Fordham Center on Religion & Culture
Faithful Citizenship I:
Voters, Bishops, and Presidential Elections

Tuesday, 6 September, 2011
Fordham University | Lincoln Center Campus
Pope Auditorium | 113 West 60th Street

Moderator
Peter Steinfels
Fordham Center on Religion and Culture, Co-Director

Panelists
John Carr
United States Catholic Bishops' Conference,
Executive Director of the Department of Justice,
Peace and Human Development

Robert George
Princeton University, McCormick Professor of Jurisprudence and Director of the James Madison Program in American Ideals and Institutions

Stephen Schneck
The Catholic University of America,
Director of the Institute for Policy Research & Catholic Studies

MARGARET STEINFELS: Good evening, all you brave people who have come out in, I guess, the post-Irene deluge — or is this the next hurricane we're having? Anyway, it's good of all of you to come this evening. I welcome you to our Forum, "Faithful Citizenship I." There will be a II, which you will hear about later. Tonight we are talking about "Voters, Bishops, and Presidential Elections."

I am Margaret Steinfels, Co-Director of the Fordham Center on Religion and Culture, the sponsor of this evening's examination of the statements by the Conference of American Catholic Bishops. The statements have been issued since 1976, and you all should have found copies of the last edition, 2008, at your seats, and I'm assuming there are many extras around you if you didn't find one.

Before introducing tonight's moderator and the panel, I would like to ask everyone here to turn off their cell phones, their beepers, their alarm clocks — we have had alarm clocks — and any other device that might interrupt the speakers and disturb anybody in the audience, especially disturb the speakers.

I would also like to explain that the pencils and cards you have found at your place are for submitting questions to the panelists. If you write your question at any time during the course of the discussion, and make them as brief as possible and legible — I repeat legible — just hold up the card when you are finished writing and one of the student assistants — students, raise your hands — will come rushing over and take it from you and bring it

forward. We will try to combine duplicates, eliminate any left over from last year, and pass them up for the end of the panel discussion.

Before we move on, I would like just to — many of you have been coming for many years, and so I know you would like to welcome a new member of our staff at the Center, Jim McCartin, James McCartin, who is joining us as Co-Director.

Jim is the author of a widely praised history, *Prayers of the Faithful: The Shifting Spiritual Life of American Catholics*, which was published by Harvard University Press in 2010. He comes to Fordham from Seton Hall, where he has been associate professor of history and Associate Director of the Center for Catholic Studies. He, of course, has received numerous research and other kinds of economic rewards, which we can tell you all about sometime. He has specialized in questions of Catholicism, public life, and American culture. He will be a visiting professor at Fordham. Jim, if you would just stand so everyone can see you.

Now to our Forum. I introduce to you Peter Steinfels, who is another Co-Director. There are more co-directors at our Center than at any other entity on the East Coast.

PETER STEINFELS: It's my exciting assignment this evening to introduce an outstanding panel of John Carr, Robert George, and Stephen Schneck. I will say more about each of them in turn before they make their initial presentations.

Our discussion this evening will look at the past but be essentially concerned about the future: How can we better understand and better act on the convergence of faith, conscience, and electoral choices, and not simply as isolated individuals and voters, but as members of a worshipping and believing community?

We will not be grinding political axes, though we will be ready to listen attentively this evening to different political perspectives. We will not be issuing a report card on the bishops, although I hope that any bishops who may be hiding in the audience [Laughter] and any who get wind of our discussion will bring these ideas to their Conference Meeting in November.

John Carr will open the discussion with a somewhat-longer-than-usual presentation on the evolution of the U.S. Catholic Bishops' statements on Faithful Citizenship. John was, as Dean Acheson put it about the development of post-World-War-II American foreign policy, present at the creation.

A graduate of the University of St. Thomas in his home territory in Minnesota, John has worked in a variety of positions for the Bishops' Conference since 1975. He also has headed Archdiocesan Social Concerns Offices in Washington, D.C., and St. Paul, Minneapolis, and he served as Executive Director of the 1978–1979 White House Conference on Family and as Director of the National Committee for Full Employment.

He is now the Executive Director of the Bishops' Conference's Department of Justice, Peace and Human Development, where he oversees the Conference's efforts on poverty, health, housing, human rights, religious freedom, environment, arms control, and peacemaking. That leaves him a lot of spare time.

John will speak for no more than fifteen minutes. His remarks will be followed by presentations of eight minutes or less from each of the other panelists.

John has asked me to give him warning signals at ten minutes, twelve minutes, and fourteen minutes, and he recognizes that, to make sure that tonight's panelists have plenty of time for exchanging ideas, I will have to be pretty ruthless about everyone's time limits. So please now welcome John Carr.

JOHN CARR: Thank you, Peter. I thought those little time signals were just going to be between us. I have mixed feelings, frankly, about my role tonight. I am honored to be a part of this distinguished panel at this great university. A place like Fordham, a Catholic Jesuit university, is exactly the kind of place we should be having an important conversation about faith and reason in public life.

We have a very distinguished panel, people who are leaders in the Catholic community, and frankly in the community beyond our own, on these questions.

But I'm a little anxious. My credentials are more modest. As Peter said, I've been a staff member at the Bishops' Conference and done some other things.

My relationship to academic life is more limited, particularly Jesuit academic life. I pay for it. Some of my Jesuit friends have said, "The way the Jesuits practice, the option for the poor is by making me poor." Nonetheless, I am very grateful for this opportunity.

I do have one — I don't have a wonderful chair or I don't head a study center, like Steve and Robbie do, but I think I have the most pompous title, as Peter has suggested.

Steve, how would you like to be Director of Justice, Peace, and Human Development for the U.S. Catholic Bishops' Conference?

STEPHEN SCHNECK: Trade you.

JOHN CARR: Something that Dr. King and Dr. Phil might do together, I think.

I often tell the story of being on an elevator with a couple at one of the bishops' meetings with a big name card that has my title. They seemed a little underwhelmed.

First of all, the guy said, "Are you a bishop?" I said, "No, I'm not a bishop." I don't know whether it was my wedding ring or the way I was dressed that gave me away. I said, "No, I'm not a bishop. I work for the bishops." He saw my title. At that time it was even more pompous, social development and world peace. He said, "He's in charge of social development and world peace." She seemed a little underwhelmed by this. She said, "You need to do a better job."

That is still the case. I think the premise of tonight's panel is all of us — bishops, professors, staffers, ordinary lay people, academics, students — we all need to do a better job of linking what we believe to how we act in public life.

I'm happy to be here for other reasons. I'm happy to be out of Washington. A more polarized, paralyzed, dispirited place you could not find, in the aftermath of the — we can't even agree on when the president can make a speech about jobs. And, frankly, it took two and a half years to get around to jobs for both the president and the Congress.

That polarization, frankly, I'm afraid is seeping into our ecclesial life somewhat, in that very often we tend to wonder how our faith shapes our politics, which is tonight's topic,

often gets turned around into how our politics shapes our faith. I'm hopeful, with the distinguished panelists we have, we can give an example of the alternative.

We can divide up the work in our Church, but we should not be dividing our community of faith. My perspectives are personal and political, they are ecclesial and professional. The reason I'm here is because of my work at the Bishops' Conference. I have been doing this a very long time.

I was there in 1976, when the General Secretary said, "Why don't we just pull together what the Holy Father has said and what the Conference has said about the role of the Church in public life and sort of list what the Conferences said about those issues?" It didn't seem like a big deal. It didn't necessarily set a precedent. But I've been in a lot of church basements and university halls like this one since talking about the role of the Church in public life. It's not always easy, and tonight may not be easy, although you'll take it easy on us, I think.

When Limbo went into limbo, I didn't understand that. But I said to one of the bishops, "I don't care what you do with Limbo, but do not mess with purgatory, because working for you has to count."

The other perspective I bring is political. I'm a product of a mixed marriage. Both my parents are Minnesotan Catholics, my mother from St. Paul, my dad from Minneapolis, which is a bigger deal than some of you know.

Of more relevance, my mother and her family are very active Republicans. My uncle was the Republican leader of the Minnesota State Senate.

My dad, still a diehard Democrat, a proud pro-life Democrat. His father, my grandfather, was Hubert Humphrey's finance chairman when he first ran for mayor, and some of you are old enough to remember that.So I learned at an early age that we can act on our faith, we can express our principles in different ways and in different parties. So I've been asked with that background, personal and professional, to talk a little bit about this process.

In 1976, a document was produced, called "Political Responsibility," and every four years since then a similar document has been created. In 2004 its name was changed to "Faithful Citizenship," a better description I think of its task. In 2007 it was changed to "Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship," echoing the words of Benedict XVI in *Deus Caritas Es*.

There are a lot of ways to describe faithful citizenship. Here is what the document said: "We are called to bring together our principles and our political choices, our values and our votes, to help build a society more respectful of human life, a more just nation, and a more peaceful world."

Pope Benedict, on the South Lawn of the White House, said: "The preservation of freedom calls for the cultivation of virtue, self-discipline, sacrifice for the common good, and a sense of responsibility towards the less fortunate. It also demands the courage to engage in civic life and to bring one's deepest beliefs and values to reasoned public debate. In a word, freedom is ever new."

We have to be very clear. As a community of faith, we are not brought together by our political convictions. We are a church, not a lobby, we are a community of faith, not an

interest group, and what brings us together is the Word of God and the teaching of the Church, not politics, not ideology. We are not the Democratic party at prayer. We are not the religious caucus, the Catholic caucus, of the Republican Party.

In many ways, at this moment of intense cynicism and, frankly, justifiable frustration with the political process, the most countercultural thing the Church teaches and the bishops have said is that politics is a good thing, that participation in public life is a moral obligation and an essential part of being American and Catholic. That is more countercultural in some ways than all life is sacred, that war ought to be a last resort, that the poor ought to come first, that marriage ought not to be redefined, because the disgust with politics threatens to overwhelm our public life.

And so, for thirty-five years in eight different statements, beginning in 1976, the bishops have tried to share what the Church teaches, initially in a very, frankly, mechanical way. Taking what has been said, frankly, in *Gaudium et Spes*, the Second Vatican Council, "A Call to Action," Pope Paul VI, and the statements of the Bishops' Conference that went through the administrative committee of the Bishops' Conference was not a big deal. But it became a big deal. You may remember a series of controversies.

In 1976 the president of the Bishops' Conference said he was disappointed in Governor Carter's position on abortion and encouraged by President Ford's position on abortion. It will probably surprise you to remember who said that. It was Cardinal Bernardin.

We have gone through the questions about the vice presidential nominee, Geraldine Ferraro, from this state. We have gone through the questions around Senator Kerry and the place of communion in his life and ours.

There has always been a set of controversies around that. But in the middle of this there has been an effort on the part of the bishops of the United States to lay out as best they can what the Church teaches about public life and then try and apply those principles to some of the most pressing issues facing the country.

Some things have been continuous. They have not changed over time. They have always been a summary of Catholic teaching. Very rarely have they broken new ground. They have tried to outline the role of the Church with an emphasis on the role of the laity.

They often list not only our principles but our assets. In public life what we bring is not only what we believe but it's what we do. Who feeds the hungry? Who shelters the homeless? Who cares for the sick? Who educates the young? So we bring what we do as well as what we believe.

There has always been a call to participation and engagement. It has actively in every statement disclaimed any notion of telling Catholics how to vote. It has never offered a traditional voters' guide. There has always been an emphasis on the common good. And there has always been a priority for human life and dignity expressed in different language through the years.

The title has changed from "Political Responsibility," to "Faithful Citizenship," to "Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship."
Like any document produced by a body of people, everyone says it ought to be shorter and then they add things to it. It started out relatively brief, then it got longer and longer and longer, and then there was real effort by the administrative committee of the bishops

to pull it back, and it got shorter, and then it got longer and longer, and then they pulled it back again.

The process has changed significantly. Initially, as I said, it was almost mechanical and involved bishops approving sort of a compendium of what had already been said. Through the years, a couple committees of the Conference had taken the lead, had consulted with other committees of the conference, and then it was adopted by the administrative committee of the Bishops' Conference, which were the sixty elected leaders who run the Conference most of the time.

In recent years, there have been some add-ons. There has been a short version, though you may not think it's very short. The reason it's not very short is the bishops couldn't agree what else to delete from it. So it's in very small type.

There have been a set of questions for the campaign, challenges for the campaign. But I would suggest — and I'll conclude with this — that what happened in 2007 was very much different, in that the bishops, while keeping with the same fundamental purpose, developed a different way of talking about that task, a different process, and frankly different content.

Instead of being developed by a couple committees and approved by the administrative committee, this document was the work of eight committees of the Conference working together. It was reviewed by the entire body of bishops three times and was adopted overwhelmingly by the entire group of bishops. I think it was 214–4. One of the bishops said, "I don't think we could present the Trinity and get only four negative votes." He thought this was quite an achievement.

It took in 2007 a different tack. It was not a commentary on a particular election. The words "2008" do not appear in the document. Rather, it took as its starting point Pope Benedict's words in *Deus Caritas Es* that said: "It is not the Church's responsibility to make this teaching prevail in political life. Rather, the Church wishes to help form consciences in political life and to stimulate greater insight into the authentic requirements of justice as well as greater readiness to act accordingly, even when this might involve conflict with situations of personal interest." So the role of the Church is to form consciences, and in that the bishops had found their central theme.

That task remains. The teaching hasn't changed. In my view, the issues haven't changed. Sadly, we're still at war in two and a half places at least; we're still fighting over health care; we have an even more intense struggle to defend marriage as we know it; there are still a million abortions a year; we still don't have meaningful immigration reform.

That document, adopted overwhelmingly by the bishops, the work of several of its committees, offers I think a continuing way forward.

I will conclude by suggesting that there are three sets of ideas that are worth thinking about. One is there are two foundations for this document — one is conscience and the other is prudence. I would suggest that one of the areas the bishops and all of us need to do some work is what does it mean to form conscience, because in our culture conscience very often means not doing what is hard but doing what we want to do anyway. My experience in church basements is conscience means "I get to do what I want to do anyway because I'm a Democrat, or I'm a Republican, or I'm a labor member, or a businessman." Or conscience means "you will do what I want you to do because of what my conscience tells me you ought to do.

There are two duties. One is to resist evil. This is a fundamental distinction in the most recent document, between those things that are intrinsically wrong and can never be justified and the affirmative responsibility to make things better.

There are two temptations. One is to make no distinctions between issues — a million abortions is the same as a cut in the WIC program. That's not the case. The other is to suggest that if you deal effectively with those things which are fundamental and intrinsically wrong, you have no other obligations, as if the children dying in Africa of famine did not have a claim on our consciences.

I think — and I'll speak personally here — this is a call to engagement. What we need are more Catholics in both parties, in all of public life, taking what we believe into the public square and fighting for what we believe. I think we need more dialogue within our Church, and I think this document helps that, even though it's often not labeled that way. And I think we need to understand that if politics is not about our fundamental values, then it's just about money, it's just about ego, and it can just be about power.

We're about to mark the tenth anniversary of 9/11. Everyone in this room probably has more immediate experience of that loss and that tragedy than I do. But just two things. When we had the earthquake in Washington — and only Washington can take a little rumble and turn it into a huge development — my second thought after it was an earthquake was someone had a nuclear device in Washington. So it's not gone far away. It brought back to me a visit I made with a group of priests to Ground Zero. For reasons of time I'll spare you the specifics. The fires were still burning; the smoke was still rising. It was an overwhelming experience.

One of the priests I was with tapped me on the shoulder and he said, "You know, the only way we will overcome this horror, what we see here, is by what we were talking about last night — respect for all human life, a sense of solidarity, a sense of justice, the search for peace." He said, "You know, the work you do, John, back at the Conference is more important than ever."

In fact, I of course responded, "The work we do, the work he does as a priest, the work our colleagues do as academics, the work the Center does, the work this university does, the work all of us do to link our faith to how we act in public life, is more important than ever." Thank you.

PETER STEINFELS: Thank you very much, John. Our next presentation comes from Robert P. George, the McCormick Professor of Jurisprudence and Founder and Director of the James Madison Program in American Ideals and Institutions at Princeton University. He is also a professor of politics and an associate faculty member of the Department of Philosophy at Princeton.

Professor George is author or editor of ten books, all published by leading university presses, in the areas of natural law, public morality, marriage, the status of embryonic life, and constitutional decisions. He is a contributor to leading law reviews as well as to *First Things*, *National Review*, *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, and *The Wall Street Journal.*

A Phi Beta Kappa graduate of Swarthmore College and Harvard Law School, Professor George also earned a Master's Degree in Theology from Harvard and a Doctorate in

Philosophy in Law from Oxford. He has been invited to deliver more distinguished lectures and serve on more important commissions than I dare to mention and has received many honorary degrees and distinguished awards everyplace from the White House to Warsaw.

Most importantly, he was on the 2008 panel here at the Center for Religion and Culture discussing what John F. Kennedy really said and meant in his so-often-quoted speech in Houston. Please welcome Robert George.

ROBERT GEORGE: Thank you all for coming out on this rainy night to hear us, and special thanks to Peter and to Peggy for thinking of me for this panel. I'm delighted to be here, especially with Steve and with John. As Steve said a moment ago, John has given us a hard act to follow.

Well, since John filled you in on his political heritage, let me just say a word about mine. John, I'm envious of people who came from politically mixed marriages. I did not. I came from a monoculture. I grew up in West Virginia, which was a democratic monoculture. Both of my grandfathers were immigrant coal miners. They were union guys, especially my father's father is a very strong union man. Great worshippers — and that's the right word — of Franklin Delano Roosevelt. People who really believed in the Democratic Party as the party of the little guy, the party that would look out for the weak and the vulnerable — "the least, the last, and the lost," as my friend John Dilulio likes to put it.

So where I grew up and in the culture in which I grew up not only did we not like Republicans, we didn't know any of them. [Laughter] All we knew is that they were the guys who owned the mines and worked out of state, lived out of state, reaped the money, cashed the checks, and were always trying to connive new ways — if that's a verb, connive in that context — to exploit the workers.

I myself was interested in politics from a very young age. I got involved in the Young Democrats and I was twice elected the governor of the West Virginia Democratic Youth Conference, which was the junior wing of the Young Democrats. I attended the 1976 Democratic Convention as an alternate delegate. That was the convention that nominated Jimmy Carter. So it was a completely Democratic background. But I find myself today a Republican.

But I want to tell you a little bit about how that happened. It's the pro-life issue mainly. When the Democratic Party began to turn, a little in the late 1960s and then with more force in the early 1970s and then with *Roe v. Wade* — a decision that was handed down, by the way, by a Nixon Republican appointee and joined in by several Nixon Republican appointees. So in those days it wasn't a straightforward Republican-v.-Democrat issue.

But as things began to move, the Democratic Party became more and more tangled up with the pro-abortion side and the Republican Party moving more and more in the pro-life direction, as so many former Democrats moved into the Republican camp, I was part of that movement. But of course, having a high degree of filial piety, which we were all raised to have in West Virginia, I couldn't actually bring myself to become a Republican. So for many, many years I just regarded myself as an independent.

But during that same period I also began to have some serious doubts about some of the programs that I myself and my family had supported, especially the Great Society programs of the 1960s, because we saw that in Appalachia where we grew up — most of

the attention is on the inner cities, but in Appalachia they just weren't working and often they were having counterproductive effects.

So, like Richard Neuhaus, like Peter Berger, like so many others, I began to look for another way. I began to look for a way that would empower the institutions of civil society to take the lead in delivering social services to those in need.

I always believed, and continue to believe, that there needs to be a social safety net. I happened to have a small role as questioner in the Republican debate last night in South Carolina, and I injected the words "fighting poverty" into my questions twice, which are not words that are typically heard in Republican debates — not because Republicans are mean or don't want to fight poverty, but because the emphasis is always on economic growth and that will lift all boats.

Well, that's part of the story. There's a lot of truth in that. But there's more to the story, and I want the party that I now belong to to tell more of the story. So I think the party that I now belong to needs more of a dose of Catholic social thought, and I hope that many of us who are Catholics who have moved into the party will run that, just as the Democratic Party needs a very heavy dose of the pro-life and pro-family message of the Catholic tradition.

Well, to our document. First, the question is, of course: Why should we have such a document? John I think provided the answer with his quotation, talking about how it is imperative from the Catholic point of view that all of us — Catholics and others, but certainly those of us who are Catholics — bring our deepest values to bear in our actions as citizens, in our public acts.

Those of you who are not familiar with contemporary work in political theory may be surprised to know that the mainstream of liberal political theory holds precisely the opposite view. This is the view associated above all with the leading political philosopher of the late 20th century, John Rawls, who held precisely that all of us should refrain from bringing our deepest values into the public square; we should refrain from acting at least in ways that limit liberty and go to constitutional essentials; we should refrain from bringing to bear what he called our comprehensive views, our visions of human nature, dignity and destiny, and should lay those aside and act on what Rawls called public reasons — that is, reasons that are not connected or dependent on these deeper comprehensive views.

I think the Catholic tradition is right about this and Rawls is wrong about this. So whether we find ourselves more inclined in the Democrat or the Republican direction, I think the Church is right to teach us that we should be acting on our most fundamental values.

That's why we have a document like this. This document represents an assertion by the Church that we want our people, the Catholic people, acting on their most fundamental values — not because we want to advance Catholicism for the sake of Catholicism, but because we as Catholics believe in the obligation of all citizens to promote justice and the common good.

As for my assessment of the document itself, I'm very pleased to say, especially since I imagine that my neighbor to the left has had quite a good deal to do with these documents over the years — I'm very pleased to say that I think it's a good document.

Now, I think it's going to be more useful for generally well-educated Catholics, and I think that is unavoidable. I myself, as I was reading back through it in preparation for this evening, was trying to think of ways that it could be made more accessible to a broader range of our Catholic people. The trouble with doing that, each time I tried to formulate it, was you lose substance. So it's a very difficult job, and I don't think anybody should be too harsh in criticism of the document on that score, because try it yourself. You'll see just how difficult it is.

I also think it's good because it does stick to the level of principle. It has some illustrations, which you need, which is good to have illustrations, otherwise it would be too abstract, but it does stick to the level of principle. Those of you who know anything about me at all may know that I'm notorious for saying that the bishops talk too often about too many things that they have no particular expertise or authority on and they should talk less and focus their discussion on the things that they can really speak with authority on in the name of the Gospel. So I think the bishops should be teaching principles and not advocating specific policies, unless the specific policies are very, very closely connected with a principle, like no killing unborn babies, or no engaging in racial segregation, or no bombing innocent civilians or knocking out cities like Nagasaki and Hiroshima.

So I like the document for keeping it at the level of generalities and leaving it where the Second Vatican Council leaves it, to the laity, to do the work of sanctification of the world.

I want to make one last point by way of criticism. That is that the document puts a lot of focus on intrinsic evils and our need to be absolutely opposed to intrinsic evils and make them a focus of our political life.

I think that is a bit of an overemphasis on the idea of intrinsic, and what gets neglected is the scope and gravity of the evil. I think the scope and gravity of an evil needs to have a greater amount of attention paid to it in future documents of this nature. I think in doing that it would help us to sort out the other distinction that's very important in the document, the difference between matters of principle and matters of prudence. Having run out of time, Peter, I'll leave it here and we can talk more in the discussion.

PETER STEINFELS: Thank you very much. Our next presentation will be made by Stephen Schneck, who heads the Institute for Policy Research and Catholic Studies at the Catholic University of America, which is an academic think-tank promoting research on public policies pertaining to Catholic moral and social teachings.

Stephen did his Doctorate in Political Theory at the University of Notre Dame, and his academic publications include books and articles in the fields of American political thought and 20th-century political philosophy.For nine years he has chaired Catholic University's Department of Politics and has been honored three times as the University's Teacher of the Year.

Professor Schneck is now at work on a book on American Catholic citizenship. He was also a founding board member of Catholics in Alliance for the Common Good and is on the board of Democrats For Life of America. Last May he initiated a letter, endorsed by eighty professors from Catholic universities around the country, criticizing Speaker Boehner, who was delivering the commencement address at Catholic U, for inattention to the poor. Please welcome Stephen Schneck.

STEPHEN SCHNECK: Thank you for the gracious introduction, Peter. I really appreciate it. It's really an honor to be here tonight. I'm especially honored to be with my two colleagues at the table.

Because of the tight schedule this evening, I want to focus very quickly on four points. I'm going to sound a little bit more like a professor here, but I think we need to march through this document a little bit in detail. I'm hoping in discussing these four points I'll set the stage for more wide-ranging discussions to follow.

The first point that I want to talk about is I want to notice the document's especially positive conception of government and politics. That positive understanding of political life informs faithful citizenship from its initial stages back in the 1970s through its current iteration.

The second point I want to mention is I want to talk about the glory and richness of the whole of our Church's teachings that are so well conveyed in "Faithful Citizenship." In that fashion, let us all appreciate just how wonderful these teachings are for the issues of the contemporary American public square.

The third point I want to discuss is a small complaint. I want to complain about the skimpy theoretical grounding of some of the arguments in Faithful Citizenship. In fact, if I could make a small little joke, sometimes it reads like it was written by eight committees of lawyers.

Finally, the last point that I want to discuss is I want to specifically identify those sections of the documents that have been most controversial. These are paragraphs 29 through 37, which deal with intrinsic evil. I wanted to argue that these need to be especially understood prudentially. All right.

To the first point, "Faithful Citizenship" teaches us that we are morally obliged to be political, to participate as fully as we can in political life as part of a community, and to do so with the purpose of the common good, never for self-interest or ideology. Boy, isn't that a message in fact that we all ought to take to heart in our current situation?

The public order itself is presented in "Faithful Citizenship" as a natural good, ordained by God, and that it's an order that is morally directed to nurture, protect, promote, care for, and respect all aspects of citizens' lives, spiritual as well as material.

Politics and government thus are not seen as necessary evils, not seen as problems to be borne, but recognized, at least inherently, at least theoretically, as designed by the Creator to be useful for the completion of human dignity and the common good. Ayn Rand would probably be appalled.

My second point: "Faithful Citizenship" wonderfully parades all of the glories of the Church's moral and social teachings for public life. We're told the common good is the measure of a just political order. We're told that solidarity is the ideal for our cooperative unity in public life, one that parallels the Christian metaphor of the mystical body of Christ that is the Church. And subsidiarity is not in "Faithful Citizenship" reduced to federalism, but refers to the balancing of appropriate powers for all the natural parts of public life toward that common good — church and state, unions and business, and so on.

The Catholic vision of the utter dignity of the human person shines fulsomely throughout the document, really manifesting what His Holiness calls "integral humanism."

Very quickly, for the bishops, moreover, these are not just lofty ideals that are put in these pages. The bishops here spell out the Church's teachings in regard to specific policies, talking poignantly about the preferential option for the poor, about the need for immigration reform, about the need for health care for all, about the sanctity of marriage, about a foreign policy based on peacemaking, and so on and so forth.

My third point: My biggest concern with the whole document is its insufficient theoretical foundation. Justification for arguments here seldom goes any deeper than references to encyclicals, or perhaps to a line from Scripture. This is an issue not only for "Faithful Citizenship," by the way, but for all of Catholic social teaching.

I think this generation of American Catholic academics are especially called to think about moving in the direction of theoretical efforts to ground these most important teachings in ways that speak beyond encyclicals and beyond occasional references to Scripture. This is a worthy task for today's generation of theologians and philosophers.

Finally, my fourth point, and perhaps the most contentious: Sections 29–37 of the document — and by the way, I think you all have copies of the document on your seats that were distributed in advance — these sections dealing with intrinsic evil are confusing to many readers.

A number of folks, for example, argue that one of the organizations I'm associated with, Catholics in Alliance for the Common Good, cherry-picked through these sections in order to justify voting for Democrats. Even some bishops have complained.

My sense is that the confusion derives from efforts to identify herein some absolute and specific criteria that can be applied juridically — those canon lawyers here — applied juridically so as to be able to make summary judgments that voting for such-and-such candidate would always be wrong.

The problem is that politics is not reducible to morality in quite that way. Since Aristotle, we have known that prudence is the primary operative virtue of political life. So to take the most important moral issue we face, for example, which is clearly abortion, "Faithful Citizenship" is absolutely lucid and clear in identifying abortion as the most important issue that we face in public life today. Yes, we must support unions, we must steward the environment and all else, but opposing abortion must come first among all we do. A million abortion deaths per year, year after year, Congress after Congress, presidency after presidency, political party after political party. We cannot accept the status quo. We cannot abet any candidate or policy that would mean more abortion deaths.

But how do we oppose this horror? How do we make progress against this unbelievable catastrophe? I'm convinced that once we begin to ask those questions, we enter into the realm of prudence.
If we're pro-life, should we pursue a one-party strategy or a two-party strategy? If we're pro-life, should we be pursuing incremental policy changes to make some impact on the incidence of abortion in this country, or must we go for it all? Should we think, for example, about the impact of economic policies on abortion rights or the impact of availability of health care on abortion rights or employment policies? Should we think, for example, about coalitions that we might want to form or alliances that we might want to engage in in order to advance on this score?

It seems to me that once we begin to ask those questions seriously, then those controversial sections of "Faithful Citizenship" that have drawn so much attention suddenly become much more clear. Recognizing these and similar demands of prudence does much to clarify what the bishops actually sought to express in those controversial paragraphs. Thank you.

PETER STEINFELS: Thank you very much, Steve, and thanks to all the speakers for sticking to your time limits so scrupulously.

I want to throw out some questions. I want to ask John, first of all, if he has any observations on the other comments. But I would urge the panelists not necessarily to wait for my questions. You may engage in discussion. Just lean over into your mics and speak to one another's points. Please do so. John, did you have any observations?

JOHN CARR: Given the positive words of both my colleagues towards the document, I want to be really clear the staff didn't write it; the bishops did and the Holy Spirit did. That's a premise we work on.

Actually, it would be really important to emphasize the involvement of the bishops, particularly over the last several years. Literally every line, in some cases every word, was a hard-won consensus that reached unity. The fact that people with different perspectives reached agreement reminds me a little bit of a story.

I worked in the Archdiocese of Washington for Cardinal Hickey. Blessed Sacrament Parish was a unique parish. It had Ted Kennedy for a while and Patrick Buchanan; it had E.J. Dionne and Bill Bennett as active parishioners. They all loved the pastor, who was a very forthright preacher.

I was invited out to talk one time on Catholic social teaching, whatever, and I said, "Monsignor Duffy is either very good or very vague." I think part of the challenge is to be so clear about the principles that they are demanding, they're not vague.

Frankly, I would say something about both my colleagues here. I was going to ask Robbie whether he had raised the question of poverty at the debate, because in the newspapers and on CNN he was criticized for going into too great a depth in questions of life and death and protecting the unborn. But I think to have a Catholic Republican in that setting raise the question of poverty is an example of faithful citizenship.

Frankly, in Washington Matthew 25 is "Whatsoever you do for the forgotten middle class, you do unto me." That's true of Republicans and Democrats.

Steve has written a letter — I forget to whom in the administration — challenging the conscience regulations in the health care bill and saying that this is not what we supported.
Talking about poverty in a Republican debate, talking about conscience clauses in a Democratic forum, does not win friends necessarily, but it is precisely the kind of activity, faithful citizenship, where our faith does in fact shape our politics instead of the other way around.

What we need is not necessarily more bishops' statements — I'm a believer in bishops' statements; the preferential option for the bureaucrats is what I'm working on [Laughter]

— but what we need are more faithful Catholics in both parties who will stand up and challenge some of the assumptions in both parties: that Democrats are the party of the weak but the unborn children have no place in that; the Republican Party is the party of family, but economic threats to family life get short shrift. We need more faithful Catholics, faithful citizens, as well as better articulation of documents.

PETER STEINFELS: Thank you, John. Robbie, I wonder if you would have any comments on Steve's remarks about prudence and its key place in the document. What do you think of the document's treatment? What do you think of Steve's remarks? Is there specifically a need to make prudential judgments about relating means to ends on all issues or only on some?

If you look in Paragraph 25, there's a reference to various issues, and the bishops point out that "these may be legitimately fulfilled by a variety of means"; or in Paragraph 29, "these are matters for principled debates and decisions." Those are always in reference to things other than their concern for human life in its earliest and latest stages.

ROBERT GEORGE: Well, I think Steve is right to put the focus on those sections and on the concept of prudence in its relationship to principle. I concluded my remarks by saying that we need to have a discussion of that.

I'm sure that Steve and I disagree about the details of the relationship between principle and prudence, but I think we'd probably have to talk for quite a while between the two of us in order to pinpoint what the disagreement is.

To answer your question directly, Peter, I think that virtually always — you'll see me just wiggling a little bit there with the word "virtually" — virtually always it will be necessary to make judgments of prudence in crafting, say, a legislative agenda for dealing with an injustice or a policy to prevent damage to the common good or to advance the common good.

That's to say that applying principle to concrete situations will almost always require some judgments of prudence. So even when it comes to the pro-life issue, there's a prudential judgment that has to be made about whether we will proceed incrementally or not. There's a prudential judgment that will have to be made about whether we will go with a human life amendment to the Constitution and focus our efforts as a movement there, or whether we will go with an effort to act legislatively under the Fourteenth Amendment, which is what I was suggesting to the candidates in last night's debate, as a way of bringing legal protection to the unborn.

But I think it's very important that prudence never be permitted to degenerate into a kind of consequentialism, a sophisticated utilitarianism, or what's sometimes called proportionalism. The greatest living scholar, probably the greatest scholar ever, of American slavery is Eugene Genovese. I once had a very interesting conversation with Professor Genovese, the author of the great book *Roll, Jordan, Roll*. He spent most of his life as a Marxist, and late in his life, under the influence of his wife who became a Catholic, from secularism returned to his Catholic faith.

But quite apart from that, I had a conversation with Gene about slavery and what he thought the right position for a Catholic would have been — Catholics were a very small minority then, without much power in those days — but what would the right position of a Catholic have been on the slavery question and how would prudence have affected it.

He said that he believed that a Catholic really did have to be an abolitionist — perhaps not an immediate abolitionist, but someone who believed that policies need to be put into place that try to make slavery unlawful. But he said that he thought that was the right position despite the fact that the consequences for people who were enslaved or who might have been enslaved might have been worse as a result of that.

He said, for example, that the most powerful argument of the time, and one that he could not as a historian dismiss — he thought that there was merit to the argument — was that had slavery been abolished in the United States, the people who would have been sold into slavery here would have either been killed, sometimes tortured, in tribal wars in Africa and/or sold into slavery in circumstances where slavery was even more horrific than it was in the United States. It was pretty horrific here, but there were places where Professor Genovese said it was even more horrific.

So some might have said, "Well, as a matter of prudence it would be better to put the focus elsewhere, try to come up with different kinds of policies, and not to support the straight making of slavery illegal, or to prioritize that to the top." But Gene thought that wouldn't actually be right, that the principle really did matter.

I think the same is true in the case that Steve and I do agree is the most important injustice that's got to be combated, the injustice of killing the unborn — and I want to stress not only by abortion, but in potentially even larger numbers by the creation of human embryos by government funding for research in which they are deliberately destroyed. That's not something that you could fight with better social welfare policies or better economic policies. This is the government putting in the money to create living members of the human family to be destroyed straightforwardly. You can't reduce the numbers of that by having a good economic policy.

PETER STEINFELS: Steve, did you have any observation on that?

STEPHEN SCHNECK: On the other hand, economic policy does matter, Robbie, I think we probably agree —

JOHN CARR: We do.

STEPHEN SCHNECK: — if we look at abortion rights over the many years, unfortunately, that we've had this horror in the United States, we see that to some extent they track up and down with how well the economy is doing and what unemployment situations are like and what the availability of health care is. It's a complicated phenomenon.

It seems to me that what we have to decide — I mean the complications of prudence are such that we have to somehow figure out, thinking about all of these factors, what mix of candidates and policies and so forth would be the most effective and the most possible given the realities of our current political life.

I think one thing is absolutely clear. The status quo is the status quo, and it has been the status quo since *Roe v. Wade*. It hasn't changed. Regardless of which political party is in power, who controls Congress, the larger picture has not changed. That is, we're still looking at a million, sometimes more than a million, abortion deaths per year.

So I think that we need to get creative. If we're serious about the pro-life cause, we need to get creative about this and think about how best to approach this issue. I don't think it's as simple as voting for one party or another party. I think it's much more complicated than that.

PETER STEINFELS: Steve, you mentioned the word "candidate," and I want to shift the discussion a bit.

Cathy Kaveny of the University of Notre Dame Law School and Theology Department has pointed out that "Faithful Citizenship" is framed almost entirely in terms of issues but that the choices facing conscientious Catholic voters and other voters in an election year are choices about candidates, choosing among candidates. Those are people who will decide on a whole range of issues, many of which the voters even don't know will be before them when they are going into the election. That is a different ballgame, she suggests, than prioritizing issues.

So isn't what is needed really a greater moral education about the virtues required of candidates than just the focus on issues? Any panelist?

JOHN CARR: That's true, there is a great focus, first of all, on the role of faith in public life; secondly, on the role of believers and the institution, the Church, in public life; and then on the principles that guide those choices; and then on some of the issues.

There is also language in there about assessing the candidates' integrity, honesty, ability to act. While that doesn't get the attention of Paragraphs 29–37, I think that's important.

Candidly, what I'm impressed with here is we need this discussion. We need this discussion of, given a million abortions a year, how do we stop them? Given 9 percent unemployment and rising poverty rates, what is the country going to do about that?

Do you know what? We're not having either of those discussions in this campaign really. There's an internal debate within the Republican Party about who's more pro-life. I don't know if there will be a debate about how to create jobs in the larger society. But for most Catholics, sadly, neither of those probably rank very high on their list.

And so I do think there ought to be a focus on the credibility, the integrity, the capacity, the intelligence of candidates. But there also needs to be a focus on us and what our priorities are and what we bring to public life.

To be honest, I've been in Washington way too long. It's an incredibly responsive place. Nobody cared about the deficit two years ago. The Tea Party came in and said "the deficit's really important," and, by God, the president and the Congress are fighting over who's got the best plan.

A month ago, someone said "there's a lot of people without jobs," and the president has a plan; Mr. Romney was on CNN this afternoon. Part of it is how do we create the momentum so we have a real discussion of how we get rid of the scandal, really get rid of the scandal, a million abortions a year; how do we get rid of the scandal of increasing poverty in the richest nation on earth. We have famine in West Africa that the world seems completely impotent in dealing with.

So part of what's needed, frankly, is more of us involved. My daughter, whom I love, who is actually a consistent — she's my two parents together; she's consistent and frustrated

by both parties — I love her dearly — she walked out of church one day and she said, "You know what? I'm going to run for Congress. I don't like the choices. I'm pro-life, I'm antiwar, and nobody — I think in a few more years I'm going to run for Congress." I said, "This is great. She got the message." Her mother said, "Well, maybe you ought to register to vote first."

ROBERT GEORGE: Peter, if I could say a word in response to Professor Kaveny's point. Perhaps I haven't understood it, but if I have understood it correctly, I want to say a word in defense of the bishops on this.

Candidates, when they're elected to office, make laws and they change laws. In doing that, they plant principles in the law or they change the principles that are there in the law. It's very, very important, at least from my point of view — and I think this is consistent with the teaching of the Church — that the principles that are planted in the law be the right principles.

So, for example, the principle of the profound, inherent, and equal dignity of every member of the human family, irrespective of race, sex, ethnicity, and also irrespective of age or size or stage of development or condition of dependency, is absolutely key. So if you have a candidate who says "Look, I just don't believe that," or in effect says "I don't believe that," who says "I believe that at certain stages of development you don't have rights that need to be protected" — the way in the *Dred Scott* decision it said if a person is of African descent they don't have rights that white people need to acknowledge — well, then you've got a candidate who is advocating a principle which will be implanted in the law by this actions.

It seems to me that if you read what the bishops here are saying, that gives you a powerful reason. Now, it might not be conclusive in the end because there may be reasons on the other side — the bishops in the document talk about proportionate reasons — but it gives you a very powerful reason for saying, "No, not this guy."

Maybe not the other guy either. The document explicitly holds open the option of not voting, which I think would scandalize some Catholics. But it does say you can actually not choose or you can choose to vote for the guy, so in favor of a guy you don't particularly like or think is good on a lot of other things because this guy would plant in the law a principle that's absolutely antithetical to the equal and inherent dignity of all human beings.

So I think you are getting guidance here about candidates, but it's done in I think the only way the bishops can really do it, which is by laying the principles out there.

PETER STEINFELS: Steve?

STEPHEN SCHNECK: Actually, I'd like to pick up Cathy Kaveny's argument too and also defend the bishops maybe from a slightly different perspective.

One of the things that I really love about this document is that it really is about forming conscience. That is, it's a teaching document; it's not a voter's guide, it's not an assessment of this candidate versus that candidate and so forth. It's a document that's designed in a way to help us inculcate and grow and develop the kind of prudence so that we can be the faithful citizens that it calls us to be.

It seems to me that — and I haven't read Cathy Kaveny's piece — but it seems to me that a focus on candidates, a focus on the horse race, a focus on candidate issues and attractiveness and so on and so forth, would take the document away from its really valuable function of helping to form conscience.

PETER STEINFELS: I suspect that her point has to do with the evaluation and the greater attention to what John referred to as the integrity of candidates, and that could be extended into a lot of dimensions — their knowledge about issues, their tolerance for ambiguity or uncertainty, a lot of other things. It could be done in different ways, but I think that she feels that that's what people really face when they go into the election booth. John, go ahead.

JOHN CARR: When this document was adopted, I actually have in my folder two stories, one by *The New York Times*, which said that it provided a loophole, a roadmap, for voting for pro-abortion candidates; and one in *The Washington Post* that said Catholics who voted for a Democrat would go to hell. The two things can be both true, and in this case neither one was true.

But I remember somebody else wrote a column in *The New York Times*, whose name shall go unmentioned, who said "This may fulfill the bishops' responsibilities, it may solve their problem, but not ours." He and I talked about that.

I said, "But the bishops have different responsibilities than we do. We have to solve our own problems. Applying these principles, applying these issues, judging the integrity and the capability of candidates, is something that belongs to individual voters, not conferences of bishops. I think it's good that way."

ROBERT GEORGE: Do you think there's any chance, John, of ever getting the media to understand the Catholic Church? I mean it honestly does seem hopeless.

JOHN CARR: I share that view.

ROBERT GEORGE: Yes. The bishops speak out and, suddenly, *The New York Times* is editorializing against them, saying that they're endangering the delicate balance of church and state and they need to get back to the principles of John F. Kennedy, which they interpret as saying religion is a purely private matter and should in no way intrude into the public sphere. But this is the same newspaper that was cheering in the 1950s when Archbishop Joseph Rummel in New Orleans excommunicated three Catholic politicians for their segregationist legislative records.

PETER STEINFELS: You don't think the same people are on the editorial page today, do you?

ROBERT GEORGE: The same types.

JOHN CARR: There are different orthodoxies and different institutions. On my way here I visited my brother, who is a columnist at *The New York Times*. He doesn't write those editorials.

Being a practicing Catholic at *The Times* is a unique sort of role. It's not the dominant position. By its definition, journalism is skeptical of large institutions, and we're a pretty large, old institution.

What I wish is they would devote more resources and their best people to the task, because I think this is a pretty fascinating story.

I will tell you that the work we do every day — Peter and Peggy and I have had this discussion for decades — you know, why can't we break through? We don't call anyone a warmonger or a baby-killer — that would break through. We haven't excommunicated people in a long time — that would break through. It's sort of "Nuances-R-Us," and that doesn't sell.

When you're talking about the Iraq war, the bishops said based on what they know, which was not complete, they did not think that the criteria for a just war had been met. It's hard to march behind that banner, but that is what bishops ought to say.

It's not only journalism, but lots of institutions, including, frankly, universities and others, have trouble interpreting all that. But I don't think we ought to give up on anybody and, given my family connections, I'm not going to.

PETER STEINFELS: We'll have a forum on *The New York Times* sometime, a subject about which I know absolutely nothing.

JOHN CARR: We could agree that their religion coverage has gotten worse.

STEPHEN SCHNECK: It has gotten worse.

ROBERT GEORGE: Yes, it has gotten worse. There was a time when we thought it was better.

PETER STEINFELS: I'd like to take a break for a moment to communicate some other information.

The Fordham Center on Religion and Culture has this previous summer asked CARA, the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate at Georgetown, to include some questions about faithful citizenship in a national survey of adult Catholics. You're getting breaking news right now.

Here are some of the results. We are told that they have a margin of error of plus or minus 2.8 percent, whatever that means.

The representative sample was first reminded that "late in the year preceding presidential elections the Catholic Bishops have usually issued a 'Statement on Faithful Citizenship' outlining how Catholics should use their religious values in shaping their political election choices."
Asked if they recalled hearing of the statement in 2008, over half the representative sample said they did not; 30 percent were unsure whether they had heard of it; and 16 percent recalled hearing of it.

The survey then went on to quote the bishops' statements that they did "not intend to tell Catholics for whom or against whom to vote." The survey also noted that some people claimed that "Faithful Citizenship" nevertheless signaled how Catholics should vote.

Respondents were then asked: "Judging from either your knowledge of the statement or the bishops' public positions during the election, which is your impression: (1) the

bishops stuck to moral principles and left the final choice to Catholic voters; (2) the bishops outlined the moral principles in a way that left little doubt about which party or candidate they thought Catholics should support; or (3) I didn't have an impression one way or the other?"

An overwhelming majority of Catholics said they didn't have any impression of the bishops' intentions. Of the 16 percent who recalled being aware of the 2008 "Faithful Citizenship" statement, however, 43 percent did feel the bishops left little doubt about who Catholics should support; a third said the bishops had stuck to moral principles and left the final choice to Catholic voters; less than a quarter of those people had no impression.

Very few Catholics said that they had actually read either the full version of "Faithful Citizenship" or the ten-page condensation. Ninety percent of all Catholics didn't read it in any form, and that was true of 77 percent even of Catholics who were aware of it. Most of those who read any of it read excerpts in parish bulletins or elsewhere.

We asked Catholics who were aware of "Faithful Citizenship" what effect it had on their voting. We asked the other Catholics what effect it might have had if they had known about it. Four percent of each group said that it was or would have been a "major influence"; over 70 percent said that it had or would have had "no influence at all"; much smaller percentages considered it "something of an influence" or a "minor influence."

What about weekly Mass attenders compared to those who go at least once a month and those who go infrequently? The weekly worshippers were more apt to have been aware of "Faithful Citizenship"; a third of them recalled it. They were also more apt to think that the bishops stuck to moral principles and left the final choice to Catholic voters.

Finally, the generational differences: A third of pre-Vatican II Catholics, those sixty-nine or older, were aware of "Faithful Citizenship"; awareness dropped sharply with Vatican II Catholics, those born after 1941; and declined steadily with post-Vatican II Catholics and the so-called Millennials under age thirty.

The older generation were also three times more likely to think that the bishops stuck to principles and left the final choice to Catholic voters, three times more likely than the youngest age group.

The full report will be up on our Web site. There are a lot of other complicated aspects. We hope that it will make a news story or two.

Back to our panel. I think that this certainly is a demonstration of the challenge, which you all have already referred to, that the bishops have in communicating their teaching and reaching Catholics in terms of a sophisticated or complicated point of view.

JOHN CARR: Just a couple other pieces of data. I remember meeting with Bono, of all people, talking about third-world debt and hunger and all that. He said, "You people — Catholic bishops, Catholic institutions — you made the difference on debt relief, you people, and you are the worst communicators on Earth." Typically, we're very proud of both parts of that. I think we have a huge communications problem.

But let me just give some other data. The materials — the statement in English and Spanish, the one-page version, the four-page version — were available free on the Web site and lots of parishes took them and all that. But if you wanted a pretty one, you had to

buy one, and 1.7 million of the bulletin inserts were sold, 133,000 English booklets were sold, and 11,000 Spanish booklets.

In the first week of November, the hits on the Web site — this is a very fancy Web site for the Bishops' Conference, it has colors and things actually move; we're very progressive on this — had about 825,000 hits.

Let me just say something about my experience with "Faithful Citizenship." It was not passed out in my parish. There was stuff on the windshields from other groups in my parish.

But my pastor preached regularly on the Sundays leading up to the election on the themes of "Faithful Citizenship." I don't think he ever referenced "our bishops have told us." Instead he talked about our responsibilities as citizens. I, for one, felt challenged by what he had to say. He also said, "The stuff in the parking lot is not our stuff, so be careful."

If we do some more research, I would be very interested in — while I work for the bishops, I think the real communicators in our church are our pastors, and what they said or what people heard them saying about the responsibilities of Catholics in an election year would also be very interesting.

ROBERT GEORGE: Let me just say a point on that. I think it's very, very difficult for the pastors, John, because they fear that whatever they say, it will be interpreted as encouraging the faithful to vote for one candidate or another or one party or another. In light of that, I think many think it's best just to say little or nothing — you know, "do your civic duty, you should vote," and so forth and so on — because if you're a pastor you're going to be accosted, maybe by both sides, interpreting you differently, and it's pretty rough.

Again, I wouldn't want to be too hard on those who don't, but I want to join you in praising those who carefully do.

PETER STEINFELS: It's also worth noting that every 1 percent in that poll represents about 500,000 adult Catholics. So even some of the smaller figures represent considerable numbers. And we have to remember in an election year what else makes any difference to people in terms of voter guides and all the other things with which people are *.

JOHN CARR: A pollster friend of mine said that the question people lie the most about is "did you vote?" and "how often do you go to church?"

ROBERT GEORGE: That's really true.

PETER STEINFELS: I think that's something that pollsters have used because they have a record of who voted, and so they can check about whether people are consistent in their lying or not and make certain deductions from that.

John, I want to pick up on two things before we go to questions from the audience.One is — maybe I'm being purposely provocative — you have stressed "all of us" in the witness that the Church has given. I have to say I too, like everyone else here, reread the 2007 edition of "Faithful Citizenship" with its many references to the Church, and I have the feeling in the text that the Church means the bishops.

For example, on page 6, above paragraph 17, the subhead reads "How does the Church help the Catholic faithful?" It sounds like these are two different entities.

Do the references to "the Church" clearly embrace the witness and thought and action of, say, Robert George, Stephen Schneck, *First Things*, *Commonweal*, *America*, and especially the many workers in neighborhoods, agencies for immigrants, refugee camps overseas, and so on? Somehow or other, the Bishops — this is my provocative remark — don't seem to be talking about "the Church" except for occasional references —I will give the panelists an opportunity to answer that.

JOHN CARR: Thank you for raising that question. I think there was a clear focus on responsibilities of bishops as they were writing this document. That may have translated into language that did not reflect the fullness of Catholic life. I think you'll find passages in the document that do reflect that.

My experience, candidly — I spend a lot of time, less time — they don't let me go up to the Hill because I get mad at people and that's not the best way to advocate — is that when people listen to us, they listen to us not only because of what we believe and the principles we have — and even those who disagree with us admire our consistency in those principles — but what they primarily give us credibility for is what we do. So when we're talking about poverty, it's what we do with poor families. When we're talking about immigration, it's what we do in immigrant communities. When we talk about education and health care, it's what we do in those areas.

The bishops are clear they don't do that, that this is the work of an entire community of faith. So bishops are citizens, they are leaders, they are pastors. Every time a letter goes to the Hill on behalf of the Bishops' Conference, it makes clear that that letter represents the Bishops' Conference, not the entire Catholic community, that people of goodwill can differ and disagree about that.

That may not be as clear in this document. There was a great preoccupation with their responsibilities as bishops in that document and it may be reflected.

If you go to the Web site and the materials, there is very little on what bishops can and should do and there's an awful lot on what parishes and schools and universities and others do. I think too narrow a vision, this may be guilty as charged.

ROBERT GEORGE: Can I try a defense of it, because I think the words are literally true?

PETER STEINFELS: For the defense.

ROBERT GEORGE: It is the responsibility of the Church to help the faithful to form their consciences in light of the Gospel, and by the Church — [Applause] I don't think we should do the applauding.

That's the thing, the Church is the whole community, the mystical body of Christ, in which the bishops have a special role as the teachers, a special magisterial role. But it's literally true, we would not want to deny — is there a single Catholic who would want to deny the proposition that the Church has a responsibility to help the faithful, to form their consciences in light of the Gospel?

So I can see the concern Peter has, that some people might be misled to think "'the Church' must mean somebody different from the faithful; that must mean the bishops." But if you look at it from a Catholic perspective, it really is literally true.

JOHN CARR: Peter, I know you're very dutiful. Take a look at Paragraphs 15 and 16, which really make the point that you were trying to make, and it may not be reflected throughout the document.

PETER STEINFELS: I thought I made it very well actually.

JOHN CARR: It in fact says, "The bishops have particular responsibilities, to teach moral principle, provide guidance, and encourage the faithful to carry out their responsibilities." It then goes on to say "the direct duty to work for the just ordering of society is proper to the lay faithful . . . is more critical than ever in today's environment . . .. Forming their consciences in accord with Catholic teaching, Catholic lay men and women can become actively involved: running for office; working within political parties," etc., the community organizations you mentioned.

ROBERT GEORGE: That's just straight out of Vatican II.

PETER STEINFELS: A final tough question before I get to the audience's questions: Right now the issues preoccupying American voters as well as our political leadership are unemployment, the federal deficit, tax cuts, foreclosures, and the possibilities of a national or even worldwide economic collapse, or maybe only a downturn. As written in 2007, "Faithful Citizenship" said relatively little or nothing about these things, and that's perhaps quite understandable.

What does a document issued this year have to emphasize to get any purchase on voters' minds? I am posing that question having mulled over the data that the CARA survey brought in for us.

JOHN CARR: Well, let me take a stab and count on my panelists to rescue me.

I don't think the principles change. The principle that the economy exists for the person, not the other way around, is in here. The principle that work is not a privilege but a duty, and therefore people need to have the opportunity to work, and therefore to work for just wages and having a voice in the workplace and in the larger economy — those principles have guided the work of our Bishops' Conference, which has been very intensely involved in trying to lift up the unemployed, the poor, and the vulnerable — frankly, the people who have been missing in the economic discussion.

We have organized something called the Circle of Protection with sort of the middle of the Christian community — the National Association of Evangelicals, the Salvation Army, as well as the National Council of Churches and Bread for the World and others — to make a very simple point: that the poor and vulnerable don't have the lobbyists, and yet they are likely to be most impacted by these cuts. Whether we are meeting with Representative Paul Ryan, the Chair of the House Budget Committee, or meeting with the President of the United States, we made that case together.

I don't know whether the document will be rewritten or not. I do know that the principles that are in this document take on greater and greater urgency given the desperate condition of people in our communities.

For those of you who are interested in a reflection on this, the Labor Day Statement of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops was released over the weekend and, to the best of my knowledge, did not make it into *The New York Times* this week. But that is an attempt to offer that kind of analysis.

Whether it gets translated into these pages or not, I'm not clear. That will be the work, I think, of the bishops and all of us, to make sure that that central issue — and, frankly, the impact not only on ourselves but on the larger community.

The central moral question is not, "Are you better off now than you were four years ago?" It's, "Are we better off? Are the poor protected, are the unborn protected, are the most vulnerable lifted up?" That's very different than the discourse we are likely to get.

PETER STEINFELS: The first question from the audience is addressed to you, John, but I feel that our other panelists are certainly sufficiently close to observing the Church and its internal life, as well as its external efforts, to toss their own views in.

The question is: "Could you say something more about the divisions or priorities that exist among our teaching bishops and how might these mirror the polarities among the faithful? In other words, where are the controversial fault lines among the bishops?"

ROBERT GEORGE: That's the one panelist who can't talk about it.

STEPHEN SCHNECK: Go for it, John.

JOHN CARR: We were talking about unemployment a minute ago. Actually, this is going to sound very naïve. I think there are very substantial differences. Whoever is writing this down, stop. But I think there are real differences in ecclesiology, in their view of religious life, and somewhat views of priorities.

I do not find a great deal of difference among our bishops in their passion to protect the unborn, their concern for the undocumented, the priority for the poor. Some of these things used to be instinctive and almost generational. They grew up in homes like Robbie and now they don't. But I'll be very blunt. I think Pope John Paul II and Pope Benedict have taken Catholic social teaching from a sort of experiential option to a doctrinal essential.
Benedict XVI has placed the care and love for the poor at the center of the Church's life along with proclaiming the Gospel and celebrating the Sacraments. That's not me or Robbie or Steve; that is the Vicar of Christ. And he has done so, I think quite amazingly, in two powerful encyclicals and has said that our charity ought to be political charity.

So this document was adopted 214–4. Now, how they translate that, how they apply it, whether in fact those paragraphs that we talked about this afternoon differ on what they in their conscience believe is possible, I think that's all true.

But as I said at the outset, and probably clumsily, one of my worries is that the polarization in political life is now seeping into ecclesial life, where we turn differences in priorities and strategies into fights over principle and we have good bishops and bad bishops, we have faithful groups and unfaithful groups. I think that is dangerous. I think it is harmful.

My own conviction — and I'll stop with this — is I think we have a massive task of changing the way we think about human life and dignity. We may win some battles on abortion. We may win some battles on the economy. We may win eventually something on immigration. But unless we change the way our society thinks about the human person, we're not going to win, we're not going to win in any fundamental way.

Unborn children are a gift, not a burden. The elderly are a blessing, not a burden. Immigrants contribute to the society; they don't threaten the society. Even the people on death row have dignity that can't be thrown away.

Unless we think differently about this, I don't think our policies are ever really going to change. That is why one of the best things I think the Conference is doing is focusing on a set of priorities, including a common effort led by our pro-life and our social justice structures, to focus on the life and dignity of the human person, because unless we change people's minds and hearts, I don't think we're going to change their actions, and certainly not their votes.

Let me give you an example. Archbishop Chaput has taken a lot of heat. I was in Denver when he was accused of partisanship. Archbishop Chaput is one of the great champions of the poor and undocumented in our Conference. People ignore that.

Bishop Blair, who is getting lots of attention for his defense of the rights of labor this week, is a great champion of the rights of the unborn and took a leading role in the defense of marriage in California.

I think when we start seeing our Episcopal leaders through our own prejudices we do them and we do the Church a disservice.As I said before, I think we can divide up the work; I don't think we ought to divide up the Church.

PETER STEINFELS: With that, would the other two panelists who have had considerable experience in the life of the Church and its relationship to politics, and are both tenured, have any comments on the controversial fault lines among the bishops?

STEPHEN SCHNECK: Actually, let me first echo and agree with John. It seems to me that the divisions that are really the danger to the Catholic Church in the United States aren't among the bishops; they are among the Catholic citizens themselves, where I see in my daily work in this regard real ideologically partisan-driven Catholics that seem to only understand their faith from the perspective of their political positions. I'm sure that you guys have seen that as well. This is, I think, one of the real problems that the Church is facing right now.

But among the bishops my experience is exactly what you heard from John Carr. The bishops that I've dealt with, that we think of as left and right, are fundamentally confusing when you deal with them face-to-face and talk about these issues.

Now, though, let me just say one point of criticism. John just waxed eloquently about the commitment of the American bishops to Catholic social teaching, and I think that that's true. But I don't see it actually getting into the pews. I'm not quite sure what the solution is. I'm not blaming the bishops generally, I'm not blaming the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops or people like John. But it seems to me what Benedict XVI and what Blessed John Paul II have done in highlighting the importance of Catholic social

teachings is something that we need to get the American Church to pay a lot more attention to.

I don't know why it's not happening and I don't know how to exactly place that in terms of criticism. I'm not blaming any specific bishop, but I think that that is a matter of concern.

ROBERT GEORGE: You know, Peter, bishops used to be people who were older than I am and now they're people my age. I don't know how that happened.

But my impression in talking with bishops and working with bishops is that very many of them, especially those in the sort of age group of the Baby Boomers, have a story that's basically my story: they grew up in Democratic homes, they were old-fashioned liberals, old-fashioned Hubert Humphrey liberals — civil rights people, pro-labor people, people who believed in a very active role for government and so forth.

But in many, many cases their story is just like my story, or Mary Ann Glendon's story or Richard Neuhaus's story — people who are now really alienated from liberalism because they see liberalism as having gone in a very different direction with abortion and the embrace of the sexual revolution. So they really are alienated in that way.

Now, some of them have also had a change of heart on the role of government or the size and scope of government or the efficacy of large bureaucratized governmental social welfare programs. But many of them, as John points out, would still count as liberals on things like immigration and lots of other ideas. But there is this deep alienation that is just palpable in many cases.

PETER STEINFELS: Let me ask a question from the audience that I hope the panel, anybody who wants to speak to it, will do so briefly. It's an interesting question. It's more political than most we've had: "In the near to intermediate future, how can American Catholics realistically make progress toward a more just society without a viable third alternative to the dominant two-party system?"

ROBERT GEORGE: You know, the temptation is always to found the American version of the Christian Democrats. You know, that was not a crazy idea in Europe and there were good people who promoted the idea, and it had a pretty good record, a pretty good run, at the beginning.

But in the end it proved not to work out at all well either for politics or for the Church. So as tempting as it is when you belong to a tradition and you believe in a set of principles that don't fit very well or completely into one party or the other — as tempting as it is to say, "Let's found a Catholic party, or if it's not an explicitly Catholic party, Christian Democratic parties or Catholic parties, a party that's built on Catholic social teaching as a third alternative" — it's not just that I don't think we'd get very far with it; I think it probably in the end would not be good for our politics and it wouldn't be good for our Church.

Scandals would prove a disaster. Human nature means there are going to be scandals. We know it all too well in the Church, and it would be true in the political parties. They end up just harming the party, harming the political system, harming the Church.

I know, Steve, you've probably thought about the Christian Democratic option, right?

STEPHEN SCHNECK: I agree with you in regard to forming something like a Christian Democratic party.

I am kind of interested, though, in some of the political experiments that you see around the world. You know in Great Britain and places on the continent, for example, there's a movement that's sometimes called Red Toryism, which is a movement among conservatives to embrace things that we might think of as Catholic social teachings and so forth, that I find particularly fascinating. Phillip Blond, for example, is associated with that.

But, unfortunately, folks, the cards are stacked against the formation of a third party in the United States. It's written into the laws. It would be a huge, very difficult undertaking. So, however attractive it might be, I think that the possibility of it as an option for us is pretty low.

PETER STEINFELS: Very briefly, John?

JOHN CARR: I said I've spent a lot of time in church basements and university halls talking about this. Part of my speech used to be, "I feel politically homeless," and I would wax eloquent about this.

David O'Brien, a friend of some of us, said, "John, you act as if that's a virtue. That's a statement of the problem." My response to that is: "If you're homeless, you better find a shelter, you better start building something."

One of the things I would like to see happen is within both our political parties — this is maybe my parents talking — let's start small but develop sort of a life-and-dignity caucus that takes the rough edges off the libertarianism of the Republican Party and the individualism of the Democratic Party and starts challenging from the inside those things — the lack of focus on the poor, the lack of any restraint on abortion-on-demand, the idea that gay marriage is "the wave of the future." Let's not abandon the parties; let's get into the parties.

I just want to say a word about that big, bulky government. I have not picked a fight with Robbie at all. Clearly, there are lots of ways in which government overreaches. We spend a lot of our time and energy trying to improve and reform and strengthen the programs that we advocate
But my mother, the Republican, the conservative, started a pro-life pregnancy center in my hometown. This true-blue "government keep your hands off" discovered that Medicaid was a lifeline for the women and children that she was trying to help, that WIC and food stamps could provide Pampers, they could provide a crib, they could provide counsel in helping women make the choice to have their child, but they couldn't provide all the health care, they couldn't provide all the nutrition. Those programs that she used to be so critical of turned out to be lifelines for the women and children that she served.

So I think we ought to step away from our corners, where the left defends everything and the right sort of attacks every instrument of government. I actually think the mediating structures model that you described offers a lot of potential. We ought to meet in the middle around poverty and talk about what is it individuals and families need to do, what is it institutions like churches need to do, what is it the market needs to do, and what is it the government needs to do at state and local levels, and get those institutions working together to lift people up, to empower people, so they can live in dignity.

Our goal is not to get everybody on food stamps. Our goal is to have people be able to earn a living so they can feed their kids themselves.

PETER STEINFELS: A question for Stephen here: "How do Democrats For Life restore any sense of relevance given the treatment they have received from their party?" You'll have to be brief in your answer here.

STEPHEN SCHNECK: Actually, Democrats For Life have been welcomed by the Obama Administration and have had quite a bit of access. So that's a bit of a dated question. But we're looking forward to next year's presidential convention, and I hope to have some role there.

PETER STEINFELS: There's a question lurking here that we really haven't addressed, but it has come up around the third party, the third alternative, question: How do Catholics operate politically from their principles in a context in which they will probably never, or not for a very long future, get the kind of agreement that they would like to get about some of these issues — in other words, a kind of irremediably pluralist society? I will illustrate it by a point and I will refer to a question here.

Robbie, you have written a book on embryonic life, which I think is the best argument that I have read of a whole series of arguments about when developing life deserves the same kind of protection we give to born individuals. However, Robbie, good as it is, I don't think it is going to get the kind of consensus anywhere in the near future that we would need to operate politically. We have to have some kind of intermediate notion.

The reference here is to a question that says something about "we know that the unborn are ontologically the same as the starving child we see on TV from Somalia or elsewhere, but they don't have the same kind of conviction in terms of the political arena. How do we deal with that?"

And you could argue the same thing about defining marriage; you could argue the same thing about a number of these other questions.

ROBERT GEORGE: Well, one thing to remember is we've been here before. This isn't the first time we face this kind of an issue.
There was a time when even reasonable people of goodwill, people who were honest, wouldn't tell lies, wouldn't betray friends, if they were handed back a dollar extra in change by mistake from a sales clerk they'd give back the dollar, who believed that it was right and just for one human being to own and be able to sell another human being. There were people like that. For people like that, raised in a culture that blocked their vision of the true and equal dignity of all members of the human family, they would look — whites, some whites — at a black and they would see someone who was human in a biological sense but not really fully possessing the dignity of a white person. So people like Lincoln had to make the argument, as Lincoln did time after time in the Douglas debates and so forth.

So I think we have to make the argument and make the argument and make the argument, be persistent and be relentless, and join forces across lines of theological division with our evangelical friends and our friends from the Latter Day Saints community and our Orthodox Jewish friends and anybody who will join with us, so that it's not the confessional Catholic thing but is a common witness to and inherent principle of basic justice. So I think that's what we have to do.

When it comes to politics, I do believe — and as you know, Peter, I have endorsed and acted on the incremental approach. I've gotten some criticism from some in the pro-life movement for that. But I think as long as we keep the ball moving forward and we are trying to get results — and we're getting some results within our own political party — then we just keep at it.

I suppose that's what Steve and his gang at Democrats For Life are trying to do, to try to get something palpable, tangible, from the Obama Administration on embryonic stem cell research and cloning and abortion.

And, of course, I am trying to advance the ball as much as I can in the Republican Party, and on other issues as well, since the life issues are not just about the beginning of life but the lives of the handicapped, the lives of the frail elderly, and so forth.

So the answer to the question is keep making — I realize that not everybody who reads my book is going to be instantly converted and only a very small percentage of people are going to read my book. But I think that —

PETER STEINFELS: We'll have poll data on that next time.

ROBERT GEORGE: But I hope the book will have impact. You should read the book because it will empower you, if you're not already empowered, to make the argument. It's not some brilliant thing on our part; all we do is get out the basic textbooks of human embryology and developmental biology and lay out the facts. When you see the facts, you're left in no doubt about when the life of a new human being begins. So let's all be empowered to go out and make the argument.

PETER STEINFELS: I'm afraid, John, that the hour has now approached for us to conclude this very rich discussion. To do that I would like to invite James McCartin, our Center's new Co-Director, to the podium.

JAMES McCARTIN: Thank you, Peter.

I bear news. Our next Center event on October 18th — mark your calendars — will closely relate to this one. We've titled it "Faithful Citizenship II: Keeping the Faith in a Season of Spin." There, instead of reflecting on the bishops' words, we will focus on the challenges of following one's conscience in the context of the noise, the negativity, the compromises even, that are required in the political process.

Our moderator for that evening will be Mary Jo Bane, who served in the Clinton Administration, who is now a faculty member at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government. Our panelists will be John Dilulio, who served in the first George W. Bush Administration, who is now a political scientist at the University of Pennsylvania; Tom Perriello, a former Virginia Congressman, a supporter of the Obama Administration, who was defeated after one term in 2010; Gerald Seib, Washington Bureau Chief of *The Wall Street Journal*; and the Jesuit political scientist and commentator Thomas Reese.

If you have not signed up to receive mail or email regarding our next event or future events, please do so at the table on your way out near the door.

I want to take a moment to thank our Program Manager Patricia Bellucci and our student assistants for the evening, who have helped to make this event possible. And finally, let's all close the Forum with a final expression of appreciation.