

# 2024 *The Candidates, the Issues and Church Teaching* Voter's Guide

The 2024 presidential campaign has been unlike any other in our nation's history. Former president Donald Trump, the Republican nominee, narrowly survived two assassination attempts. Meanwhile, his presumed opponent, President Joe Biden, unexpectedly bowed out of the race, leaving Vice President Kamala Harris to take his place as the Democratic nominee.

Now, it's time to make a choice. As Catholic voters, it's important to be well-informed about the candidates' views on the pressing issues of the day. But not only that: Our consciences also ought to be well-formed by the sound guidance and teachings of our Church. For that reason, the Register's 2024 Voter's Guide combines the candidates' positions and excerpts from their party's platforms with citations from the Catechism of the Catholic Church and other reliable Church sources, focusing on seven key "pillars" that have special resonance for Catholics this year: Abortion and Life Issues; Family Life; the Economy, Foreign Policy, Immigration; Care for Creation and Care for the Elderly. We hope this guide can help you prayerfully discern which candidate is most deserving of your support as our country prepares for Election Day on Nov. 5.



ANDREW HARNIK/GETTY IMAGES



BILL PUGLIANO/GETTY IMAGES

## The Seven Pillars

### Abortion and Life Issues



The Catholic position on matters pertaining to civil law is rooted in a basic principle: Human life is sacred. It's for that reason, as the U.S. bishops remind us in their own voter guide, that the Church so vociferously opposes abortion, euthanasia, assisted suicide and in vitro fertilization, since all four directly attack life itself — "the

most fundamental human good and the condition for all others." While abortion is a perennial issue in presidential campaigns, this year's election marks the first since the Supreme Court overturned *Roe v. Wade* in 2022, a decision that triggered a seismic shift in abortion politics. Freed from *Roe's* constraints, individual states may now regulate abortion as they see fit. But as the Trump-Harris race has made clear, abortion remains very much a federal issue, too. Unexpectedly, the same is also true with IVF, as both major parties have tried to curry favor with those who support the use of artificial means to create new life. Their support for infertile couples may be well-meaning, but it ignores the darker reality that IVF involves the callous abuse and destruction of embryonic human life on a massive scale.

### Family Life



The family is an integral part of God's plan for humanity, an image of the Holy Trinity, and the place where children are prepared to become faithful citizens. Because of the family's vital importance, society must promote its flourishing, aiding parents' ability to raise their children. Today, however, American families face innumerable challenges, both material and ideological. Family formation and birthrates have been hit by high costs and also crises of confidence in the future and the devaluing of parenthood. With a birthrate of 1.62 children per woman, Americans are having less children today than ever before.

Meanwhile, families are harmed by the spread of counterfeit understandings of marriage and gender ideology. Pope Francis has described the latter as the ugliest ideology of our times because it cancels out the differences between men and women. Parents' rights to form their own children are undermined by aggressive ideological agendas in the classroom, pop culture and even courthouses, often backed by state and federal government. The next American president will be faced with not only providing American families economic relief, but confidence in raising children.

### Economy



The economy, and particularly inflation, is by far the top concern of voters nationwide and across demographic categories. A spike in inflation in recent years has lessened the purchasing power of consumers and substantially increased the cost of living for average Americans. While inflation is down from its

2022 peak of 9.1%, rising prices — particularly for food — remain a concern. Today, a pound of chicken costs about 35% more than it did three years ago, and the price of bread and eggs have both increased by about 30%. The cost of housing has also risen rapidly in recent years, with the national median home price ballooning by 40% since 2021. The national median for rent has also risen by 26% in the same period. Other indicators offer a mixed picture of the health of the U.S. economy. The gross domestic product (GDP) has risen in recent years, but at a slow pace. And while the current unemployment rate of 4.3% is average by historical standards, government statistics revealed that 818,000 fewer jobs were created between March 2023 and March 2024 than had previously been reported.

### Foreign Policy



The next president of the United States will contend with a globe increasingly engulfed in military conflict in multiple theaters. In Europe, the war between Russia and Ukraine — the largest in continental Europe since World War II — will soon enter its third year, with the U.S. having provided

Ukraine more than \$175 billion in military aid to date. In the Middle East, Israel's war against Hamas will enter its second year. A key geopolitical ally, Israel launched its military operation in Gaza in response to the Oct. 7, 2023, terrorist attack that left more than 1,100 dead, including at least 31 Americans. Israel has come under international pressure for its prosecution of the war, which has produced significant civilian casualties. In Asia, U.S. military experts believe that by 2027 China will have built sufficient military capability to invade neighboring Taiwan, a key U.S. geopolitical ally and large-scale producer of coveted technology. A Taiwanese defeat would endanger other democratic allies in the Indo-Pacific, which is by far the world's fastest-growing economic region.

### Immigration



For Catholics as well as lawmakers, immigration stands as one of the thorniest issues to navigate. While the Catholic Church sets forth clear moral principles on immigration, prudential judgments differ on how best to implement them. Pope Pius XII in 1952 called

Joseph "the archetype of every refugee family," and he endorsed what he called "the right of people to migrate." More recently, Pope Francis called for countries to "welcome, protect, promote and integrate" migrants now fleeing their homelands in record numbers. Yet Catholic social teaching also acknowledges that a country has, as the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops explains, "the right to regulate its borders to control immigration ... for the common good," for "no country is bound to accept all those who wish to resettle there." While their approach differs markedly, both parties agree that our immigration system is "broken" and has been for decades. An attempt to broker a bipartisan plan to address some of the most urgent issues at the U.S. southern border, which has been overwhelmed by a surge of illegal crossings in recent years, failed earlier this year.

### Care for Creation



Created in God's image and likeness, humanity is called to steward creation (Genesis 1:26). God gives mankind "dominion" over all the Earth, not to exploit creation, but to ensure that it is cultivated and that its fruits are shared among all peoples. As Pope Benedict XVI taught, "the environment is God's gift to everyone," and "our duties towards the environment are linked to our duties towards the human person."

While perennial, man's duty to care for creation is more pressing than ever, given both the terrifying power of modern technology and a widespread consumeristic mindset. Pope Francis and his predecessors have warned that poor stewardship of the environment — including air and water pollution and man-made climate change — affects the poor most acutely, puts future generations in peril, and contributes to global instability. In *Laudato Si*, Pope Francis also spoke of an "ecological debt" that wealthier nations owe poorer ones when crafting policies that impact the environment. The next American president will be responsible for determining how the U.S. ensures access to resources while upholding ecological integrity and providing for our country's energy needs.

### Care for the Elderly



The elderly encounter challenges as they age. Their health-care needs and health-care costs usually increase as their ability to work diminishes. Some struggle to obtain health care. Some feel lonely. Some feel like a burden to their families. The Catholic Church teaches that longevity is a gift from God and that elderly

people must be treated with respect and dignity. "The whole of society must hasten to take care of its elderly — they are its treasure! — who are increasingly numerous and often also more abandoned," Pope Francis said in 2022. Both parties support the two biggest federal programs for the elderly: Social Security, which provides a government pension for retirees, and Medicare, which pays most of the costs of health care for people age 65 and older. With the cost of both programs rising sharply, however, some public officials question how the federal government can continue to pay for them. Democrats call for a tax increase on multimillionaires. Republicans say an economic boom under a Republican administration will help pay for the programs, since the federal government would stand to take in more money in tax revenue.

### Election Prayer



Lord Jesus Christ, you told us to give to Caesar what belongs to Caesar and to God what belongs to God. Enlighten the minds of our people in America. May we choose a president of the United States, and other government officials, according to your divine will. Give our citizens the courage to choose leaders of our nation who respect the sanctity of unborn human life, the sanctity of marriage, the sanctity of marital relations, the sanctity of the family, and the sanctity of the aging. Grant us the wisdom to give you what belongs to you, our God. If we do this, as a nation, we are confident you will give us an abundance of your blessings through our elected leaders. Amen.

Composed by Servant of God Father John Hardon  
Imprimatur: Bishop René Gracida of Corpus Christi, 1992

## Catholic Morality Through the Lens of Justice in the Next Election

### COMMENTARY

As we approach the upcoming election, it is incumbent upon Catholics to vote for candidates and ballot measures that protect justice for the unborn, those with gender confusion and women.

The popular culture claims to have the moral high ground, which has caused many Catholics to shy away from the Church's positions. However, the real moral high ground belongs to the Church, which truly protects the vulnerable from grave harms, injustices and the violation of their inalienable rights.

### The Right to Life

Science has established that a new, unique, substantially whole human being comes into existence at fertilization (a single-celled zygote). When this is combined with four principles from historical and contemporary philosophy of law, it shows indisputably that unborn human

beings are legal persons (deserving of protection under the law) who possess, by their very nature, the inalienable rights of life, liberty, property and the pursuit of happiness. Therefore, killing the unborn (innocent human beings) is a grave injustice and a violation of their inalienable rights.

The law and authority that permit this injury and death are unjust, and as St. Augustine, John Locke, Thomas Jefferson,



FATHER ROBERT SPITZER, SJ

Edmund Burke, Martin Luther King Jr., Mahatma Gandhi, and the U.N. Universal Declaration on Human Rights recognize, "An unjust law is no law at all" — and those who enact such laws delegitimize themselves.

The dismantling and destruction of the rights of the unborn is in every way tantamount to that done to African Americans to justify slavery in *Dred*

*Scott v. Sandford*. The fallacious and intentionally destructive rationale for abortion and slavery used by both Supreme Courts is almost identical: the reduction of substantially equal human beings to "a subordinate and inferior class of beings." This distorted rationale led the Supreme Court in *Dred Scott* to conclude "[Black people have] no rights or privileges but such as those who hold the power and the Government might choose to grant them." States promoting abortion effectively say the same thing about the rights of the unborn.

How, then, can one say without contradiction, "I agree with the rationale in *Roe v. Wade* but not the rationale of *Dred Scott v. Sandford*"? We can no longer turn a blind eye to this obvious injustice and violation of inalienable rights.

Much has been made of abortion as non-detrimental to women's emotional health and well-being. Nothing could be further from the truth.

Priscilla Coleman, an American psy-

chologist and researcher, studied the effects of abortion on three-quarters of a million women and found that 81% of women who had an abortion had significantly higher negative mental-health effects than those who brought their babies to term or were never pregnant. Specifically, women who had an abortion versus those who did not had a four times greater rate of suicide, a 2.5 times greater rate of suicidal contemplation, a 2.1 times greater rate of substance/alcohol abuse, a 1.4 times greater rate of depression, and a 1.3 times greater rate of anxiety.

Considering this, it must be admitted that abortion has a significantly detrimental effect on women's emotional health. Any other conclusion is pure sophistry — deception!

### Transgenderism

Some critics contend that the Church has marginalized, demeaned and caused the persecution of the transgendered and that she even hates them. These mali-

cious accusations are completely false because the Church has never been and never will be against *people* with cross-gender confusion who receive gender-affirming care or sexual-reassignment surgery! She is against the injustice and harmful effects of transgenderism.

What are these harmful effects? **1. A three-times increase in mortality rates and significant, lifelong emotional health issues among those receiving gender-affirming care.** The physical-emotional problems of transgenderism start almost immediately after gender-affirming therapy (reception of hormonal treatment). The most extensive longitudinal study done in the Netherlands (over 50 years) by physicians administering gender-affirming therapy found that transgender women (biological men who transitioned to women) had two times the mortality rate of biological men and three times the mortality rate of biological women. They

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# Catholic Teaching on Voting for The Lesser of 2 Evils

COMMENTARY

In an in-flight interview Sept. 13, Pope Francis was recently asked about the U.S. elections and noted that both major candidates are “against life,” adding that a voter must choose between “the lesser of two evils.” Both brief comments represent a shorthand for a developed Catholic moral theology about complex moral decisions, especially when the options are imperfect, as is often the case.

In 2006, Pope Benedict XVI articulated a clear statement of the principle of social goods,



COLIN DONOVAN



**REAFFIRMING MORAL THEOLOGY.** Pope Francis speaks with journalists Sept. 13 aboard his return flight from Singapore to Rome. In his response to a question about the US presidential election, the Holy Father reaffirmed Catholic moral theology when he noted that voters must sometimes choose between ‘the lesser of two evils,’ when voting for one of the major candidates. Vatican Pool/Getty Images

which the Church considers important both in legislation and in elections. These “common” or “social” goods are necessary for a well-ordered society and, therefore, those who govern society should govern in keeping with them. The public political character of a candidate should, therefore, be judged by the extent to which their governance history, their current policy views and objectives coincide with the common good.

Since these are often in service of their party’s objectives, the party’s platform should also be considered. These elements belong to a prudent judgment about the merits of their candidacy and how they will likely govern.

In his March 30, 2006, address to a group of European Parliamentarians, Pope Benedict stated that “the principal focus of [the Church’s] interventions in the public arena is the protection and promotion of the dignity of the person, and she is thereby consciously drawing particular attention to principles which are not negotiable. Among these, the following emerge clearly today:

- the protection of life in all its stages, from the first moment of conception until natural death;
- recognition and promotion of the natural structure of the family as a union between a man and a woman based on marriage;
- the protection of the right of parents to educate their children.”

Here, Pope Benedict identified the principle social goods that human beings need to flourish: life, the natural family structure, and the freedom to raise one’s children in accordance with one’s beliefs. Only then will society itself flourish in accordance with our nature and God’s plan.

The purpose of governing is, therefore, to facilitate these common goods, not to substitute others that do not serve human flourishing. Likewise, to the extent that a candidate’s views and policies would advance these goods, they are worthy of our vote. To the extent that they would not, they are unworthy of it.

Unfortunately, it is all too common that candidates do not hold

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**WE DO NOT FULFILL OUR ROLE IF WE DO NOT HELP ELECT THOSE WHO WILL REPRESENT US WELL OR PREVENT THE ELECTION OF CANDIDATES WHO WILL NOT.**  
 .....

these social goods at the center of their political views or hold them imperfectly. In such cases, as Pope Benedict noted, the voter should choose the lesser of the evils. By this, he means we should vote for the candidate who would do the least evil, in order to prevent the evil that the other candidate would do. It is this choice of the will that redeems our vote. However, in doing so, we should make clear to others, who may wonder, that our purpose was to prevent a greater evil and was not to support the evil the candidate for whom we voted might do.

Although Pope Francis used the life issue as his example, it is clear that more than life in the strict sense (abortion, euthanasia) is at stake in any election. As noted above, Pope Benedict identifies three goods that flow from human life. In addition to the life of the individual — without which no other rights or goods matter — there is the life of the basic cell of society (natural marriage and fam-

ily) and the liberties that are necessary for individuals and families to live and flourish. Thus, when comparing candidates to determine which one has the least evil views and policy positions, all three principles must be considered.

While clearly few candidates in any election perfectly hold these human and Christian values, it is often clear that some profess contrary values against one or the other, or even all three, of these paramount goods. Some candidates hold them deeply by conviction, and they have spent political careers fighting for them. The thoroughness of those views and their past and current policies and actions are the best guide to how the candidate will govern.

In the end, as Pope Francis noted, the voter must choose. Both the Catechism and the moral tradition teach this. In our constitutional system, it is the people who govern, but we do not fulfill our role if we do not help elect those who will represent us well or prevent the election of candidates who will not. If we cannot choose a candidate who seeks the common good across the board, then we need to choose the one who will do the least harm. To choose otherwise is to abdicate our responsibility to vote.

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“One day through the Rosary and the Scapular, Our Lady will save the world!”  
 -St. Dominic



Whoever shall faithfully serve me by the recitation of the Rosary, shall receive signal graces.

People who pray the Rosary in a group receive the merits of the total number of participants!

- 1) Holy rosary from the heart
- 2) Holy mass
- 3) Holy scripture
- 4) Fasting
- 5) Confession



Give me an army saying the Rosary and I will conquer the world.”  
 -Blessed Pope Pius IX

## Immigration



**The Catechism Says:**

“The more prosperous nations are obliged, to the extent they are able, to welcome the foreigner in search of the security and the means of livelihood which he cannot find in his country of origin. Public authorities should see to it that the natural right is respected that places a guest under the protection of those who receive him. Political authorities, for the sake of the common good for which they are responsible, may make the exercise of the right to immigrate subject to various juridical conditions, especially with regard to the immigrants’ duties toward their country of adoption. Immigrants are obliged to respect with gratitude the material and spiritual heritage of the country that receives them, to obey its laws and to assist in carrying civic burdens” (2241).



**Democratic Party:**

The Democratic Party platform calls for expanding immigration. “Legislation must secure the border, reform the asylum system, expand legal immigration; and keep families together by supporting a pathway for long-term undocumented individuals, improving the work authorization process, and securing the future of the DACA program,” the platform states, referring to the “Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals” policy that allows immigrants brought to the country illegally when they were children to receive renewable extensions of their authorization to live and work in the country.



**Kamala Harris:**

Kamala Harris supported the Biden administration’s policy of allowing immigrants into the country while their asylum claims are pending, and she has also supported Biden’s announcement in June 2024 of a new policy designed to limit the number of migrants coming across the border. “I know we can live up to our proud heritage as a nation of immigrants and reform our broken immigration system. We can create an earned pathway to citizenship and secure our border,” Harris said during her acceptance speech at the Democratic National Convention on Aug. 22.



**Republican Party:**

The Republican Party platform calls for completing the border wall on the country’s southern border, reinstating the first Trump administration’s “Remain in Mexico” policy, halting releases of migrants into the interior of the country, moving troops to guard the southern border, and beginning what it calls the “largest deportation program in American history.” “Republicans will secure the Border, deport Illegal Aliens, and reverse the Democrats’ Open Borders Policies that have driven up the cost of Housing, Education, and Healthcare for American families,” the party platform says. It also says the party “will end luxury housing and Taxpayer benefits for Illegal Immigrants and use those savings to shelter and treat homeless Veterans.”



**Donald Trump:**

Donald Trump has described migration into the United States during the Biden years as a disaster and has promised mass deportations. “We also have an illegal immigration crisis — a massive invasion at our southern border that has spread misery, crime, poverty, disease and destruction to communities all across our land,” Trump said during his acceptance speech at the Republican National Convention on July 18.

## Care for Creation



### The Catechism Says:

"The Seventh Commandment ['You shall not steal'] enjoins respect for the integrity of creation. Animals, like plants and inanimate beings, are by nature destined for the common good of past, present, and future humanity. Use of the mineral, vegetable, and animal resources of the universe cannot be divorced from respect for moral imperatives. Man's dominion over inanimate and other living beings granted by the Creator is not absolute; it is limited by concern for the quality of life of his neighbor, including generations to come; it requires a religious respect for the integrity of creation" (2415).



### Democratic Party:

The Democrats devote an entire chapter of their platform to both addressing environmental challenges like climate change and making energy access more affordable and secure. The party notes that environmental crises "hit the most vulnerable among us hardest," including seniors, people with disabilities and the poor, and that climate change poses an "existential threat to future generations."

The party aims to reduce pollution by initiatives like eliminating carbon from the transportation sector by 2050 through the promotion of electric trucks, buses and cars. Installing one million solar rooftop panels in low-income areas by 2029 and adding additional regulations that protect drinking water from chemical runoff are ways Democrats plan to pursue "environmental justice." The party aims to build on the Biden administration's trillion-dollar investment in green energy by continuing to incentivize alternatives to fossil fuels, which Democrats contend will drive down energy costs by giving consumers "more energy choices than ever." Democrats also pledged to ensure that the U.S. continues to be a "global climate leader" by committing \$11 billion to developing the international clean-energy market.



### Kamala Harris:

Like her party, Harris pledges her commitment to both lowering energy costs and tackling climate change. Once a supporter of a fracking ban, her campaign website touts her legal victories against oil companies during her time as California's attorney general, as well as her tie-breaking vote as vice president that passed Biden's trillion-dollar climate-investment package through the Senate.

If elected, Harris says she will "unite Americans to tackle the climate crisis as she builds on this historic work, advances environmental justice, protects public lands and public health, increases resilience to climate disasters, lowers household energy costs, creates millions of new jobs, and continues to hold polluters accountable to secure clean air and water for all." During her recent debate with Donald Trump, the vice president described climate change as "very real" and linked inaction on environmental crises to rising costs for homeowners and consumers, but also boasted that domestic gas production has reached historic levels under the Biden-Harris administration.



### Republican Party:

The GOP party platform makes no direct mention of issues like climate change or pollution. The platform does discuss, however, the need to "unleash American Energy" by extracting natural resources, lifting restrictions and "terminating the Socialist Green New Deal." "The United States has more liquid gold under our feet than any other Nation, and it's not even close," the party platform states. "The Republican Party will harness that potential to power our future." The platform speaks of promoting energy production "from all sources," including nuclear energy, in order to "immediately slash inflation and power American homes, cars, and factories with reliable, abundant, and affordable energy."

While the GOP emphasizes that its energy policies are aimed at ensuring that the fruits of natural resources are more widely available, there is no corresponding discussion of responsible stewardship and mitigating ecological harm.



### Donald Trump:

Trump's policy positions related to the environment mirror those of his party's platform. A key campaign promise is to "make America the dominant energy producer in the world, by far," while also cutting "costly and burdensome" environmental regulations. The former president has previously called man-made climate change a "hoax" and has contended that crises like California wildfires are caused by poor forest management, not changes to the climate. However, when asked in a 2020 debate if human pollution contributes to warming, he said, "I think a lot of things do, but I think to an extent, yes."

Trump's website says that during the former president's time in the Oval Office, he "unlocked our God-given abundance" of natural resources and rolled back environmental regulations, adding that he will do so again if reelected. He has also criticized President Joe Biden's electric vehicle subsidies for being wasteful. His campaign website states that "President Trump will unleash the production of domestic energy resources, reduce the soaring price of gasoline, diesel and natural gas, promote energy security for our friends around the world, eliminate the socialist Green New Deal and ensure the United States is never again at the mercy of a foreign supplier of energy."

## Care for the Elderly



### The Church Says:

"Inspired by a conviction that older people still have a lot to say and a lot to give to the life of society, the Holy See calls for their dignity and fundamental rights to be respected..." the Vatican's Pontifical Council for the Laity said in a 1998 document called "The Dignity of Older People and Their Mission in the Church and in the World," during a discussion of the demographic shift in the West of older people living longer while fewer babies are being born.



### Democratic Party:

The Democratic Party touts its support for programs to help elderly people pay for medications.

"We've continued to protect and expand the Affordable Care Act, expanding coverage to more Americans ever in history; and we're taking historic steps to lower the cost of prescription drugs — like capping insulin at \$35 a month and prescription drug costs at \$2,000 a year for seniors — and we'll keep fighting to expand those caps for every American," the party's platform states.

The Democrats' insulin cap is down "from as much as \$400 per month, for nearly 4 million seniors on Medicare," the platform states, adding that the current administration "persuaded the nation's top three insulin makers to lower their prices for everyone."

"Now, we'll fight to expand that \$35 cap to cover everyone, saving millions of Americans with diabetes nearly \$1,000 a year," the platform says.

"Starting next year, the Inflation Reduction Act also caps total out-of-pocket drug costs at \$2,000 a year for millions of seniors and others on Medicare. Democrats will fight until that cap covers every single American," the platform states.

The platform touts the Democrats' efforts during the current administration to limit the cost of medications.

On Social Security, the platform says, "Middle-class Americans pay 6.2% of their income to support Social Security, and the self-employed pay twice that. But people with multimillion-dollar incomes pay a fraction of 1%. We'll strengthen the program and expand benefits by asking the wealthiest Americans to pay their fair share."

It doesn't say how much the tax increase on multimillionaires would be or what the threshold income would be for it.



### Kamala Harris:

"Vice President Harris will protect Social Security and Medicare against relentless attacks from Donald Trump and his extreme allies. She will strengthen Social Security and Medicare for the long haul by making millionaires and billionaires pay their fair share in taxes. She will always fight to ensure that Americans can count on getting the benefits they earned," Harris' campaign website says.



### Republican Party:

The Republican Party's 2024 platform supports Social Security and Medicare but portrays certain other government policies as getting in the way of elderly people getting access to health care. It calls for encouraging health care workers for senior citizens.

"Republicans will shift resources back to at-home Senior Care, overturn disincentives that lead to Care Worker shortages, and support unpaid Family Caregivers through Tax Credits and reduced red tape," the platform states. It adds the party will help the elderly address health problems without going broke.

"Republicans will support increased focus on Chronic Disease prevention and management, Long-Term Care, and Benefit flexibility. We will expand access to Primary Care and support Policies that help Seniors remain in their homes and maintain Financial Security," the platform states. Republicans say they will use the free market to lower the cost of prescription drugs.

"Healthcare and prescription drug costs are out of control. Republicans will increase Transparency, promote Choice and Competition, and expand access to new Affordable Healthcare and prescription drug options," the platform states.

Republicans say they will provide improved economic conditions to fund Social Security, without specifying how. "Social Security is a lifeline for millions of Retirees, yet corrupt politicians have robbed Social Security to fund their pet projects. Republicans will restore Economic Stability to ensure the long-term sustainability of Social Security," the Republican Party's platform states. The platform also endorses Medicare, saying: "We will ensure these programs remain solvent long into the future by reversing harmful Democrat policies and unleashing a new Economic Boom."



### Donald Trump:

"I am going to protect Social Security and Medicare — Democrats are going to destroy Social Security and Medicare," Trump said during his acceptance speech at the Republican National Convention on July 18.

The Republican Party's 2024 platform, which is what the Trump campaign uses for its stances on issues, states: "President Trump has made absolutely clear that he will not cut one penny from Medicare or Social Security."



Register to vote at [Vote.org](https://www.vote.org).



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## Spitzer

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also found that despite multiple attempts to lower the mortality rates, they were unable to do so over 50 years. Therefore, receiving hormones of the opposite of one's biological sex will increase death rates by two to three times.

**2. A 20-times increase in suicides among those receiving sexual reassignment surgery.** According to psychiatrist Paul McHugh of Johns Hopkins Medical School, "The most thorough follow-up of sex-reassigned people — extending over 30 years and conducted in Sweden, where the culture is strongly supportive of the transgendered — documents their lifelong mental unrest. Ten to fifteen years after surgical reassignment, the suicide rate of those who had undergone sex reassignment surgery rose to 20 times that of comparable peers."

Indeed, the negative effects on physical and emotional health are so deep and prolific, and the "benefits" so comparatively small, that five European countries that were fore-runners of gender-affirming care for young people have reversed their positions — either banning it or further restricting it: Great Britain, Sweden, Finland, Norway and France.

The medical establishment's encouragement of pre-adolescents and adolescents to pursue rapid sexual

reassignment in the face of these very detrimental physical and emotional health effects is a grave injustice.

How can this be viewed as medically ethical given adolescents' undeveloped frontal cortex (responsible for judgment), their lack of experience, and their habituation to emotion before rational reflection? Do we have to wait for lawsuits to reverse this destructive and unjust course of action? Let's vote for candidates who want to rectify this cultural travesty.

If you believe that abortion and transgenderism are causing genuine harm and injustice to vulnerable populations, fight back against the popular culture that wrongly tries to justify them. Vote for candidates and ballot measures that protect the vulnerable — and speak with your family and friends about these issues.

*Jesuit Father Robert J. Spitzer, Ph.D., is president of the Magis Center of Reason and Faith, a prolific author and host of Father Spitzer's Universe on EWTN.*

### LEARN MORE

More information about these critical issues for Catholics is available by reading these position papers from the Magis Center at [MagisCenter.com](http://MagisCenter.com): "Declaration on the Inalienable Rights of the Preborn: The Grave Injustice of Abortion"

"The Facts About Transgenderism" "Does Abortion Negatively Affect Women's Health? Some Facts"

## Following Mr. Dooley's Election-Year Wisdom

**"A man that'd expict to thrain lobsters to fly in a year is called a loonytic, but a man that thinks men can be tur-rned into angels by an iliction is called a rayformer and remains at large."**

That bit of wisdom concerning the limitations of the electoral process was coined by Mr.



RUSSELL SHAW

Dooley. A purely fictitious creation of author Finley Peter Dunne, Mr. Dooley held forth on many subjects — politics included — from his perch in a Chicago pub. The Dooley sketches first appeared in newspapers and were collected by Dunne in several popular books.

I thought of Dooley recently as I read a memo the executive director of a retirement community sent residents, cautioning them to mind their manners in an election year. It read in part:

"In the coming months, it will be essential for us to demonstrate respectful behavior to each other, even when we disagree. Derogatory, discriminatory, or harassing behaviors will simply not be tolerated. That is not who we are. We strive to be kind, caring, inclusive, and respectful."

Did the executive director see



SHUTTERSTOCK

trouble brewing? Did the memo work? Who can tell?

One thing seems certain. Our politicians lately have been setting a bad example (again?) for the rest of us via their so-called debates. I for one would welcome authentic discussions in which candidates exchanged thoughtful views in measured, civil tones and spent their time — and ours — spelling out competing approaches to problems bearing on the common good. What we have now instead are name-calling contests better suited to the schoolyard than the debate hall.

Noteworthy, too, is the candidly self-critical report by the U.S. Secret

Service concerning its failures in security procedures in connection with the July 13 rally in Butler, Pennsylvania, featuring former president Donald Trump. Trump was grazed by a bullet, two other people were critically injured, and one person was killed. The gunman, 20-year-old Thomas Matthew Crooks, was shot and killed by a Secret Service sniper. And if that wasn't enough, yet another would-be assassination — this time at a Trump golf club in Florida — was thwarted by the Secret Service.

It is hardly news that among the consequences of political campaigns are heightened passions. Appropriately tough security is part of the

necessary response to this fact of life. So, too, are tougher gun-control laws. And so are serious, binding commitments by candidates to tone down their rhetoric. No one will be any the worse for these measures, while the nation as a whole will be a lot better off.

Even in the sequestered setting of a retirement community, its director judged it imperative to urge elderly residents to avoid causing trouble by expressing "derogatory, discriminatory, harassing" views of one another in an overheated political environment. Good advice. Too bad it was needed. We shall see how "kind, caring, inclusive, and respectful" of one another the memo's recipients — and others, too — will succeed in being.

I have no foolproof suggestions for avoiding the kind of unpleasantness envisaged here — except for the obvious step of swearing off political discussions in politically mixed company. In addition, putting aside spiritual reading or whatever they do with their spare time, people who get hot under the collar in political arguments would do well to ponder another bit of wisdom from Mr. Dooley: "A fanatic is a man that does what he thinks the Lord would do if He knew the facts of the case."

*Russell Shaw is a veteran journalist and author of more than 20 books.*

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## Cross Catholic Outreach Combats Extreme Hunger in Developing Countries by Shipping Vitafood

Cross Catholic Outreach, a trusted Catholic ministry located in Florida, is mobilizing donors throughout the U.S. to help relieve extreme hunger in the developing world through a wonderful food resource it calls Vitafood.

This protein-rich product, which is scientifically designed to meet the needs of the malnourished, can be packaged by Catholic groups in America, loaded into large shipping containers and cost-effectively shipped to schools, orphanages and other Catholic partners serving the poorest of the poor overseas.

A single container can make a life-transforming impact, keeping crucial feeding programs running or providing immediate relief when disasters strike.

"We organize food-packing events throughout the U.S. to assemble the ingredients into food packets, but at this stage, we are looking for donors to help us ship this food to Catholic missions in Haiti (see feature story on opposite page). For that, we need cash donations to cover inland and overseas shipping costs," explained Michele Sagarino, president of Cross Catholic Outreach.

"Church leaders in that country are eager to help the poor in their communities, but they need this food to succeed. Vitafood shipments are critical to them, and in some cases, the meals have the potential to save lives."

According to Sagarino, Vitafood is an extremely flexible resource. It comes in several varieties and can be prepared with additional spices or ingredients to suit local tastes. It provides the optimal balance of vitamins, minerals, protein, fiber and carbohydrates for a hungry child's body. This tried-and-tested formula is suitable for more than just severely malnourished children. These meals are also important to the health and physical well-being of children and adults who are healthy but at risk of becoming malnourished.

What's more, because donations and volunteers help get the Vitafood packets to Cross Catholic Outreach at little or no cost, the ministry typically only needs to cover the cost of shipping the meals to the hungry. This means that for every dollar donated, about 14 nutritious meals can be provided to families in need!

"Very few donations a person can make will achieve this much bang for the buck," Sagarino pointed out.

In the last year, global inflation and the impact of the Ukraine war and other conflicts have made this outreach even more important to the poor, according to Sagarino.

"Food shortages and inflation have definitely increased the risks of



Children in Haiti's Central Plateau are in great need of the nutritional support offered by Cross Catholic Outreach.



Cross Catholic Outreach's Vitafood packets are easily shipped, can be safely stored and provide a versatile food source for Catholic ministries. Some serve them as formulated, while others supplement them with local produce, meats and spices.

malnutrition, so our goal is to support Church leaders as they work to improve the health of the people," she said.

"As I see it, this is our opportunity to be a blessed instrument of mercy. It is our chance to further the work of the dedicated priests, sisters and Catholic lay missionaries who are doing everything they can to respond to that threat."

*Readers interested in supporting*

**Cross Catholic Outreach's food programs and other outreaches can contribute through the ministry brochure inserted in this issue or send tax-deductible gifts to Cross Catholic Outreach, Dept. AC04023, PO Box 97168, Washington DC 20090-7168.**

**The ministry needs partners willing to make gifts on a monthly basis. You can use the inserted brochure to become a Cross Mission Partner.**

## Unique Christmas Catalog Created To Bless Donors — and the World's Poor

If you are like most people, your mailbox has been choked with Christmas catalogs this year. In fact, their arrival has almost become a sign of the season, like the appearance of house lights and department store decorations.

This Advent and Christmas season, Cross Catholic Outreach intends to offer a catalog too — but theirs is a very different offering with a very different purpose. It has been designed to bless both givers and receivers by using the

holiday gift-giving tradition to help the world's poorest families.

Rather than offering gizmos, gadgets, neckties and jewelry, the Cross Catholic Outreach Christmas Catalog is giving Catholics with a concern for the poor an opportunity to share the blessings in their lives with needy families by sponsoring practical and urgently needed items like medicines, milk powder, seeds for farming, access to safe water or materials for roof repairs.

Of course, it also offers blessings for children, including toys and sports equipment, so individuals can choose to sponsor both practical items suitable for families and gifts to bring children joy.

"Like most Christmas catalogs, ours offers lots of items so donors can choose to give something very specific. That said, they can also make a general gift to address the poor's greatest needs," explained Jim Cavnar, CEO of Cross Catholic Outreach, the Catholic relief

and development ministry offering this program. "When donors choose to give to Greatest Need, they provide us and the Catholic missions we serve with the freedom to address any urgent need. The priests and religious sisters we support really appreciate that flexibility. It's the best way to empower their work among the poor."

This unique Christmas catalog is easy to access. Readers will find a link for it at the ministry's website

(CrossCatholic.org) or they can reach it directly by entering the web address: CrossCatholic.org/Christmas.

"Our hope is that everyone will be blessed by the experience," Cavnar said. "It's a wonderful way for us to celebrate the birth of our merciful Lord!"

Scan this code to visit Cross Catholic Outreach's Christmas Catalog web page.



## Catholic Ministry Encourages Those Who Have Been Blessed To Consider the Needs of the Poor

Four-year-old Nicolson Derval is fortunate to be alive. The country he was born in — Haiti — has one of the highest child mortality rates in the Western Hemisphere, and his family is among its poorest citizens. When you look into his eyes, it's easy to think, *there but for the grace of God, go I ... or my child ... or my grandchildren.*

**"Knowing we are blessed people should motivate us to share..."**

Michele Sagarino,  
Cross Catholic Outreach

"We hear the 'there but for the grace of God' phrase a lot. It's often stated in recognition that our circumstances — including where we were born — have saved us from situations others are suffering. Some also use it as a thank-you to God, recognizing they've been blessed with rare benefits like abundant food, comfortable housing or a good

education," said Michele Sagarino, president of Cross Catholic Outreach, a leading Catholic ministry involved in relief efforts worldwide. "But I propose there's a third way to look at it — *as a call to action.* Knowing we are blessed people should motivate us to share what we have with the poor."

In Nicolson's case, a blessed Catholic could express his or her support in a number of ways, because the boy's family lives in extreme poverty and faces a multitude of daunting daily challenges. They lack adequate housing, access to education, decent medical care, safe water sources and, perhaps most troubling, regular meals.

"In Haiti, people live under the constant threat of extreme hunger, especially rural families. Everyone there knows someone who lost a young child, and the pain felt by parents, grandparents and siblings can be felt so strongly," Sagarino said. "When you visit a community where food is scarce, you can see the impact of hunger in the eyes of the people and in the physical exhaustion

of the children. It's heartbreaking."

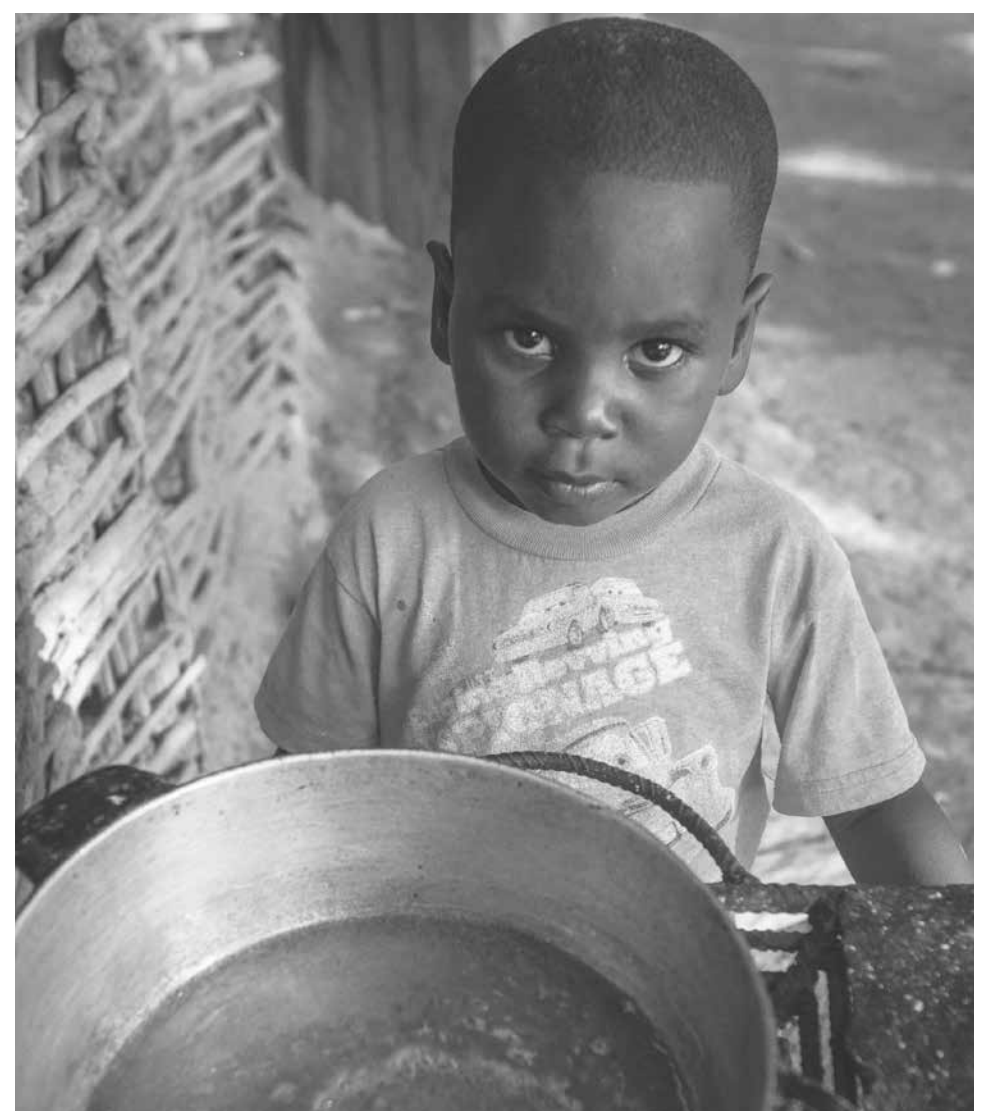
Tragically, the hunger crisis in Haiti — which has always been an issue — recently reached extreme levels, with nearly 7 in 10 people experiencing food insecurity.

The World Food Programme has described the situation as having "famine-like conditions," indicating that children living with these hardships may go several days without food. Their tiny bodies are weakened further by waterborne illnesses caused by bacteria teeming in the dirty rivers and streams they rely on for drinking water. Without treatment, these little ones are dying of diarrheal diseases — one of the leading causes of childhood death in Haiti.

"Surely, the Lord is calling us to address this terrible problem and to ensure Nicolson and other children like him have the food they need to grow up healthy and strong. Surely, God wants the poor in Haiti to have adequate food and the other necessities of life," Sagarino said. "As people who have been blessed in life, shouldn't we be involved in that mission of mercy? Shouldn't we be the first to share what we have? Catholic leaders in Haiti are perfectly positioned to deliver that food relief. They just need our financial support to get the job done."

Sagarino added that she is confident U.S. Catholics will be eager to support this effort as they learn more about the extreme needs in Haiti.

"Hunger is something everyone understands, and American Catholics have always been quick to respond when they learn about specific places in the world with urgent needs," she said. "Catholic ministries in Haiti have asked for our help with food; and with the support of U.S. donors, Cross Catholic Outreach is prepared to ship in thousands of meals. It's time for those of us who have been blessed to share with those in need."



In some of the poorest parts of Haiti, families boil a pot of water and rocks so children like Nicolson (shown here) can imagine a hot meal being prepared.



A woman uses a handmade broom to sweep up outside her family's crumbling house. Mud-and-stick homes like these are common in Haiti's poor rural communities.

### How to Help

To fund Cross Catholic Outreach's effort to help the poor worldwide, use the postage-paid brochure inserted in this newspaper, or mail your gift to Cross Catholic Outreach, Dept. AC04023, PO Box 97168, Washington, DC 20090-7168. The brochure also includes instructions on becoming a Mission Partner and making a regular monthly donation to this cause.

If you identify an aid project, 100% of the donation will be restricted to be used for that specific project. However, if more is raised for the project than is needed, funds will be redirected to other urgent needs in the ministry.

