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Philadelphia archbishop: 'Absolute adherence' required on abortion

Joshua J. McElwee | Oct. 24, 2012 NCR Today

?Absolute adherence? to a desire for the criminalization of abortion is required by Catholics, states Philadelphia Archbishop Charles Chaput in a video posted Tuesday by Catholic News Service.

?If we don?t stand united on this issue, we?re bound to failure,? Chaput continues in the video, which is posted on YouTube and features a two-minute interview with the archbishop on the ?politics of abortion.?

Chaput?s interview, posted two weeks before the November elections, comes as several bishops have become more outspoken [1] in advising, or even telling, Catholics how to vote. In early October, New York Cardinal Timothy Dolan, president of the U.S. bishops' conference, joined the fray [2] and expressed nine ?concerns? he said he has for the nation as people prepare to vote.

In Tuesday's video, Chaput addresses how he believes the political parties have historically addressed abortion following brief footage of Vice President Joe Biden and his Republican challenger Paul Ryan, both Catholics, discussing their views on the subject at the vice presidential debate Oct. 11.

Abortion, says Chaput, ?really is a big issue today. And I think what it requires to Catholics is a loyalty to the church prior to their political party.?

The archbishop continues:

> We are Catholics before we?re Democrats. We are Catholics before we?re Republicans.
>
> We?re even Catholics before we?re Americans because we know that God has a demand on us beyond any government demand on us. And this has been the story of the martyrs through the centuries.
>
> It doesn?t mean that we?re not good citizens. Because being a good citizen means giving God His rights prior to the government making its claims upon us. So I think this is a very serious issue that requires absolute adherence on the part of Catholics.
>
> And if we don?t stand united on this issue, we?re bound to failure. Not only in the area of protecting unborn human life, but in maintaining our religious freedom.
>
> And you know, you can?t trust the Republicans to be pro-life twenty years from now. You can?t let any party take your vote for granted, you know. And that?s unfortunately what?s happened.

> I think many of the Democrats have thought they had the Catholic votes for granted because they?ll go with them no matter what the position of the party might be on abortion.
>
> That?s why the position of the Democrat party has gotten worse and worse and worse as time goes on, because Catholics haven?t abandoned them as they?ve moved in that direction.
>
> So we just have to be insistent on it. Catholic identity takes precedence over everything.

The full video follows.

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[1] http://ncronline.org/node/36236
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