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## Focus on Religious Freedom

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### Choosing Leaders Who Uphold Life and Religious Liberty

“ At this stage of history, the liberating message of *the Gospel of Life* has been put into your hands. And the mission of proclaiming it to the ends of the earth is now passing to your generation. Like the great Apostle Paul, you too must feel the full urgency of the task: **“Woe to me if I do not evangelize” (1Cor 9,16). Woe to you if you do not succeed in defending life.**”  
Pope Saint John Paul II, Aug. 15, 1993 Denver, CO; World Youth Day

In Nov., 2023 the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) approved by an overwhelming majority of 225-11 to again include the threat of abortion as a pre-eminent priority in their guide for Catholics, *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship*. The Bishops state that because abortion affects the most vulnerable among us and is responsible for a million deaths of unborn children here in the United States every year, it is an intrinsic evil and must, along with euthanasia, always be opposed.

The choice to support life is more difficult when there is no candidate who perfectly protects unborn life in every situation. Specific commentary on this issue is available referring to the teaching of Pope Saint John Paul II in *Evangelium Vitae* (73) as he expands on St. Thomas Aquinas’ principle in *Summa Theologiae* along with teaching from Jesuit moralist Father Henry Davis as referred to in the National Catholic Register’s article: <https://www.ncregister.com/commentaries/is-there-a-lesser-of-two-evils>

The USCCB also points out the importance of Catholic support for Freedom of Religion, which has come under great pressure here in the United States in spite of strong Constitutional support for the freedom to choose one’s religious beliefs and to practice those beliefs openly and without reprisal.

Too many Americans allow their religious practice to be marginalized because of repeated and strident propaganda which has been accepted as truth. Most harmful of the propaganda is the ongoing, deliberate deception that the phrase “separation of church and state” is part of the Constitution and forbids any meaningful public reference to God or morals. This lie perpetuated in our media, schools and universities, is pervasive and unchallenged. In fact, Pres. Thomas Jefferson penned the phrase in support of individual freedom of conscience and cited the First Amendment as protecting churches and individual conscience from government interference “thus building a wall of separation between Church and State.”

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