

2008 Archdiocesan Public Policy Breakfast – *Restorative Justice* Parish Resource Materials

Prayers of the Faithful

God of truth and love, we pray that each one of us work tirelessly to build a society in which the least among us, especially at-risk youth, are provided with opportunities, and that ALL children be educated fairly and grow up in a world to which they can all contribute according to their gifts and talents we pray...

Lord of love and healing justice, we pray that all people suffering from poverty and injustice may benefit from policies and programs which provide hope, health and respect, we pray...

Lord God of compassion, we pray that both victims and offenders are given the means to true healing and reconciliation, including a justice system which focuses on transformation and not merely punishment, we pray...

God of transformation, we pray that all who offend the community may recognize your call to love and find the ways and means to work for a more compassionate community that reaches out to others. We pray that those who are incarcerated may experience your loving presence that brings hope, we pray...

God of true justice, we pray that our faith tradition guide us as we exercise our responsibility as voters this November, especially when it comes to discerning the full dignity of every human being, we pray...

Bulletin Announcements:

OCTOBER 5

Election Corner – Your Vote as a Faithful Citizen

Tuesday, November 4 is coming up fast. Not only will we be voting for our next President, we will also be voting for a series of propositions. We are encouraged to vote as Catholics, not with a human-centered approach, but to see issues in the light of our baptismal call. Please pray and reflect in the next several weeks how your vote can support gospel values such as loving your neighbor and working for the common good.

OCTOBER 12

Election Corner – Your Vote as a Faithful Citizen

Catholics have a serious obligation when it comes to voting. We are called to see proposed legislation through the eyes of God, through the eyes of our Church. The Bishops' document *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship*** "...highlights the role of the Church in the formation of conscience, and the corresponding moral responsibility of each Catholic to hear, receive, and act upon the Church's teaching in the lifelong task of forming his or her own conscience. With this foundation, Catholics are better able to evaluate policy positions, party platforms, and candidates' promises and actions in light of the Gospel and the moral and social teaching of the Church in order to help build a better world."

Next Week: A Look at Proposition 6

**** For the full text, go to <http://www.usccb.org/faithfulcitizenship/FCStatement.pdf>**

OCTOBER 19

Election Corner – Your Vote as a Faithful Citizen: Proposition 6:

The Archdiocesan Public Policy Breakfast on September 26, 2008 focused on restorative vs. retributive justice. The California Conference of bishops makes this distinction, “As bishops, we seek justice, not vengeance. We seek a type of justice which addresses crime in terms of harm done to victims and communities, not simply as a violation of law. We seek a type of justice which holds people who commit crimes accountable, but encourages victims to forgive, so that there can be healing. The type of justice we seek is ‘restorative justice.’”**

It is for this reason that the California bishops are opposing Proposition 6, the so-called Safe Neighborhoods Act.” They feel that it merely focuses on stricter and longer incarceration standards which neither heals nor reconciles violent acts. This proposition deals with the symptoms of crime, rather than the prevention of it, by taking away billions of dollars from education and social services and not increasing public safety.

****For information on the Bishops’ stance on Prop 6, go to: <http://www.catholic.org/bishops-statements/bishops-statement-on-proposition-6.html>**

OCTOBER 26

Election Corner – Your Vote as a Faithful Citizen: Proposition 6

Last week, the issue of retributive vs. restorative justice was highlighted. The Bishops remind us that we are called to view justice through the eyes of God, not merely as human seeking vengeance. They write,

*"A Catholic approach begins with the recognition that the dignity of the human person applies to both victim and offender... As bishops, we believe that the current trend of more prisons and more executions, with too little education and drug treatment, does not truly reflect Christian values and will not really leave our communities safer. We are convinced that our tradition and our faith offer better alternatives that can hold offenders accountable and challenge them to change their lives; reach out to victims and reject vengeance; restore a sense of community and resist the violence that has engulfed so much of our culture."***

The California Conference of Catholic Bishops has come out publicly opposing Proposition 6. They site their concerns as: focusing on mere punishment with no hope of healing; Prop 6’s creation of new crimes with additional penalties; the possible curtailment of community councils in policy-making for juvenile justice; and the use of billions of dollars that could go into education and the prevention of violent acts.

—** from: U.S. Bishops, Responsibility, Rehabilitation, and Restoration: A Catholic Perspective on Crime and Criminal Justice, November 15, 2000

NOVEMBER 2

Election Corner – Your Vote as a Faithful Citizen

Election Day is in just two days, Tuesday, November 4. We are called as Catholic Christians to use our vote in furthering the work of our faith in the social arena. Please pray that our votes reflect gospel and Church values, including love for our neighbor, the dignity of every human life and our belief in redemption.