MICHIGAN CATHOLIC CONFERENCE

U.S. bishops' teaching on 'intrinsic evils' and what it means for voting choices.

It is important to recognize certain acts are incompatible with love of God and neighbor and are always opposed to the authentic good of persons. These acts, called *intrinsic evils*, should always be rejected.

As for how this concept applies to voting, consider the following teachings of the U.S. bishops from their document *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship*:

- It is essential for Catholics to be guided by a well-formed conscience that recognizes that all issues do not carry the same moral weight and that the moral obligation to oppose policies promoting intrinsically evil acts has a special claim on our consciences and our actions.
- A Catholic cannot vote for a candidate who favors a policy promoting an intrinsically evil act, such as abortion, euthanasia, racist behavior, assisted suicide, deliberately subjecting workers or the poor to subhuman living conditions, or redefining marriage in ways that violate its essential meaning, if the voter's intent is to support that position.
- 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.
- 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.
- These decisions should consider a candidate's commitments, character, integrity, and ability to influence a given issue. In the end, this is a decision to be made by each Catholic guided by a conscience formed by Catholic moral teaching.

This resource was adapted from a similar document provided by the USCCB, *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship*, Nos. 22–25 and 31–37. Scan the QR code or visit cthl.cc/zpffe to learn more.

For more on how Catholics can prepare to vote in the 2026 election, scan the QR code or visit micatholic.org/electionresources.