



DIOCESE OF VENICE IN FLORIDA
OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

October 28, 2012

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

The Church affirms that all Catholics are called to prayerful and responsible participation in the political process. This means that Catholics who are eligible to vote should do so with a properly formed conscience and in accordance with Catholic moral teaching. For future voters, our youth, they should be encouraged to pray and study the Church's position on key issues.

Leading up to the election, each parish was given resources intended to highlight the Church's Teaching on fundamental moral issues, which were to be made available to you. I have written letters to the faithful through the *Florida Catholic* on four crucial election issues, all of which should be utmost in the mind of the voter. Acknowledging that not all issues are of equal importance, the four identified are: protection of human life; promotion of traditional marriage and the family; the reaffirming of our religious liberty; and the defense of the poor and needy. For those wanting to read these letters, they are available on the Diocesan website.

As your Bishop, it is my responsibility to teach what Holy Mother Church proclaims on moral issues; this is also true in the context of this upcoming election. Your vote not only has obvious political implications, but it is most profoundly a moral action. After all, the ultimate motive of voting is to give witness to the truth of God's Law and to infuse our nation with Christian values. Faithfulness to the Teachings of Christ and His Church should always take precedence over mere personal or political affiliations.

As we approach this election, pray for our country and for all elected leaders, that they will be open to the grace, wisdom, compassion, and justice of Our Lord. Pray also that Catholics will discern with a properly formed conscience, the moral decisions which God calls us to make. At the end of our lives, we will be asked to give an account of our actions. Let us not fall short on this critical occasion.

I take this opportunity to extend to you my continued prayers and consideration.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

+ Frank J. Dewane
Bishop of the Diocese of
Venice in Florida