

VOTER DISCERNMENT 2018

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Economics



Forida is a 22-year-old sewing machine operator in a garment factory in Bangladesh that supplies global brands. She has worked there since she was 15. Each day, she is given a goal she must meet. A

typical day lasts 12 hours, longer when Western clothing companies submit bigger orders. Forida would like all workers to make a living wage, to be able to afford the basics in life. She says: "If we were paid a little more money, then I could send my son to school; we could live happily, we could lead a better life."

While workers like Forida struggle to survive, billionaires saw their wealth increase by \$762 billion in the past year, an increase that could have ended extreme poverty seven times over. 82% of all wealth created in the past year went to the top 1%, while the bottom 50% saw no increase at all.

Environment

Marta Rivera's home is at the bottom of a hill in Arecibo, Puerto Rico. During Hurricane Maria, her home was destroyed. She says, "I had diabetes and now I'm a cancer patient. I had a relapse because of what happened; I didn't have the medicine I need. I still have trouble getting the medication."

Marta's story is one that we've heard over and over again as we witness how the impacts of climate change are playing out through unprecedented floods, droughts, wild fires, and heat waves. Data from NOAA shows that the first half of 2018 was characterized by warmer to much-warmer-than-average conditions across the Earth's land and ocean surfaces. Meanwhile, people who are in most need bear the brunt of natural disasters and a warming climate.



Access to Health Care



The U.S. National Institutes of Health more than 115 people die each day from an opioid overdose. One of the biggest challenges to ending this crisis is access to mental health

and addiction services. Mental health care, especially for those on Medicaid, is challenging to access.

Christine, a Licensed Clinical Social Worker in Syracuse says, "The biggest misconception about opioid abuse is that folks cannot get better. I saw with intensive outpatient treatment over a year with Suboxone that miracles do happen. I saw folks get better and become productive members of society. I saw them turn around and give back to other addicts. I saw their families heal with them. But the investment of resources is significant. They also need continuing care for many years — less frequent treatment but they still need to attend groups... and continue on their Suboxone."

☾ "The poor will never suffer from starvation or lack of clothes unless the rich neglect their due."

—Hadith (Islamic Tradition)

✚ "Every economic decision and institution must be judged in light of whether it protects or undermines the dignity of the human person."

—U.S. Catholic Bishops (Economic Justice for All)

✚ "The economy needs ethics in order to function correctly — not any ethics whatsoever, but an ethics which is people-centered."

—Pope Benedict XVI (Caritas in Veritate)

✚ "Rabbi Levi ben Hiyata said to teach that without earth, there is no rain, and without rain, the earth cannot endure, and without either, humans cannot exist."—Genesis Rabbah (Jewish Tradition)

✚ Today, however, we have to realize that a true ecological approach always becomes a social approach; it must integrate questions of justice in debates on the environment, so as to hear both the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor. (49)

—Pope Francis (Laudato Si')

☸ "If we could see the miracle of a single flower clearly, our whole life would change."—Buddha

✚ "Affordable and accessible health care is an essential safeguard of human life and a fundamental human right."

—U.S. Catholic Bishops (Faithful Citizenship)

✚ "Health and wholeness in our communities cannot be achieved piecemeal nor can access to health care be regarded as the privilege of some."—National Council of Churches

☾ "The right of every individual to adequate health care flows from the sanctity of human life and that dignity belongs to all human beings." —Imam Sa'dullah Khan, The Islamic Center of Southern California

- Reflect on our economic system. Who bears the burden during times of crisis or economic downturns?
- How are the needs of people who are poor and vulnerable addressed by the candidate's economic policies?
- Does the candidate have plans to reform national and international economic policies in "people-centered" ways?

- Reflect on our lifestyle, economic and political systems. How do our choices impact the environment, especially in low-income communities?
- What are the candidate's policies for ethical, responsible, and sustainable use of land and resources?
- How do candidates propose to address Climate Change's disproportional burden on the poor?

- Reflect on the ongoing health care debate. What role does life and human dignity play in the various positions?
- Do the health care policies of the candidate meet the needs of people who are poor and vulnerable?
- What is the position of the candidate on the role and responsibility of the individual, private sector, and government in health care?



Immigration



Nazario Jacinto-Carrillo left his village in Guatemala with his 6-year-old daughter, Filemona, to seek asylum in the U.S., but his plan went awry soon after illegally crossing the California border. U.S. Border Patrol agents took his weeping daughter from his arms and told him that she would be returned to him within days. Although the Administration has ended the practice of separating children from their parents at the U.S.-Mexico border, about 2,300 children remain in shelters across the country.

Jacinto-Carrillo was deported to Guatemala, but his daughter wasn't with him. She remains at an undisclosed shelter in New York, where social workers have told the family she cries constantly. "When I got home my wife and mother were happy to see me, but they were weeping. My wife asked me, 'Where is Filemona?'"

Life & Human Dignity

Brian Jones, says, "...there is no amount of assimilation that can shield you from racism in this country. Throughout my life, something – the kink of my hair or my 'attitude' – would mark me as inferior, worthy of ridicule, humiliation or ostracism. In elementary school I got the distinct impression that teachers didn't like me... In third grade, I had my first black teacher and the whole dynamic changed. Mrs. Brooks decided it was OK if I squirmed in my chair. She taught us about discrimination and injustice and taught us to recite and interpret poetry from the black arts movement."



Brian is one person, but his experience is multiplied by millions. Incidents of overt racism and the rhetoric of white supremacy have increased recently. All people, especially those who benefit from white privilege, must examine the role they can play in the racial justice movement and dismantling institutional racism.

Violence

The mass shooting at Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida in February of 2018 was the deadliest shooting at a high school in U.S. history.

Students still talk of how that day stays with them. However, the students of Stoneman Douglas have turned their pain and frustration into action. Student Delaney Tarr said, "We've been to many rooms, spoken to legislators, but try as we might, the most we've gotten out of them is: 'We'll keep you in our thoughts, you're so strong, you're so powerful.' We've heard enough of that. We're ot here to be patted on the back. We're doing it so our legislators will make a change, so they won't dismiss us any longer."



✝ "You shall love the alien as yourself; for you too were once aliens in the land of Egypt." —Leviticus 19:34

✝ Governments must address "the root causes of forced migration, such as extreme poverty, unemployment, political persecution, armed conflicts, genocide, environmental degradation, religious intolerance, trade policies, and other forms of injustice."
—Evangelical Lutheran Church of America

✝ In his World Day of Peace message on "Migrants and Refugees: Men and Women in Search of Peace," Pope Francis reiterated his advocacy for "all those fleeing from war and hunger, or forced by discrimination and persecution, poverty and environmental degradation to leave their homelands... Please, let's not extinguish the hope in their hearts, let's not suffocate their expectations of peace."
—Pope Francis (January 1, 2018)

ॐ "Every being is an abode of God, worthy of respect and reverence." —Hindu Scriptures

✝ "Whatever is opposed to life itself, such as any type of murder, genocide, abortion, euthanasia, or willful self destruction, whatever violates the integrity of the human person... whatever insults human dignity, such as subhuman living conditions, arbitrary imprisonment, deportation, slavery, prostitution, the selling of women and childrenlll all these things and others like them are infamies indeed." —Vatican II (Gaudium et Spes)

✝ "The problem of intolerance must be confronted in all its forms: wherever any minority is persecuted and marginalized because of its religious convictions or ethnic identity, the Well being of society as a whole is endangered and each one of us must feel affected."
—Pope Francis (Address to delegation of the Simon Wiesenthal Center 10/24/13)

✪ "The whole of the Torah is for the purpose of promoting peace."
—Babylonian Talmud (Jewish Tradition)

✝ "I call heaven and earth today to witness against you: I have set before you life and death, the blessing and the curse. Choose life, then, that you and your descendants may live."
—Deuteronomy 22:8

✝ The U.S. Bishops have called for all people to work toward a culture of life, to do more to end violence and for gun violence, "We support measures that control the sale and use of firearms and make them safer (especially efforts that prevent their unsupervised use by children or anyone other than the owner), and we reiterate our call for sensible regulation of handguns."
—U.S. Bishops (Responsibility, Rehabilitation, & Restoration: A Catholic Perspective on Crime & Criminal Justice)

- Reflect on who benefits from our current immigration policy. Who suffers? What is the impact on our community?
- Do the immigration policies of the candidate treat the migrant with respect and dignity?
- What is the position of the candidate on international trade policy and poverty reduction programs to address the root causes of immigration?

- Reflect on the list of "infamies" opposed to life listed by the 2nd Vatican Council. What would you add to this list today?
- How is the promotion of racial justice evident in the policies and programs of the candidates?
- How does the candidate address the right to life and human rights for all members of our local and global community?

- Reflect on proliferation of lethal weapon on our streets. What happens to families traumatized by gun violence?
- Do the candidates' positions foster peace & security for all?
- How do the candidates approach gun violence in our community and how do they propose to address it? Do the candidates advocate funding research and evidence-based policies?