It is immoral to allow a single issue to outweigh candidates’ positions that harm immigrants and asylum seekers, low-income families, people of color, the LGBTQ+ community, the environment, and other marginalized communities
- Focus on a single issue allows other social sins to continue unchecked – environmental destruction, economic exploitation, harm to immigrants, racism, and more.
- In recent years, Pope Francis – echoing hundreds of years of Church teaching – has spoken clearly and forcefully about the moral demands on Catholics acting the public sphere.
- Pope Francis urges us not to ignore injustice or act as though one issue is more important than others. Instead, Pope Francis calls us to prioritize the sins of racism, economic inequality, xenophobia, and more.
- At a time when other leaders fail to address the evils of these social sins, Pope Francis continuously says racism, xenophobia, and poverty cannot be ignored.

- **We need moral leadership** from political candidates who will pass policies that advance racial and economic justice.
- Since racism and economic inequality were intentionally built into our laws and institutions over centuries, we need intentional solutions. “Policies got us into this, policies can get us out.”
- For our democracy to work for all of us, it must include us all.
- I encourage fellow people of faith to listen to their conscience and elect candidates who bring us closer to a truly representative, inclusive, multi-racial democracy that works for all of us.

- The **Equally Sacred Scorecard** allows voters to compare candidates’ positions on the issues Pope Francis names as “equally sacred” to the defense of the unborn
- The quotes used in the Equally Sacred scorecard come from four sources of Pope Francis’s speaking and writing:
 - [*Gaudete et Exsultate*](#) “Rejoice and Be Glad” Apostolic Exhortation published March 2018
 - [*Evangelii Gaudium*](#) “The Joy of the Gospel” Apostolic Exhortation published Nov. 2013
 - [*June 3, 2020 General Audience*](#)
 - [*Laudato Si’*](#) “Praise Be to You” Encyclical published May 2015