

[Opinion](#)

[News](#)

[Guest Voices](#)



Democratic presidential nominee Joe Biden makes a campaign stop Oct. 27 in Atlanta. (CNS/Reuters/Brian Snyder)

by Thomas R. Suozzi

[View Author Profile](#)

## [Join the Conversation](#)

Send your thoughts to *Letters to the Editor*. [Learn more](#)

October 30, 2020

[Share on Facebook](#)[Share on Twitter](#)[Email to a friend](#)[Print](#)

Someone sent me a video the other day where a priest was saying, "You cannot be Catholic and be a Democrat." As the U.S. representative for New York's 3rd District, I am both. So is my candidate for president.

I will argue here, that despite Joe Biden's position on abortion, Catholics absolutely should vote for him.

Next Tuesday, Catholic Voters can help elect the second Catholic president in U.S. history.

Former Vice President Joe Biden's Catholic roots run deep. He was born into an Irish Catholic family, baptized, confirmed and married as a Catholic, and educated by nuns in parochial schools. He attends church regularly, and carries a rosary at all times.

"My idea of self, of family, of community, of the wider world comes straight from my religion. It's not so much the Bible, the beatitudes, the Ten Commandments, the sacraments, or the prayers I learned. It's the culture," he wrote in his 2007 memoir, [\*Promises to Keep: On Life and Politics\*](#).

Remembering his father's [admonition](#), "Joey, there's no greater sin than the abuse of power," Biden entered politics on the side of the underdog.

Whether fighting for decent wages for working men and women, protecting women against violence, championing civil rights or leading the battle for health care reform that refused to discriminate against those with preexisting conditions, Biden has never forgotten what his dad said and what his faith demanded.

While Biden and I — and so many other Catholic Democrats — work to create a society where there are fewer abortions, there are some that suggest unless we advocate to make abortion illegal, other Catholics cannot vote for us because of this issue.

Nothing can be further from the truth.

Pope Francis and the U.S. bishops are clear that we must defend the unborn, but they are also clear there are many issues that are "[equally sacred](#)."

The Catholic Church does not endorse candidates. It never has. The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops has been adamant that the Catholic Church in the United States does not stand behind one party or one candidate. "Our purpose is to help Catholics form their consciences in accordance with God's truth," the bishops wrote in their document, "[Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship](#)."

And while Trump claims he wants to make abortion illegal, he is just plain wrong on the church's views on climate change, capital punishment, helping the poor, immigration and a laundry list of issues from Catholic social teaching.

As [Jesuit Fr. Thomas Reese has pointed out](#), in "Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship," Paragraph 35 "acknowledges the messy world of politics, where a candidate may disagree with church teaching on an important issue but a Catholic might still vote for that candidate for other morally grave reasons."

Clearly, there are "morally grave" reasons why we should vote for Joe Biden rather than Donald Trump.

Trump calls his opponents "[scum](#)," brands women as "[fat pigs](#)" and belittles people all around him. He [mocks a reporter with a disability](#) by imitating him, daily bullies his colleagues with insulting nicknames and [refuses to condemn white nationalist](#), anti-Catholic hate groups. And do not forget his public cruelty to political adversaries, former employees and ex-wives. Don't ignore his racist demeaning of immigrants or his Twitter rants that thrive on division.

Then, too, the basic commandment on which society is based: "Thou shalt not lie." Donald Trump is a prolific liar. [Fact Checker](#) has posted more than 20,000 lies told by Trump since his inauguration. In the lead-up to the election, he has been averaging about 50 false or misleading claims per day. [The virus is "going to disappear](#)," he has told us at least three dozen times.

Trump calls global warming and climate change "[a total hoax](#)." [Pope Benedict said](#) we are responsible "for the protection and care of the environment." He supported research for solar energy, the management of forests and said we must focus on how to deal with climate change. To do less, he [claimed](#), was to "harm human coexistence, and thus betray human dignity and violate the rights of citizens who desire to live in a safe environment."

Advertisement

Pope Francis directed the global community in his encyclical, "[\*Laudato Si\*](#), on Care for Our Common Home" to raise awareness about the growing climate change crisis. "This sister [the earth] now cries out to us because of the harm we have inflicted on her by our irresponsible use and abuse of the goods with which God has endowed her," the pope said.

Joe Biden has [said](#), "I believe faith is a gift. And the first obligation we all have is, 'Love your God,' the second one is, 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' ... Treat people with dignity. Everyone's entitled to dignity, that's a basic tenet in my household."

This election is not a referendum on any one issue. It's a choice between two men.

As Biden likes to [tell](#) audiences, "Don't compare me to the Almighty, compare me to the alternative."

Joe Biden is a man of rare character, honesty and compassion. His candidacy speaks to the soul of our nation and the need to realign our moral compass towards the common good. Now more than ever, America needs a leader with empathy and compassion who cares for the least among us and will try to heal the division that exists.

"Scripture is clear," Biden said in a [tweet](#). "It's not enough to just wish the world were better. It's our duty to make it so." Joe Biden is driven by his values. These are values that we Catholics share. Let us join together and truly restore the soul of our nation.

[U.S. Rep. Thomas R. Suozzi represents the 3rd Congressional District in New York. He previously served as mayor of his hometown, Glen Cove, New York, and as Nassau County Executive. He lives in Glen Cove with his wife, Helene, and their three children Caroline, Joseph, and Michael.]

This story appears in the **Election 2020** feature series. [View the full series](#).