Dignity of the Human Person

In their statement on *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship*, the Catholic bishops of the United States identify the four main principles of the Church’s social teaching and apply them to some concrete issues. This is not to tell the faithful for whom or against whom to vote, but instead to help them form their consciences in accordance with God’s truth as they approach this often-challenging decision. The four main principles are the Dignity of the Human Person, the Common Good, Solidarity, and Subsidiarity. They are all interrelated. This bulletin focuses on the Dignity of the Human Person, and the other three principles are covered in three other bulletins in this series.

Because each human person is created in the image and likeness of God, each one of us possesses innate and inviolable human dignity. This dignity is present in each person from the moment of their conception and throughout their lives. As Pope Francis has emphasized, human dignity is central to building a society in which we are “brothers and sisters all.”

Every human being has the right to live with dignity and to develop integrally; this fundamental right cannot be denied by any country. People have this right even if they are unproductive, or were born with or developed limitations. This does not detract from their great dignity as human persons, a dignity based not on circumstances but on the intrinsic worth of their being. Unless this basic principle is upheld, there will be no future either for fraternity or for the survival of humanity.²

Pope Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*, no. 107

The dignity of the human person is the foundation for a moral vision of society. As we seek to imitate the Good Samaritan and become neighbor to all, we must work to protect the dignity of all, especially those who are most vulnerable.

As we engage in the public square with a well-formed conscience:

- We work to protect the most vulnerable—children in the womb who are in danger of abortion—while also standing in radical solidarity with mothers.¹ Building on their bond of flesh and kinship, and on the network of family, neighbor, and community relationships in which they are situated, the Church actively assists mothers and their children to have a brighter future.
“Social friendship and universal fraternity”

Pope Francis writes, “necessarily call for an acknowledgement of the worth of every human person, always and everywhere.” Through our political participation, our accompaniment of those in need, and the witness of our daily lives, may we support the worth of every person, created in God’s image.

This bulletin insert along with five others was approved by the body of U.S. bishops in November 2023. Find this and more complementary resources at www.faithfulcitizenship.org.

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1 Pope Francis, Fratelli Tutti (On Fraternity and Social Friendship), no. 8.
2 Pope Francis, Fratelli Tutti, no. 107. See also: Pope Benedict XVI, Caritas in Veritate (Charity in Truth), no. 45.
4 St. John Paul II, Evangelium Vitae (The Gospel of Life), nos. 8, 15, 18, 23, 94. See also: Pope Francis, Fratelli Tutti nos. 18-21.
5 Pope Francis, Amoris Laetitia (The Joy of Love), no. 56.
7 Pope Francis, Fratelli Tutti, nos. 263-270. See also: Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship, no. 84.
8 Pope Francis, Evangelii Gaudium (Joy of the Gospel), no. 53.
9 Pope Francis, Fratelli Tutti, no. 22.
10 Pope Francis, Fratelli Tutti, no. 106.
11 Pope Francis, Fratelli Tutti, no. 106.