

IN THEORY: On the gravitational poll

U.S. Catholic bishops this week reportedly approved new moral guidelines for Catholic voters warning that their political choices could impact a person's salvation.

Bishops reportedly stress that the guidelines are not a voter guide, but rather they represent a moral framework for believers. Still, some bishops disagree that voting choices can affect someone's salvation.

The church reportedly believes it is a "formal cooperation in evil" to vote for a candidate for the sole reason that he or she supports "intrinsic evils" such as abortion or racism. Bishops also believe Catholics should avoid becoming one-issue voters. What do you think? Should your political choices affect your salvation?

All deliberate choices affect our salvation. The question is: To what extent?

Some choices have little or no bad effect, and some can have deadly effect. It doesn't matter much if we choose Coca-Cola over Pepsi, but it matters very much if we choose hate over love. We are responsible for our choices.

The Nov. 14 statement by the United States bishops is some 45 pages and covers many topics. It is written to help people "form their consciences in accordance with God's truth." That was a mandate given by Christ to the 12 apostles: "Go teach all nations . . ." The document presents "fundamental moral principles" but avoids telling people how to vote.

The document talks about some things being "intrinsically evil," meaning that they can never be chosen under any circumstances.

"They must always be rejected and opposed and must never be supported or condoned."

Some examples given were: abortion, human cloning, destructive research on human embryos, euthanasia, racism and targeting innocent civilians in war. However, it is not enough to simply oppose evil. "Both opposing evil and doing good are essential obligations." We must try to ease the burden of those struggling to do what is right.

A candidate for elected office holds many positions and promises many things. Hopefully those who vote for him are expecting him to do more good than harm. Of course, to vote for a candidate precisely because he is pro-abortion would be seriously sinful. This "is not just one issue among many."

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