Selected & Representative Articles on Religious Voting Considerations in 2016

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N.B. For a listing of representative articles AFTER the Election see https://www2.bc.edu/james-bretzke/Election2016PostMortem.pdf


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Arranged in 4 Categories (listed alphabetically):

**Code A:** “Analytical” or “Explanatory” or “None of the Above”

**Code C:** Pro-Hillary Clinton (Or Lesser of Two Evils)

**Code D:** Pro-Donald Trump (Or Lesser of Two Evils)

**Code E:** Anti-Trump (without necessarily supporting Clinton)

**Code A: “Analytical” or “Explanatory” or “None of the Above” (most recent at top)**


Debunks the notion of the so-called ‘Non-Negotiables’ that supposedly out to guide voting choices in disqualifying support for a particular candidate or political party that may espouse or otherwise support one of these “non-negotiables”:

“I have never understood the expression non-negotiable values. Values are values, and that is it. I can’t say that, of the fingers of a hand, there is one less useful than the rest. Whereby I do not understand in what sense there may be negotiable values. …As an example: war is not intrinsically evil, because some wars are just. Taken to its logical and absurd conclusion, this approach to public morality would argue that what Bashar al-Assad is doing in Syria is not “non-negotiable” and so can be supported. A less extreme example concerns poverty reduction. Yes, this is a prudential issue, and yes, there are many approaches consistent with Catholic social teaching. But actions to make the poor poorer and the rich richer is not one of them.”

“Catholics are rightly frustrated with an overly rigid separation of faith and politics, but confusing the two is dangerous as well, because it can induce Catholics to shift their values to accommodate their candidate rather than the other way around. … People change their views to match the views of the candidate they support, and they align their values with the whole of their party’s platform. Once someone has already picked a candidate based on some criteria, they will often adapt their beliefs in other areas to support their choice.”


Contrasts two rather different speeches at the Notre Dame conference that garnered far less media attention than the polarizing address of Archbishop Chaput, namely those of Washington, D.C. Cardinal Donald Wuerl and Brownsville, TX Bishop Danny Flores. Winter’s conclusion bears note: “The fact that these texts were not the subject of any media attention, demonstrates an additional problem with the culture warrior approach: It sucks up all the oxygen in the room. If someone is prepared to say outrageous things, those who speak with the voice of sanity get drowned out. And more than sanity. Our world is thirsty for life-giving water, as Jesus recognized the need of the woman at the well. Some prelates seek to slake the thirst of our thirsty world, while the culture warriors claim to be able to corner the market on water and serve notice they will give it out sparingly. Our God is a God of abundance who gives freely and without cost, as Isaiah promises. Cardinal Wuerl and Bishop Flores articulate that promise in our day. God bless them for it.”


“When positions advocated by the church come into conflict with a person’s political party or ideology, it is the church that loses every single time.”  Gives a basic overview of conscience formation in relation to *Faithful Citizenship*
Jeffrey Pavlovitz [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/john-pavlovitz/white-conservative-christian-friends-i-wish-you-really-were-pro-life_b_12475464.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/john-pavlovitz/white-conservative-christian-friends-i-wish-you-really-were-pro-life_b_12475464.html) (accessed October 21, 2016)


Coded language against both Clinton and Trump, with a call to “do better” (but what he believes that to be is quite, quite unclear, though his lead concern is “religious liberty” which is the Bishops’ code for “no Obama-care, no Democrats.”


Ross McCullough, a doctoral student in religious studies at Yale University in New Haven, Conn., is writing a dissertation on how God is the cause of our free choices.


Social Sin Is Also a Non-Negotiable Intrinsic Evil [http://www.patheos.com/blogs/scotterical/social-justice-is-also-a-non-](http://www.patheos.com/blogs/scotterical/social-justice-is-also-a-non-)
Critical evaluation of Phoenix Cathedral Rector’s Homily Supporting Trump
http://www.patheos.com/blogs/propernomenclature/phoenix-priest-offers-homily-advice-on-voting-but-something-is-missing/

Michael O’Laughlin, “Stand By Your Man?” (Catholics still supporting Trump)
http://www.americamagazine.org/content/dispatches/stand-their-man


Archbishop Charles Chaput: “Some Personal Thoughts on the Months Ahead” (Both “flawed”: Trump “eccentric”, Clinton “liable to criminal prosecution”)


**Code C: Pro-Clinton (Or Lesser of Two Evils) (most recent at top)**


> Looks at the actual rates of abortions which tend to rise in Republican administrations and fall in Democratic administrations, and also debunks the commonly-held myth that somehow the legality of abortion would likely be overturned in a Republican administration.


> “This is especially true in making choices that, as Cardinal Dolan of New York recently wrote, promote the dignity of the human person, as something ‘to be defended and promoted as a first priority, a dignity not dependent upon race, green card, stock portfolio, age, or health; [and] the sacredness of human life, from the instant of
conception to the holy moment of natural passing, to be defended vigorously rather than
diluted and then discarded."

Anthony Annett Catholic Winter, Catholic Spring
https://www.commonwealmagazine.org/blog/catholic-winter-catholic-spring October 18, 2016

Debunks the supposed anti-Catholic conspiracy in the Wikileaks of Clinton campaign e-
-mails and looks more deeply at the strong relationship between the Catholic hierarchy
and the Republican Party of the last several decades.

Annett is a climate change and sustainable development advisor at the Earth Institute at
Columbia University and in this position is affiliated with Religions for Peace.

John Gehring, “Credibility Gap: Troubling Rationale from Trump's Catholic Advisors”
Commonweal October 13, 2016 https://www.commonwealmagazine.org/credibility-gap

Noting that some conservative religious leaders are now expressing reservations about
Trump in light of the revelations of his documented remarks about women, Gehring goes
on to raise a number of questions about either the continued explicit support of Trump by
some high-profile Catholic leaders such as Fr. Frank Pavone of Priests for Life, as well as
the fixation of many, especially among the hierarchy, on abortion, “religious liberty” and
same-sex marriage to the exclusion of serious consideration of a range of other social
issues and intrinsic evils like racism. Gehring is Catholic program director at Faith in
Public Life, an advocacy group in Washington, and a former associate director for media
relations at the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops. He is author of The Francis Effect:
A Radical Pope’s Challenge to the American Catholic Church (Rowman & Littlefield,
2015) and a contributing editor to Commonweal.

Bishop P.J. McGrath of San Jose, California: http://tvc.dsj.org/2016/09/16/a-message-from-
bishop-patrick-j-mcgrath/

Paul Keller, CMF. Can a Catholic vote for a Democrat? Moral considerations
http://www.uscatholic.org/blog/201603/can-catholic-vote-democrat-moral-considerations-30587

Mark Shea: Voting to Support the Lesser Evil
http://www.patheos.com/blogs/markshea/2016/05/voting-to-support-a-lesser-evil-vs-voting-to-
lessen-evil.html

Hillary Clinton Is the Best Choice for Voters Against Abortion
http://www.christianpost.com/news/hillary-clinton-is-the-best-choice-for-voters-against-
abortion-170258/#qIyVgLyJFCRwu6Zv.99
**Code D: Pro-Donald Trump (Or Lesser of Two Evils) (most recent at top)**


This is why I urge you, when you go to vote — as is the duty of every capable citizen — to uphold the dignity of all human life when casting your ballot. Do not fall prey to the modern opinion that we can be faithful Catholics and purposefully and intentionally vote against the right to life. I understand that there is a rightful separation of church and state in our country, but there can be no separation of personal faith (informed by Church teaching) from the decisions that we make in the voting booth.

In the voting process, Catholics also should be mindful of the critical role that federal judges and Supreme Court justices play in deciding on social issues such as abortion, same-sex “marriage,” gender identification and religious freedom. And down the ballot, I encourage you to make your voice heard for the people best suited for national, state and local offices. These people also must work to allow us to exercise our faith — not work against it. We are voting for more than a president this year.


Arguments that we can be “single issue” voters, just as Abraham Lincoln espoused as a single-issue slavery as decisive as a fundamental wrong. Bishop Paprocki then moves this analogy to abortion as “the defining moral issue of our time.” He then goes on explicitly to condemn Hillary Clinton and Timothy Kaine as espousing positions which are morally abhorrent. Voters who support such candidates are “cooperators with evil” and should discuss their actions with a priest in the Sacrament of Penance who can then offer them forgiveness.


Smith, who teaches moral theology at the Sacred Heart Seminary of the Archdiocese of Detroit explains her decision to support Trump: “Trump is behind in the polls. I suspect there is a very large number of people like myself who have considered not voting for president at all or for a third party rather than vote for either candidate. I hope those people will come to see that it is a good decision for those who live in a swing state to vote for Trump. Even more importantly we should give verbal support to his campaign and financial support to groups trying to get him elected. … I realized I needed to vote
for the only person who can stop her [Hillary Clinton]. She is the most corrupt person I have ever seen in American politics. … I am praying that God will use whomever we elect to lead this country to respect His laws. I know He often writes with crooked lines.”


“In the fourth edition of his own booklet on voting responsibilities, Bishop Thomas J. Olmsted of Phoenix writes that “Catholics may never legitimately promote or vote for any law that attacks innocent human life,” adding “being right on all the other issues can never justify a wrong choice on this most serious matter.”


...Argues, erroneously, that the Catholic moral tradition holds that one can never negotiate with certain intrinsic evils and that voting for a pro-choice candidate such as Hillary Clinton could not be legitimately done in good conscience.


...All the bishops featured hewed to just one message, namely that abortion and same-sex marriage were the foundational issues that Catholics should bear in mind in casting their ballot. No bishop who might be suspected of voting for, or even countenancing the moral legitimacy of supporting the Democratic candidate was included in the sampling.


...Every issue is presented in such a way that the only orthodox or reasonable political position on key issues in Catholic social teaching aligns with the Republican Party and/or Donald Trump.


“At the heart of all Catholic moral and social teaching is a single fact: the respect given to an individual human person must always be first and must govern every law and action so that the person’s life and dignity is always and everywhere protected and defended. In other words, from the first moment of human conception to the last moment of life on earth, the person must be respected without exception.

“For the reason, there are some actions that are never acceptable and should not be made so by law, they include: abortion, euthanasia, embryonic stem cell research, and not recognizing the unique and special role of marriage as the union of one man and one woman.


Rev. Dr. Jim Garlow: If You're On the Fence, Vote for Trump [http://www.charismanews.com/politics/opinion/59206-if-you-re-on-the-fence-about-your-vote-this-pastor-clarifies-how-the-very-future-of-america-is-at-stake](http://www.charismanews.com/politics/opinion/59206-if-you-re-on-the-fence-about-your-vote-this-pastor-clarifies-how-the-very-future-of-america-is-at-stake)

Denver Archbishop Aquila Tells Catholics to Vote for Pro-Life (Trump):

Denver Archbishop Aquila’s Full Statement on How Catholics Are to Vote:
http://denvercatholic.org/voting-catholic-2016/

Phoenix Cathedral Rector’s Homily with Coded Support for Trump:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=881aDDE5qFY (see Code A above though for a critique of this homily)

**Code E: Anti-Trump (without necessarily supporting Clinton)**


“To comprehend fully the anarchic spectacle of Donald Trump—a show unhindered by the guiding political and religious institutions of the United States—it helps to have been a young white woman growing up a half century ago, as I did, inside the border of the Old Confederacy. … Like the witch of Endor, Trump has the power to summon America’s undead, in the form of the white nationalists now relabeled the “alt-right.” Seizing the legacy of the new Southern Republicanism rooted in Richard Nixon’s cynical appeal to Dixiecrats, he has reanimated the race-hatred of the Old South.”

Bishop P.J. McGrath of San Jose, blasting Trump’s claims that the election may be rigged http://cal-catholic.com/?p=26133 (October 26, 2016)

“The claims by some of our fellow citizens that they will not accept the final outcome of the election borders on the seditious, portending a future that would be neither civil, nor true to our common roots as Americans.”


Camosy is an associate professor of Christian ethics at Fordham University and quite involved in the anti-abortion movement, and author of *Beyond the Abortion Wars: A Way Forward for A New Generation*. Here he argues that the anti-abortion movement has made important strides in gaining greater support among Millennials, but that Trump’s deep unpopularity with that group, especially in issues like immigration, criminal justice reform, health care and climate change, risks losing these important gains.
Christopher Jolly Hale, “Progressives aren’t a threat to American Catholicism. Donald Trump is.” October 19, 2016

“If conservatives want to fight for Catholic values in this election, then perhaps they should save their fire for a candidate who doesn’t praise Russian President Vladimir Putin and slam the pope.”

Leon Wolf, “The Professional Pro-Life Movement Has A Lot In Common With Donald Trump”

Very critical of the organized pro-life movement organs and their unblinking commitment to Donald Trump’s candidacy, arguing that the Republican Party in general and the Trump candidacy in particular have simply “used” the pro-life support with no tangible evidence of actually doing anything to reduce, much less end, abortions in the United States.


Lisa Wangness, “A Christian Conservative Backlash against Trump seems to be building”
Boston Globe October 17, 2016 https://www.bostonglobe.com/metro/2016/10/17/religious-conservatives-divided-who-are-going-vote-for-what-are-going/gYxfB42UZIHC5X2c2y8FvM/story.html


Argues that in continuing to support Trump after the deepening proof of his many moral lapses vis-à-vis women conservative, evangelical Christian men are abandoning both their core principles as well as the women they should be closest to.

The author, a Catholic girls high school teacher, reflects on some of the deeper meanings of support for the candidacy of an individual such as Donald Trump does have on young women who struggle to develop and maintain a healthy image of themselves as women.

Washington Post: Evangelical magazines decry Trump: ‘Someone who violates all that is sacred to us’ (Christianity Today Magazine)  
October 12, 2016

Trump’s Catholic Problem Worsens  
[Crux](https://cruxnow.com/church-in-the-usa/2016/10/11/outrage-mounts-trumps-catholic-problem-gets-worse/)  
11 October 2016

CatholicVote.org Statement on Why Trump Should Withdraw:  
[https://www.catholicvote.org/catholicvote-statement-on-donald-trump/](https://www.catholicvote.org/catholicvote-statement-on-donald-trump/)

GOP Elites Say Good-bye to Trump  