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STATEMENT

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Archbishop Michael J. Sheehan
On
How to Vote?

ALBUQUERQUE, NM - IMMEDIATE RELEASE – Wednesday, October 08, 2008—IMMEDIATE RELEASE
As we prepare to cast our vote in the upcoming November elections, I think it is important for me, as the Shepherd of the Catholic Family, to remind everyone of the responsibility we have to participate as faithful citizens in the welfare of our country.

The Church has an important role in forming the consciences of its members. A good Catholic should be informed about the issues involved and the stance the candidates have on each issue. The Church is not allowed, under the law, to promote one candidate or the other or to promote a particular political party. We are forbidden to do that.

I ask that you inform yourself about the serious issues at stake and the candidates' platforms. Take advantage of the privilege you have as U.S. citizens to vote and to share your views. As Archbishop Chaput of Denver says in his new book, Render Unto Caesar, we should not be silent about our values when it comes to the public debate on issues that relate to faith and human life. He says that Christian faith is always personal but never private. We must not be shamed into being quiet because others disagree with us.

*Study the issues and pay close attention to each candidate's proposals concerning human life issues. **Vote pro-life! A pro-life society is one that respects the dignity of all human life including the unborn human life and also protects the elderly and the sick from the creeping evil of euthanasia. Life issues include the entire spectrum from conception to natural death. Is it a sin to vote for candidates who do not support these values? Yes, if that is the main reason we are voting for them.***

We affirm stem cell research that does not harm the human embryo. It is surprising that some anti-abortion politicians have endorsed public funding for embryonic stem cell research. The Church teaches that embryonic stem cell research is wrong because it means that human life is being destroyed. All stages of life are stages of the same being. Each of us was once a human embryo. To give approval of the killing of human embryos to provide body parts for medical purposes is every bit as wrong as abortion. The end does not justify the means and the ethical dimensions of this matter should be kept in mind when you vote for a candidate.

There are many other issues as well that should be considered when we vote, such as same-sex marriage, the death penalty, concern for the poor, the treatment of inmates, immigration policy, the approach to war and peace – amongst others. The priests and other church leaders are not allowed to publicly tell you who to vote for or against, but we do indeed speak to the issues such as the ones I have mentioned. We want leaders in government who respect these values that are so important, not only to Catholics but for the good of our Nation.

*We pray for all public officials and ask God to guide them so that they will make ethical decisions about the laws that regulate our society. We also urge efforts to pursue much needed ethics reform at the State and Federal level. **We are citizens of this world but, of course, the ultimate goal is citizenship in the next! END***

We invite you to visit our website
<http://www.archdiocesasantafe.org>