

NOVENA BEFORE THE ELECTION





Voting as Faithful Citizens

September 2024

Election Day is November 5. Early voting begins September 20. As Americans, we will decide who our next President will be. As Virginians, we will also decide who will represent our Commonwealth in the U.S. Senate and U.S. House of Representatives. As faithful citizens, it is our sacred duty to form our consciences and vote.

World and national events are ever-changing and often tragically alarming. In Ukraine and the Middle East, war, violence, and immense suffering are daily realities. Across our country, extreme and dangerous proposals to expand access to abortion will appear on many states' ballots this November. Seemingly everywhere we look, a "throwaway culture" runs rampant, disregarding dignity and embracing indifference, selfishness, abandonment, and greed.

Yet, we must see beyond all the destruction and despair. The Church's timeless teachings show us how. They shine light in the darkness, providing an anchor for our enduring hope and a sure guide for the formation of our consciences.

As we have stated in previous pre-election letters, these teachings tell us that three principles must guide how we vote:

- Many issues are important.
- Not all issues have equal moral weight.
- Protecting life is paramount.

Addressing the tragedy of abortion is the "pre-eminent priority because it directly attacks our most vulnerable and voiceless brothers and sisters and destroys more than a million lives per year in our country alone" (U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, [*Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship*](#), Introductory Letter).

Resources provided by the Virginia Catholic Conference explain the principles, the positions of candidates, and practical tips for voter registration. Visit www.vacatholic.org to view these materials.

Through conscience formation, prayer, and fasting, prepare your minds and hearts to engage in this year's critical voting decisions. United in the Eucharist, let us pray for one another, as Americans, Virginians, and faithful citizens.

Faithfully yours in Christ,

Most Reverend Michael F. Burbidge
Bishop of Arlington

Most Reverend Barry C. Knestout
Bishop of Richmond



Efficacious Novena to the Sacred Heart of Jesus

O my Jesus, you have said: 'Truly I say to you, ask and you will receive, seek and you will find, knock and it will be opened to you. ' Behold I knock, I seek and ask for the grace of..... (here name your request)

Our Father... . Hail Mary... . Glory Be to the Father... .
Sacred Heart of Jesus, I place all my trust in you.

O my Jesus, you have said: 'Truly I say to you, if you ask anything of the Father in my name, he will give it to you. ' Behold, in your name, I ask the Father for the grace of..... . (here name your request)

Our Father... Hail Mary... . Glory Be To the Father... .
Sacred Heart of Jesus, I place all my trust in you.

O my Jesus, you have said: 'Truly I say to you, heaven and earth will pass away but my words will not pass away. ' Encouraged by your infallible words I now ask for the grace of... . . (here name your request)

Our Father... . Hail Mary... . Glory Be to the Father...
Sacred Heart of Jesus, I place all my trust in you.

O Sacred Heart of Jesus, for whom it is impossible not to have compassion on the afflicted, have pity on us miserable sinners and grant us the grace which we ask of you, through the Sorrowful and Immaculate Heart of Mary, your tender Mother and ours.

Say the Hail, Holy Queen and add: St. Joseph, foster father of Jesus, pray for us.
-- St. Margaret Mary Alacoque



Prayer Before the Election

Lord God, as the election approaches,
we seek to better understand the issues and concerns that confront
our city/state/country,
and how the Gospel compels us to respond as faithful citizens in our
community.

We ask for eyes that are free from blindness
so that we might see each other as brothers and sisters,
one and equal in dignity,
especially those who are victims of abuse and violence, deceit and
poverty.

We ask for ears that will hear the cries of children unborn and those
abandoned,

Men and women oppressed because of race or creed, religion or
gender.

We ask for minds and hearts that are open to hearing the voice of
leaders who will bring us closer to your Kingdom.

We pray for discernment
so that we may choose leaders who hear your Word,
live your love,

and keep in the ways of your truth
as they follow in the steps of Jesus and his Apostles
and guide us to your Kingdom of justice and peace.

We ask this in the name of your Son Jesus Christ and through the
power of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.



Prayer after the Election

God of all nations,
Father of the human family,
we give you thanks for the freedom we exercise
and the many blessings of democracy we enjoy
in these United States of America.

We ask for your protection and guidance
for all who devote themselves to the common good,
working for justice and peace at home and around the world.

We lift up all our duly elected leaders and public servants,
those who will serve us as president, as legislators and judges,
those in the military and law enforcement.

Heal us from our differences and unite us, O Lord,
with a common purpose, dedication, and commitment to achieve
liberty and justice

in the years ahead for all people,
and especially those who are most vulnerable in our midst.

Amen.