



**ARCHDIOCESE OF SANTA FE**  
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## **Statement**

**Archbishop John C. Wester on  
*Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship*  
Elections 2016**

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ALBUQUERQUE, NM – Thursday, October 27, 2016- IMMEDIATE RELEASE—Archbishop John C. Wester has issued the following statement on *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship*, Elections 2016.

*As we near the finish line of this election cycle that ends on Tuesday, November 8<sup>th</sup>, it is understandable that emotions are running high. This is certainly true for those of us who care deeply about the sanctity of human life, particularly vulnerable human life in the womb. Yet these emotions do not give us license to espouse positions that do not embrace the full moral teaching of our Catholic tradition. Nor do they allow leaders in the Church to endorse or denounce a candidate because of his or her position on a given issue. I once again urge the Catholic faithful in the Archdiocese of Santa Fe to read, study and reflect on the USCCB document **Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship** [www.faithfulcitizenship.org](http://www.faithfulcitizenship.org). While this document does not give an exhaustive treatment of Catholic moral teaching, it does give excellent advice to Catholic voters as they prepare to cast their ballots. I also invite you to read my articles on **Faithful Citizenship** on pages 4-5 in the August, September and October 2016 issues of **People of God** posted on our website at <http://preview.tinyurl.com/7orv24j>.*

*One of the fundamental points that is made in **Faithful Citizenship** is that the “Church’s leaders are to avoid endorsing or opposing candidates or telling people how to vote.” Rather, “This is a decision to be made by each Catholic guided by a conscience formed by Catholic moral teaching.” It is certainly true that no Catholic should ever intend an intrinsic evil. However, assuming that is not one’s intention, there are many considerations that must be weighed in determining which candidate will ultimately do the most to promote the sanctity of human life and the common good. These considerations are complex, nuanced and contextual, demanding serious study in light of sound Catholic principles. It is our sacred duty as Catholics to form our consciences properly and to make decisions that take into account our religious and political beliefs, giving priority to the former. In any case, no one has the right to censure the conscience of another that has been formed with good will, prayer and Catholic teaching.*

*Any election is important, carrying with it countless consequences and ramifications. This year’s election is no different. I urge all Catholics to vote this coming November. It is a privilege and a duty to vote, and something that our faith urges us to do as we seek to be faithful Catholics and responsible citizens, working actively to further the Kingdom of God on earth.*

Most Rev. John C. Wester, Archbishop of Santa Fe--END