

Faithful Citizenship

Principles and Strategies to Serve the Common Good

Edited by Dennis Hamm, S.J., and Gail S. Risch

Introduction

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[1] The papers in this volume derive from a symposium, “Faithful Citizenship: Principles and Strategies to Serve the Common Good,” held at Creighton University, April 17-19, 2008. Subtitled “A Symposium on the Catholic Interface between Church & State,” the gathering was sponsored by Creighton’s Rabbi Myer and Dorothy Kripke Center for the Study of Religion & Society and the Amelia B. and Emil G. Graff Chair in Catholic Theology.

[2] The idea for the symposium emerged from the experience of the 2004 presidential election and the public discourse preceding it. Beginning with the 1976 election season, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) has issued, twelve months before each presidential election, a call to political responsibility under the rubric of “faithful citizenship.” Continuing that tradition, in November of 2003 the USCCB published “Faithful Citizenship: A Call to Political Responsibility.” It was a cogent document, challenging U.S. Catholics to consider the full spectrum of Catholic social teaching as they approached the election process. The promulgation and application of this excellent document was, at best, uneven. Some of our church leaders were less enthusiastic than others in promoting that full spectrum of issues. In the process, important questions were raised, once again, regarding the relationship between faith and public life. And so it seemed to me that faithful citizenship (the exercise of political responsibility informed by Catholic social teaching) was a ripe subject for attention by the Graff Chair and for the Kripke

Center. Faithful citizenship is, after all, about the interface between church and state. That is why we organized this symposium – gathering scholars to address major topics of the current presidential campaign from the viewpoint of the Catholic social tradition. The idea was to break open the notion of faithful citizenship – historically and theoretically – and to use that understanding to consider some of the major issues of the campaign – poverty, immigration, war, abortion, and environment. The explanatory phrase in the title – “Principles and Strategies to Serve the Common Good” – was chosen carefully, to underscore the distinction between (nonnegotiable) principles and (necessarily negotiable) political strategies entailed in seeking the common good.

[3] April seemed the right time for the symposium. Last November, again a year before national elections, the USCCB published the most recent update of their quadrennial call to political responsibility, “Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship.” Gathering in late April gave us time to hear that call in the context of the national campaigns, with some months still remaining in those campaigns during which the discourse of the symposium might serve to clarify and stimulate the ongoing conversation about the relationship between the Catholic social tradition and the issues of the campaigns. Given the ephemeral nature of campaign discourse, it seemed best to publish the symposium’s papers online rather than in a print medium that would only become available after the fact of the election. Thus, this volume for Supplement Series of the *Journal of Religion & Society*.

[4] The first paper, “The Story of Faithful Citizenship: History, Context, Directions, and Dangers,” represents the keynote address, given by John L. Carr, Secretary of the Department of Social Development and World Peace, USCCB. He has assisted the bishops with the development of significant documents, including *Communities of Salt and Light*, *Sharing Catholic Teaching*, *Called to Global Solidarity*, *Everyday Christianity*, and *Faithful Citizenship*. He served as Executive Director of the White House Conference on Family and as Director of the National Committee for Full Employment. Most importantly for us, Carr has been the shepherd and chief architect of the several versions of the U.S. bishops’ faithful-citizenship documents since the beginning of that tradition in 1976.

[5] Our format for the following day and a half entailed (1) a half-hour oral presentation of the gist of a major paper, followed by (2) a 15-minute response by a local scholar or activist, and then (3) some thirty minutes for interchange among the invited scholars and the seventy-some “active auditors” who were present. The papers posted in this volume were revised during the weeks following, and in the light of the discussions generated during the symposium. These texts – the major presentations and the responses – are published here in the order in which they were originally presented. The text of Ernesto Cortés, “Faithful Citizenship *between* Elections,” reconstructed from an after-dinner talk by his aide, Paul Turner, makes a fitting conclusion for the collection.

[6] To place the challenge of “Faithful Citizenship” within its historical context, David J. O’Brien presented “Faithful Citizenship in the Longer U.S. Catholic Story.” O’Brien, retiring this year as Loyola Professor of Catholic Studies at the College of the Holy Cross, has been researching and writing that history most of his academic life. His first full telling of that story was his 1988 book *Public Catholicism: American Catholics and Public Life, 1787-1987*. He followed another thread in *From the Heart of the American Church: Catholic Higher Education and*

American Culture (1994). His biography of Isaac Hecker provides yet another sounding of the U.S. Catholic experience, and his interest the themes of faithful citizenship are evident in his incisive journal articles and his service on the boards of Voice of the Faithful and Catholics in Alliance for the Common Good.

[7] O'Brien's respondent is Sue E. S. Crawford, Associate Professor of Political Science at Creighton University. Crawford was an obvious choice because of her interest and research in the interface between church and state in the U.S.

[8] No one who has studied Catholic social teaching will wonder why David Hollenbach, S.J., was invited to participate in a symposium subtitled "Principles and Strategies to Serve the Common Good." Hollenbach has been researching and writing on the common good for some thirty-five years. He has been working steadily all these years spelling out the Catholic social tradition, collaborating with the U.S. bishops on their pastorals of the 1980s, "The Challenge of Peace" and "Economic Justice for All," writing articles and books, and becoming one of the Catholic church's primary interpreters and exponents of our social teaching. Now Director of the Center for Human Rights and International Justice and holder of the University Chair in Human Rights and International Justice at Boston College, Father Hollenbach is eminently qualified to address "Common Good and Issues in U.S. Politics: A Critical Catholic Approach."

[9] Hollenbach's respondent is another person with a professional interest in the interface of church and state from a very practical point of view, James R. Cunningham. As Executive Director of the Nebraska Catholic Conference, he is the Nebraska bishops' lobbyist in the state unicameral legislature; he responds from the place where the Catholic magisterium meets the formation of public policy on the local level.

[10] Our next presenter is Bryan Massingale, a priest of the Archdiocese of Milwaukee and Associate Professor of Theology at Marquette University and Professor in the Institute for Black Catholic Studies at Xavier University of Louisiana. He is Vice President of the Catholic Theological Society of America and Associate Convener of the Black Catholic Theological symposium. His recent works include a document for Catholic Charities USA, "Poverty and Racism: Overlapping Threats to the Common Good" (2008) and a book on racial justice and the Catholic response, forthcoming this fall. In our symposium, he addresses the "Scandal of Poverty: The Option for the Poor Post-Katrina."

[11] Massingale's respondent is Richard L. O'Brien, M.D., University Professor at Creighton University, founder and member of the Creighton Center for Health Policy and Ethics, and the department of Medicine in our School of Medicine. These positions enable him to bring a broad social perspective to the topic of poverty. His response carries the title, "There is Hope for Diminishing Poverty and Inequities in America."

[12] William O'Neill, S.J., presents a paper titled "The Violent Bear It Away: Just War and U.S. Military Policy in the Eyes of Catholic Teaching." He is professor social ethics at the Jesuit School of Theology at Berkeley and a visiting professor ethics at the Jesuit School of Theology, "Hekima," in Nairobi, Kenya. His work includes questions of human rights, ethics, and hermeneutical theory, social reconciliation, and refugee policy. He serves on the boards of the Society of Christian Ethics and of *Theological Studies*. O'Neill's many recent

publications include “Imagining Otherwise: The Ethics of Social Reconciliation” in *The Journal of the Society of Christian Ethics* (2002) and “Modernity and Its Religious Discontents: Catholic Social Teaching and Public Reason,” in the *Journal of Law, Ethics and Public Policy of Notre Dame* (2006).

[13] Michael J. Kelly, Professor of Law at Creighton University’s School of Law, responds to O’Neill. Kelly lives the “option for the poor” by specializing in U.S. law at its interface with Native Americans. His expertise in international law gives him a powerful perspective on the issues of military policy in this globalizing world.

[14] When it comes to the place of law in the protection of life “from conception to natural death,” it seemed imperative that the speaker be a woman, and, ideally, an attorney experienced in addressing these issues professionally. We found such a person in Teresa Collett, Professor of Law at the University of St. Thomas. She has represented numerous individuals and organizations seeking to advance a prolife agenda, including the former Surgeon General C. Everett Koop, Congressman Ron Paul, the Illinois State Medical Society, the Catholic Medical Society, and the Christian Medical and Dental Association. The range of her work is evidenced in the titles of two recent articles, “The Supreme Court’s Confused (And confusing) Understanding of the Creation and Taking of Life” and “Constitutional Confusion: The Case for the Minnesota Marriage Amendment.” Here she addresses “The Responsibility of Citizens to Advance a Culture of Life against Judicial Opposition.”

[15] Since Collett’s paper was not available to her respondent, Julia Fleming, prior to the symposium, Fleming’s response took the form of “The Death Penalty – Another Threat to a Culture of Life,” which turned out to be an excellent companion piece to Collett’s presentation. Fleming is Associate Professor of theology at Creighton University.

[16] Kristin E. Heyer is a young scholar who has made a bright mark early in her career with the publication of *Public and Prophetic: The Social Witness of U.S. Catholicism* (Georgetown Press: 2006), which the College Theology Society selected as the Best Book published that year by a member of the CTS. In our symposium Heyer addressed the topic “Immigration: A Faithful Approach to Matters of Citizenship.” Currently Associate Professor of Christian Ethics at Loyola Marymount University, she has edited *Catholics and Politics: Dynamic Tensions between Faith and Power* (2008). Her recent articles address the topics of immigration, Catholic political discernment, and feminist ethics. She serves on the editorial board of *Theological Studies* and on the administrative team for the Catholic Social Teaching Group of the Catholic Theological Society of America.

[17] Heyer’s respondent is Edward W. Leahy, Director of the Financial Stability Partnership in the College of Public Affairs and Community Service, the University of Nebraska – Omaha. Before taking this post, Leahy worked for many years assisting and advocating for immigrant families in Nebraska. Unfortunately, he was not able to complete his written response prior to the publication of this volume.

[18] Dan Misleh, Executive Director of the Catholic Coalition on Climate Change, was an obvious choice to bring the Catholic social tradition to bear on climate change. His work includes educating and building a Catholic constituency for active engagement in climate

change and promoting the U.S. bishops' agenda on the issue – as outlined in their 2001 statement *Global Climate change: A Plea for Dialogue, Prudence and the Common Good* – including promoting the common good and protecting poor people from the impacts of climate change and climate change policy. He was Director of Diocesan Relations for the USCCB's Department of Social Development and World Peace as well as policy advisor on agriculture, environment and criminal justice issues. He has written articles on climate change and Catholic Church for *US Catholic*, *Just Faith Voices*, *Missouri Catholic Conference Messenger*, *Catholic Charities USA*, *Today's Parish Minister*, and *Interactions Monday Developments*. His presentation is "Faithful Citizenship and Climate change: Reclaiming Christian Principles of Prudence, Poverty, and the Common Good."

[19] Misleh's respondent is Charles Harper, Professor in Creighton's Department of Anthropology and Sociology. Harper is admired for his readiness to apply his sociological expertise to important current issues and then to write significant textbooks on those issues. His work includes a book on the sociology of food and, most recently, a textbook on sociology and environmental issues.

[20] Because the challenge to faithful citizenship entails more than participating in the voting process, it made sense that we acknowledge that reality in the course of the symposium. A way to do this became obvious to me when I heard Ernesto Cortés, Jr., speak to a group of community organizers in Omaha. He is a person with a vision of organizing local initiatives for the common good, a vision rooted in traditions of faith and philosophy and schooled by years of broad-based community organizing. I invited Cortés to speak to the assembled scholars at a dinner half-way through the symposium – an occasion that brought us closest to the original meaning of the Greek word *symposion*, a conversation during a meal.

[21] A native of San Antonio, Texas, Cortés did graduate studies in Economics at the University of Texas at Austin. However, his interest in pursuing social justice through community organizing, coupled with the death of his father, led him away from formal scholarly endeavors. As a student activist on the board of the University YMCA, he organized the statewide support group for the farmworkers union, and initiated the successful statewide caravan in support of striking farmworkers at La Casita farms in the Rio Grande Valley. Three decades later, the organizations of the Southwest IAF Network have a combined core leadership of over 25,000, linked to an estimated constituency of over a quarter of a million families. Southwest IAF organizations work together, on regional as well as state-wide levels, to revitalize local democracies and thereby bring change to poor and moderate income communities. The organizations help ordinary people develop the competence, confidence, and leadership to be, as Thomas Jefferson said, "participants in the affairs of government."

[22] We have book-ended Cortés' talk, "Faithful Citizenship *between* Elections: Reflections from and Exponent of Broad-Based Community Organizing," with Carr's keynote at the beginning. The collection thus begins and concludes with the insight that the politics that counts is indeed local and works best when it is grounded in a sense of the common good that emerges from shared faith and experience.