

# ST. ELIZABETH ANN SETON CHURCH



Father Mark Seiker  
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North Platte, Nebraska 69101

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Parish Hall: 534-0511

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## ***30<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time*** ***October 25, 2020***

***Welcome to St. Elizabeth's:*** It is our hope that you feel at home and among friends here at St. Elizabeth. If you are a visitor for a day, we pray God's speed on your journey. If you are looking for a parish community, we would be delighted to welcome you into our parish family. Please introduce yourselves. Registration forms are available in the entry racks or contact us anytime at 308-534-5461.

### **Religious Services**

#### **Mass Schedule** For Sunday Obligation:

Saturday 5:00 p.m.  
Sunday 10:00 a.m.

#### **Weekdays & Holy Days**

As published in the Bulletin.

#### **Rosary**

Prayed **8:30 a.m.** Monday mornings, and  
30 minutes before weekend Mass.

#### **Sacrament of Confession**

Offered 30 minutes before most all daily Masses  
Saturday 4:00 p.m. – 4:55 p.m.  
Sunday, 9:00 a.m. – 9:55 a.m., or by appointment.

#### **Sacrament of Baptism**

Parents are asked to attend a baptism preparation class. This is recommended, and easiest to do before the birth of the child, but must be done before the baptism.

#### **Sacrament of Matrimony**

To assist those who plan to marry, all couples will be required to fulfill the diocesan marriage preparation policy, which includes the FOCCUS & Engaged Encounter Programs. This requires a minimum of 4-6 months. The assessment process must be completed before a wedding date is set. Contact pastor early to begin the preparation.

### **Parish Information**

#### **Bulletin Deadline**

All material is to be submitted to the parish office before noon Wednesday prior to the Sunday it is to appear. Email to: [rectory-office@seas-np.org](mailto:rectory-office@seas-np.org)

#### **New or Moving Parishioners**

Please call the office to arrange an appointment with the Pastor to register in the Parish. Please call the office to notify us of any address change.

#### **Your Will**

Ask your attorney to include remembrance of your Church in your will.

#### **Religious Vocations**

Any young woman interested in religious life, or young man interested in a vocation to the priesthood should contact your pastor. Please pray for vocations!

### **Education**

#### **Family Formation Program**

Sunday mornings (Sept-May) 11:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

#### **Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (R.C.I.A.)**

For those interested in possibly joining the Catholic Church. Usually on Wednesdays (Sept-May), 7:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m. in Parish Hall. Please contact the parish office for more information.

## SCHEDULE OF MASSES

Monday	Oct. 26	<b>7:30 a.m.</b>
Tuesday	Oct. 27	
Wednesday	Oct. 28	<b>5:30 p.m.</b>
<b>6:00pm–10:00pm Eucharistic Holy Hours =&gt; Spend time with Jesus</b>		
Thursday	Oct. 29	8:00 a.m.
Friday	Oct. 30	<b>12:10 p.m.</b>
		<b>5:30 p.m.</b>
Saturday	Oct. 31	<b>5:00 p.m.</b>
Sunday	Nov. 1	<b>10:00 a.m.</b>

## INTENTIONS

Ashley Krienert
- No Scheduled Parish Mass -
Steve Budke
Special Intention (jls)
For our Benefactors
Liv/Dec mem. Bode/Ruskamp families
People of our Parish
Beatrice Estrada +

***You shall love the Lord,  
your God,  
with all your heart,  
with all your soul,  
and with all your mind.***

—Matthew 22:21

## **Stewardship: October 18, 2020**

<b>Adult Envelopes:</b> .....	\$1,295.00
<b>Loose Plate:</b> .....	\$439.00
<b>Children:</b> .....	\$0.00
<b>Holy Day:</b> 0 .....	\$0.00
<b>Total:</b> .....	\$1,734.00

<b><u>Joy of the Gospel Campaign</u></b>	
Total Pledged: .....	\$958,770.00
Gifts last week: .....	\$0.00
<b>Total Gifts Received:</b> .....	<b>\$895,263.05</b>
Original DIAL Loan: .....	1,485,000.00
Total Received (CTTF Camp):	\$1,025,440.07
Misc Donations Received: .....	\$739,940.31
Total Payments on Loan: .....	\$1,712,678.04
<b>Balance on DIAL LOAN:</b> .....	<b>\$54,536.89</b>

Propagation of the Faith: \$320.00

### **Parish Calendar**

Wednesday	Oct. 28	<b>6:00pm – 10:00pm:</b> Eucharistic Adoration <b>7:00pm – 9:00pm:</b> RCIA Classes in Person and via Zoom
Thursday	Oct. 29	<b>1:00pm:</b> Adult Bible Study via Zoom (contact Teri Volesky)
Sunday	Nov. 1	<b>11:30am:</b> Family Formation, Parents & Children

## **Catholic School News:**

**Upcoming Events:** Oct. 26-27: Volleyball Sub-District, Oct. 30: Football Playoffs, Oct. 31: Volleyball District Final

**God is Here:** A big thank you to our Priests and Deacons. Each week they celebrate 2 Masses at the High School and 2 Masses at the Grade School. We appreciate that they have rearranged their schedules so our students can still be offered this opportunity to build their faith.

**Thank You!** Virtual G.R.E.E.N. was a success! Many thanks to all of those that participated and tuned into our broadcast. If you were unable to bid on an item or didn't have access to YouTube, You can still make a donation by visiting [www.bidpal.net/green20](http://www.bidpal.net/green20), Endowment Office, 308-534-5939.

**Job Opportunity, After-School Program:** The North Platte Catholic Schools are excited to announce that we are implementing an after school program at McDaid Elementary! We are looking to hire a director for our new program. Applicant must be energetic, organized, and possess strong communication skills. Applicant must also hold a current certified Nebraska Teaching certificate or an associate's degree in early childhood development. Contact Principal Pam Wood (532-1874) for more information and the application process.

**Investing in Your Child's Future Together:** A great education is the ultimate gift a parent can give to a child, and we are committed to helping provide exceptional students with the opportunities an education from NPCCS offers. We aim to educate the whole child, and promise that you will be making a priceless investment in your child's future. It is our goal to offer a faith-based, rich learning environment that is affordable to all families. Enrollment is open! If you or someone you know would be interested in learning more about our schools, please contact PR/Enrollment Director, Gwen Covey (308-532-1874) or [g.covey@npcschools.org](mailto:g.covey@npcschools.org). We look forward to meeting you!

**North Platte Catholic School: Faith & Knowledge for a Brighter Future**

**Emmaus Institute Classes ...** There's still time to register for the following in-person or online fall classes with The Emmaus Institute for Biblical Studies, running Sep 8 – Nov 16: The Letter of James, Leviticus through Deuteronomy, Interpreting the Bible, Book of Job, Saints & Scriptures. Learn more & register at [www.emmausinstitute.net](http://www.emmausinstitute.net).

## **LDCCW October Pro-Life Diaper Drive ...**

The LDCCW October Pro-Life Diaper Drive will soon be coming to an end, but you still have an opportunity to donate. Would you like the LDCCW to shop for you? You can mail a check payable to LDCCW to Kay Wessel, 3600 W Wittstruck Rd, Martell NE 68404. The LDCCW can purchase the needed diaper sizes in volume at a discounted price. Listen to Spirit Catholic Radio for Diaper Drive announcements. Thank you to those that have already donated. God Bless You.

Cash donations can be placed in the collection basket or in the Church collection slot by the Rectory in a marked envelope "Daughters of Charity Diaper Drive." Make checks payable to the "Daughters of Charity." The Daughters of Charity write one check to Women's Resource Center to purchase diapers as needed.

**Daughters of Charity Bake Sale ... All Things Pumpkin Theme Bake Sale** in the Narthex of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Church on the following dates/times:

- **Saturday, October 24, 2020 6:00pm – 7:00pm**
- **Sunday, October 25, 2020 11:00am – 1:00pm**

All are welcome. Pumpkins and T-shirts will also be available for sale.

**50 Days of Prayer and Fasting ...** Join us as we lift our nation in prayer for 50 days from September 14<sup>th</sup> until Election Day on November 3<sup>rd</sup>. Pray for a different state each day. Participants are encouraged, but not required, to add sacrifices or some fasting to their prayers in a manner that is appropriate for their state in life. More details at "50 Days of Prayer and Fasting" on Facebook (search "50 Days of Prayers and Fasting") or Twitter (@50daysUSA).

**Nebraska Catholic Voter Guide ...** The Nebraska Catholic Conference invited all state legislative and federal legislative candidates on the upcoming ballot to answer a survey indicating their support or opposition on a variety of important public policy issues currently facing our state and nation. We also gave them the opportunity to offer a special message to you, the Catholic voter. Please reference the Voter Guide at: <https://www.nebraskacatholicvoter.com/>

**Healing After Abortion ...** Every day, women who have had abortions are coming to the healing of the Lord. One such person has shared the following: “[My husband] convinced me to get an abortion. I was of the feeling (although I knew better) that this wasn’t really a baby. It was a ‘mass of tissue’ I was getting rid of. I grieved for a long time when I faced what I had really done. It made me a much sadder person for a while. I made a confession to a Priest, [and] followed his advice to become involved in letting people know that they are carrying a life inside of them. I feel very good about myself now. I am involved in the Pro-Life Movement.” For more info, visit [www.SilentNoMore.com](http://www.SilentNoMore.com).

### **Nebraska Catholic Conference ... suggestions:**

**October is Respect Life Month ...** Reflection excerpts by +Joseph Hanefeldt, Bishop of Grand Island. Full message: <https://gidiocese.org/statements>

*There are many challenges to the dignity of the human person in our society today. From the moment of conception until the time of death, life is being assaulted in countless ways. Violence seems to be the common answer for everything: the violence of abortion, the violence of human trafficking, violence against immigrants, the violence of racism, the violence of suicide and assisted suicide, the violence of rioting and the destruction of property, the violence of Planned Parenthood selling aborted fetal body parts for profit, violence from those who will not tolerate the freedom of religion. Living the Gospel of Life challenges us to present a different way of living to our violent, broken world.*

*Each of us must look within our own conscience and consider how we think of others and notice how we treat them. What we say and do to them, and what we say about them to others, comes from the deepest recesses of our hearts. Consistently living the gospel of life requires a deeper conversion, beginning within our own hearts. We must repent of any disregard we may have had for the dignity of others. We must adhere to the gospel of life at all times, seeking God’s mercy for the times when we have not lived by the Golden Rule.* Reflection by +Joseph G. Hanefeldt, Bishop of Grand Island

**Bountiful Harvest: The Love of Christ ...** a Benefit for Catholic Social Services – Hastings ... is being held from **October 1-25, 2020**. (the following is quoted from the *Southern Nebraska Register* online ... <https://www.lincolndiocese.org/news/diocesan-news/14188-annual-hastings-event-for-css-goes-online>)

For years the banquet has been held in the Hastings City auditorium to highlight the work of Catholic Social Services of Southern Nebraska (CSS) in the 16-county greater Hastings area. Due to social distancing efforts, CSS will not have the celebration dinner, but will conduct an online auction through Oct. 25 to raise funds to help the needy and vulnerable of the Hastings area.

The 2020 Bountiful Harvest Celebration will conclude Sunday, Oct. 25 with a live event on social media where CSS will show a brief video on the work in the Hastings area. They will also close the auction and draw the winner of a \$5,000 giveaway sponsored by Plum Creek Wagyu Beef.

To support the 2020 Bountiful Harvest Celebration, participants may visit [www.csssis.org/bh2020](http://www.csssis.org/bh2020) and bid on gifts, trips, packages, and items.

Catholic Social Services opened a full-service location in Hastings in 1991. Now the St. John Vianney Center provides food pantry services; sack lunch distribution; emergency services including rent and utility assistance; disaster relief; the St. Joseph Gift & Thrift; St. Gianna’s West, offering housing for those escaping violence; and through telehealth, the Clinical/Family Counseling program provides psychological services.

“The needs we are seeing in our communities have never been greater,” said Phil Rosno, Hastings Regional Manager.

“So many people that were already on the brink financially have lost jobs or lost hours and that has put them over the edge,” he explained. “When a good 40% of families do not have the resources to handle a \$500 emergency, a pandemic of this proportion causes a lot of misfortune.”

He added that the struggles are not just financial.

“Depression, anxiety, suicide and abuse have all increased significantly in the past six months,” he said. “The effects of Covid will take years to overcome. We implore you to be as generous as possible now to help us help those in most need.”

**Good Counsel Retreat House Retreats** Register for Online & in person Retreats sponsored by Good Counsel Retreat House [www.goodcounselretreat.com](http://www.goodcounselretreat.com), 402-786-2705, or [goodcounsel@cdolinc.net](mailto:goodcounsel@cdolinc.net).

### **Upcoming in-person and online retreats including:**

- Oct. 30-Nov. 4: M/W, Fr. Craig Doty, *Jesus, Please Heal Me! Prayer Teams available to pray in-person. (in-person and online)*
- Nov. 13-15: M/W, Fr. Matt Rolling, *Couch to Saint: Training to Be an Authentic Follower of Christ. (in-person and online)*

**Menopause Info Session ...** Michele Chambers, CFCP, will be speaking about the health, hormonal, and charting implications of menopause on **October 26**, at 7:00pm at the John XXIII Diocesan Center. **The event will also be virtual.** Event is free, pre-registration requested at <https://lincolndiocese.regfox.com/menopause> Questions, please call NFP Office (402-473-0630) or email [naturalfamilyplanning@cdolinc.net](mailto:naturalfamilyplanning@cdolinc.net)

### **Benedict XVI Diocesan School of Catechesis ...**

This class is now virtual and in-person! It is for Catholics wanting to strengthen their intellectual and spiritual formation to empower their evangelical mission in the world. It covers the Creed, the Sacraments, the Commandments, and Prayer (Year I) as well as Salvation History, Church History, Faith and Reason, and Spirituality (Year II). The time commitment is one Saturday a month from September to April for two years. The cost is \$100 per semester, however, those who teach CCD, God-teen/CYO, or in Catholic schools would receive a 25% discount. For more information ... [www.lincolndiocese.org/bxvi](http://www.lincolndiocese.org/bxvi) or call 402-473-0631.

### **WRAP Means White Ribbon Against Pornography ...**

The purpose of white ribbon against Pornography is to raise awareness about the Hardcore pornography problem. The Catholic Daughters will be handing out white ribbons on Oct. 24-25. Display the white ribbon in your home or car as a reminder to pray for protection for your family.

### **Family Formation Parent’s Meeting ... our November Meeting is on Sunday, November 1, 11:30am–12:30pm**

in Parish Hall, for all parents of School age children, and in person classes for children Grades K-6. Children, Teachers, and Parents will all be asked to wear masks during the classes (similar to what is being done in many schools).

**QUOTES ...** The Lord sees not only how much we give, but also how much we keep. \*\*\* Excuses are the tools which persons with no purpose in view, build for themselves great monuments of nothing. \*\*\* Education is learning what you didn’t even know you didn’t know. \*\*\* Some people make things happen, some people watch things happen, and some people wonder what’s happening. \*\*\* Life’s greatest achievement is the continual remaking of yourself so that at last you know how to live.

### **FROM FR. MARK SEIKER:**

**Bishop’s Appeal for Vocations ... “Peace Be With You”.** Due to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, there is a different approach to BAV this year. Pledge cards and a letter for the Bishop’s Appeal for Vocations 2020 to parishioners were put in the mail 10/03/20. You may place your contribution (*check only not cash*) in the enclosed envelope & mail to the Lincoln Drop Box. *If you did not receive a pledge card, or if you have questions, please contact Fr. Seiker (email or phone).* The goal for St. Elizabeth Ann Seton is **\$4,510.00**. This is our share of the Diocesan goal of \$800,000 which has been established by Bishop Conley. Your gifts and your prayers for our seminarians are much appreciated! Please support the Bishop’s Appeal for Vocations.

**RCIA Classes ...** (Inquiry class in Faith) on Wednesdays in Parish Hall 7:00pm – 9:00pm, will continue until mid May 2021. **It is not too late to join!** Classes for Catholics & non-Catholics. Come, learn more about your faith; offered in **person (with social distance) & virtually.**

**Fr. Seiker’s schedule ...** Mon Oct 26 – Tue Oct 27, meeting with Jesus Caritas Priests in Waverly; returning Wed. for 5:30pm Mass.



## Liturgical Ministers

<b>Lector</b>		
<b>Acolyte</b>		
<b>Server</b>		
<b>Music</b>		
<b>Gifts</b>		
<b>Ushers</b>		
<b>Rosary</b>		

## *Readings for the Week*

Monday: Eph 4:32 - 5:8; Ps 1:1-4, 6; Lk 13:10-17  
 Tuesday: Eph 5:21-33; Ps 128:1-5; Lk 13:18-21  
 Wednesday: Eph 2:19-22; Ps 19:2-5; Lk 6:12-16  
 Thursday: Eph 6:10-20; Ps 144:1b, 2, 9-10;  
 Lk 13:31-35  
 Friday: Phil 1:1-11; Ps 111:1-6; Lk 14:1-6  
 Saturday: Phil 1:18b-26; Ps 42:2, 3, 5cdef;  
 Lk 14:1, 7-11  
 Sunday: Rv 7:2-4, 9-14; Ps 24:1-6; 1 Jn 3:1-3;  
 Mt 5:1-12a

**Prayers for the sick:** Fr. Seiker, Tucker Smith, Robert Wessell, J.D. Troyer, Dean & Janice Large, Jennifer Schmid, Steve Haman, Sharon Beckius, Those affected with/by COVID-19, Theresa McCarthy-Garth, Troy Tickle, Iris Wyman Lloyd, Peggy Lawler, Matt Reisen (Matt & Ashley Perlinger's friend), Special Intention, Carolyn Cohen, Tim Garth (Theresa McCarthy-Garth's son), Those struggling with Alcoholism, Mary Lou Robles (Toni Barron's sister), Renate Nordquist, Mike & Kim Paul, Jim Beckius.

**Prayers for the deceased:** Beatrice Estrada, Eloise Kramer (Monica Kramer's mother), Nellie Rodriguez (Toni Barron's sister), Reyes Robles (Toni Barron's brother-in-law), Margaret Ruskamp (Donna Bode's mother), Dolores Kosmicki, Patricia Zamora (Toni Barron's sister), Teresa Clouatre, Gordon Swanson (Cindy Swanson's father), Florena Schneweis (Emily Krondak's mother), Carlos Fleury (Steve/Janet Fear's son-in-law), Ruby Ramirez (Toni Barron's sister), JoAnn Bode Waters (John Bode's sister), Eileen Boltz, Leona Clouatre, Bernadine Torres, Martha Burbach, Luke Ranck.

**Birthdays/Anniversaries:** 10/26 - Trudy Brosius, 10/29 - Jan Bush, 10/30 - Kelsey Heimann, John Rouzee, 10/31 - Drew Connelly.

**TREASURES FROM OUR TRADITION ...** There is a show on public television in which people search their attics for heirlooms, dust them off, and trek them downtown for ruthless evaluation by teams of antique experts. Occasionally the owners are surprised to learn they have been harboring priceless artifacts: a Tiffany bowl used to catch the car keys, a Van Gogh in the downstairs bathroom. What they lugged downtown in a paper bag, they carry home in bubble wrap and receiving blankets. It's the same way with treasures in Church life. Lots of things were lugged up into the attic years ago, and it was inevitable that some treasures ended up in the trash. Many Catholics tucked the sacrament of penance away in a dusty corner. We know it's there if we need it, but it is not the weekly routine it once was, like the Saturday bath "whether I need it or not." Today, especially in Lent and Advent or as part of personal preparation for marriage, ordination, or other life transitions, the sacrament of penance is a treasure of the Christian life waiting to be discovered. What's in your attic? — Copyright © J. S. Paluch Co.

**LIVING JUSTLY ...** "You give that back right now!" How many of us have heard that line, probably more than once, as we were growing up? We come home with the trophy of what we thought was a really sweet deal, only to have our parents undo our profits by making us return the spoils. They had a different idea of what constituted a "fair trade agreement." Justice in our dealings with others continues to be an important measure of our character, and like a good parent, God cares very much about how we treat each other and about how others treat us. God hears the cry of the poor, and answers the call of the oppressed. God's beloved children are not to behave like bullies. — Copyright © J. S. Paluch Co.

**"Evil Wants Us to fall asleep, give up, stay locked in fear, despair, Stop Praying, Never Go Back to Mass, and Live as if God Does Not Exist."** — Bishop Donald Hying

**BORN TO LOVE...** We were born to love, we live to love, and we will die to love still more. — Joseph Cafasso

**CHARACTER ...** Character is much easier kept than recovered. —Thomas Paine

**HALLOWEEN ...** Bring forth the raisins and the nuts – Tonight All-Hallows' spectre struts along the moonlit way. — John Kendrick Bangs

**Pray for our Seminarians:** Thomas James Haberman, from St. Wenceslaus Parish in Wahoo. He entered the Seminary in 2020. He is in Theology 1 at St. Gregory the Great Seminary.

**Pray for our Religious Sisters:** School Sisters of Christ the King, Marian Sisters of the Diocese of Lincoln, Sisters at the Carmel of Jesus, Mary & Joseph, Pink Sisters, Sisters of Mary, Queen of Mercy.

**HOLY FATHER'S INTENTIONS ...**

**(October) Prayer Intention for Evangelization - The Laity's Mission in the Church:** We pray that by the virtue of baptism, the laity faithful, especially women, may participate more in areas of responsibility in the Church.

## Guide to Moral Duties Concerning Voting

**We encourage all citizens, particularly Catholics, to embrace their citizenship not merely as a duty and privilege, but as an opportunity meaningfully to participate in building the culture of life. . . . Every act of responsible citizenship is an exercise of significant individual power. We must exercise that power in ways that defend human life, especially those of God's children who are unborn, disabled or otherwise vulnerable. We get the public officials we deserve. Their virtue—or lack thereof—is a judgment not only on them, but on us. Because of this we urge our fellow citizens to see beyond party politics, to analyze campaign rhetoric critically and to choose their political leaders according to principle, not party affiliation or mere self-interest.**

[*Living the Gospel of Life: A Challenge to American Catholics* 34, National Conference of Catholic Bishops, November 1998]

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### The Role of Common Teaching in Catholic Moral Theology

The public discussion regarding voting suggests that most Catholics think there is little Church teaching on the subject. Besides a comment here and there regarding abortion, same-sex unions, or more recently, gender ideology, some important principles in the *Catechism* and encyclicals, and Pope Benedict's teaching on non-negotiable and negotiable common goods, we are otherwise left to make the hard choices on our own.

This is not really the case, however. Magisterial statements express with authority what is already believed, occasionally with some clarification or even development, but they are to be understood in continuity with the Tradition, including the common theology of the Church. This is the meaning of Pope Benedict's interpretative principle "hermeneutic of continuity." Such is the case with the Church's moral theology.

#### **That Which is Taught Always, Everywhere and by All**

St. Irenaeus of Lyon (died 150 A.D.) wrote of the universality and consistency of the Church's teaching as one of the gifts enabling Christians to tend to salvation. Writing in the first systematic theological treatise, he stated,

**THIS GUIDE MAY BE FREELY REPRODUCED AND DISTRIBUTED NON-COMMERCIALY.**

[T]he preaching of the Church is everywhere consistent, and continues in an even course, and receives testimony from the prophets, the apostles, and all the disciples—as I have proved—through [those in] the beginning, the middle, and the end, and through the entire dispensation of God, and that well-grounded system which tends to man's salvation, namely, our faith; which, having been received from the Church, we do preserve, and which always, by the Spirit of God, renewing its youth, as if it were some precious deposit in an excellent vessel, causes the vessel itself containing it to renew its youth also. (*Against Heresies* III, 24)

Another Church Father, St. Vincent of Lerins (+450), encapsulated this principle in a formula which is still used,

[I]n the Catholic Church itself, all possible care must be taken, that we hold that faith **which has been believed everywhere, always, by all**. For that is truly and in the strictest sense "Catholic," which, as the name itself and the reason of the thing declare, comprehends all universally. (*Commonitory* 2, 6)

Both Fathers express the truth that the Church *as a whole* is infallible in what she believes, in what is handed on generation to generation, without doubt or contradiction. From time to time the Magisterium affirms some element out of necessity, but the teaching is true even absent such an affirmation.

Blessed Pope Pius IX noted this doctrine in writing to a German bishop about the errors of theologians who had endorsed the proposition that "the Catholic faith is circumscribed to what is formally proposed by the Magisterium." He wrote,

[E]ven if it were a matter concerning that subjection which is to be manifested by an act of divine faith, nevertheless, it would not have to be limited to those matters which have been defined by express decrees of the ecumenical Councils, or of the Roman Pontiffs and of this See, but would have to be extended also to those matters which are handed down as divinely revealed by the ordinary teaching power of the whole Church spread throughout the world, and therefore, **by universal and common consent are held by Catholic theologians to belong to faith**. (*Tuas libenter*, 21 December 1863; DS2879)

### Application to Moral Theology

An example of this can be found with respect to abortion. From the first century abortion at every stage was condemned by the Church as an attack on human life, even though neither the Church nor the world understood what was happening biologically in the womb. Today we know exactly when a unique human being begins, at fertilization. The Church's understanding of the science, like the world's, has developed, but her supernatural sense of the faith was correct all along.

Church teaching did not become true, therefore, when Pope St. John Paul II defined the meaning of the 5<sup>th</sup> Commandment, and abortion and euthanasia as direct taking of

innocent human life, in *Evangelium vitae* (Gospel of Life). He merely confirmed authoritatively what was already “believed everywhere, always, by all.”

Since so little is formally defined by the Magisterium in the area of moral theology, the role of the Church's common moral teaching, especially as found in the theological witnesses to it, assumes a special importance. These witnesses can be of the past or of the present, but in keeping with a hermeneutic of continuity they must be grounded in the moral tradition, and their contemporary application must flow logically from it.

## Our Duty to Vote

**CCC 2239.** It is the duty of citizens to contribute along with the civil authorities to the good of society in a spirit of truth, justice, solidarity, and freedom. The love and service of one's country follows from the duty of gratitude and belongs to the order of charity. Submission to legitimate authorities and service of the common good require citizens to fulfill their roles in the life of the political community.

**2240** 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 (Rom. 13:7) ....

... The Apostle exhorts us to offer prayers and thanksgiving for kings and all who exercise authority, "that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life, godly and respectful in every way." (1 Tim 2:2)

The duty to vote is one of co-responsibility for society. Its moral object is the common good. As Catholics our consciences should be specifically informed as to the greatest moral principles, so that we may vote with them in mind.

## The Worthy Candidate and the Common Good

Public character, what the candidate intends to do with political power, is the most important qualification. Will he, and those associated with him in governing, serve the common good? Or, will they undermine the common good? Those are the key questions.

Personal moral character is not unimportant, as it obviously informs the candidates appreciation of the moral dimension of public issues, but it is the stated commitment to public policy in keeping with the common good which is the most significant factor.

Since the purpose of voting is to foster the common good, the worthiness or unworthiness of a candidate for office is therefore *best* judged by their relationship to the basic principles of a just social order and their willingness to advance them.

**CCC 1906.** By common good is to be understood "the sum total of social conditions which allow people, either as groups or as individuals, to reach their fulfillment more fully and more easily." The common good concerns the life of

all. It calls for prudence from each, and even more from those who exercise the office of authority.

The *Catechism* goes on to name among the elements of the common good:

- 1) the fundamental and inalienable natural rights of human persons, (CCC 1907)
- 2) the basic common goods of society (food, clothing, health, work, education and culture, suitable information, the right to establish a family, etc.) (CCC 1908),
- 3) and the stability and security that comes with a just social order. (CCC 1909)

We can get a clearer idea of these elements from an address by Pope Benedict XVI in 2006 to European parliamentarians, in which he named the goods which are *non-negotiables*, and thus at the heart of the *common good*.

As far as the Catholic Church is concerned, the principal focus of her interventions in the public arena is the protection and promotion of the dignity of the person, and she is thereby consciously drawing particular attention to principles which are **not negotiable**. Among these the following emerge clearly today:

- (a) **protection of life in all its stages**, from the first moment of conception until natural death;
- (b) **recognition and promotion of the natural structure of the family as a union between a man and a woman based on marriage**, and its defense from attempts to make it juridically equivalent to radically different forms of union which in reality harm it and contribute to its destabilization, obscuring its particular character and its irreplaceable social role;
- (c) **the protection of the right of parents to educate their children.**  
(*Address to European Parliamentary Group*, 30 March 2006)

Here the Pope establishes a basic distinction, *non-negotiable* common goods—those involving “fundamental and inalienable rights” (CCC 1907). They are morally unequivocal, and their violation is an intrinsic evil which can never be justified by motive or circumstances.

All other *common goods* are therefore *negotiable*, as they do not involve a single moral good or solution (CCC 1908-1909). While they inevitably touch on matters of life, natural marriage and freedom, they are dependent upon particular circumstances, and decisions about the best *means* to achieve the desired good (e.g. economic justice, health care, domestic and international peace). Unlike the *non-negotiables*, people of good will may disagree on how to achieve that good.

How a candidate stands with respect to the *non-negotiable common goods* of life, natural marriage and religious freedom is, therefore, the paramount test of worthiness to serve in public office. In this regard, the platform of the candidate’s party is also very important, since no one person, regardless of the dignity of the office held, is able to bring their policy views to fruition without the support of a great many others. This



assistance is typically of those within their own political party, as well as those whom they appoint to offices under their control in government.

### For Whom We May Vote

For many, of whom I have often told you and now tell you even with tears, live as enemies of the cross of Christ. Their end is destruction, their god is the belly, and they glory in their shame, with minds set on earthly things. But our commonwealth is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ . . . (Phil. 3:18-21)

We've already seen that the *non-negotiables* are the acid test of public character, but how do we use this knowledge in choosing for whom to vote?

Consider the situation where two candidates are both worthy on the non-negotiables. One would expect their upright positions to inform also the negotiable issues, adhering to the fundamental values of life, natural marriage and family, and religious freedom. If there are policy differences between them, they would be opinions about the means and one would be free to vote as one thought best.

The moral tradition speaks of this stalemate, in the context of our next subject, the unworthy candidate. Capuchin Father Heribert Jone states,

Voting is a civic duty which would seem to bind at least under venial sin whenever a good candidate has an unworthy opponent. It might even be a mortal sin if one's refusal to vote would result in the election of an unworthy candidate. (*Moral Theology* n.205. Dublin: Mercier Press, 1929, 1955)

We can get three things out of this teaching.

- 1) If all the candidates are worthy, it would not be sinful if we did not vote.
- 2) If a worthy candidate is opposed by an unworthy candidate, there would be a slight obligation to vote for the worthy candidate (and thus a venial sin to not vote), except,
- 3) If not voting would foreseeably result in the election of an unworthy candidate, it would be mortally sinful to not vote to prevent that candidate's election

### For Whom We May Not Vote

Jesuit Father Henry Davis writes similarly,

It is the duty of all citizens who have the right to vote, to exercise that right when the common good of the State or the good of religion and morals require their votes, and when their voting is useful. [*Moral and Pastoral Theology*, vol. 2, Chapter V, 4<sup>th</sup> Commandment, p. 90 (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1935, 1959)]

Here we see the same sense of the tradition as in Jone, and we also have the nature of unworthiness described: **a candidate is unworthy who is an enemy of the common good of the State, the good of religion and of morals.** These are the same common goods found in the *Catechism* and differentiated into *non-negotiables* and *negotiables* by Pope Benedict XVI.

We thus return, again, to the non-negotiable issues as the defining expression of public character and the worthiness of a candidate for elected office. Davis makes this quite clear in the final sentence of the section cited above, and in which he also notes an exception,

It is sinful to vote for the enemies of religion or liberty, **except to exclude a worse candidate**, or unless compelled by fear of great personal harm, relatively greater than the public harm at stake. (Davis, *Ibid.*)

Father Jone states similarly,

One may vote for an *unworthy candidate* only when this is necessary to prevent a still less worthy candidate from obtaining office; but in such a case one should explain the reason for his action if this is possible. In an exceptional case one may vote for some unworthy candidate; viz., if he can thereby avert some unusually great personal disadvantage. (Jone, *Ibid.*)

A Catholic can therefore have an obligation to vote in order to prevent the election of an unworthy candidate. We now have this defined as an enemy of religion, morals and liberty. This is easy to comprehend if there is a worthy candidate as an alternative. But what if both candidates are unworthy or have defects of view regarding the non-negotiables?

In such a case, both Fr. Davis and Fr. Jone explains, one may vote for an enemy of religion and morals **in order to exclude an even greater enemy of religion, morals and liberty.** Indeed, one can be seriously obliged to do so IF that candidate's election is a foreseeable result of not voting to exclude election.

Pope St. John Paul II wrote about what is wrongly sometimes called the "lesser of two evils" in his encyclical *The Gospel of Life*, in the context of abortion legislation.

A particular problem of conscience can arise in cases where a legislative vote would be decisive for the passage of a more restrictive law, aimed at limiting the number of authorized abortions, in place of a more permissive law already passed or ready to be voted on. ... In a case like the one just mentioned, when it is not possible to overturn or completely abrogate a pro-abortion law, an elected official, whose absolute personal opposition to procured abortion was well known, could licitly support proposals aimed at limiting the harm done by such a law and at lessening its negative consequences at the level of general opinion and public morality. This does not in fact represent an illicit cooperation with

an unjust law, but rather **a legitimate and proper attempt to limit its evil aspects.** (*Gospel of Life* 73)

**This is the only exception for such voting which can be found in the tradition,** as it is the only case where there is a proportion between the goods being weighed—bad on the non-negotiables versus *less* bad. Both are applications of standard moral principles of the natural law and of Catholic moral theology, the principle of double effect and moral culpability due to an action with foreseeable consequences.

### Ratzinger on Proportionality and Voting

Some claim, however, that Cardinal Ratzinger in a letter to the U.S. Bishops in 2004 authorized voting for a candidate with a *permissive view* of abortion or euthanasia whose policies on the negotiables issues were compatible with Catholic teaching.

A Catholic would be guilty of formal cooperation in evil, and so unworthy to present himself for Holy Communion, if he were to deliberately vote for a candidate precisely because of the candidate's permissive stand on abortion and/or euthanasia. 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.** (Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, Letter to the U.S. Bishops on *Worthiness to Receive Holy Communion*, 2004)

In fact, however, the use of *proportionate reason* by the father of the “hermeneutic of continuity” is adequately explained by the tradition which permits such a vote to exclude a worst candidate on the non-negotiables, or due to some grave moral impossibility (see below). A *proportionate reason* simply cannot be found by comparing goods from different moral categories.

Unlike abortion, for example, no one factor governs the existence or absence of the common good of basic health care. The death of the innocent results from the will to kill, sanctioned by an unjust law, and perpetuated by the continuing election of candidates who support it. Death from inadequate health care, while evil, is not the consequence of a single choice or circumstance, except when it's abortion or euthanasia delivered as “health care”.

A basket of negotiables (health care, immigration, wages etc.), therefore, represent multiple levels of judgment regarding moral principles and applicable circumstances, the possibility of achieving a policy politically and economically, balancing principles of subsidiarity and solidarity, private action versus public action, etc.. Only the comparison of two candidates on their relative worthiness or unworthiness regarding the non-negotiables establishes a proportionate reason of the same moral goodness.

### Consequentialism and Proportionalism

In some cases, the line of reasoning that leads Catholics to conclude that the non-negotiables and negotiables are comparable follows from errors condemned by the

Church, either of consequentialism or proportionalism. Essentially, in these moral theories circumstances can make an action the Church calls intrinsically evil justifiable, either by making the moral object good, or by weighing the good versus the bad consequences, and finding a greater proportion of good consequences.

This is quite different than the Church's uses of proportion in applying the principle of double effect, which depends on the moral object already being good in itself, and not by virtue of some clever redefinition. In these theories, abortion (adultery, homosexual unions etc.) are only morally wrong in non-justifying circumstances, or when the bad consequences outweigh the good.

This is a view that is clearly widespread both in society and in the Church and one that influences how citizens view their political choices. It was condemned by Pope St. John Paul II in his moral theology encyclical *Splendor of Truth*, and also falls under Pope Benedict's condemnation of moral relativism.

### Moral Impossibility

It is sinful to vote for the enemies of religion or liberty, except to exclude a worse candidate, or **unless compelled by fear of great personal harm, relatively greater than the public harm at stake.** (Davis, *Ibid.*)

In an exceptional case one may vote for some unworthy candidate; **if he can thereby avert some unusually great personal disadvantage.** (Jone, *Ibid.*)

In both these citations can be found the moral principle of *impossibility*. Impossibility can be physical (weather prevents fulfilling the Sunday obligation) or moral, as in the examples given above. Imagine voting in the Soviet Union, where one was obliged to vote, and expected to vote for the Party candidate. One could not be expected to make a futile protest vote and risk oneself and one's family's well-being.

In cases of moral impossibility (to do the right thing), the will is determined by factors other than the worthiness of the candidates. This lessens or even completely mitigates the moral culpability for voting to elect an enemy of religion, freedom and morality, or the worst of several such candidates, if that situation exists.

Excusing is different from justifying, however. In the circumstance of two or more unworthy candidates, the moral object of voting must be to limit the damage that the greatest enemy of religion, liberty and morals would do if elected. This is done by voting for a candidate who is more worthy on grounds of the non-negotiables, and, applying the principles of prudence, who has the foreseeable possibility of *actually* excluding the worst candidate from being elected.

Mr. Colin B. Donovan, STL



**Purpose of White Ribbon Against Pornography Week  
(Oct. 25 – Nov. 1)**

**Is to Raise Public Awareness About the Hardcore Pornography Problem and to  
Promote Enforcement of Obscenity and Related Laws.**

NEW YORK, Oct. 26/Christian Newswire/ -- This year, the annual White Ribbon Against Pornography (WRAP) Week runs Sunday Oct. 25 through Sunday Nov. 1. WRAP Week is intended to inform the public and public officials about the harms of pornography and the need to enforce obscenity and related laws.

MIM President Robert Peters had the following comments:

“Our nation is facing a moral crisis which is giving rise to, among other things, teen promiscuity, sexually transmitted diseases (including AIDS) abortions, children born to single mothers, divorces, sexual abuse of children, rape, trafficking in women and children, on-the-job sexual harassment and lost worker productivity. The cost associated with these problems are incalculable.”

“It is clear that the explosion of hardcore pornography on the Internet and elsewhere is fueling this moral crisis. It is also clear that ignoring the problem and failing to take necessary steps to effectively curb the problem won’t solve the problem.”

“The government’s ongoing failure to enforce federal obscenity laws should be a matter of great concern. While enforcement of obscenity laws is not the whole answer to the pornography problem, vigorous enforcement will put many hardcore pornographers out of business and encourage others to get or stay out. It will also send the message that pornography is a moral and social evil. Youth especially need to hear this message.”

“The Supreme Court has held that obscenity laws can be enforced against ‘hardcore pornography,’ and these days most commercially distributed pornography is ‘hardcore.’

“The Court has also said there are ‘legitimate governmental interests’ at stake in stemming the tide of commercialized obscenity, which include protecting public safety, family life, and morality, and maintaining a decent society.

“Clearly, children also need protection both from exposure to hardcore pornography and from sexual predators who use this material to groom their victims and arouse themselves.”

In addition to being a community problem, pornography is also a spiritual (sin) problem that affects both the church and the community.

Display this white ribbon in your home or in your car. Use it as a reminder to pray for protection for your family from pornography