

SPECIFIC MORAL NORMS FOR CATHOLIC CITIZENS IN VOTING

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In a democracy, part of the Christian life is discernment regarding voting. How to do this is passionately contested. Political parties and organizations that misuse religious arguments and language to gain the support of Catholic voters harm the faithful. The battle for the “Catholic vote” in the 2008 presidential election will be of unprecedented ferocity. Catholics should avoid being manipulated; the faith must never be subordinated to the interests of any political agenda.

I. Introduction

Catholics make up about 25% of the U.S. population, so it comes as no surprise that securing the so-called “Catholic Vote” is a concern of both of our nation’s major political parties.² Both have extensive Catholic voter outreach programs.³ In addition, a number of legally independent groups have sprouted with the words Catholic and Democratic (or Republican) in their title.⁴ There are also competing, non-partisan, voters guides distributed by the millions.⁵ Imagining the political gale that will buffet Catholics in 2008, I hope this article contributes to rooting Catholics in the faith so that we are not merely blown along by the political winds of our time, but remain faithful to the Gospel.

This paper’s purpose is two-fold. First, to elucidate the relevant moral norms that Catholic citizens in a representative democracy should consider when electing a government official. Second, to clarify certain confusions common among faithful Catholics. This paper does not imply anything regarding the responsibilities (moral or otherwise) of elected officials (Catholic or not) and it intentionally ignores matters that go beyond the act of voting such as publicly endorsing a candidate or working on his or her campaign.⁶ It does not consider all errors, or even the worst errors, but only errors likely to be pernicious to Catholics who are conscientiously attempting to vote in accordance with their faith.

II. Four Specific Moral Norms for Catholic Citizens Regarding Voting (and Politics)

In a representative democracy, citizens are the ultimate governors. In the United States, the power of citizens is expressed within the framework of a Constitution that restricts and structures the use of power, including the power of citizens. Americans ordinarily exercise their governing power collectively in an election where they elect local, state and federal representatives. “Voting” is the act proper to a citizen whereby he or she exercises governing authority by participating, with other citizens, in an election which results in the designation of an individual as a “holder” of public office who then has governing authority either alone (in the case of an executive position) or with others (the election of a member of a legislature or court).

The rise of Democracy in history and the general trend toward greater participation by “the people” in their governance is reflected in the relative emphasis given to civic responsibility in the documents of the Magisterium. For example, the *Catechism of the Council of Trent*,⁷ originally promulgated by Pope Pius V in 1567, contains just four small paragraphs (in a text of over six-hundred pages) related to government, politics or citizenship and three of those are about the honor due public officials.⁸ This contrasts with the more than sixty-three paragraphs on the same topics in the second edition of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (hereafter, *Catechism*).⁹

A. Voting and Preparing to Vote are Serious Moral Obligations

In the *Catechism* the duties of citizens and questions regarding participation in social life are considered in its third section, “Life in Christ.” “Submission to authority and co-responsibility for the common good make it morally obligatory to pay taxes, to exercise the right to vote, and to defend one’s country.”¹⁰ Voting is a serious moral obligation; however, like all positive duties, it is subject to exceptions where it would be unreasonable to fulfill the obligation such as in cases of illness or where there is a conflicting, superior obligation.¹¹ Urgent commitments to one’s family or employer sometimes should take priority. One may also intentionally abstain from voting when doing so seems to be the best way to promote the common good. For example, in some elections the outcome will be void unless a certain percentage of the electorate participates.¹² In those cases, participating in voting at all assists the passage of the measure and not voting can be a more effective means of opposing its passage than voting against it.¹³

The preceding paragraph is not intended to eviscerate the obligation to take part in an election. There are many illegitimate reasons that persons fail to vote, including simple laziness. Also, if voting is a serious obligation, then preparing to do so intelligently is also an obligation. For most persons, that means setting aside at least a few hours before Election Day to research and deliberate. Voting in culpable ignorance does not fulfill the obligation to vote any more than not voting at all does and it amounts to a kind of recklessness in a serious matter.

Finally, one should reject various rationalizations for not voting, such as the limited impact of “one vote” or the fact that the candidate one supports appears headed for defeat by a wide margin.¹⁴ These attitudes fail to take note of the communicative aspect of voting. Voting not only has a political effect (someone is elected), but also subtler influences. The margin a candidate wins by can effect his or her political power after the election. If she wins by a wide margin she may assert that she has a “mandate.” It will also influence whether she decides to run again or if someone else will attempt to challenge her. The narrower the margin of victory, the more likely that seat will be targeted by the other political party in the next election. Even the size of a candidate’s loss can determine if he or she will seek elective office again or be appointed to a government position at some point.

B. The Church is Never to be Identified with Any Political Organization or Opinion

As the Second Vatican Council teaches, political “solutions proposed on one side or another may be easily confused by many people with the Gospel message. Hence it is necessary for people to remember that no one is allowed . . . to appropriate the Church’s authority for his opinion.”¹⁵ In the realm of practical solutions and prudence, rather than principles, there is no one “right” position that can be derived from the Deposit of Faith. Even where it is clear that an unjust situation exists, and that “something” should be done about it, the “something” admits of different possibilities consistent with the Faith.

For example, rape, is wrong by both the light of reason and revelation; however, the exact punishment for rapists and the resources and approaches to be devoted to this crime admit of many proposals—all consistent with the faith. If Candidate A wants to hire ten new police officers for anti-sexual assault work and Candidate B wants to hire five, one could not say as a *matter of faith* that Candidate A’s position was more in keeping with Catholic teaching. You might be of the opinion that A’s position is the right one (meaning it is, all things considered, most in accord with Catholic Social Teaching) but you may not declare that your

opinion is *de fide* and those supporting Candidate B are outside the faith. In resolving social problems, “absolute value must never be attributed to these choices because no problem can be solved once and for all.”¹⁶

This does not imply all is a matter of personal opinion; nor do I deny that in some cases it is demonstrable that the political position of one political party or candidate is more consistent with the faith than another. My chief concern is with the identification of a political organization or candidate with the Church. The Church is a unique entity with divine and human origins. For anyone to “claim that one party or political coalition responds completely to the demands of faith or of Christian life would give rise to dangerous errors.”¹⁷ The Second Vatican Council teaches that it is essential to maintain

a clear distinction between the tasks which Christians undertake, individually or as a group, on their own responsibility as citizens guided by the dictates of a Christian conscience, and the activities which, in union with their pastors, they carry out in the name of the Church. The Church, by reason of her role and competence, is not identified in any way with the political community nor bound to any political system. She is at once a sign and a safeguard of the transcendent character of the human person.¹⁸

It seems to me that the inclusion of both the words “Catholic” and “Republican” or “Democrat” within the name of a political party or organization, in the context of contemporary America, creates the risk of such identification and therefore is, in itself, imprudent. Even presuming the good faith of these efforts, they risk using Catholic theology and morality as tools placed in the service of a political agenda. The harm is magnified if the organization itself takes the position (rather than just implying it by their name), that their political organization “corresponds completely to the demands of faith” or is the only legitimate option for “faithful” Catholics.

C. The Application of Church Teaching to Practical Situations is the Domain of the Laity

As Pope Paul VI urged in *Populorum Progressio*, “[T]he laity have the duty of using their own initiative and taking action in this area—without waiting passively for directives and precepts from others. They must try to infuse a Christian spirit into people’s mental outlook and daily behavior, into the laws and structures of the civil community.”¹⁹ The Second Vatican Council reiterates the same instruction,

Laymen should also know that it is generally the function of their well-formed Christian conscience to see that the divine law is inscribed in the life of the earthly city Let the layman not imagine that his pastors are always such experts, that to every problem which arises, however complicated, they can readily give him a concrete solution, or even that such is their mission. Rather, enlightened by Christian wisdom and giving close attention to the teaching authority of the Church, let the layman take on his own distinctive role.²⁰

This teaching is interesting in a number of ways. While a surprising number of lay people want “the Church,” or at least their bishop, to make it unambiguously clear who should receive the votes of Catholics, this would be an abuse of the Church. Catholic bishops refrain from endorsing candidates not because of the tax code but because of the nature of the Church herself. On these matters the Church acts through the laity. The task of the bishops is to clearly teach those aspects of moral theology by which Catholics should discern how to cast their votes—not tell the faithful for whom they should be voting. Because this principle belongs to the nature of the Church, I believe it should even be respected in extreme situations, where no reasonable person could doubt the superiority of one of the candidates. Bishops should be cautious of those who would use them for political purposes or ask that they use their spiritual authority for political effect. On the other hand, where the good of souls requires it, bishops should not hesitate to act in spite of the potential (negative) political impact.

D. Always Vote with the Purpose of Advancing the Common Good

Every community has a “common good” which its members are obligated to promote according to their position and capacity. The nation of the United States of America is one such community. It has as its constitutive members “citizens” who have a distinct political power typically exercised in the act of voting. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* teaches that, “Authority is exercised legitimately only when it seeks the common good of the group concerned.”²¹

The *Catechism* draws its definition of the “common good,” from paragraph twenty-six of the Second Vatican Council’s Pastoral Constitution, *Gaudium et Spes*, “the sum total of social conditions which allow people, either as groups or as individuals, to reach their fulfillment more fully and more easily.”²² In paragraph seventy-four, the same Constitution explains,

The political community, then, exists, for the common good: this is its full justification and meaning and the source of its specific and basic right to exist. The common good embraces the sum total of all those conditions of social life which enable individuals, families, and organizations to achieve complete and efficacious fulfillment.²³

Commenting on these passages, the *Catechism* defines “three essential elements” of the common good.²⁴

First, the common good presupposes respect for the person as such. In the name of the common good, public authorities are bound to respect the fundamental and inalienable rights of the human person. Society should permit each of its members to fulfill his vocation. In particular, the common good resides in the conditions for the exercise of the natural freedoms indispensable for the development of the human vocation, such as ‘the right to act according to a sound norm of conscience and to safeguard . . . privacy, and rightful freedom also in matters of religion.’

Second, the common good requires the social well-being and development of the group itself. Development is the epitome of all social duties. Certainly, it is the proper function of authority to arbitrate, in the name of the common good, between various particular interests; but it should make accessible to each what is needed to lead a truly human life: food, clothing, health, work, education and culture, suitable information, the right to establish a family, and so on.

Finally, the common good requires peace, that is, the stability and security of a just order. It presupposes that authority should ensure by morally acceptable means the security of society and its members. It is the basis of the right to legitimate personal and collective defense.

These categories actually correlate well to the substance of American political debate. Security, in the sense of “national security” and also in the sense of crime, is a perennially important political concern. Access to healthcare and education are major issues that both major political parties feel they must have a “plan” to address and, while we may not agree on what they are, “rights” are an obsession of American politics.

The common goods secured by public authorities make possible the achievement of various goods by individual persons. When these common goods are deficient in a given society, persons are impaired from cooperating with God to build up material for the Kingdom.²⁵

Certain goods are fundamental or *basic goods* while other goods are *instrumental* to the pursuit of basic goods.²⁶ *Basic goods* are goods of persons and fulfill persons or perfect them as persons. They are fundamental or ultimate reasons for action and include: 1) self-integration or inner peace, 2) peace of conscience, 3) peace with others or friendship, 4) peace with God, 5) human life and health, 6) knowledge, 7) skilled performances and 8) marriage.²⁷ These goods are incommensurable; “there is no rational way of comparing, say, the good of life with the good of knowledge of the truth or of friendship . . . and of judging which is greater.”²⁸

If there is no hierarchy among the basic goods, does that mean if two candidates for state senator are the same except one wants to ban same-sex marriage and the other wants to legalize it, but also build new tennis courts, you could vote for either one?²⁹ No, but not because the good of marriage is “higher” than the good of skilled performances. It is reasonable to support the candidate with a correct understanding of marriage because of the relevance of the protection of marriage and the family to a political society’s common good. Supporting marriage and providing absolute legal protection for all human life against private violence are essential aspects of political community while promoting the good of skilled performances is not.

Pursuit of the basic goods requires certain prerequisite *instrumental* goods, so, for example, the pursuit of certain instantiations of knowledge in a given society may require a functioning system of higher education and the preservation of human life can in some instances require the existence of a working healthcare system. But systems of healthcare and education are not fundamental goods of persons but instrumental to fundamental goods. The value of instrumental goods is derived from the basic goods they serve; they do not fundamentally fulfill human persons. Both basic and instrumental goods can be pursued in both moral and immoral ways.

Note that the description given in the *Catechism* of the three essential elements of the common good includes both instrumental goods and basic goods.³⁰ “Instrumental goods” are “instrumental” precisely because they are not fundamental goods of persons themselves but are practical states of affairs that provide options for choices by persons. Persons, in their pursuit of different basic goods, can choose these “options” as means to achieving certain goods of persons for

themselves or others. For example, a society that permits religious freedom (an element of the common good) provides a context helpful (in that regard) for persons to choose harmony-with-God, which is a basic good (a fundamental way in which human persons are fulfilled).³¹ Likewise, in speaking of “development” as the “epitome of all social duties,”³² the Catechism refers to various material prerequisites for the pursuit of the basic reflexive goods such as harmony with others (as in marriage) and the substantive basic goods of knowledge, life and skilled performance.³³

Voters are morally obliged to cast their ballots so as to fulfill their duty to promote the common good. They should not vote based on sentimentality or for personal advantage where the voter’s advantage is contrary to the common good.³⁴ Voting is but one part of a citizen’s commitment to the promotion of the common good of their society. The virtue or disposition to action that characterizes this commitment is “solidarity.” Solidarity is

not a feeling of vague compassion or shallow distress at the misfortunes of so many people, both near and far. On the contrary, it is a firm and persevering determination to commit oneself to the common good; that is to say to the good of all and of each individual, because we are all really responsible for all. This determination is based on the solid conviction that what is hindering full development is that desire for profit and that thirst for power already mentioned.... The exercise of solidarity within each society is valid when its members recognize one another as persons.... In what has been said so far it has been possible to identify many points of contact between solidarity and charity, which is the distinguishing mark of Christ’s disciples.³⁵

III. Voting in Solidarity to Advance the Common Good

The purpose or point of voting is to advance the common good. Voting to advance the common good fulfills a serious moral obligation. A citizen with the virtue of solidarity has the emotional disposition and intellectual ability to fulfill this obligation prudentially. Prudence presupposes a true theoretical understanding as well as virtuous emotions. It allows us to “see in any given juncture of human affairs what is virtuous and what is not Its function is to point out which course of action is to be taken in any round of concrete circumstances.”³⁶

Telling a man to act with prudence is unhelpful; if he already has the virtue he does not need to be told, and if he lacks it such advice is meaningless. On the other hand, instructing in prudence is anything but elegant.³⁷ It usually requires awkward lists of factors and sub-factors, enumerated in a tedious manor. Such lists feel artificial—because they are. But they create a structure to guide decision-making and persons who act based on deliberating on a proper structure will simultaneously train both their intellect and their emotions and will grow in prudence, which will ultimately make the structure superfluous. What follows is an attempt to create such a structure for deliberating on voting.

A. Evaluate the Candidates based on their Public Virtues

As noted in the previous section, the *Catechism* lists “three essential elements” of the common good: 1) respect the rights of the human person; 2) make accessible to each person the preconditions of development: food, work, health, education, culture, information, “and so on;” and 3) maintain the peace and security of a just order.³⁸ Typically, elections feature candidates who are deficient in one or more ways. Regarding each of the three essential elements of the common good, candidates can be deficient regarding their: understanding of the truth; public witness to the truth; competence; and, proportionate commitment. I refer to these four characteristics as public virtues, which I am asserting are the cardinal virtues of public officials. So there are at least twelve ways (three elements times four virtues) that a candidate can be more or less deficient *as a public official*, each of which can result in harm to the common good and ultimately human persons. Candidates can also be deficient *as persons*. Such concerns are usually raised in election politics as “character issues.” I consider the relevance of “character” in this paper’s penultimate section.

Consider the following case as an illustration of the four public virtues. Everyone agrees that one of the common goods of a society is peace (and security), without which it is impossible to pursue many of the basic goods. Maintaining security is universally recognized as one of the foundational responsibilities of government. If candidate “Meli” understands this then she has a correct or true understanding (the first public virtue) of the third essential element of the common good. If Meli openly affirms this truth as a part of her campaign she gives public witness to this element of the common good and has the second public virtue. There are a variety of means to achieve this good, such as through the elimination of civil liberties or by unjustified military expenditures. If Meli advocates for unreasonable means, she lacks the public virtue of

competence in this regard. Finally, it is possible that Meli, although having the previous three virtues, may lack a proportionate commitment to this element of the common good. A candidate or elected official with a “proportionate commitment” takes into account: 1) the role her elected office plays in the political system, 2) the importance of different issues at different times to a society, 3) the fairness³⁹ (particularly to the weakest members of society) of emphasizing some issues over others; and, among other prudential factors, 4) the likelihood of success or progress on a given issue.

If Meli is running for a seat on the local city council it would be unreasonable for her to make military defense a center of her campaign; she should concern herself with local crime. In promoting the peace of her local community, she would want to take into account the current crime rates of her city and the city’s other pressing needs such as clean water and education. If there were toxins in the water supply, she might rightly decide to prioritize that matter in terms of resource allocation over hiring more police. She should give particular consideration to the impact of crime on the weakest members of her city such as the poor, the unborn and the elderly. Finally, in whatever goods she might attempt to achieve, she should take into account the political likelihood of accomplishing anything on those matters.

B. Evaluate the Candidates Deficiencies Based on their Impact on the Common Good

In the case of candidates who are deficient in relation to different elements of the common good, it is reasonable to consider the relevance of a candidate’s defective understanding of the common good to the office he or she is seeking. We should vote so as to promote the common good and a candidate’s erroneous view should be considered in the context of the scope of his or her authority if elected.⁴⁰

For example, Tom is running for chair of the local school board and completes a survey sent to everyone running for elected office in the state by a newspaper. Tom states that he favors every convicted murder receiving the death penalty. Voter Patty believes that such a position evidences a serious defect in Tom’s respect for human life and, all other things being equal, would prefer to vote for Tom’s opponent, Marilyn. Unfortunately, Marilyn, while opposed to the death penalty, does favor a major increase in Patty’s property taxes and a “new math” curriculum for all schools in the district. Patty believes that “new math” is a fad and a waste of her child’s time.

Obviously being committed to unnecessary killing by the state is far graver, absolutely speaking, than destroying the math skills of your

children or increasing your taxes.⁴¹ However, because of the irrelevance of the capital punishment issue to the powers of the elected office in question, I believe a Catholic voter *could* in good conscience vote for Tom. In electing someone to the local school board, it is reasonable to prefer a candidate who is right on relevant matters over a candidate who is correct on matters which are irrelevant.

C. Consider the Total Impact of Your Vote on the Promotion of the Common Good

Voting to advance the common good usually means voting for the “best” candidate, but this is not always the case. It is reasonable to take into account the likelihood of a candidate’s victory in voting. This is true even where the gravest defects of the common good are relevant. For example, a Catholic voter need not always vote for the most “pro-life” candidate in a race, even where the legality of abortion is directly relevant. In the 2004 election for President of the United States there was a third-party candidate⁴² who promised to use all means necessary, including the military, to end abortion on his first day in office. Allow me to further postulate that this candidate is opposed to the war in Iraq, opposed to embryonic stem cell research, opposed to same-sex marriage and opposed to capital punishment. I still do not believe that it would be morally *required* for Catholics to vote for such a candidate. Clearly the fact that he had no chance of winning makes it reasonable to vote for one of the two “major” candidates even if they were both, in comparison, less pro-life.

It seems to me that, in some situations, voting to promote the common good means not voting for the “best” candidate, but rather voting based on a candidate’s political party. In each of the three cases that follow, one may or may not agree with the wisdom of the hypothetical Catholic voter’s decision, but I do not believe that it placed him outside of the Catholic faith. Consider the case of candidate Bobby who is a eugenicist and is opposed to Catholic teaching in every area. He is anti-life in every sense of the term and wants to abolish the entire safety-net for the poor. His opponent in this race for the state legislature, Marilou, is perfect in every regard. Still, it seems to me, that a conscientious Catholic could reasonably vote for Bobby where the control of the legislature depended on the outcome of this election and Bobby’s political party is greatly preferable to have in governance than Marilou’s.⁴³

Along the same lines would be an election with two mostly unacceptable candidates, Mary and Mitch. Even if Mary is objectively preferable to Mitch, a voter could decide to support Mitch intending to

punish Mary's political party for nominating someone so objectionable. The voter realizes that if Mary is elected she will be able to remake her political party in her image with possible tragic results for the common good in the long term. The bigger Mary's loss the more likely her party will "learn a lesson," so a vote for Mitch could be reasonable.⁴⁴

Another example is where third-party C pulls voters disproportionately from party B. Catholic voter Louise decides that, all things considered, party A is most likely to advance the common good in her state. If party C's top candidate gets over 5% in the current election, then party C will automatically have a spot on the ballot in the next election on all levels. Deciding that a vote for C this election is the best way to elect candidates from party A in the long run, Louise votes for candidate C, even though she believes he is the candidate least likely to advance the common good if elected.⁴⁵

D. Vote in Accord with the Golden Rule

The most basic responsibility of Christians towards other human persons is to love them: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."⁴⁶ This love, which is a commandment for Jesus' followers, is not an emotion but a volitional disposition.⁴⁷ Jesus teaches, "So whatever you wish that men would do to you, do so to them; for this is the law and the prophets."⁴⁸ Living this teaching is a universal obligation that extends to all persons, even our enemies.⁴⁹ In the parable of the Good Samaritan Jesus sets before us a weak, poor, wounded man who is in dire straits as the exemplar of our "neighbor."⁵⁰ Love of neighbor attaches in a particular way to persons in grave need.

Voting is a morally grave matter. After deliberating between candidates who have a deficient understanding of the common good, and deciding to vote for one of them, further reflection will present to your conscience the "winners" and "losers" of your decision. Which real human beings will be hurt? How? Who will benefit? The imagination can be helpful in this reflection. If presidential candidate Gerry supports policies you believe likely to actually improve public education, and also likely to result in unrestricted embryonic experimentation, then voting for Gerry benefits children in public schools by improving their education and hurts human persons in the embryonic stage of development by experimenting on and killing them. If you believe the election of presidential candidate Pam will result in just immigration reform (which you favor) and also an unjust war with Iran (which you don't), a different set of winners and losers comes to mind.

One votes "in accord with the Golden Rule" when you can peacefully consider the human persons who could suffer because of your

decision, your brothers and sisters in Christ, and know that your decision is fair to them. Your conscience is clear when you can say that, if you were in their position (the migrant, the unborn, the ill-educated, the Iranian) you would find the decision to vote against your interests reasonable. Your conscience is at peace when you can say that you are treating the persons likely to be harmed or disfavored by your voting decision in the same way that you would want to be treated if you were in their situation. If you do not have peace of conscience regarding your voting decision, it needs to be reconsidered.

IV. Common Misconceptions and Controversial Suggestions

A. About Personal Character

As mentioned above (III. A), candidates for public office can be deficient *as persons* in as many ways as the rest of us and those personal defects can impact their promotion of the common good if they are elected to office. In election campaigns this is usually referred to as the “character issue.” While of grave importance in terms of an individual politician’s soul, it seems to me to be of secondary importance as a means for voters to choose among candidates. Why? Two reasons: first, it is almost always *unknowable* by voters, and; second, even if known, it is of *lesser significance* for discriminating among candidates than public virtues.

I consider the actual character of a candidate to be (largely) *unknowable* because voters simply do not have access to a candidate in a way where such personal characteristics can be accurately ascertained. Character is not the same as reputation.⁵¹ Sometimes a single incident causes a scandal, but a single instance may or may not reflect a person’s character. For example, who is the most sexually deviant politician in America? We have no idea. Some may be better than others at keeping their problems hidden. Some are unlucky and have their political careers destroyed by a single act of foolishness. Judging the relative character of politicians by “who got caught” is not reasonable because the quality and quantity of the data will not justify such a judgment. Honestly reflect on your own judgments regarding the character of potential spouses, professional colleagues, and acquaintances. We have a much larger and more reliable data set to draw on in making a judgment on their character—and yet consider how frequently you have been wrong.

Further, character can change for better or worse, and not only gradually. Some choices are grave, which is to say character defining. They can change the orientation of a person towards (or against) a whole set of virtues and vices. Repentance can give a person a new, resolute

revulsion against a whole set of personal vices. And thus far I am only speaking naturally and psychologically and have not even touched upon the power of God to change people. Believers must consider that conversion and repentance is always a possibility.

I consider the personal character of a candidate, even if knowable, to be of *lesser significance* to the public virtues and thus not determinative of who should be elected. When one candidate is clearly superior in terms of her willingness to advance the common good, then her personal character defects should not, usually, dissuade us from voting for her. For example, if Candidate A is more chaste and hard working than Candidate B, but A is committed to propositions gravely opposed to the common good while B has a generally sound view of the same, we should vote for B. One qualification is in order. In cases where a candidate's personal defects are so extreme, so significant, that they enfeeble the candidate's public virtues then they could be considered relevant in assessing that candidates' public virtues—but this would be an extreme case where a vice raises to the level of a pathology.

Two final thoughts on personal character. First, because judgments regarding it cannot be reasonably made, “character” has a tendency to be a matter of liking or not liking a candidate; a question of which candidate's personality we find more attractive. It distracts us from focusing on the proper criteria for discernment and it is subject to easy manipulation for political purposes. For these reasons, debate on the “character issue” can itself play a deleterious role in American politics and be harmful to the common good. Second, there is a risk to the common good from the election of a morally notorious candidate, but it is not necessarily from the candidate's actions once in office. A culture itself is coarsened when the people give the honor of public office to such a candidate. Note that this cultural harm results not from the actual character of the candidate but from the “scandal” of honoring a person perceived (rightly or wrongly) to be disreputable.

B. Intrinsically Evil Acts and Merely Evil Acts

There is an argument to be found in some popular voting guides,⁵² but also from some reputable moralists, that has the following form. “Certain human acts are always wrong, while other kinds of acts are sometimes right and sometimes wrong. The “always wrong” acts are “non-negotiable issues” for Catholics in voting and one may never vote for a candidate who is wrong on these issues even if he or she has a better position on the other, prudential issues.

This position involves a number of confusions regarding Catholic moral theology. Clarification begins with a review of the Church's actual teaching, as found in *Veritatis splendor*, where Pope

John Paul II explained that there are

objects of the human act which are by their nature ‘incapable of being ordered’ to God, because they radically contradict the good of the person made in his image. These are the acts which, in the Church’s moral tradition, have been termed “intrinsically evil” (intrinsic malum): they are such always and per se, in other words, on account of their very object, and quite apart from the ulterior intentions of the one acting and the circumstances . . . The Second Vatican Council itself, in discussing the respect due to the human person, gives a number of examples of such acts: ‘Whatever is hostile to life itself, such as any kind of homicide, genocide, abortion, euthanasia and voluntary suicide; whatever violates the integrity of the human person, such as mutilation, physical and mental torture and attempts to coerce the spirit; whatever is offensive to human dignity, such as subhuman living conditions, arbitrary imprisonment, deportation, slavery, prostitution and trafficking in women and children; degrading conditions of work which treat laborers as mere instruments of profit, and not as free responsible persons.’⁵³

Likewise, the relevant passage of the *Catechism* teaches that there are “acts which, in and of themselves, independently of circumstances and intentions, are always gravely illicit by reason of their object; such as blasphemy and perjury, murder and adultery.”⁵⁴

The point of the Church’s teaching on intrinsically evil acts is that they are never morally good actions no matter the intention of the actor or the circumstances in which they are performed. They are always objectively wrong. One must never choose to do them no matter how dire the situation or how good the intention.⁵⁵ Evil must never be done that good may come of it.⁵⁶ This teaching is opposed to a certain kind of proportionalism where the goodness of the act would depend on the intended consequences of an action.

Catholic teaching does not require that all intrinsically evil acts be outlawed by the state. Further, nothing in the Church’s teaching implies that acts that are always wrong are necessarily more morally grave than acts that are sometimes wrong. For example, war can be just or unjust, but an unjust war imputes to the aggressor responsibility for the unjustified deaths of many persons. In 1939, Germany invaded Poland. Hitler justified the war as a defensive response to over twenty alleged “border incidents,” supposedly conducted by Polish nationalists

against Germany.⁵⁷ In the course of just this campaign, 150,000 Polish civilians lost their lives. By the end of World War II, over 20% of Poland's total population, 6 million people, were dead.⁵⁸ Given the potential gravity of an unjust war, I fail to see why matters of war would *always* be considered a “secondary” issue, less important even when *evil in fact* than any of the acts (adultery, blasphemy, perjury, etc.) that are intrinsically wrong.

C. Authoritative Church Teaching

In the Catholic faith, there is a hierarchy of moral teachings. The leaked and undated memo of then Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger to Cardinal Theodore McCarrick, entitled, “Worthiness to Receive Holy Communion: General Principles,” concisely explains:

Not all moral issues have the same moral weight as abortion and euthanasia. For example, if a Catholic were to be at odds with the Holy Father on the application of capital punishment or on the decision to wage war, he would not for that reason be considered unworthy to present himself to receive Holy Communion. There may be a legitimate diversity of opinion even among Catholics about waging war and applying the death penalty, but not however with regard to abortion and euthanasia.⁵⁹

This paper is addressed to voters who accept the Church's teaching and not those “at odds with the Holy Father.” There certainly is a hierarchy of moral and theological teachings regarding human action and the faith, but voting for a candidate who does bad things or believes false propositions is not the same as doing bad things or believing false propositions. Not believing in the Trinity, and voting for a candidate who does not believe in the Trinity, is not the same thing. It does not have the same implications for a Catholic's relationship to the Church and to Christ. Likewise, *dissenting from* the Church's consistent teaching on abortion, and, *voting for* a person who disagrees (or dissents if they are a Catholic) with the Church's teaching on Abortion, is not the same moral act. As a postscript to the “Ratzinger Memo” states, “When a Catholic does not share a candidate's stand in favor of abortion and/or euthanasia, but votes for that candidate for other reasons, it is considered remote material cooperation, which can be permitted in the presence of proportionate reasons.”⁶⁰

D. The Problem of Material Cooperation in Voting for Pro-Choice Candidates⁶¹

Cooperation in another's evil action is a common problem that arises in numerous contexts.⁶² "Cooperation" in the technical sense that concerns this paper relates to situations where a person finds themselves in some kind of relationship with one or more persons who are involved in wrongdoing. At first glance, the solution to the problem of cooperation seems to be easy to solve: never cooperate. If a store sells pornography, don't shop there. If a hospital performs abortions, never use it. If the government does evil, don't pay your taxes. And, returning to the topic at hand, if certain political candidates pledge to support unjust laws, never vote for them. A little reflection makes clear that this simplistic approach is practically impossible and in some instances will conflict with one's duties: if your child is deathly ill, you should head to the nearest hospital.

Instances of cooperation are typically divided (as in the "Ratzinger Memo") into formal and material cooperation, as St. Alphonsus Liguori explained: "That [cooperation] is formal which concurs in the bad will of the other, and it cannot be without sin; that [cooperation] is material which concurs only in the bad action of the other, apart from the cooperator's intention."⁶³ In formal cooperation one shares in the evil intention of the evil actor and this is always morally impermissible. When a bad intention determines a choice that choice is invariably morally evil. In contrast, material cooperation concerns a cooperator's acts that involve them in a wrongdoer's evil actions without sharing in the wrongdoer's intention. The evil one is contributing to is *a foreseen but unintended side effect*.

The foreseeable but unintended side effects resulting from the election of pro-choice politicians are extremely fact dependent as a review of the previous examples in this paper demonstrates. The following evils may or may not all be relevant in a given case, but, considered generically, material cooperation in the election of a candidate who is "Pro-Choice," requires accepting up to five separate foreseeable evils. First, depending on how such a position is articulated,⁶⁴ it can encourage abortion or make it appear as a more attractive option for choice by women. Second, publicly holding such a position directly harms the second element of the common good which includes "culture" and "information."⁶⁵ Third, if the candidate is publicly known to be a Christian, there is harm to the Church in their counter-witness; "Christian witness is to be considered a fundamental obligation that can even lead to the sacrificing of one's life..."⁶⁶ Fourth, as the candidate is committed to denying the equal protection of the law to the

unborn, he or she may have the opportunity to act on that commitment (by, for example, voting for or against legislation) if elected. Fifth, such political acts may have consequences, including facilitating the actual killing of human persons before birth. It is this fifth harm of pro-choice politicians that gets the most attention, but the impact of legal restrictions on abortion is disputed.⁶⁷

Material cooperation can be either morally acceptable or unacceptable, but always involves a defective situation. Germain Grisez has proposed three principles for judging the permissibility of material cooperation:⁶⁸ 1) The act that constitutes [material cooperation] is morally acceptable in itself, 2) one's reason for doing that act is morally acceptable, and 3) that reason is proportionate.⁶⁹ That the cooperator's actions and intentions must not be evil in and of themselves is an absolute principle. If this is met, then the strength of the reasons for and against cooperating must be discerned to determine if one has proportionate reasons to materially cooperate. This process of discernment should take into consideration the bad side effects that may result from material cooperation and the Golden Rule. The totality of the circumstances make cooperation either reasonable or unreasonable, all things considered.⁷⁰

If cooperation is reasonable (or proportionate,) then one is not "doing" evil in cooperating with another's evil action. Talk of doing the "lesser evil" is confused, for St. Paul as states, "there will be tribulation and distress for every human being who does evil"⁷¹ and in another place argues that it is a slander against him to claim he taught it is permissible to do evil that good may come of it.⁷² The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* reiterates this teaching in saying that "one may never do evil that good may result from it."⁷³

E. The Indirect Taking of Human Life is a Grave Matter

Some believe that only the direct intentional taking of human life is a grave matter, but this view is mistaken. In addressing sins against the Fifth Commandment, under the subtopic of "Intentional Homicide," and directly before the subtopic of "Abortion," the *Catechism* teaches,

The fifth commandment forbids doing anything with the intention of indirectly bringing about a person's death. The moral law prohibits exposing someone to mortal danger without grave reason, as well as refusing assistance to a person in danger.

The acceptance by human society of murderous famines, without efforts to remedy them, is a scandalous injustice and a grave offense. Those whose usurious and avaricious dealings lead to the hunger and death of their brethren in the human family indirectly commit homicide, which is imputable to them.

Unintentional killing is not morally imputable. But one is not exonerated from grave offense if, without proportionate reasons, he has acted in a way that brings about someone's death, even without the intention to do so.⁷⁴

Likewise, at almost the very beginning of *Evangelium Vitae*, Pope John Paul II solemnly wrote,

The Second Vatican Council, in a passage which retains all its relevance today, forcefully condemned a number of crimes and attacks against human life. Thirty years later, taking up the words of the Council and with the same forcefulness I repeat that condemnation in the name of the whole Church, certain that I am interpreting the genuine sentiment of every upright conscience.⁷⁵

He then quotes the “list” of intrinsically evil acts from paragraph 27 of *Gaudium et Spes*, which I quoted in the previous section. It is Pope John Paul II, not an apologist for a liberal political party, who “lumps” abortion in with “disgraceful working conditions” and teaches that “all these things . . . are infamies indeed. . . Moreover, they are a supreme dishonor to the Creator.”⁷⁶ It is he who is categorizing these evils as “attacks against human life” and gives a list that includes murder and deportation, euthanasia and prostitution, torture and genocide. Later, in the same encyclical letter, Pope John Paul II condemns “violence against life done to millions of human beings . . . who are forced into poverty,” as well as “the spreading of death caused by reckless tampering with the world’s ecological balance.” He calls these and other matters “threats to human life.”⁷⁷

VI. Concluding Thoughts

In, *Deus Caritas Est*, Pope Benedict XVI teaches, “Justice is both the aim and the intrinsic criterion of all politics.” He goes on to explain that Catholic social doctrine has as its goal “to help purify

reason and contribute, here and now, to the acknowledgment and attainment of what is just.”⁷⁸ We will fail to achieve that purpose if we forget that our central identity in this life cannot be as a member of a political party but as one of those living in “the freedom of the glory of the Children of God.”⁷⁹ While sharing in the joys, sorrows and responsibilities of our time and place, we are part of a community of faith that stretches back in time and will continue to exist after the end of time. We must remember to never give to the political realm what belongs to God alone⁸⁰ and to be vigilant against those who would use us, the faith, and the name of God himself to advance a political agenda, however noble.⁸¹

Notes

1. My title is listed for identifications purposes only. Nothing herein should be assumed to reflect the position of the Archdiocese of Chicago. Nor is this paper intended to be a “voter guide.” The Cardinal Archbishop of Chicago has approved two such resources for distribution in the Archdiocese of Chicago: “Elections, Conscience and the Responsibility to Vote” by the Illinois Catholic Conference (<http://www.catholicconferenceofillinois.org>) and the United States Catholic Conference of Bishops’, “Faithful Citizenship” (<http://www.usccb.org/faithfulcitizenship/bishopStatement.html>).
2. “Largest Religious Groups in the United States of America,” 7 December 2005, <http://www.adherents.com/rel_USA.html> (5 October 2006).
3. Regarding Republican efforts, see Patrick Basham, “How Many Votes Has the Pope?” 15 April 2005, <<http://www.reason.org/phprint.php4>> (25 October 2006).
4. For example, a quick Google search reveals websites for: Ohio Democratic Catholic Caucus, Catholic Democrats of Massachusetts, Catholic Democrats, and Catholics for Bush. Along with these websites, millions of copies of various “Catholic” voter guides are being distributed as I write this in November of 2006 – and this is only an off-year election. See, Alan Cooperman, “Religious-Right Voter Guides Facing Challenge From Left,” 29 September 2006, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/09/28/AR2006092801664_pf.html> (25 October 2006).
5. See, Catholics for Political Responsibility (<http://www.thecatholicvote.org>); Catholics for Free Choice (<http://www.catholicvote.net>); Catholic Answers, “Voter’s Guide for Serious Catholics,” (<http://www.caaction.com/>); and Catholics in Alliance for the Common Good (<http://thecatholicalliance.org/new>).
6. Hence I only note briefly, in a later section of this paper, the important doctrinal note from the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, “The Participation of Catholics in Political Life,” 24 November 2006, <http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_20021124_politica_en.html> (26 October 2006). It

concerns, for the most part, the responsibilities of elected officials rather than voters.

7. The *Catechism of the Council of Trent* was also known as *The Roman Catechism* and the *Catechism of Pius V*.

8. *Catechism of the Council of Trent*, trans. John McHugh and Charles Callan, (Rockford, Ill.: Tan Books, 1982), 415-416.

9. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2nd ed., (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1997), 463-472, 539-543.

10. *Ibid.*, 540.

11. *Ibid.*; Also see, *Vatican Council II*, ed. Austin Flannery, "Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World," (Northport, New York, Costello Publishing Co., 1984), 982.

12. See, "Italian Referendum on Fertility Treatment, Embryo Research Fails with Low Turnout," 15 June 2005, <<http://www.medicalnewstoday.com/medicalnews.php?newsid=26177>> (26 October 2006).

13. Some have argued that, where both candidates in an election are morally objectionable, one should abstain from voting as a low voter turnout can send a message to political parties and the public that the candidates presented were unacceptable to a large percentage of the electorate. While I am not persuaded that this argument is correct, such a position seems to me not inconsistent with Catholic teaching. For an argument in favor of not voting, see, Paul Griffiths, "Right, Left & None of the Above," *Commonweal*, 8 October 2004, <http://www.commonwealmagazine.org/print_format.php?id_article=957> (4 November 2006).

14. This paragraph, as well as the proceeding two, is drawn in part from ideas found in, Germain Grisez, *Living a Christian Life*, Vol. 3, *The Way of the Lord Jesus*, (Quincy, Ill.: Franciscan Press, 1993), 870.

15. *Vatican Council II*, 944.

16. Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2005), 246.

17. *Ibid.*, 249.

18. *Vatican Council II*, 984.; Also see, *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 542.

19. Pope Paul VI, “*On the Development of Peoples*,” 26 March 1967, <http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/paul_vi/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-vi_enc_26031967_populorum_en.html> (26 October 2006).

20. *Vatican Council II*, 944.

21. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 464.

22. *Ibid.*, 465.

23. *Vatican Council II*, 981.

24. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 465.

25. A caution is in order. A political society is a real community, but it is not the only real community. “Its common good is not the “all-inclusive (the unconditioned end) of its citizens... On the contrary, political society’s common good is instrumental and subordinate” to the actualization of these goods in persons and in natural communities such as the family. Germain Grisez, *The Way of the Lord Jesus Christ*, Vol. 2: *Living a Christian Life*, (Quincy, Ill.: Franciscan Press, 1993), 848. This point is connected to the principle of subsidiarity, “according to which a community of a higher order should not interfere in the internal life of a community of a lower order, depriving the latter of its functions.” *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 460.

26. The discussion which follows is indebted to William May, *An Introduction to Moral Theology*, 2nd Ed., (Huntington, IN: Our Sunday Visitor, Inc., 2003), 93-113.

27. *Ibid.*, 95-96.

28. *Ibid.*, 97.

29. My attempt to illustrate the implications of the incommensurability of these here is drawn from, and much inferior to, Robert P. George, “Does the ‘Incommensurability Thesis’ Imperil Common Sense Moral

Judgments?” 37 *The American Journal of Jurisprudence* (1992): 185-195.

30. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 465

31. Cf., Robert P. George, *In Defense of Natural Law*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999), 133.

32. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 465.

33. For a description of the first principles of practical reasoning and a justification of related theoretical questions, see, Germain Grisez, Joseph Boyle and John Finnis, “Practical Principles, Moral Truth, and Ultimate Ends,” *American Journal of Jurisprudence* 32 (1987): 99-151.

34. On the relationship between the common good and the private good and as an essential corrective to placing the two in fundamental opposition, see Yves Simon, *A General Theory of Authority*, (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1991). Also, Clarke E. Cochran, “Yves R. Simon and ‘The Common Good’: A Note on the Concept,” *Ethics*, Vol. 88, No. 3 (Apr., 1978), pp. 229-239.

35. Pope John Paul II, “*Sollicitudo rei socialis*,” par. 38-40, 30 December 1987, http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_30121987_sollicitudo-rei-socialis_en.html (27 February 2007).

36. Joseph F. Delaney, “Prudence,” *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, 1911, <<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/12517b.htm>> (4 November 2006).

37. Hearing the correct notes of a piano hit at the right time, with the right force, and at the right speed is a beautiful thing; hearing a piano instructor teach a student how to do each of these things is not. (Special thanks to piano students John and Clare Lund-Molfese for helping me with this example.)

38. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 465.

39. Here I am thinking of the reflective analysis recommended by the Catholic tradition and known as “the Golden Rule.”

40. Many of the voter guides seem to believe that every candidate should be judged as if running in a presidential election. Sometimes the argument (which I find unconvincing) is given that persons elected to lower offices may in the future run for a high one so they should be judged now on issues that will only be potentially relevant later.

41. See, *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 546.

42. See, “President Peroutka,” 2 August 2005, <<http://www.peroutka2004.com/>> (4 November 2006).

43. This case recalls (with some added flourishes and some changes in facts) the example of Senator Rick Santorum of Pennsylvania who gave decisive support to incumbent Republican Senator Arlen Specter in his primary victory over Pat Toomey in 2004. Toomey lost the primary by less than 2% of the vote.

44. This example is based on the 2006 election for Governor of Illinois where some Catholic organizations made just this argument in support of voting for the incumbent Democratic governor.

45. Some Catholics made this argument in favor of voting for the Green party candidate in the election referred to in the above note.

46. Matthew 22:39.

47. This paragraph and much of the substance of the following discussion is drawn from Chapter 6, “Love, Mercy, and Social Responsibility,” of Germain Grisez’s *Living a Christian Life*.

48. Matthew 7:12.

49. Matthew 5:43-48; Luke 6:27-36.

50. Luke 10:29-37.

51. The election of an individual with a particularly notorious reputation (without regard to their actual character) could be harmful to the common good as a form of scandal. People might take such a person’s election as the condoning by the electorate of the candidate’s reputed bad behavior. As a healthy moral ecology of a society is part of the common good, this is an important matter to consider in voting.

52. “Voter’s Guide for Serious Catholics,” (San Diego: Catholic Answers Action, 2006), 5-6.

53. John Paul II, “Veritatis splendor,” 6 August 1993, <http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/encyclicals/document_s/hf_jp-ii_enc_06081993_veritatis-splendor_en.html> (8 November 2006), Par. 80. He is quoting from paragraph 27 of *Gaudium et Spes*. Just after the quoted portion of text, Pope Paul IV is cited for the teaching that contraception is also an intrinsically evil act.

54. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 435.

55. This does not mean that intrinsically evil acts are always subjectively sinful as the usual circumstances for sin (free will, knowledge, etc.) would also need to obtain. They are always objectively wrong.

56. Cf. Romans 3:8.

57. Wikipedia, “Gleiwitz incident,” 12 October 2006, <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gleiwitz_incident> (26 October 2006).

58. Wikipedia, “Invasion of Poland,” 26 October 2006, <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/German_invasion_of_Poland_1939> (26 October 2006).

59. Joseph Ratzinger, “Worthiness to Receive Holy Communion,” n.d., <<http://www.priestsforlife.org/magisterium/bishops/04-07ratzingerommunion.htm>> (4 November 2006).

60. Ibid.

61. Portions of this section of this paper are taken from my unpublished paper, “Fundamental Issues in Cooperation and Catholic Healthcare,” delivered on 5 May 2001 to the Catholic Physicians Guild of Chicago.

62. See, Germain Grisez, *The Way of the Lord Jesus Christ*, Vol 3: *Difficult Moral Questions* (Quincy, IL: Franciscan Press, 1997), p. 871 – 897. My discussion here attempts to follow Professor Grisez closely, however he should not be held accountable for any errors this essay contains. Those interested in his work should examine it directly.

63. As cited by Grisez, *Ibid.*, 873.

64. For example, “We must ensure that the right to choose is never abridged, never weakened and never taken away.” Quotation from a speech by a presidential candidate contained in an unpublished paper in my possession.

65. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 547.

66. *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, 247.

67. Jeffrey Rosen has argued persuasively for the propositions that, if *Roe v. Wade* is overturned by the Supreme Court: “access to abortion wouldn’t necessarily become less widely available;” a right to abortion would be secure “in at least twenty-three states;” no more than twelve states will ban abortion; and, currently very few abortions are performed in these states in any case. More women would travel for an abortion, but studies show 87% of all counties in the United States do not currently have an abortion facility and a quarter of women who have abortions currently travel fifty miles or more. Jeffery Rosen, “The Day After *Roe*,” *The Atlantic Monthly*, June 2006, <<http://www.theatlantic.com/doc/prem/200606/roe>> (11 November 2006).

68. *Difficult Moral Questions*, 876 – 882.

69. *Ibid.*, 889.

70. In saying that one’s reasons for acting in material cooperation with wrongdoing must be proportionate in order for one’s choice to be both reasonable and morally justified, neither Grisez nor I are advocating proportionalism. Proportionalism fails for many of the same reasons that consequentialism is incoherent. It falsely presupposes a commensurability of basic goods and, to an impossible degree, knowledge of the future consequences of our actions. In contrast to this, Grisez is proposing a deliberative process that *begins* by taking stock of all of the relevant arguments and *ends* with the making of a prudential judgment for or against the course of action under deliberation.

71. Romans 2:9.

72. Romans 3:8.

73. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 435.

74. *Ibid.*, 547.

75. John Paul II, “Evangelium vitae,” 25 March 1995 <http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_25031995_evangelium-vitae_en.html > (8 November 2006), Paragraph 3.

76. *Ibid.*

77. *Ibid.*, Paragraph 10.

78. Pope Benedict XVI, “Deus Caritas Est,” <http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/encyclicals/documents/hf_ben-xvi_enc_20051225_deus-caritas-est_en.html> (11 November 2006).

79. Romans 8:20.

80. Cf. Mark 12:13-17; Matthew 22:15-22; Luke 20:20-26; St. Thomas Aquinas, *Catena Aurea*, (Albany, N.Y.: Preserving Christian Publications, Inc., 2000), 749, 750.

81. This paper was greatly improved (but not as much as some of them hoped) by the comments of the anonymous reviewers as well as Gerard Bradley, Clarke Cochran, Carson Holloway, Mary-Louise Kurey, and Mitch Striedl. Any errors that remain are, obviously, my responsibility alone.