

Scripture and Church Teaching

The following pieces of Scripture and Church Teaching is not an exhaustive list and relate not just to those in positions of power in politics, but to all. It is about our responsibility and opportunity as local, national and global citizens, our role in one human family. Notes of explanation and questions are there to provoke thought not give a definitive answer.

First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way.

1 Timothy 2:1-2

Praying for those in leadership? Looks like we are called to do this for the benefit of everyone living under that King/First Minister's rule.

Tell us, then, what you think. Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar, or not?" But Jesus, aware of their malice, said, "Why put me to the test, you hypocrites? Show me the coin for the tax." And they brought him a denarius. And Jesus said to them, "Whose likeness and inscription is this?" They said, "Caesar's." Then he said to them, "Therefore render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's."

Matthew 22:17-21

The Pharisees were trying to trap Jesus into saying something against God's law, that by paying taxes to Caesar it was going against God. Jesus was shrewd and asked to see the coin. In reply to their question Jesus said 'give to Caesar what is Caesar's' but very clearly make sure you 'give to God what is God's'. Jesus understood that the Pharisees' question was designed to trap him. They opposed Roman rule, yet they were also failing to honour God fully. Rather than answering their false choice, Jesus reframed the question entirely.

Should we respect and follow the laws we have in this country? At any cost?

Peter and the apostles answered, "We must obey God rather than men"

Acts 5:29

It may look like this verse contradicts the previous one but Peter was replying to accusations made against him and the apostles in relation to talking about Jesus. The authorities were demanding that they stop talking about Jesus but they replied 'we will obey God rather than man'.

Was it that Peter and the apostles were very happy to obey the law of the land unless it went against the law of God? And if the authorities introduced laws against following God, they would stand against it. Daniel did the same in the Old Testament. He was told not to pray to God but he couldn't do that and was subsequently punished.



Quotes from the Encyclical Fratelli Tutti

It is my desire that, in this our time, by acknowledging the dignity of each human person, we can contribute to the rebirth of a universal aspiration to fraternity. **#8**

To care for the world in which we live means to care for ourselves. **#17**

When the dignity of the human person is respected, and his or her rights recognized and guaranteed, creativity and interdependence thrive, and the creativity of the human personality is released through actions that further the common good. **#22**

Let us care for the needs of every man and woman, young and old, with the same fraternal spirit of care and closeness that marked the Good Samaritan. **#79**

Service is never ideological, for we do not serve ideas, we serve people. **#115**

It also means combatting the structural causes of poverty, inequality, the lack of work, land and housing, the denial of social and labour rights. It means confronting the destructive effects of the empire of money... Solidarity, understood in its most profound meaning, is a way of making history, and this is what popular movements are doing. **#116**

For many people today, politics is a distasteful word, often due to the mistakes, corruption and inefficiency of some politicians. There are also attempts to discredit politics, to replace it with economics or to twist it to one ideology or another. Yet can our world function without politics? Can there be an effective process of growth towards universal fraternity and social peace without a sound political life? **#176**

Every commitment inspired by the Church's social doctrine is "derived from charity, which according to the teaching of Jesus is the synthesis of the entire Law (cf. Mt 22:36-40)". This means acknowledging that "love, overflowing with small gestures of mutual care, is also civic and political, and it makes itself felt in every action that seeks to build a better world". **#181**

Good politics will seek ways of building communities at every level of social life, in order to recalibrate and reorient globalization and thus avoid its disruptive effects. **#182**

Politics too must make room for a tender love of others. "What is tenderness? It is love that draws near and becomes real... ..Amid the daily concerns of political life, "the smallest, the weakest, the poorest should touch our hearts: indeed, they have a 'right' to appeal to our heart and soul. They are our brothers and sisters, and as such we must love and care for them". **#194**

Encounter cannot take place only between the holders of economic, political or academic power. Genuine social encounter calls for a dialogue that engages the culture shared by the majority of the population. **#219**



Other Church Teaching

I ask God to give us more politicians capable of sincere and effective dialogue aimed at healing the deepest roots – and not simply the appearances – of the evils in our world! Politics, though often denigrated, remains a lofty vocation and one of the highest forms of charity, inasmuch as it seeks the common good. We need to be convinced that charity “is the principle not only of micro-relationships (with friends with family members or within small groups) but also of macro-relationships (social, economic and political ones)”.

I beg the Lord to grant us more politicians who are genuinely disturbed by the state of society, the people, the lives of the poor! It is vital that government leaders and financial leaders take heed and broaden their horizons, working to ensure that all citizens have dignified work, education and healthcare. Why not turn to God and ask him to inspire their plans? I am firmly convinced that openness to the transcendent can bring about a new political and economic mindset which would help to break down the wall of separation between the economy and the common good of society.

(Evangelii Gaudium #205)

People in every nation enhance the social dimension of their lives by acting as committed and responsible citizens, not as a mob swayed by the powers that be. Let us not forget that “responsible citizenship is a virtue, and participation in political life is a moral obligation”. Yet becoming a people demands something more. It is an ongoing process in which every new generation must take part: a slow and arduous effort calling for a desire for integration and a willingness to achieve this through the growth of a peaceful and multifaceted culture of encounter.

(Evangelii Gaudium #220)

It is necessary that all participate, each according to his position and role, in promoting the common good. This obligation is inherent in the dignity of the human person... As far as possible citizens should take an active part in public life (nos. 1913–1915).

(Catechism of the Catholic Church)

“The Church wishes to help form consciences in political life and to stimulate greater insight into the authentic requirements of justice as well as greater readiness to act accordingly, even when this might involve conflict with situations of personal interest... The Church cannot and must not take upon herself the political battle to bring about the most just society possible. She cannot and must not replace the State. Yet at the same time she cannot and must not remain on the sidelines in the fight for justice.

(deus caritas est. #28)

Pope Leo XIV, in his recent addresses, consistently calls us to active, faith-informed engagement in civil society, framing voting and civic responsibilities as opportunities for justice, unity, and the common good.

In October 2025, he told us to view our civic duty to vote not as a burden, but as an avenue for transformation and a tool to safeguard and protect the most vulnerable and excluded:

“Today we are called to engage the peripheries, reaching out to the excluded and transforming society through active charity.

“Participation is a form of charity. Vote and act for the excluded, for politics at its best seeks the common good.

“Let us allow the Gospel to guide us...Faith must inform our choices, so that no decision neglects the cry of the poor.”

(Pope Leo XIV)

“While the bishops help form the laity in accordance with basic principles, they do not tell the laity to vote for particular candidates. On these often complex matters, it is the laity’s responsibility to form their consciences... Conscience is “a judgment of reason” by which one determines whether an action is right or wrong. It does not allow us to justify doing whatever we want, nor is it a mere “feeling.” Conscience—properly formed according to God’s revelation and the teaching of the Church—is a means by which one listens to God and discerns how to act in accordance with the truth. The truth is something we receive, not something we make. We can only judge using the conscience we have, but our judgments do not make things true.”

(Catholic Bishops of the United States for Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship)

Scottish Catholic International Aid Fund

SCIAF is the official relief and development agency of the Catholic Church in Scotland and a proud member of the Caritas family. 196 Clyde Street, Glasgow, G1 4JY. Tel: 0141 354 5555. Scottish Charity No: SC012302. Company No: SC197327.

