

# CATHOLIC PROFESSIONAL and BUSINESS CLUB OF MODESTO

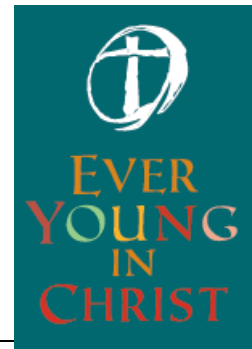
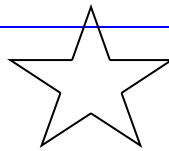
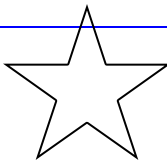
ROMAN CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF STOCKTON

October 2012

**Due to circumstances beyond our control we have a speaker change for our November 13 meeting. Come hear Betsy Reifsnider talk to us about Environmental Justice**

Mass 6:30 at St Stanislaus Church, 7th & J St.  
Networking 7:00 at the Doubletree. Breakfast and speaker 7:15. Reservations: online at cpbc-Modesto.org, chearst@pacbell.net, gerbele2@yahoo.com, Cathy Hearst (209) 968-8086

Have you renewed your membership for this year? Our new year started in September. We miss and need all of you who have not joined us yet .



## A word from our spiritual director, Father Sam

My grandfather used to say that one way to avoid an argument is not to discuss two subjects - religion and politics. Well, in this month's article, I am not going to take my grandfather's advice. Because our country is in a major election year, I feel it necessary to talk about both. However, in doing so, I will be careful not to directly tell you which of the major party candidates you should vote for or against. I don't want to get into trouble with the most powerful government agency, the Internal Revenue Service. My sincere intention is to shed some light, in a very small way, on a matter of great complexity and importance. My desire is to approach the issue of how we as Catholic should best exercise our obligation to vote thoughtfully, honestly, and, of course, charitably.

As Catholics, we should be involved in the political affairs of our nation for the sake of building and promoting a society that is just and respects the rights of all human persons. This means we have a moral obligation to vote. However, given the current divisive political environment, the decision of who to for or how to vote is not that simple. Like myself, I know many of you struggle with how to vote morally and justly. Thankfully, to navigate through all of the political rhetoric, we are given the grace to under-

stand how best to exercise this serious obligation. To help us make the right decision, we use the gifts our loving God has given us - our consciences informed by natural law and shaped by the Divine wisdom of Church teaching. Therefore, we have the duty to use this gift and form our consciences in accord with God's will before making the choice in voting. According to a summary of the document called *Faithful Citizenship* issued by the bishops of the United States, "the Church equips its members to address political questions by helping them develop well-formed consciences. 'Conscience is a judgment of reason whereby the human person recognizes the moral quality of a concrete act. . . . [Every person] is obliged to follow faithfully what he [or she] knows to be just and right' (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 1778). We Catholics have a lifelong obligation to form our consciences in accord with human reason, enlightened by the teaching of Christ as it comes to us through the Church." In order to do what is right and take the proper "concrete action" in moral matters, we form our consciences by study of natural law using the gift of our human reason and make every effort to understand the teachings of the Church as revealed in Sacred Scriptures and Sacred Tradition and interpreted by the authentic Magisterium. If after taking the steps to form my conscience, I conclude that in a moral choice I am allowed to act against what the Church teaches, then I must have not properly formed my conscience, and I would be obligated not follow the dictates of a poorly formed conscience. For example, if a person says they believe that an intrinsically evil act, say killing innocent human life, agrees with their conscience in a particular situation, they would still be wrong and actions resulting from this erroneous decision could never be justified no matter how much the person insisted it is what their conscience dictates. A poorly or erroneously formed conscience is never a legitimate reason for doing evil.

This business of formation of conscience can be confusing, but when comes to voting as Catholics, here are some practical considerations. First off, we should not simply vote for the candidate who we think or hope is going to benefit us personal (particularly financially), but we need to carefully consider first and foremost which candidate will best promote and preserve the common good for all people, especially the more vulnerable in our society, including unborn children and their mothers, the poor, the disabled, and the elderly.

With this said, it is important to point out that not all of the issues facing our nation have the same moral weight. There are some issues which are more serious than others because they involve intrinsically evil acts, acts that are always and everywhere gravely disordered and never should be permitted. Among these acts is abortion, which is the direct killing of innocent human life. Issues that involve taking of a human life are far more serious than issues having to do with taxes or how public funds are to be spent. For instance, the issue of the Federal government providing food stamps for poor families or funding education does not have the same moral weight as the issues of slavery, racism, or abortion. In addition to the obvious differences in a direct threat against the human life and dignity, certain financial considerations may require food stamp programs to be reduced, however, there could be no circumstance in which slavery or abortion could ever be allowed.

Because abortion is an intrinsically evil act, it would be morally proper to not vote for a candidate *solely* based on their position on abortion. According the Bishop's summary of the *Faithful Citizenship*, "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 a candidate's position on a single issue that involves an intrinsic evil, such as support for legal abortion or the promotion of racism, may legitimately lead a voter to disqualify a candidate from receiving support." Also, because of the evil of abortion, it would be gravely wrong, and possibly mortally sinful, to vote for a candidate *only* because he or she promoted and supported abortion.

However, what about a voter who is personally against abortion, but still votes for "pro-choice" candidates because of their stand on other issues many of which could possibly benefit the common good? This moral question is addressed by well-formed conscience. Another factor that should be considered is does voting for a pro-choice candidate in anyway, even in the slightest, promote and support the evil of abortion, albeit indirectly? Also, will voting for a pro-choice candidate cause a public scandal because if others know that a Catholic voted for a pro-choice candidate or has the candidate's signs, bumper stickers, attends their fundraisers, etc., they might conclude that abortion is not a big deal? I sincerely think that because of the candidate's support of abortion, voting for pro-choice candidates even for reasons not related to their position on abortion is at the very least morally questionable. In giving this

issue much thought and prayer, I really do not know how the Good Lord, who is always merciful, will judge a person's decision to vote for a pro-choice candidate, even if the vote was cast for other issues. Personally, I do not intend to find out on the day I stand before our Just Judge, the Lord Jesus.

In addition, the reasons that pro-choice candidates give to justify their position on abortion show that they do not understand the role of government, or they are incapable of representing the interest of all people. Government's first obligation is to protect the rights of its citizens, all citizens. But, some pro-choice candidates have said they are personally against abortion, but, at the same time, they say they cannot impose their personal beliefs on others or need to support abortion because most of their constituents support abortion. I wonder if this reasoning would make sense if the behavior was another intrinsically evil act such as sex-slavery or racism? Would a candidate be worthy of our vote and capable to lead us if he or she said they were personally against forcing young girls into prostitution, but at the same time, they said they have an obligation not to limit this horrible practice because they do not want to impose their beliefs on others?

Finally, for me, the question comes to mind is how can I trust a candidate for public office who says he or she will help the poor, elderly, the disadvantages, who at the same time is not willing to protect the lives of the most vulnerable, unborn children and their mothers?

To find out where the major party candidates for president stand on the issue of abortion, you can go to the website: <http://www.nrlc.org/Records/potuscomparison.pdf>. I realize this article has only scratched the surface of this complex and sensitive issue. I encourage you to go the United States Conference of Catholic Bishop's website at [www.usccb.org](http://www.usccb.org) to read further on how to properly form conscience.

I have probably created more confusion than have helped in this important matter, and there is still certainly much more to discuss. Maybe, I should have taken my grandfathers advice after all. God bless you.

Fr. Sam West  
Chaplain



## Executive

**Board** *The CPBC Executive Board meets the fourth Wednesday of every month, at First Cal, 3224 McHenry Ave. Plans are developed for future meetings. Guests are welcome at the 7 a.m. session. Contact George Erbele, [gerbele2@yahoo.com](mailto:gerbele2@yahoo.com) if interested in serving on the board*

### *Mission Statement*

“As Catholic professional business men and women, we are called to live our Christian ethics not only on Sunday, but throughout our daily lives at home and at work.”

Our goal in the Catholic Professional and Business Club, an unincorporated association (CP&BC), shall be to gather to share with others who seek a more ethical business environment.

Each of us shall strive to achieve a co-mingling of our ethical and professional obligations, in demonstration of the fact that ethics and business need not be mutually exclusive terms.

**Parish  
and  
School  
News from  
around  
the city  
and  
county**

CCHS Open House, October 30, 5:30 p.m. Tour the school, meet teachers and coaches

8<sup>TH</sup> GRADE DAY

**Central Catholic High School**

Friday, November 30

9-1 p.m.

8<sup>th</sup> graders from all of our Catholic Schools, public schools

and other private schools are welcome. Please call

Ms. Tybor at 524-9611 to reserve a spot.

Students will participate in a rally, attend classes, enjoy a

lunchtime dance and free pizza lunch

Legacy of Hope, Dinner and Auction Gala for United Samaritans, Turlock, November 17<sup>th</sup>, \$100

CCHS Italian Crab Feed, CCHS, November 17<sup>th</sup>, \$45

St. Joseph's Many Hands, Many Hearts, Dinner and Auction, November 2

