

The Dorothea Project Action Voter Guide Appendix

Questions for Personal Examen and Application in Daily Life

Life and Dignity of the Human Person:

1. Do I recognize and defend the dignity of all people?
2. Who is the person whom I love the least? How might I seek to recognize and uplift their inherent dignity?
3. In what ways do I unconsciously judge others? Do I make sweeping generalizations about certain groups of people? Do I harbor ill-feelings, contempt, or fear of a particular group such as: those who belong to an opposing political party, people with disabilities, people of other faiths, people of other origins, people of color, or people who identify as LGBTQ+?
4. Do I avoid the sin of dehumanizing others in my thoughts, words, and actions?
5. Do I, like the “good Samaritan”, find ways to support victims of crime, especially victims of domestic and sexual violence?
6. Do I allow myself to see the poor, without judgement, and act on their behalf?

Call to Family, Community, and Participation:

1. What does the phrase “common good” mean to you? “Am I striving for the common good?”
2. How do I overcome obstacles that restrict my active participation in my communities?
3. What is one concrete way I can build community?
4. Do I know people who are unable to fully participate? What is keeping them on the margins? Is there a way I can invite them into my community?
5. How can I live this call to community in my own family, household, and/or community? Even if my sphere of influence is small, how can I help build true community in my local area?
6. Do I have a subconscious judgment towards those in an atypical family situation- such as blended families and single parents?
7. Do I exclude families from participating in the community, perhaps by curating events that are not feasible for those with children to attend?
8. Do I forget to include single mothers/fathers when making friendships in my community?
9. Do I offer support to friends with children, such as setting up playdates, offering to babysit, or checking in with new mothers who might need additional support?
10. Have I ever harshly and perhaps vocally criticized someone for an abortion, miscarriage, or death of a young child?
11. Do I judge mothers who opt to be stay at home mothers? Do I judge mothers who opt to return to the workforce? Do I judge women who opt to not get married or have children?
12. Do I have a subconscious judgment towards adults or children with disabilities?

When planning community events do I look for ways to provide accessible spaces?

13. Do I ask for input from people with disabilities to ensure their ideas are included?

Option for the Poor and Vulnerable:

1. Do I understand the role foreign aid/assistance plays in supporting developing nations in the world? Am I willing to research the impact of governmental policy and funding on agencies like [Catholic Relief Services](#), who work directly in the field with the poor and vulnerable?
2. According to the U.S. Bishops in [Economic Justice For All](#), “The poor have the single most urgent economic claim on the conscience of the nation.” Have I prioritized the needs of the poor in the way I live my life and in my support of fair public policy?
3. Am I willing to bring the Catholic values laid out in our rich history of Catholic Social Teaching into the public square, not solely in how I vote, but also through community service to and with the poor and vulnerable?
4. Do I vote for policies and candidates who lift up the dignity of all human beings? Do I simply ignore rhetoric and policies that dehumanize whole groups of people? Or do I actively oppose the dehumanizing rhetoric and policies?
5. Do I know how systemic racism, as outlined by the USCCB’s pastoral letter on racism: “[Open Wide Our Hearts: The Enduring Call to Love](#)” impacts my brothers and sisters in Christ? Do I try to learn from other perspectives or experiences of communities unfamiliar to me? Do I understand what has sparked demands for equal treatment under the law by and for people of color in our Country?
6. How much interaction do I have with those who live below the poverty line? Do I truly understand, “the cries of the poor” at a level that moves me to make personal choices based on *their* needs? Do I agree that the poor should have a claim on my heart, and on my resources?
7. Servant of God Sr. Thea Bowman advocated for education for the poor and vulnerable as a means to full participation in society and the Church. How can I support education for all members of society? Do I support education that is grounded in historical truth and examines our past through the eyes of the poor and vulnerable? Do I oppose repeating rhetoric and policies that disenfranchise the poor and people of color?

The Dignity of Work and the Rights of Workers:

1. Do I take the time to learn about the Catholic Church’s teaching “... that the poor, for example, should rise above poverty and wretchedness, and better their condition in life; and for this she makes a strong endeavor.” (*Rerum Novarum* 28)?
2. Do I seek out lawmakers who advocate for laws that provide opportunities for the poor to engage in labor with dignity and in ways that can better themselves and rise out of poverty?

3. What workers do I encounter in my daily life? Do I treat all laborers with equal dignity - regardless of perceived skill or educational level?
4. How does my life benefit from the work of others - the educators, the farmers, the trash collectors, the factory workers here and overseas? How can I acknowledge the dignity of their work?
5. Do I make assumptions about people with certain types of jobs- such as waitresses, trash collectors, fast-food workers, farm workers, day laborers, maids and those in hospitality services, etc?
6. Have I taken the time to educate myself on the obstacles facing people who wish to enter into higher education and asked, why some people are able to pay for higher education and some are not?
7. Am I aware of income disparity and its causes? Am I aware of how building generational wealth historically enabled many to advance toward economic independence and that following WWII, African American and other service members of color were denied the GI Bill preventing many from seeking higher education?
8. Do I fulfill obligations to my employer and colleagues such as: meeting commitments, doing a thorough job, and supporting colleagues?
9. As an employer, do I fulfill my obligations to my employees to pay a fair wage, provide a safe work environment, and honor labor laws such as the right to form unions?

Solidarity:

1. Do I reflect on my own privilege as a citizen with the right to vote and use the power I have, even if it is small, to advocate for those with less power?
2. Do I take the time to inform myself about the issues going on in my neighborhood, city, state, nation, and worldwide?
3. When I see communities being discriminated against, do I make efforts to stand with them in solidarity and advocate for peace and justice?
4. Do I see people as human beings, worthy of dignity and love, not as objects of contempt or derision? Do I treat people as brothers and sisters or as a means to an end?
5. Am I a conscientious consumer who supports fair labor and humane working conditions?
6. Am I an over-consumer? Do I consider the environment when I shop?"
7. "Do I commit myself to the common good" as St. John Paul II urged us? Even if this means making sacrifices in my own life?

Rights and Responsibilities:

1. Do I acknowledge that all people have inalienable rights as stated in our Declaration of Independence? Do I recognize my responsibility to defend those rights?
2. How do I show that I value people and creating safe and welcoming communities through my vote?
3. Do I take responsibility to contribute to society?

4. Do I recognize the value and rights of everyone, including the poor (who are easy to judge as unworthy in our society)? Do I live up to my responsibilities to help lift up others in my community?
5. Have I taken the time to learn about the injustices within our judicial system, especially as they affect the incarcerated and the death penalty?
6. Do I consider the dignity of all people in my vote, regardless of race, gender, religion, etc?
7. Have I taken the time to educate myself on the history of voting rights for women, Black Americans, and all other minorities previously denied the right to vote?

Care for God's Creation:

1. What actions are most practical for me to take such as composting, water conservation, or reducing my use of plastic?
2. Could I join community groups to protect our local environment? If I do not have the time, could I contribute funds?
3. If I have a garden, could I modify it to conserve water?
4. Do I consider who made my clothes? Am I aware of the effects of the fast-fashion industry on our natural resources such as water and excess waste?
5. Do I often use AI? Do I understand the impact of AI Data Centers' energy requirements on my community such as: electricity rates, clean water supply, and local wildlife?
6. If I live in an arid environment, do I monitor and try to reduce my water usage?
7. Have I taken the time to educate myself on climate change or local policies that affect our water, wildlife, and agriculture? Have I made an effort to visit a local nature preserve or donate to a charity that assists environmental protections?
8. Do I take the time to understand how climate change drives migration?
9. Do I listen carefully to understand why some do not accept that climate change is a danger? Do I make the effort to learn how to communicate in this area?