

Thomas E. Drury¹
Palm Beach Atlantic University
United States of America

Original scientific paper
<https://doi.org/10.54561/prj1702213d>
Date received: February 12, 2023
Date accepted: June 15, 2023

U.S. CATHOLIC BISHOPS' VOTING GUIDELINES: FAITHFUL CITIZENSHIP AS A RESOURCE FOR POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT

Abstract

Beyond offering guidelines for voting, *Faithful Citizenship* represents an attempt by the U.S. Catholic bishops to articulate a theological vision of political engagement. One may examine the theological vision of *Faithful Citizenship* according to three textual viewpoints: what it says (content); theological understandings (problematics); and possibilities for conceptual development (implications). Addressing the dynamics of political engagement in contemporary society is a complex task. While this analysis maintains that *Faithful Citizenship* constitutes a useful conceptual resource insofar as signaling basic theological terms of Catholic political engagement, there are areas of conceptual underdevelopment. Accordingly, the analysis suggests paths toward a deeper conceptual engagement with political philosophy, especially understandings of constitutional democracy.

Keywords: *Faithful Citizenship*, political engagement, Catholicism, theology, publicness

Introduction

Beyond offering guidelines for voting, *Faithful Citizenship* represents an attempt by the U.S. Catholic bishops to articulate a theological vision of political engagement. The political is more than simply a matter of electoral politics in that it encompasses human activity as an organic reality,² and, as such, it thereby bears directly on Catholicism as a faith tradition. Catholicism as a faith tradition concerns itself with faith as integral to human existence³ and cannot escape being shaped

¹ Thomas E. Drury (B.A., Duke University; M.A. in Theology, Boston College; M.A. in Philosophy, St. Vincent de Paul Regional Seminary) is a Candidate in the Ph.D. in Practical Theology program at Palm Beach Atlantic University and teaches religious studies at St. Ann Catholic School, West Palm Beach, Florida, USA. Contact E-mail: tedrury22@gmail.com

² Claude Lefort, "The Permanence of the Theologico-Political?", in: *Public Theologies: Public Religions in a Post-Secular World*, Hent de Vries and Lawrence Eugene Sullivan (eds.), Fordham University Press, New York, 2006, p. 152. Lefort argues that "we arrive at a very different idea of the political. . . if we use the term to refer to the principles that generate society or, more accurately, different forms of society." He adds that ". . . it is simply because the very notion of society already contains within it a reference to its political definition [regime as "shaping of human co-existence"] that it proves impossible, in the eyes of the philosopher, to localize the political in society."

³ Francis Schussler Fiorenza, *Foundational Theology: Jesus and the Church, Crossroad*, New York, 1992, pp. 201-202. Fiorenza notes that ". . . the division of the Church's mission into a properly religious and improperly social or political mission [raises] the nature of that which is religious." He also notes that "[v]arious attempts to address the mission of the Church often fail. . . because they consider the mission of the Church primarily as an ecclesiological rather than as a fundamental theological question."

by the polity in which it resides.⁴ Consequently, while the U.S. Catholic bishops may seek to articulate a theological vision of political engagement that is faithful to tradition, it is a task that also demands attentiveness to matters of constitutional and democratic polity constitutive of the U.S. context.⁵

Historical Background

The history of Catholicism in the United States is one of overcoming minority status and rising to prominence. Spurred on by waves of immigration, and despite frequent anti-Catholic campaigns,⁶ Catholicism had become, by the mid-19th century, the largest denomination in the nation. Eventually, Catholicism began to impact the U.S. political system in a significant way,⁷ as Catholics formed a major part of the Democrat Party coalition throughout much of the 20th century,⁸ and they substantially contributed to the election of John F. Kennedy as the nation's first Catholic president in 1960. In recent decades, however, more and more white Catholics have moved toward the Republican Party, while Hispanic Catholics continue to identify primarily as Democrats.⁹

The voting guidelines under consideration here are a publication of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB). As a national ecclesial body, the USCCB is a relatively recent phenomenon. For much of U.S. history, the activities of the Catholic bishops as a group were loosely organized.¹⁰ However, the rise of the federal government in the post-World War II era generated the need for a more permanent platform that could address an expanding array of policy issues,¹¹ with the publication of *Political Responsibility: Reflections on an Election Year* in 1976 marking the beginning of efforts by the bishops to address political matters at the national level.¹²

The bishops' current teaching document on voting bears the title *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship: A Call to Political Responsibility from the Catholic Bishops of the United States*. In the earliest years of publication, the process of preparing

⁴ Karen Orren and Stephen Skowronek, Have We Abandoned a 'Constitutional Perspective' On American Political Development?, *The Review of Politics*, Vol. 73, No. 2, 2011, p. 296. In keeping with their work in the field of "American political development," the authors stress the multi-faceted "orderings of authority" within the American polity among which religion is central.

⁵ Jacob Weinrib, The Modern Constitutional State: A Defence, *Queen's Law Journal*, Vol. 40, No.1, 2014, pp. 166-168. Weinrib suggests that the primary ideological challenger to constitutional polity would not be autocracy or dictatorship, but rather forms of "hyper" democracy. These would separate "the issue of whether a legal system should protect individual rights from the issue of the institutional framework through which rights should be protected. . . [as] one can accept the former while rejecting the latter."

⁶ R. Laurence Moore, *Religious Outsiders and the Making of Americans*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1986, pp. 49-50.

⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 70.

⁸ William V. D'Antonio, Michelle Dillon, and Mary L. Gautier, *American Catholics in Transition*, Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Lanham, 2013, p. 127.

⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 127.

¹⁰ Timothy A. Byrnes, *Catholic Bishops in American Politics*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1991, p. 11.

¹¹ *Ibidem*, pp. 44-53.

¹² Steven Millies, "Big problem for US Catholic voters: US Catholic bishops". The Hill, January 1, 2023. Available at: <https://thehill.com/opinion/3794485-big-problem-for-us-catholic-voters-us-catholic-bishops> (accessed March 1, 2023).

the document involved less consultation than presently.¹³ In more recent years, a committee of bishops reviews any amendments to the document and then presents it to the entire conference of bishops for debate and a vote.¹⁴

As public intellectuals, theologians have raised concerns about *Faithful Citizenship* in several areas. They have critiqued the document for overlooking questions of political polarization and party ideology.¹⁵ They have also critiqued the document for its lack of emphasis on the personal character of those running for office.¹⁶ Finally, the document has received criticism for focusing on issues of sexuality at the expense of other ethical concerns.¹⁷

Faithful Citizenship has not been significantly modified since 2007, arguably reflecting the difficulties that bishops face as public figures.¹⁸ Of course, bishops are constrained by the Catholic tradition, with its inbuilt tendency for consistency over time. In addition, Catholic social teaching is both pro-life and pro-social justice, and this may create unique levels of cross-pressure for Catholic voters.¹⁹

While it would be a mistake to insist that each and every teaching presented by the bishops must bind the consciences of believers, episcopal teaching matters greatly from a Catholic perspective.²⁰ Indeed, *Faithful Citizenship* has implications beyond theology and the church. The document represents critical discourse that serves as a self-reflection of both modern political theory and theology regarding its normative sources.²¹

Faithful Citizenship: Content, Problematics, and Implications

One can appreciate the importance of *Faithful Citizenship* by examining it as a theological text. There are three textual viewpoints to consider: what the document says (content); its theological understandings (concepts); and its possibilities for conceptual development (implications).

The first of the document's major sections ("The U.S. Bishops' Reflection on Catholic Teaching and Public Life") is the fundamental one. This is where the bishops lay out the normative grounds for their vision of political engagement. From

¹³ John Carr, *Faithful Citizenship: History, Context, Directions, Dangers*, *Journal of Religion and Society*, Vol. 10, No. 4, 2008, p. 17.

¹⁴ *Ibidem*, pp. 15-16.

¹⁵ For example, see David Cloutier, "The Real Problem with Faithful Citizenship", *Commonwealth Magazine*, November 15, 2015. Available at: <https://www.commonwealthmagazine.org/real-problem-faithful-citizenship> (accessed March 1, 2023).

¹⁶ For example, see Cathleen Kaveny, "Voting for People, Not Just Policies", *Commonwealth Magazine*, September 26, 2016. Available at: <https://www.commonwealthmagazine.org/voting-people-not-just-policies> (accessed March 1, 2023).

¹⁷ For example, see Matthew Sitman, "Preeminent? The Bishops Miss the Mark on Faithful Citizenship", *Commonwealth Magazine*, November 21, 2019. Available at: <https://www.commonwealthmagazine.org/preeminent> (accessed March 1, 2023).

¹⁸ Thomas J. Reese, *A Flock of Shepherds: The National Conference of Catholic Bishops*, Sheed & Ward, Kansas City, MO, 1992.

¹⁹ Laura S. Antkowiak, Levi G. Allen, and Geoffrey C. Layman, Coping with Cross-Pressures: The Seamless Garment in Catholic Political Behavior, *Political Psychology*, Vol. 42, No. 1, 2021.

²⁰ J. Bryan Hehir, "The Church and the Political Order: The Role of the Catholic Bishops in the United States", in: *The Catholic Church, Morality and Politics*, Charles E. Curran and Leslie Griffin (eds.), Paulist Press, Mahwah, 2001, pp. 175-176. Hehir also points out that "[t]he impact of the policy and practices of the U.S. government . . . on the lives and welfare of other nations and peoples creates a distinct challenge for U.S. bishops in their social ministry" (p. 188).

²¹ Hille Haker, *Towards a Critical Political Ethics: Catholic Ethics and Social Ethics*, Schwabe Verlag, Basel, 2020, p. 269.

the viewpoint of content, one may sort the discussion analytically according to the levels of “individual,” “institution,” and “publicness.”²² “Individual” concerns human nature itself and how individual persons practice their faith.²³ “Institution” concerns the existence of the church within processes of social transformation,²⁴ while “publicness” concerns the faith as a corporate reality impacting the polity as a whole.²⁵

Within each of the content levels, *Faithful Citizenship* articulates a vision of political engagement in reference to specific theological understandings. At the level of “individual,” the document draws on a concept of the common good. At the level of “institution,” the document draws on a concept of historical consciousness. And, at the level of “publicness,” the document draws on a concept of faith as public witness.²⁶

Finally, these theological understandings have implications regarding notions of political engagement present in the broader philosophical tradition. Political engagement is inseparable from the communicative aspect of human life and action.²⁷ At its core, it entails an ongoing process of critical-rational argumentation²⁸ in which both faith traditions and philosophy journey together towards a common future.²⁹ Hence, one must look at ways in which the arguments made in *Faithful Citizenship* might be sharpened and clarified.

²² See Ann Taves, From Religious Studies to Worldview Studies, *Religion*, Vol. 50, No. 1, 2020, p. 14. For Taves, religion pertains to the category of “worldview.” Given its naturalistic overtones, such a category is debatable from a theological viewpoint, yet it acknowledges that worldviews as such are tied to basic human practices and ways of life.

²³ See John R. Sachs, *The Christian Vision of Humanity*, Liturgical Press, Collegeville, MN, 2017, pp. 11-25; Stephen J. Duffy, *The Dynamics of Grace: Perspectives in Theological Anthropology*, Wipf and Stock, Eugene, 2007, pp. 43-62; and Susan A. Ross, *Anthropology: Seeking Light and Beauty*, Liturgical Press, Collegeville, 2012, pp. 85-93.

²⁴ See Leonardo Boff, *Church: Charism and Power – Liberation Theology and the Institutional Church*, Wipf and Stock, Eugene, 2012, pp. 47-64; Thomas F. O’Meara, *Theology of Ministry*, Paulist Press, Mahwah, NJ, 1999, pp. 35-79; and Gerard Mannion, *Ecclesiology and Postmodernity: Questions for the Church in Our Time*, Liturgical Press, Collegeville, 2017.

²⁵ See Johann Baptist Metz, J. Matthew Ashley (trans.), *A Passion for God: The Mystical-Political Dimension of Christianity*, Paulist Press, Mahwah, 1997, pp. 54-71; Edward Farley, *Good and Evil: Interpreting a Human Condition*, Fortress Press, Minneapolis, 1990, pp. 266-280; and Elaine Graham, *Between a Rock and a Hard Place: Public Theology in a Post-Secular Age*, SCM Press, Norwich, 2013, pp. 106-139.

²⁶ See Christiane Alpers, “Public Opposition to Ecclesial Involvement in Secular Politics: Schillebeeckx’s Grace-Optimism as a Response to Public Theology and Radical Orthodoxy,” in: *Salvation in the World: The Crossroads of Public Theology*, Stephan van Erp, Christopher Cimorelli, and Christiane Alpers (eds.), T&T Clark, New York, 2017, pp. 26-42. Alpers observe that resistance to Christian involvement in secular politics has been countered by “public theology” and “Radical Orthodoxy.” Building on Schillebeeckx, she makes an argument for a modified approach that differs from both. . . . insofar as their approaches to politics commence with the detection of a problem [secular ontology] that needs to be solved.”

²⁷ Jürgen Habermas, *Between Naturalism and Religion: Philosophical Essays* (trans. Garan Cronin), Polity Press, Cambridge, 2008, p. 103. In his article “Prepolitical Foundations of the Constitutional State?,” Habermas specifies his understanding of modern constitutional polity as one of “Kantian republicanism.” Contrary to a contextualist view, Habermas proposes that all societies share in a basic “communicative constitution of sociocultural forms of life” that justifies a “nondefeatist concept of reason” along with a “nondecisionistic concept of legal validity.”

²⁸ Christiaan Jacobs-Vandegeer, Insight into the Better Argument: Habermas and Lonergan, *Revista Portuguesa de Filosofia*, Vol. 63, No. 4, 2007, p. 1224.

²⁹ Peter E. Gordon, Between Christian Democracy and Critical Theory: Habermas, Böckenförde, and the Dialectics of Secularization in Postwar Germany, *Social Research*, Vol. 80, No. 1, 2013, pp. 173–202.

Faithful Citizenship's Vision of Political Engagement

Level I: Individual

Faithful Citizenship proclaims that politics involves justice for all according to the “common good.”³⁰ This is in keeping with Catholicism’s understanding of natural law. However, this natural law orientation stands in contrast with an understanding of justice rooted in “the turn to the subject” stretching back to the Enlightenment.³¹ In the U.S. context, such an understanding is particularly manifested in the post-World War II era with its emphasis on human rights.³² In contrast to a natural law conception of justice that is oriented toward the “good,” justice is hereby understood in terms of the “right.”³³ This distinction between the “good” and the “right” is central to much of contemporary political theory. Implicit in this understanding is that democratic society compels citizens to shape their identities as equal and autonomous agents³⁴ within the constraints of *political* community as the normative arena of justice.³⁵ Consequently, in its appeals to the “common good,” *Faithful Citizenship* advances a contrasting view of the normative basis of the political that is likely to be challenged.

Faithful Citizenship also depicts justice in relation to morality. It posits that the divine will and the human will are joined in acts of love that ensure justice in a basic interpersonal sense.³⁶ However, within a political context, one must grapple with the fact of the law.³⁷ Constitutional polity is characterized by a dynamic relationship between the *intra*-communal (love) and the *inter*-communal (law).³⁸ Although both morality and the law are vital to the wellbeing of constitutional polity, the legal aspect is decisive. The law relates not only to questions of discursive justification but

³⁰ “Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship”, USCCB. Available at: <https://www.usccb.org/offices/justice-peace-human-development/forming-consciences-faithful-citizenship>, p.11 (accessed November 22, 2022). “Thus we take up the task of the common good with joy and hope, confident that God . . . walks with us and strengthens us on the way (Jn 3:16).”

³¹ James T. Kloppenberg, The Virtues of Liberalism: Christianity, Republicanism, and Ethics in Early American Political Discourse, *The Journal of American History* Vol. 74, No. 1, 1987, p. 23. Kloppenberg makes a distinction between “freedom” and “autonomy” and advises that the latter, as a specifically *liberal* value, takes precedence in America’s constitutional design.

³² Mark A. Graber, “What’s in Crisis? The Postwar Constitutional Paradigm, Transformative Constitutionalism, and the Fate of Constitutional Democracy”, in: *Constitutional Democracy in Crisis*, Mark A. Graber, Sanford Levinson, and Mark Tushnet (eds.), Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2018, pp. 666-667. Graber recognizes how the post-war consensus finds itself increasingly subverted from within constitutional polity, as populist “entrepreneurs” coopt legal constitutional mechanisms for their own illiberal ends, thus leaving the substantive elements of democracy hallowed out.

³³ Kent Greenawalt, Individual Conscience and How It Should Be Treated, *Journal of Law and Religion*, Vol. 31, No. 3, 2016, p. 312.

³⁴ Kenneth Baynes, *The Normative Grounds of Social Criticism: Kant, Rawls, Habermas*, SUNY Press, Albany, 1992, p. 68.

³⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 61.

³⁶ “Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship”, p. 12. “[The] council] says that “society itself may profit by the moral qualities of justice and peace which have their origin in [people’s] faithfulness to God and His holy will” (no. 6). The work for justice requires that the heart and the mind of Catholics be educated and formed to know and practice the whole faith.”

³⁷ Joshua Neoh, *Law, Love and Freedom: From the Sacred to the Secular*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2021, p. 132.

³⁸ Michel Rosenfeld, *The Identity of the Constitutional Subject: Selfhood, Citizenship, Culture, and Community*, Routledge, New York, 2010, p. 158. Rosenfeld speculates that one can understand the history of the American constitutional founding as providing a “launching pad” to the state which “precedes and anticipates” any discreet articulation of culture or nation.

to the existence of the state itself and its very legitimacy.³⁹

Having examined the common good and morality, *Faithful Citizenship* then proceeds to define human personhood. The document argues that each person has dignity in virtue of his or her existence.⁴⁰ Such an understanding operates within a metaphysical framework. However, religious believers in the U.S. context inhabit a polity which does not reason metaphysically, per se. Constitutional polity tends to eschew essentialist categories in favor of indeterminate categories, and this poses a challenge to any reliance on metaphysics.⁴¹ U.S. constitutional polity has developed largely in conjunction with political liberalism that conceives of a self-governing people, thus disavowing the pursuit of any absolute "truth."⁴²

Faithful Citizenship also overlooks theologians whose work specifically focuses on the U.S. context.⁴³ John Courtney Murray is a case in point. Murray explores personhood in relation to the common use of reason in both individual and social areas of judgment.⁴⁴ While his approach draws on a Catholic appreciation of the interdependence of faith and reason, it also highlights the problem of group bias. The problem manifests when human dignity is proclaimed in the name of all yet serves only the interests of dominant groups.⁴⁵ *Faithful Citizenship* would thus benefit from a deeper appreciation of the anti-majoritarian aspects of constitutional polity. While some constitutional frameworks make explicit reference to human dignity in terms of "rights," in the U.S. context, a grounding of human dignity in terms of constitutional "values" is more plausible.⁴⁶

Level II: Institution

In *Faithful Citizenship*, the bishops address their message to citizens who exercise their civic rights and duties,⁴⁷ thus acknowledging that citizens generate social change. However, the church as an institution also exists within society and assumes a historical consciousness. In the aftermath of the Second World War, a renewed

³⁹ A. John Simmons, Justification and Legitimacy, *Ethics*, Vol. 109, No. 4, 1999, p. 746, 768-769.

⁴⁰ "Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship", p. 14. "At the center of these truths is a respect for the dignity of every person. This is the core of Catholic moral and social teaching. Because we are people of faith and reason, it is appropriate and necessary to bring this essential truth about human life and dignity to the public square."

⁴¹ Pini Ifergan, Cutting to the Chase: Carl Schmitt and Hans Blumenberg on Political Theology and Secularization, *New German Critique*, No. 111, 2010, pp. 149-171. Whereas Schmitt insists that all political concepts are but theological in nature, Blumenberg disputes this on both historical and philosophical grounds in his work, *The Legitimacy of the Modern Age*.

⁴² Owen Anderson, *The Declaration of Independence and God*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2017, pp. 141-143.

⁴³ Roger Haight, The Birth of American Catholic Theology, *Theological Studies*, Vol. 80, No. 1, 2019, p. 20.

⁴⁴ J. Leon Hooper, *The Ethics of Discourse: The Social Philosophy of John Courtney Murray*, Georgetown University Press, Washington, D.C., 1986, p. 199.

⁴⁵ Ibidem, pp. 215-216.

⁴⁶ Aharon Barak, *Human Dignity: The Constitutional Value and the Constitutional Right*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2015, pp. 144-145.

⁴⁷ "Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship", p. 6. "With renewed hope, we, the Catholic Bishops of the United States, are re-issuing *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship*, our teaching document on the political responsibility of Catholics, which provides guidance for all who seek to exercise their rights and duties as citizens."

historical consciousness emerged in the church in conjunction with political efforts to rebuild post-war society, and it became even more pronounced in the wake of the Second Vatican Council.⁴⁸

Faithful Citizenship focuses on the institutional presence of the church in the course of U.S. history. It states that "...the Church's teaching is in accord with the foundational values that have shaped our nation's history: "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness."⁴⁹ Although official endorsement of democracy by the church is relatively recent,⁵⁰ this section of the document alludes to how the church in the local U.S. context has sought to appropriate a democratic ethos from early on in its history. However, in this regard, the document could employ more concrete examples.

The growth of Catholicism in the United States would not have been possible without an institutional embrace of assimilation and cultural adaptation.⁵¹ However, the document at times appears to suggest that the church's interests are inevitably at odds with the interests of political society.⁵² Yet the institutional role of Catholicism in relation to U.S. constitutional polity is rich and complex, being shaped by a "practical, but principled, willingness to adjust."⁵³ This diffuses any facile notion that the U.S. is either an essentially Christian nation, or conversely, that religions face a necessary disadvantage within constitutional structures.

This is especially relevant in connection with contemporary debates on "religious freedom." At stake in these debates is not merely the issue of the role of religion in relation to politics. Religious disestablishment in the U.S. context implies a political role for religion that is rather open-ended.⁵⁴ Hence, debates about religious freedom would seem to hinge on the particular quality of the contributions that specific institutions make, or fail to make, to democratic well-being.⁵⁵

Level III: Publicness

Faithful Citizenship speaks of political participation as a basic liberty.⁵⁶ Nonetheless, the document projects ambivalence. In a section which appropriates Pope

⁴⁸ Donald J. Dietrich, *Human Rights and the Catholic Tradition*, Routledge, New York, 2017, pp. 111-112.

⁴⁹ "Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship", p. 15. "Our nation's tradition of pluralism is enhanced, not threatened, when religious groups and people of faith bring their convictions and concerns into public life. Indeed, our Church's teaching is in accord with the foundational values that have shaped our nation's history: "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness."

⁵⁰ Paul E. Sigmund, *The Catholic Tradition and Modern Democracy*, *The Review of Politics*, Vol. 49, No. 4, 1987, p. 531.

⁵¹ Charles H. Lippy, *Pluralism Comes of Age: American Religious Culture in the Twentieth Century*, Routledge, New York, pp. 35-40.

⁵² "Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship", p. 16. "As citizens we should be guided more by our moral convictions than by our attachment to a political party or interest group."

⁵³ Philip Gleason, "American Catholic and Liberalism, 1789-1960", in: *Catholicism and Liberalism: Contributions to American Public Policy*, R. Bruce Douglass and David Hollenbach (eds.), Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1994, pp. 51-55.

⁵⁴ Franklin Gamwell, *The Meaning of Religious Freedom*, SUNY Press, New York, 1995, p. 128.

⁵⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 128.

⁵⁶ "Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship", p. 15. "Moreover, the United States Constitution protects the right of individual believers and religious bodies to participate and speak without government interference, favoritism, or discrimination."

Benedict XVI's encyclical *Spe Salvi*, the document describes politics as "a fight for justice" founded on a hope which "transcends every law of justice."⁵⁷ On the one hand, one might take this description as gesturing towards a biblical and prophetic vision of public witness. On the other hand, prophetic rhetoric has the capacity to connote "destruction for the re-creation of perfection."⁵⁸ The ambiguity in this section is therefore problematic, appearing to de-value the role of procedural authority in the maintenance of constitutional order.

Faithful Citizenship also states that believers bear the responsibility to "hear, receive, and act upon the Church's teaching..."⁵⁹ In the post-Vatican II era, a tension exists between respect for individual conscience and obedience to episcopal authority. Again, the document would benefit from the insights of John Courtney Murray. Murray insists that the church "meets" the democratic state "above all with-in those who [are] both believers and citizens."⁶⁰ As such, religious convictions are not alien to public forms of debate characteristic of an open society.⁶¹ Nonetheless, Catholics may experience cognitive dissonance in relationship to episcopal authority, and this has a potential to undermine the agency of believers as equal citizens of a democracy.⁶²

Finally, *Faithful Citizenship* defends Catholicism's position on abortion. In the section "Doing Good and Avoiding Evil," the document states that "[a] legal system that violates the basic right to life on the ground of choice is *fundamentally flawed* (my emphasis)."⁶³ Notwithstanding the philosophical merits of the church's position, the document's particular framing of the abortion issue in these terms is problematic. One could understand the statement as implying that reasoned forms of argumentation in support the pro-choice position are out of the question and even inimical to the maintenance of constitutional order. However, one must consider how U.S. constitutional polity is constituted by a plurality of moralities, thus allowing for "...not only a diversity of comprehensive ethical and metaphysical views, but further, and relatedly, disagreement over major questions of constitutional (or "human rights") interpretation and application."⁶⁴

⁵⁷ *Ibidem*, pp. 10-11.

⁵⁸ Niels Christian Hvidt, *Christian Prophecy: The Post-Biblical Tradition*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2007, p. 254.

⁵⁹ "Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship", p. 12.

⁶⁰ Thomas Hughson, *The Believer as Citizen: John Courtney Murray in a New Context*, Paulist Press, Mahwah, 1993, p. 10.

⁶¹ Thomas Christiano, *The Authority of Democracy*, *The Journal of Political Philosophy*, Vol. 12, No. 3, 2004, p. 282.

⁶² Peter McDonough, *The Catholic Labyrinth: Power, Apathy, and a Passion for Reform in the American Church*, Oxford University Press, 2013, p. 23. In addition to alienation among Catholics who have ceased to actively participate in church life, alienation also manifests among Catholics who remain active, and it would appear to cut across all ideological subgroupings within the church. As McDonough observes: "In the culture of Catholicism, then, attitudes toward political, social, and sexual issues can be visualized as composing a set of concentric circles. . ." As such, "[the issues] may be combined in various ways, and this makes for strange bedfellows."

⁶³ "Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship", p. 10.

⁶⁴ Frank I. Michelman, *Postmodernism, Proceduralism, and Constitutional Justice: A Comment on van Der Walt and Botha*, *Constellations*, Vol. 9, No. 2, 2002, p. 246.

A Path Forward for Catholicism in the U.S. Political Context

The foregoing examination uncovers both strengths and limitations with regard to *Faithful Citizenship's* vision of Catholic political engagement in the U.S. The document makes use of several key theological understandings, including the common good, historical consciousness, and prophetic witness. Nonetheless, *Faithful Citizenship* would benefit from drawing more deeply on the work of U.S. Catholic theologians like Murray, as well as on contemporary political theory in general. As the nature of constitutional and democratic polity continues to evolve, political engagement on the part of faith traditions represents a long-term challenge and opportunity. Towards this end, the document, with its conceptual engagement of the political at the levels of individual, institution, and publicness, serves as a salient recourse in charting a path forward.

References

- Alpers Christiane, "Public Opposition to Ecclesial Involvement in Secular Politics: Schillebeeckx's Grace-Optimism as a Response to Public Theology and Radical Orthodoxy", in: *Salvation in the World: The Crossroads of Public Theology*, Stephan van Erp, Christopher Cimorelli, and Christiane Alpers (eds.), T&T Clark, New York, 2017.
- Anderson Owen, *The Declaration of Independence and God*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2017.
- Antkowiak Laura S., Levi G. Allen, and Geoffrey C. Layman, Coping with Cross-Pressures: The Seamless Garment in Catholic Political Behavior, *Political Psychology*, Vol. 42, No. 1, 2021. <https://doi.org/10.1111/pops.12796>
- Barak Aharon, *Human Dignity: The Constitutional Value and the Constitutional Right*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2015.
- Baynes Kenneth, *The Normative Grounds of Social Criticism: Kant, Rawls, Habermas*, SUNY Press, Albany, 1992.
- Boff Leonardo, *Church: Charism and Power – Liberation Theology and the Institutional Church*, Wipf and Stock, Eugene, 2012.
- Carr John, Faithful Citizenship: History, Context, Directions, Dangers, *Journal of Religion and Society*, Vol. 10, No. 4, 2008.
- Christiano Thomas, The Authority of Democracy, *The Journal of Political Philosophy*, Vol. 12, No. 3, 2004. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9760.2004.00200.x>
- Cloutier David, The Real Problem with Faithful Citizenship, <https://www.commonwealmagazine.org/real-problem-faithful-citizenship> (accessed March 1, 2023).
- D'Antonio William V., Michelle Dillon, and Mary L. Gautier, *American Catholics in Transition*, Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc., Lanham, 2013.
- Dietrich Donald J., *Human Rights and the Catholic Tradition*, Routledge, New York, 2017.
- Duffy Stephen J., *The Dynamics of Grace: Perspectives in Theological Anthropology*, Wipf and Stock, Eugene, 2007.
- Farley Edward, *Good and Evil: Interpreting a Human Condition*, Fortress Press, Minneapolis, 1990.
- Gamwell Franklin, *The Meaning of Religious Freedom*, SUNY Press, Albany, 1995.
- Gleason Philip, "American Catholic and Liberalism, 1789-1960", in: *Catholicism and Liberalism: Contributions to American Public Policy*, R. Bruce Douglass and David Hollenbach (eds.), Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1994. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511627965>
- Gordon Peter E., Between Christian Democracy and Critical Theory: Habermas, Böckenförde, and the Dialectics of Secularization in Postwar Germany, *Social Research*, Vol. 80, No. 1, 2013. <https://doi.org/10.1353/sor.2013.0026>
- Graber Mark A, "What's in Crisis? The Postwar Constitutional Paradigm, Transformative Constitutionalism, and the Fate of Constitutional Democracy", in: *Constitutional Democracy in Crisis?*, Mark A. Graber, Sanford Levinson, and Mark Tushnet

(eds.), Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2018.

Graham Elaine, *Between a Rock and a Hard Place: Public Theology in a Post-Secular Age*, SCM Press, Norwich, 2013.

Greenawalt Kent, Individual Conscience and How It Should Be Treated, *Journal of Law and Religion*, Vol. 31, No. 3, 2016. <https://doi.org/10.1017/jlr.2016.40>

Habermas Jurgen, *Between Naturalism and Religion: Philosophical Essays* (trans. Ciaran Cronin), Polity Press, Cambridge, 2008.

Haight Roger, The Birth of American Catholic Theology, *Theological Studies*, Vol. 80, No. 1, 2019. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0040563918819801>

Haker Hille, *Towards a Critical Political Ethics: Catholic Ethics and Social Ethics*, Schwabe Verlag, Basel, 2020.

Hehir J. Bryan, "The Church and the Political Order: The Role of the Catholic Bishops in the United States", in: *The Catholic Church, Morality and Politics*, Charles E. Curran and Leslie Griffin (eds.), Paulist Press, Mahwah, 2001.

Hopper Leon J., *The Ethics of Discourse: The Social Philosophy of John Courtney Murray*, Georgetown University Press, Washington, D.C., 1986.

Hvidt Niels Christian, *Christian Prophecy: The Post-Biblical Tradition*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2007.

Ifergan Pini, Cutting to the Chase: Carl Schmitt and Hans Blumenberg on Political Theology and Secularization, *New German Critique*, No. 111, 2010. <https://doi.org/10.1215/0094033X-2010-018>

Jacobs-Vandegeer Christiaan, Insight into the Better Argument: Habermas and Lonergan, *Revista Portuguesa de Filosofia*, Vol. 63, No. 4, 2007.

Kaveny Cathleen, "Voting for People, Not Just Policies", *Commonwealth Magazine*, September 26, 2016. Available at: <https://www.commonwealmagazine.org/voting-people-not-just-policies> (accessed March 1, 2023).

Kloppenber James T, The Virtues of Liberalism: Christianity, Republicanism, and Ethics in Early American Political Discourse, *The Journal of American History*, Vol. 74, No. 1, 1987. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1908503>

Lefort Claude, "The Permanence of the Theologico-Political?", in: *Public Theologies: Public Religions in a Post-Secular World*, Hent de Vries and Lawrence Eugene Sullivan (eds.), Fordham University Press, New York, 2006. <https://doi.org/10.5422/fso/9780823226443.003.0007>

Lippy Charles H., *Pluralism Comes of Age: American Religious Culture in the Twentieth Century*, Routledge, New York, 2015.

Mannion Gerard, *Ecclesiology and Postmodernity: Questions for the Church in Our Time*, Liturgical Press, Collegeville, 2017.

McDonough Peter, *The Catholic Labyrinth: Power, Apathy, and a Passion for Reform in the American Church*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2013.

McGarvie Mark Douglas, *Law and Religion in American History: Public Values and Private Conscience*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2016.

Metz Johann Baptist (trans. J. Matthew Ashley), *A Passion for God: The Mysti-*

cal-Political Dimension of Christianity, Paulist Press, Mahwah, 1997.

Michelman Frank I., Postmodernism, Proceduralism, and Constitutional Justice: A Comment on van Der Walt and Botha, *Constellations*, Vol. 9, No. 2, 2002. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-8675.00278>

Millies Steven, "Big problem for US Catholic voters: US Catholic bishops", The Hill, January 1, 2023. Available at: <https://thehill.com/opinion/3794485-big-problem-for-us-catholic-voters-us-catholic-bishops> (accessed March 1, 2023).

Moore R. Laurence, *Religious Outsiders and the Making of Americans*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1986.

Neoh Joshua, *Law, Love and Freedom: From the Sacred to the Secular*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2021.

O'Meara Thomas, *Theology of Ministry*, Paulist Press, Mahwah, 1999.

Orren Karen and Stephen Skowronek, Have We Abandoned a "Constitutional Perspective" On American Political Development?, *The Review of Politics*, Vol. 73, No. 2, 2011. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0034670511000088>

Prusak Bernard P., *The Church Unfinished: Ecclesiology through the Centuries*, Paulist Press, Mahwah, 2004.

Reese Thomas J., *A Flock of Shepherds: The National Conference of Catholic Bishops*, Sheed & Ward, Kansas City, 1992.

Rosenfeld Michel, *The Identity of the Constitutional Subject: Selfhood, Citizenship, Culture, and Community*, Routledge, New York, 2010.

Ross Susan A., *Anthropology: Seeking Light and Beauty*, Liturgical Press, Collegeville, 2012.

Sachs John R., *The Christian Vision of Humanity*, Liturgical Press, Collegeville, 2017.

Schussler Fiorenza Francis, *Foundational Theology: Jesus and the Church*, Crossroad, New York, 1992.

Sigmund Paul E., The Catholic Tradition and Modern Democracy, *The Review of Politics*, Vol. 49, No. 4, 1987.

Simmons A. John, Justification and Legitimacy, *Ethics* Vol. 109, No. 4, 1999. <https://doi.org/10.1086/233944>

Sitman Matthew, "Preeminent? The Bishops Miss the Mark on Faithful Citizenship", *Commonwealth Magazine*, November 21, 2019. Available at: <https://www.commonwealmagazine.org/preeminent> (accessed March 1, 2023).

Taves Ann, From Religious Studies to Worldview Studies, *Religion*, Vol. 50, No. 1, 2020. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0048721X.2019.1681124>

Weinrib Jacob, The Modern Constitutional State: A Defence, *Queen's Law Journal*, Vol. 40, No. 1, 2014.

"Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship", USCCB. Available at: <https://www.usccb.org/offices/justice-peace-human-development/forming-consciences-faithful-citizenship> (accessed November 22, 2022)

Томас Е. Друри

ГЛАСАЧКЕ ИНСТРУКЦИЈЕ АМЕРИЧКИХ БИСКУПА: *ВЕРНО* ГРАЂАНСТВО КАО ИЗВОР ПОЛИТИЧКОГ АНГАЖОВАЊА

Сажетак

Поредтогаштонудиинструкцијезагласање,*Вернограђанство*представља покушај америчких бискупа да артикулишу теолошку визију политичког деловања. Теолошка визија овог документа може се анализирати кроз три тачке: шта каже (садржај), теолошко разумевање (проблематика), и могућност за концептуално развијање (импликације). Међутим, бавити се динамиком политичког ангажовања у савременом свету је веома сложен задатак. Иако овај рад тврди да *Верно грађанство* чини користан извор за католичко политичко деловање, ипак постоје места која нису довољно развијена. Стога, овај рад сугерише путеве који би довели до дубљег концептуалног ангажовања са политичком философијом, поготово са разумевањем уставне демократије.

Кључне речи: *Верно грађанство*, политичко ангажовање, католицизам, теологија, јавност