



# FAITH+LIFE

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## FIRST READING ACTS 2:42-47

*“They devoted themselves to the teaching of the apostles and to the communal life, to the breaking of bread and to the prayers. Awe came upon everyone, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles.*

*All who believed were together and had all things in common; they would sell their property and possessions and divide them among all according to each one’s need.*

*Every day they devoted themselves to meeting together in the temple area and to breaking bread in their homes. They ate their meals with exultation and sincerity of heart, praising God and enjoying favour with all the people.*

*And every day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.”*

*“In the Catholic tradition, responsible citizenship is a virtue, and participation in political life is a moral obligation. This obligation is rooted in our baptismal commitment to follow Jesus Christ and to bear Christian witness in all we do.”*

*- Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship: A Call to Political Responsibility, paragraph 13.*



Attributed to silashwang on Flickr

### VOTING WITH CONSCIENCE

The elections are coming! Like many other citizens, this will be my first time voting. Naturally, this fills me with a deep sense of responsibility and uncertainty. I know that my vote will count but will it add up correctly and make the right difference? Everyday, the news is updated with developments in the political scene. To garner votes, competing parties and candidates announce campaign proposals and promises, sometimes even issuing claims and challenges to each other. All this can be pretty confusing to new voters.

For my part, I am determined to vote with my conscience. I try to inform myself about the important issues affecting our lives today. I also try to look beyond my own immediate concerns to see these same issues through the eyes of others. The one temptation I refuse to give in to is to be obsessed over any one single issue. Instead, I try to measure their plans against those closely held values that have shaped my life. Without being carried away with what the politicians argue, I try to evaluate who amongst them can best work towards the common good.

#### **Reflect:**

*Does your voice matter and does your vote count? Why?*

*What important issues are affecting our lives today? How do the parties and candidates hope to address them?*

*What do you think is the common good of our society? Are we getting any nearer in achieving it or have we lost our way?*

## **COMMON GOOD**

The common good does not merely imply the good of the common people or the good of the majority. Instead, the common good is rooted in the human dignity of each and every person in society.

Without excluding anyone, our task is to nurture this together by contributing whatever gifts and talents we have been given to build up the common good. Each and every one of us can only find fulfilment when we pursue this good – with and for others. This fulfilment is not limited to our material needs alone but holistically includes all the other often-neglected aspects of the human person.

Just like the disciples in last Sunday’s reading, their life in community hints at what the common good can look and feel like (Acts 2:42-47). In Singapore today, many do not share in the fruits of that success. Our faith shapes our values and challenges us to look beyond ourselves.

### ***Reflect:***

*Who are the poor, the weak, and the vulnerable in our community? Where do we encounter them in our daily lives?*

*Are the needs of the poor, the weak, and the vulnerable being properly addressed?*

*In what ways are you helping to build up the common good?*

## **FAITHFUL CITIZENSHIP**

This question about the common good is an important one to ask, especially as the elections loom. Whoever they might be, the type of parties and candidates we eventually vote into authority will reflect our own hopes about what we want our future to look like. How we treat the poor, the weak, and the vulnerable in our midst is a reflection of this.

Our citizen duty to vote must take into consideration our Christian desire to build up the common good in our society – not just for ourselves but for each and every person. As both Christians and citizens, we share the responsibility of shaping the moral character of society. Our voting decisions must similarly reflect our concerns and aspirations as both Christians and citizens.

### ***Reflect:***

*Do you know enough about the social and political issues being discussed for you to make an informed decision at the voting booth?*

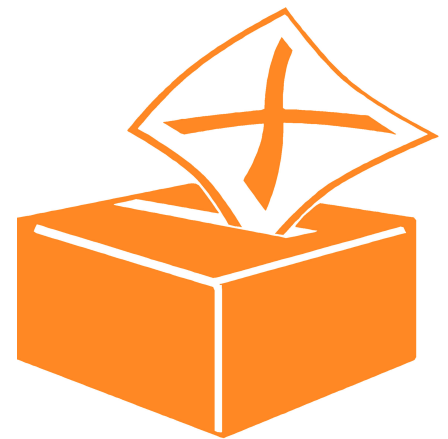
*As Christians and citizens, are you allowing your moral convictions to guide your actions and decisions?*

*What is your vision for the future of Singapore?*

**Faith+Life is a monthly publication of Caritas Singapore that draws upon Catholic social teachings to reflect upon local concerns that affect our society today.**

“The Church is involved in the political process but is not partisan. The Church cannot champion any candidate or party. Our cause is the defence of human life and dignity and the protection of the weak and vulnerable.”

*- Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship: A Call to Political Responsibility, paragraph 58.*



*The 'X's we inscribe on our ballot papers mark more than just our vote. Our crosses mark an expression of faith.*

“As Catholics, we should be guided more by our moral convictions than by our attachment to a political party or interest group. When necessary, our participation should help transform the party to which we belong; we should not let the party transform us in such a way that we neglect or deny fundamental moral truths. We are called to bring together our principles and our political choices, our values and our votes, to help build a better world.”

*- Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship: A Call to Political Responsibility, paragraphs 14.*