



Our Sacred Duty *Vote*

October 2021

Election Day is November 2, and early voting has already begun. Virginia voters will elect a governor, lieutenant governor, attorney general and all 100 members of the Virginia House of Delegates. Much is at stake, and it is our sacred duty to form our consciences and vote.

May we join with Catholics across the commonwealth in voting for leaders committed to policy positions that uphold the truth reflected in our Catholic beliefs, most notably the protection of all human life, especially those in greatest need. We begin this process with prayer and reflection, standing upon the fundamental teachings of our Catholic Faith.

These three foundational principles must guide how we vote:

- Many issues are important.
- Not all issues have equal moral weight.
- Protecting life is paramount.

As Catholics, we must protect the sacredness of all human life. The right to life is “the fundamental right that makes all other rights possible” (United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, [*Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship*](#), no. 49). It must be “defended with maximum determination” (Saint John Paul II, [*Christifideles Laici*](#), no. 38). In the United States, the tragically pervasive acceptance of abortion underscores the urgency of this message. There have been more than 62 million abortions since *Roe v. Wade*. Still, elected officials in Washington and here in Virginia are working to advance an even more radical abortion-driven agenda. Protecting life to the fullest extent possible is of the utmost importance and must be our highest priority.

For side-by-side comparisons of the policy positions of the major-party candidates for governor, lieutenant governor and attorney general on issues of importance to Catholics (in their own words), visit www.vacatholic.org.

We are blessed to live in a country where we have the freedom to elect our leaders. At the same time, we know that politics have become more divisive and destructive in our communities and even, at times, within our families. Our unity and peace must be founded in and inspired by the healing power of Jesus Christ. May we bring his truth, peace and unity with us to the ballot box in this election, and always.

Faithfully yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael F. Burbidge".

Most Reverend Michael F. Burbidge
Bishop of Arlington

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Barry C. Knestout".

Most Reverend Barry C. Knestout
Bishop of Richmond