

St. Sylvester R. C. Church

68 Ohio Avenue, Medford, NY 11763

www.stsylvesterli.org

(631) 475-4506

A community praying, growing, serving & welcoming in Jesus Christ.

Eucharist:

Saturday 5pm; Sunday 9am & 11am.
Monday, Tuesday, Thursday & Friday @
8:30am in the Church. Rosary recitation begins
at 8:15am before morning Mass. Holy Days as
announced.

Baptisms:

Celebrated on pre-determined dates. *Prior to making plans*, please call the Parish Center for Baptism dates, for preparation class dates, and important information regarding Godparents.

Reconciliation/Confession :

For those seeking spiritual healing.
Saturday: 4:00 to 4:30 pm in the Sacristy or by
appointment 631-475-4506, Ext. 101 or email
dsuglia@drvc.org.

Confirmation:

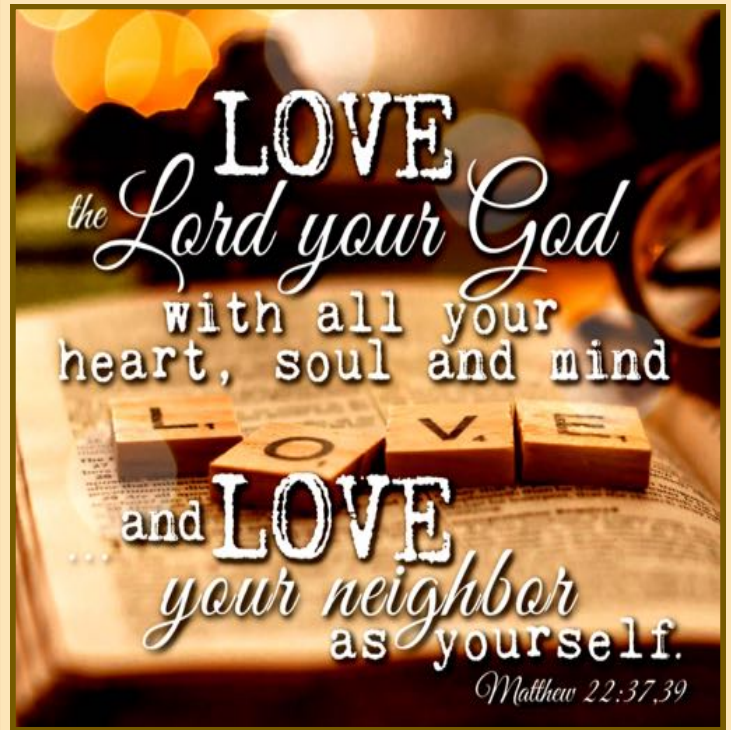
In the Fall for the youth of the parish. Adults
and young adults can also be confirmed at
Pentecost. Please call the Faith Formation
Office 631-475-4506, Ext. 118.

Marriage:

Friday @ 3, 4:30, 6pm; Saturday @ 11:00am,
12:30pm, & 2:00pm. Arrangements must be
made one year prior to the requested date.
Please be aware that all the Sacraments of
Initiation should have been celebrated prior to
the requested wedding date and Pre-Cana
preparation is required. No plans should be
made prior to meeting with a priest or deacon.

Anointing of the Sick & Dying:

For those needing surgery or serious medical
treatment and for those in danger of death.
According to the Catechism of the Catholic
Church #1515, the Sacrament should be
received once, unless during an illness the sick
person's health worsens, or for subsequent
surgeries, or after recovery they begin a new
illness. They may then receive it again. Every
second Friday of the month @ 8:30am Mass, or
call the Rectory at 631-475-0418 any time.



October 25, 2020
30th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Pastoral Leadership Team

Rev. Dennis A. Suglia, Pastor

Deacon Joseph Mystkowski

Deacon George Riegger, Retired

Michael Lofaro, Administrator,
Faith Formation

Frances McMahon, Director,
Faith Formation & Music Ministers

Justin McMahon, Director,
Parish Social Ministry

Lori Zito, Director, Parish Ministries & Events

Office Information

Parish Office: (631) 475-4506, ext 101; Fax (631) 475-1057; email: parishoffice@stsylvesterli.org
Mon., Wed. & Fri. ~ 9am-12pm

Faith Formation Office: (631) 475-4506, ext. 118; email: faithformation@stsylvesterli.org
Please call (631) 475-4506, ext. 118 to make an appointment and we will be happy to serve you!

Parish Social Ministry at Clare House: (631) 475-4506, ext. 122; Fax (631) 475-6058
Please call the number above or press the number "5" on the parish phone message for assistance.

Thrift Shop: (631) 475-4506, ext. 124 ; Tues. & Thurs. ~ 10am-3pm .



Pastoral Council: The members of our Pastoral Council listed below meet with Fr. Suglia monthly to discern the needs and hopes for the future of our parish. Please keep them in your prayers as they carry out this important responsibility:

Patricia Coppola
Nancy Di Santo

Amanda Gentile
Tom Mowat

Ashley Perrone
Bill Sisco

We Pray

Saturday, October 24, 2020

5:00pm John & Theresa Rizzo
Augustus Suglia
Luigi & Maria Russo
Dolores Scanzillo
Lan Zhang Daly

Sunday, October 25, 2020

9:00am Felice Toscano
11:00am Jacqueline London

Monday, October 26, 2020

8:30am The People of St. Sylvester

Tuesday, October 27, 2020

8:30am Augustus Suglia

Thursday, October 29, 2020

8:30am The People of St. Sylvester

Friday, October 30, 2020

8:30am Luigi & Maria Russo

Saturday, October 31, 2020

5:00pm Trina Bozzo
Walter Reich
Luigi & Maria Russo
Albert Breud
Augustus Suglia

Sunday, November 1, 2020

9:00am For All Souls
11:00am For All Souls



**We remember and pray for those who have died,
especially:
*Michael DeLuca***

*If you have had a close family member pass away
and would like him or her placed on this list, please
send the name of the deceased with the correct
spelling, along with your name and contact infor-
mation, to: ecareccia@stsylvesterli.org or call
631-475-4506, ext. 101.*

Thank you and God bless.



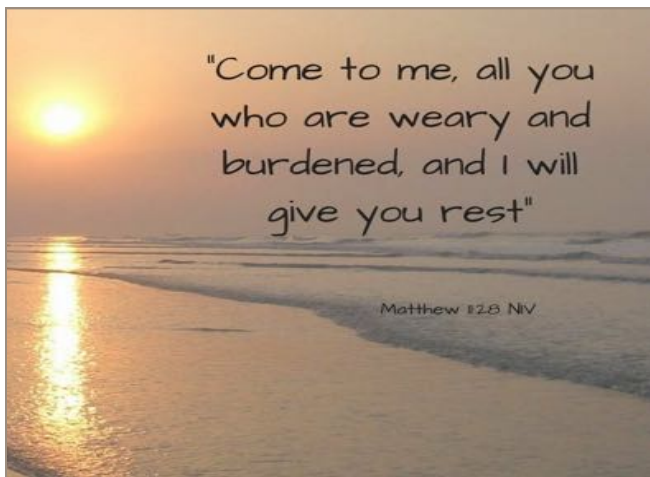
*The Bread and Wine
used at this weekend's liturgy
are the gifts of
Victoria & John Olexa
in loving memory of
Richard Daly*

We Pray



Please pray for all who are sick,
especially . . .

**Melanie Schmadtke, John McGarvey,
Grace Stephens, Nicholas Grizopoulos,
Mark LaGatta, Terri Weinstein,
Lisa Gallaudet, Marge Golden, and
Michelle Clark.**



***In order to keep our Sick List up to date,
we will remove all names at the end of
each month. Simply call or email the
Parish Office if you wish to place some-
one on the list. Please remember that for
the sake of privacy, this request must be
made by either the sick person him/
herself, or by an immediate family
member. Thank you.***

**PRAYER, the world's
greatest wireless connection**



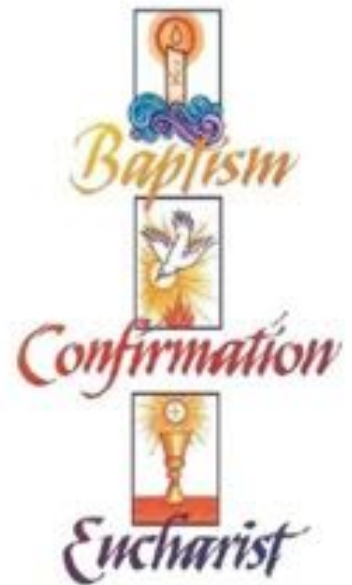
Please pray for world peace and
all public servants
including the following who are
serving on active duty:

**Captain Meghan Munisteri, D.O., Army
Captain Maurice "Joe" Grosso, Air Force
1st Lieutenant Hannah Grosso, Army
1st Lieutenant Michael Dustin, Army
1st Lieutenant Michael Hawkins, Army
Petty Officer 2nd Class Elena Greck, Navy
Lieutenant Nicoli Carlson, Navy
Captain Holly Grosso Carlson, Army
Captain Peter Duff, Army
Ensign Brett Reilly, Navy**

***If you have a family member who is
currently serving on active duty in the
military and would like his or her name added to
this prayer list, please call
631-475-4506 Ext. 101 or email
ecareccia@stsylvesterli.org Please notify
the same of any change in status.
Thank you.***

***Romans 12:12
Rejoice in hope, endure in affliction,
persevere in prayer.***





**This Sunday, October 25th, at the 9am Mass
we will be joined by three men seeking full Sacramental Initiation
(Baptism, Confirmation and Communion) in the Church.**

**Dennis, Stefan and Justin will make their public intention to join us
as members of the Church in the Rite of Acceptance
into the Order of Catechumens.**

**They have been meeting remotely with the RCIA Team for several
months in preparation for this next step on their journey in faith.**

**We welcome you to join in supporting them with your prayers
throughout the next months as they grow closer on their journey to
becoming disciples of Christ.**

**We look forward to the day they join us and share fully in
Communion at the Lord's Table.**





Saint Sylvester R.C. Church

61 Ohio Avenue, Mount, New York 11763
Telephone: 631-475-4506 Fax: 631-475-1657

October 2020

Dear Parishioner,

As autumn settles in with Thanksgiving seemingly just around the corner, the holiday season is not far behind! *Normally*, one of the tell-tale events which mark this special time of year is our annual Holiday Fair – a terrific event that is greatly anticipated by our community and one which serves as our largest parish fundraiser of the year.

However, as we all know, *2020 has been far from normal*. The Covid-19 pandemic resulted in our church being shut down for months and even now, forces us to operate the parish in a limited fashion. **As a result of these limitations, we have sadly cancelled this year's Holiday Fair and have decided to hold a special Holiday Raffle this year instead to offset the loss of both reduced weekly collections and our Holiday Fair revenue.** We hope that you will enthusiastically support this endeavor! The tickets are \$50 each and the prizes will be \$5,000, \$3,000, \$2,000 and \$1,000 in cash – more than a great stocking stuffer! *(If total prize money is not received, prize money will be reduced.)*

Tickets can be purchased in the parish office, outside after some Masses (weather permitting) or online through our website, www.stsylvesterli.org. (For website ticket purchases, an official, numbered ticket will be mailed to you once your ticket purchase order is received.) **The drawing will be on Monday, December 7th at 11am.**

Please consider taking a raffle chance to assist us if you are financially able to do so. More importantly, we ask for your continued support and prayers at this challenging time. May God bless you and your families with continued good health.

With gratitude,

Rev. Dennis A. Suglia
Pastor

HOLIDAY RAFFLE

\$11,000 IN PRIZE MONEY!*

\$50 per ticket



1st Prize ~ \$5,000

2nd Prize ~ \$3,000

3rd Prize ~ \$2,000

4th Prize ~ \$1,000



Please support this special raffle to help offset the financial loss of not having our annual Holiday Fair!

Tickets can be purchased beginning Monday, October 26th in the Parish Office, online through our website, www.stsylvesterli.org, and outside after select Masses.

For website purchases, an official numbered ticket will be mailed to you once your ticket purchase order is received.

Drawing is Monday, December 7th at 11am!

*If total prize money is not received, prize money will be reduced.

PARISH INFORMATION

As we continue to navigate through this challenging time, we are pleased to be able to say that things are beginning to open up here at the parish, although in a limited way. We are happy to communicate the following:

WEEKEND MASSES ARE CELEBRATED AT 5PM ON SATURDAYS AND 9AM AND 11AM ON SUNDAYS. You must register to attend these Masses weekly through our parish website beginning each Wednesday morning at 9am. The program will stop accepting reservations on Friday at 3pm (or sooner if it reaches a maximum of 80 people for that particular Mass). Ushers will check your registrations at the door before entering the church and will seat you. The pews in the church are marked off to maintain social distancing.

WEEKEND MASSES WILL NOW BE LIVE STREAMED ON YOUTUBE AT 5PM AND 11AM —LINK AVAILABLE FROM OUR WEBSITE. If you click on the Mass and it has already begun, you will have the ability on *YouTube* to rewind the Mass to the beginning while it is in progress. Don't worry if you are unable to rewind — the Mass in its entirety will also be available immediately after its conclusion. Live streaming will allow you to attend Mass at home simultaneously with your fellow parishioners in the church, and with much clearer video and sound than we have been able to offer in the past.

THE SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION IS OFFERED ON SATURDAYS AT 4PM IN THE CHURCH. Unfortunately due to limited seating, you cannot remain for the 5pm Mass after Reconciliation if you have not reserved a seat ahead of time.

WEEKDAY MORNING MASSES ARE CELEBRATED ON MONDAYS, TUESDAYS, THURSDAYS AND FRIDAYS AT 8:30AM IN THE CHURCH. You do not need to register for these Masses.

THE PARISH OFFICE IS NOW OPEN ON MONDAYS, WEDNESDAYS AND FRIDAYS FROM 9AM TO 12PM TO ASSIST YOU WITH MASS CARDS, ANNOUNCED MASSES, MEMORIALS, SACRAMENT CERTIFICATES, ETC.

PLEASE REMEMBER TO WEAR A MASK AND PRACTICE SOCIAL DISTANCING IN THE CHURCH AS WELL AS IN ALL PARISH BUILDINGS AND AREAS.

HELP PROTECT OUR CHILDREN

TO REPORT SEXUAL ABUSE involving diocesan personnel, priests, deacons, teachers, employees or volunteers at schools or churches in the Diocese of Rockville Centre, please call our confidential hotline number at 1-516-594-9063 and speak with Mary McMahon, LCSW, Director.

IF YOU SUSPECT a child or vulnerable adult is being—or has been abused, call the New York State Hotline phone number: 1-800-342-3720

If you suspect someone is in immediate danger, call 911.

Dear Parishioners,

As we continue to navigate the public celebration of Mass within State Guidelines, St. Sylvester Parish will offer Mass on Saturdays at 5PM and Sundays at 9AM & 11AM.

Please note the following important information:

- **At this time, the bishop still dispenses all the faithful from the obligation to attend Sunday Mass and Holy Days of Obligation.**
- **Our Sunday worship will continue to be posted on the website for those who are vulnerable, for those who have a health impairment that would make them more susceptible to serious illness, for those who might not be feeling well, or have a fever, and for those who are caretakers for other people who are vulnerable. If you are in any of these situations, you are encouraged to continue to remain at home and worship online.**
- **Restrooms will be open for emergency use only! Please use bathroom at home!**
- **There is a mandatory online reservation system for all who wish to attend Mass. Please register beginning Wednesdays at 9am by going to www.stsylvesterli.org**
- **Please print out your registration information or have available on your phone as you will be asked to show your registration before entering the church.**
- **Masks or other face coverings must be worn by all participants.**
- **Please arrive 15 minutes before Mass so your reservation may be confirmed and you may be shown to your seat. Capacity at this time is limited to 25%.**
- **Seating will be done according to social distancing guidelines. You will most likely not be sitting in your “usual” seat. Families may sit together at Mass. There is no “saving seats” or asking to be seated in a particular seat.**
- **The Offertory procession and passing of the donation basket will be omitted.**
- **If you wish to make a contribution, there will be baskets at the entrance and exit. Contributions may also dropped at the parish center or made online.**
- **The Sign of Peace or other greetings will not be exchanged.**
- **Directions will be given for Communion, which will be distributed after Mass as you are leaving the church. Please follow the directions of the ushers.**
- **No bulletins will be distributed. Please read the bulletin online.**
- **Please go directly to your car, as no congregating is permitted.**
- **We will continue to keep you updated on changes as we move forward.**

This is a work in progress, so as we move forward there may be changes. We appreciate your patience and want you to know that our first priority is that those attending Mass will be safe.

**Yours in Christ,
Fr. Suglia**

Revised & Simplified Faith Formation Program 2020-2021 !

Dear Parents/Guardians and Catechists,

We have revised and simplified the St. Sylvester Faith Formation Program so that it will be **more manageable and yet still meaningful** for all involved, Catechists, students, and their families.

As school districts are moving forward with plans for the school year, it has become clear to us that parents and students may be challenged by the newness of what lies ahead. This combined with parents changing work situations has caused us to take another look at the Faith Formation Program we are offering and how we can be more accommodating to all.

If you have already registered your child, we hope this will make life a little easier. If you have not yet registered your child, the hope here is that with this more accommodating schedule, you will now reconsider registering them.

Here is the revised and simplified Faith Formation Program for 2020-2021 Year for Levels 1 through 7!

- ♦ Arrangements will be made for a curbside pickup of the materials (books, calendar, etc.) needed for each of your children so they can work from home.
- ♦ There will be 4 virtual meetings on the Zoom platform, for the year, that we ask students to try their best to attend (with the help of a parent). So, for example, if you registered your child for a Level 5 class on Mondays at 4:30 p.m., your child's class will be held four (4) times virtually on 4 specific Mondays at 4:30 p.m. according to the Level 5 Calendar. If you registered your child for Level 3, 4 or 5 Home Taught the virtual; meetings will be held on Saturdays according to the Home Taught Level 3, 4 or 5 calendars. Level 1 will be Home Taught and have four (4) virtual meetings on specific Saturdays according to the Level 1 calendar.
- ♦ The calendar will not begin until Monday, November 30, 2020 to give everyone time to adjust to the school schedules, etc. and will end in May.
- ♦ Parents with children who have special needs!
Parents, for students who are in the Individualized Faith Formation Program or whose needs would make it difficult to stay focused virtually, we will work directly and individually with you to accommodate your child's needs. Please go ahead and register your child for the next Level in the Individualized Faith Formation Program. If you have questions, please email faithformation@stsylvesterli.org
For more information or if you have questions, please email faithformation@stsylvesterli.org

Blessings,

Fran, Mike and Terese

FAITH FORMATION

Faith Formation Registration 2020-2021 Year Has begun and will continue on-line!

Parents, if you have not yet received an email with important registration information and directions on how to register your child for 2020/2021 Faith Formation year, please email us at faithformation@stsylvesterli.org

Due to COVID 19, this year, registration will take place online.

Our goal is to be sure all who attend Faith Formation are safe and stay healthy. Thank you for your patience!

Adults: We know that formation in faith is ongoing and life-long and therefore St. Sylvester's ministers of RCIA and Adult Confirmation are prepared to walk with you as you deepen your relationship with God, yourself and others. For information please email to: fmcmahon@stsylvesterli.org



Did you know?
*Our homes are called the School of
Christian Life and the
Domestic Church!*

“Childhood religious awakening which takes place in the family is irreplaceable. Indeed, family catechesis precedes... accompanies and enriches all forms of catechesis.” *General Directory for Catechesis, John Paul II, Apostolic Exhortation, Catechesi Tradendae (October 1979): AAS 71 (1979), pp. 1277-1340*

***For more information or questions
please email
faithformation@stsylvesterli.org***

Stewardship

One Family in Mission



Called to Evangelize

Formation

Hospitality

Prayer

Service

Gifts of Treasure

October 18, 2020

Regular ~ \$5,377

Renovation ~ \$50 Solar ~ \$55

Last Year's Collection ~ October 20, 2019

Regular ~ \$7,996

THANK YOU, THANK YOU, THANK YOU
to all those who, in the spirit of stewardship, continue to financially support the mission and ministry of the parish!!!

Will & Estate Planning

Consider leaving a legacy of faith by remembering our parish in your will or bequest. Saint Sylvester RC Church is a fully compliant charitable organization registered as a 501(3)C non-profit.

Please contact Father Suglia directly if you have already made provisions for St. Sylvester or if you would like to remember us when you conduct your estate planning.



Thank You and God Bless!

If you judge people, you
have no time to love
them.

Mother Teresa

Who Is My Neighbor?

This past Sunday I found myself wandering around Woodstock, contemplating the proliferation of peace signs and today's Gospel on a beautiful autumn day. What better place to consider Jesus' greatest commandments of *Love God and Love Your Neighbor* than the hippie haven of Woodstock, a town which still fosters love, peace and acceptance of all as a way of life!



As I walked around appreciating the hand of God in the beautiful fall foliage, I first considered what loving God means in the context of Matthew's Gospel. Simply said, we are to see Him in everything and love Him completely, understanding as faith-filled stewards that all that we have has been given to us by God. Next, I found myself sitting on a well-worn bench in the town square contemplating who is my neighbor, and why and how I should love him or her. The answer once again came from people-watching in this special little upstate town filled with all kinds of people that time seems to have forgotten.

Sure, it's easy enough to love others who are just like us, but that is not what Jesus is saying. Jesus commands us to "*love your neighbor as yourself.*" Period. No exceptions! Love those who don't look or speak like you. Love those who live a different economic reality and are less educated than you. Love those who do not pray like you — or who don't pray at all. Love those who have different political beliefs and will not vote like you. Love those who are mean-spirited and whom life has embittered. Love your neighbors around the world you have never even met. Why? Because Jesus came not only for us, but for all of them too!

~ Lori Zito



Parish Social Ministry



Clare House - We are here to help!

We no longer have drop in hours open to the public. If you have an emergency situation that requires assistance please call our intake line. Please leave only one complete message stating your name, number, and primary need: 631-475-4506 x122

Emergency Food Distribution is held weekly on Tuesdays and Thursdays by appointment only. A full new client intake is required, including documentation of all income and expenses, to access resources at Clare House. A member of our staff will contact you to complete this intake interview over the phone. Documentation should be provided electronically whenever possible.

We regularly post resources to our Twitter feed @clarehouse99

<https://twitter.com/clarehouse99>

We are NOT soliciting physical donations at this time. If you wish to support our mission please consider making a donation through Faith Direct. Click "Make a One-Time Gift Now" and then write "Clare House - PSM" in the Note. Thank you for your support!

<https://membership.faithdirect.net/NY285>



Thrift Shop is Open!

St. Sylvester operates a community thrift shop filled with a variety of goods at extremely affordable prices - often much lower than traditional thrift shops! Hardworking staff and volunteers stock the shelves with a high level of detail. Often the items available are very high quality. Excess clothing which cannot be sold or used is donated to the Society of St. Vincent de Paul and furthers their mission to serve the poor. Clare House clients can receive a voucher, based on financial need, to obtain items at no cost.

WE ARE NOW ACCEPTING DONATIONS!

All items must be placed inside the bin. To donate items which do not fit in the bin, please call during hours and speak to a member of our team.

Please DO NOT leave items outside the thrift shop, they are destroyed by exposure to the elements.

Thank you for your support!

CONTACT

631-475-4506 x124

HOURS

Tuesday and Thursday
10:00AM - 3:00PM

CIVILIZE IT



DIGNITY BEYOND THE DEBATE

2020

Civil Dialogue: A response to Jesus' call to love our neighbor

Jesus uses the parable of the Good Samaritan to answer a question that is both searing and simple: "Who is my neighbor?" (Luke 10: 29). Our familiarity with this parable makes it easy for us now to identify as "neighbor" those on the margins of our society such as those experiencing homelessness or poverty. But how often do we see our neighbor in the person who disagrees with us?

As Catholics, our strong tradition of social teaching compels us to be actively engaged in the building up of our communities. This is achieved by being involved in the political process—and yet today, many shy away from such involvement because our national and local conversations are filled with vitriol and harsh language, often directed at people themselves. When personal attacks replace honest debate, no one wins. This kind of attack, no matter the reason, only serves to further divide our communities.

What is needed is good, honest, civil dialogue. This means that we must treat everyone as worthy of being at the table, worthy of our respect, and worthy of being heard. In short, it means treating everyone as our neighbor.

We undermine our commitment to human life and dignity when we fail to see the dignity of those who have a different viewpoint. We must detach from the bitterness that surrounds us and seek a better path. A commitment to civil dialogue

can help us make real and authentic human connections, which breaks down the barriers that divide us.

Engaging in civil dialogue can help our faith communities create a new space to model love for our neighbors and respect for the dignity of all.

Tips for Engaging in Civil Dialogue:

1. Listen first and seek to understand the whole picture.
2. Ask questions for clarification.
3. Use 'I' statements; pay attention to body language.
4. Listen to what feelings are present and pay attention to how you respond.
5. Summarize what you've heard and ask for feedback.



Civil dialogue can best be defined as the ability to enter meaningful conversation with people whose viewpoints may be different from our own, who have a different background or experiences, or who come to a different conclusion about the best way to promote the common good. We enter into civil dialogue because we want to build a community that is rooted in understanding one another. God's love for each person requires us to remember that someone who disagrees with us is still a beloved child of



God who deserves our love, respect, and care.

An important ingredient to civil dialogue is commitment to the truth. While respecting the dignity of all, we acknowledge that not all viewpoints are equally valid. We have the responsibility to speak truth with love. In addition, all who exercise their freedom of speech have an obligation to ensure that they come to conclusions based on data from credible and reputable sources, and that care is taken to avoid seeking the truth selectively, that is, only when it is convenient to us.

Civil dialogue is different than remaining silent in the face of disagreement. Listening to opposing views is a part of seeking clarity and can be a creative process. In civil dialogue, all are invited to bring and share their values, beliefs, and questions. We seek first to understand how our views on a topic are different and why. We ask questions to be sure we understand one another. In thinking critically about how we arrived at our own view points and listening to the experiences of others, we can sometimes arrive at new understanding and even find common ground.

Pope Francis has remarked, "Dialogue allows people to know and understand one another's needs. Above all, it is a sign of great respect, because it puts the person into a stance of listening, and into a condition of being receptive to the speaker's best viewpoints. Secondly, dialogue is an expression of charity because, while not ignoring differences, it can help us investigate and share the common good. Moreover, dialogue invites us to place ourselves before the other, seeing him or her as a gift of God, and as someone who calls upon us and asks to be acknowledged."¹

Just like any authentic human connection, the process of dialogue is complicated, often uncomfortable, and requires vulnerability and trust. We must rely on our faith in Christ who taught us that everyone is truly our neighbor. Promoting civil discourse is one way we can put this teaching into action.

Interested in learning more about civil dialogue or about how your community can engage in civil dialogue more often? Join USCCB's *Civilize It* Campaign to help promote dignity beyond the debate. A version of this campaign was first implemented by the Archdiocese of Cincinnati and is a call for all people to civilize our conversations. Visit civilizeit.org for more information, to take the pledge, or plan an opportunity for civil dialogue in your community.

If you are part of a group looking to create an opportunity for civil dialogue in your community, it may be helpful to consider these questions:

1. Is our intention to facilitate greater understanding, or merely win a debate?
2. Whose voices are we including? Whose are missing? Who else should be invited to the conversation?
3. How can we remember our shared human dignity and deescalate the situation when we feel ourselves become tense?
4. What guidelines could the group set together that will keep the conversation centered on dialogue instead of debate, and honor the dignity of all people present?

¹ Pope Francis, *Jubilee Audience at St. Peter's Square*, October 22, 2016.





What does it mean to form my conscience?

Catholics have a long tradition of engagement in the public square. Sometimes that engagement requires making difficult moral decisions that impact our own lives and those of others. Our conscience can help guide the decisions we make. The Second Vatican Council guides us: "Always summoning [one] to love good and avoid evil, the voice of conscience can when necessary speak to [one's] heart more specifically: do this, shun that" (*Gaudium et Spes* 16). However, our conscience doesn't just come to us when we are born. We must work throughout our lives to form it through prayer, learning, and conversation.

How do I form my conscience?

It takes time to form our consciences so that we can make well-reasoned judgments about particular, real-life situations. The Church teaches that it is important to work continually on conscience formation so we can be prepared to make decisions whenever the opportunity arises. Some specific ideas to form your conscience are:

- 1) Begin by **being open to the truth** and what is right.
- 2) **Study Sacred Scripture** and the **teaching** of the Church.
- 3) **Examine the facts and background information** about various choices and be discerning in where we gather information.
- 4) **Prayerfully reflect** to discern the will of God (*Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship*, no. 18).

Additionally, it is important to consider how our community of faith can help us form good consciences through some of these steps:

- 1) Seek the **prudent advice** and **good example** of trusted leaders and others to support and enlighten our conscience.
- 2) Learn about the **authoritative teaching** of the Church.
- 3) Pray for the **gifts of the Holy Spirit** to help us develop our conscience.
- 4) Regularly partake in an **examination of conscience** to hear God's voice in your life.¹

Doing the work of forming our consciences can seem daunting. Fortunately, we have many church teachings that can help us in this important task. *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship* is an important resource for U.S. Catholics and helps us prayerfully reflect on how we can apply Church teaching in our civic life. "Conscience is not something that allows us to justify doing whatever we want, nor is it a mere 'feeling' about what we should or should not do. Rather, **conscience is the voice of God resounding in the human heart**, revealing the truth to us and calling us to do what is good while shunning what is evil."²

Here are some questions for further reflection:

1. When has my conscience guided me to "do good and avoid evil"?
2. What are some key resources I can use to form my conscience?
3. Forming conscience is a "lifelong task." What do I do to regularly form my conscience? What more should I do?

¹ Catechism of the Catholic Church (2nd ed.), Washington, DC: Libreria Editrice Vaticana–United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), 2000, no. 1777

² USCCB, *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship*, Washington, DC: 2015, no. 17



CATHOLIC VOTER GUIDE

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) releases a document before each presidential election to help Catholics prepare to vote. The document (Link: "[Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship](#)") lists 47 issues that Catholics should consider when they vote. To view a chart with all 47 issues and the current political beliefs of the two major presidential candidates please visit www.catholicvoterguide.com

Can Catholics vote for a candidate who supports an "intrinsically evil action?"

According to the Bishops: Yes.

- Catholics can vote for a candidate *despite the fact* that they support these positions "for other morally grave reasons," when we "perceive the proper relationship among moral goods" (34-35). This means that Catholics can vote for a non-pro-life candidate if his/her stance on the other "moral goods" demand our attention because of "morally grave reasons."
- Catholics cannot vote for a candidate *because* they support positions that allow intrinsic moral evils to be permitted.
- Catholics can vote for a candidate who supports certain intrinsically evil actions to "limit the damage" caused by the actions of opposing candidates (Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church, 570).
- Remember: "The responsibility to make choices in political life rests with each individual in light of a properly formed conscience, and that participation goes well beyond casting a vote in a particular election" (7).

Can Catholics be single issue voters?

According to the Bishops: No.

- "A candidate's position on a single issue is not sufficient to guarantee a voter's support" (42).
- But, Catholics "may legitimately disqualify a candidate from receiving support... if a candidate's position on a single issue promotes an intrinsically evil act" (42).
- In Summary: A Catholic voter can "disqualify" a candidate based on "a single issue," but they cannot vote for a candidate based on "a single issue." Catholics *can* be single issue "disqualifiers," but not single issue voters.
- Remember: "The responsibility to make choices in political life rests with each individual in light of a properly formed conscience, and that participation goes well beyond casting a vote in a particular election" (7).

Quotes from "Faithful Citizenship:"

34. "Catholics often face difficult choices about how to vote. This is why it is so important to vote according to a well-formed conscience that **perceives the proper relationship among moral goods**. A Catholic cannot vote for a candidate who favors a policy promoting an intrinsically evil act, such as abortion, euthanasia, assisted suicide, deliberately subjecting workers or the poor to subhuman living conditions, redefining marriage in ways that violate its essential meaning, or racist behavior, **if the voter's intent is to support that position**. In such cases, a Catholic would be guilty of formal cooperation in grave evil."

"At the same time, a voter should not use a candidate's opposition to an intrinsic evil to justify indifference or inattentiveness to other important moral issues involving human life and dignity."

35. "There may be times when a Catholic who rejects a candidate's unacceptable position even on policies promoting an intrinsically evil act may **reasonably decide to vote for that candidate for other morally grave reasons**. Voting in this way would be **permissible** only for truly grave moral reasons, not to advance narrow interests or partisan preferences or to ignore a fundamental moral evil."

42. As Catholics **we are not single-issue voters**. A candidate's position on a single issue is not sufficient to guarantee a voter's support. Yet if a candidate's position on a single issue promotes an intrinsically evil act, such as legal abortion, redefining marriage in a way that denies its essential meaning, or racist behavior, a voter **may** legitimately disqualify a candidate from receiving support.

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Decisions regarding issues of human life must be clearly taken from the Gospel.

In a recently released statement, **Archbishop Joseph F. Naumann** of Kansas City in Kansas, chairman of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' (USCCB) Committee on Pro-Life Activities encourages faithful Catholics in this manner:

"...It is a time to focus on God's precious gift of human life and our responsibility to care for, protect, and defend the lives of our brothers and sisters..."

Last November, the U.S. bishops reaffirmed that 'the threat of abortion remains our preeminent priority because it directly attacks life itself, because it takes place within the sanctuary of the family, and because of the number of lives destroyed.' While we noted not to 'dismiss or ignore other serious threats to human life and dignity such as racism, the environmental crisis, poverty, and the death penalty,' **we renewed our commitment to protect the most fundamental of all human rights - the right to live.**

This past January, I shared with **Pope Francis** that the bishops of the United States had been criticized by some for identifying the protection of the unborn as a preeminent priority.


The Holy Father expressed his support for our efforts observing that if we fail to protect life, no other rights matter. Pope Francis also said that abortion is not primarily a Catholic or even a religious issue, it is first and foremost a human rights issue."

Source: U.S. Bishops' Pro-Life Chair Launches Respect Life Month and Invites Catholics to "Live the Gospel of Life"
September 24, 2020; Public Affairs Office

please call us at (516) 678-5800 x 626 to find out more -
~Ministry Feature for Week of October 25, 2020~

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formation*

*Election Day is
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August 24 – August 27, 2020
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Christology
August 31 – September 3, 2020
7:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

**Building Intercultural Competence
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Mornings
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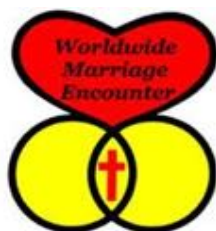
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