



Roman Catholic Diocese of Providence Office of Communications

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Bishop Tobin: 'Okay, Here's How You Should Vote'

Election Presents Teaching Opportunity for Rhode Island Catholics

Can a Catholic Support a Pro-Abortion Candidate?

(PROVIDENCE, R.I.)- A letter from a Catholic couple encouraging the Bishop to speak out on the upcoming election as the catalyst, The Most Rev. Thomas J. Tobin, Bishop of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Providence, offers his personal reflections on voting in this week's *Rhode Island Catholic*. The 'Without a Doubt' column encourages Catholics to bring their faith with them into the voting booth and to search their conscience and consider Church teachings on morality when considering a candidate.

"This column is a local application to what the Bishops of the United States have done nationally through their Faithful Citizenship effort," said Bishop Tobin. "I am hopeful that Catholics in Rhode Island, many of whom are seeking guidance on the upcoming election, will benefit from this assessment of Church teachings as they prepare to vote next week."

"If you follow my ministry here in Rhode Island at all, you know that I haven't been shy about speaking out on public affairs, especially when they have moral relevance," Bishop Tobin writes.

In the column, the Bishop states that it is **not his role to tell readers who they should vote for**, but rather how they should vote. The Bishop also discusses Church teachings relative to consideration of candidates who support abortion.

"... there are no perfect 'Catholic candidates,' no candidates whose positions exactly reflect all the moral teachings of the Catholic Church," the Bishop writes. "...we have to consider all the options and make the best choice we can. Is it possible for a faithful Catholic to vote for a pro-abortion candidate? In theory, yes! Faithful Catholics may in good conscience vote for a pro-abortion candidate if: they're voting for the candidate for serious moral reasons other than their pro-abortion stance; and if, there are no other viable options."

While recognizing the various issues Catholics should consider, Bishop Tobin reminds Catholics that the issue of abortion has priority. The American Bishops have emphasized that, "abortion, the deliberate killing of a human being before birth, is never morally acceptable and must always be opposed."

"The primary moral issue we face today is the right to life and particularly the need to fight against the terrible sin of abortion," the Bishop explained.

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Through the 'Faithful Citizenship' effort, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops encourages Catholics to engage in the political process. Bishop Tobin shares the 'seven key themes' of the program: The Right to Life, Family and Community, Rights and Responsibilities, Option for the Poor, Dignity of Work and Workers, Solidarity with our Neighbors and Caring for God's Children.

And how will the Bishop vote in the upcoming election?

"It's not my role or that of Church leadership to tell you for whom you must vote," writes the Bishop. "I don't know about you...but I could never vote for a candidate – of any party for any office – who supports laws that promote or allow the death of thousands of children in the hideous crime of abortion. I just don't want that on my conscience."

While serving as Bishop of Youngstown, Ohio Bishop Tobin began writing a regular column, *Without a Doubt*, in that diocese's newspaper. The column continued here in Rhode Island when he was installed as Bishop of Providence.

To read the full column, please log onto www.thericatholic.com.