



Proposal 1: A Wolf in Sheep's Clothing

A statement of the Catholic Bishops of New York State

On November 5, faithful citizens throughout the nation will have the opportunity once again to exercise their sacred right to vote. Pope Francis has reminded us that as thoughtful Catholics, we must participate in the public square for the sake of the common good. Every Catholic is called to do the work of properly informing his or her conscience and voting for candidates and policies that will best advance the natural law, the protection of human rights, the dignity of the human person, the sacredness of all life, and the teachings of Christ and His Church. It is a presidential election year, and there are important votes to be cast for Congress and the state Legislature as well. Importantly, in New York, like several other states, there is also a critical referendum on the ballot.

Educating oneself will be especially important in the case of Proposal 1, sometimes referred to as the "Equal Rights Amendment." The title suggests a noble cause, as all children of God should be treated equally under the law. However, this proposed amendment to the state Constitution is broadly written and could have dangerous consequences if enacted, which is why we oppose it and urge you to vote no. The measure would, effectively, permanently legalize abortion without restriction and up until the moment of birth in New York. Aside from being redundant in a state that already has stripped away all abortion limitations, the amendment would render impossible any change to the law if the hearts and minds of New Yorkers were ever to shift toward protecting the child in the womb.

The amendment's sweeping language and inclusion of "age" as a protected class could also lead to parents' rights being stripped away. Courts could decide that parents have no authority over their minor children on important matters and permit children to make destructive and permanent decisions on their own which they could well live to regret, including but not limited to so-called "gender affirming" treatments and surgeries. The relationship between parents and their children is sacred. Parents must be able to support and guide their children in accord with the natural law, without interference from the government or courts, which would be reaching beyond their competency.

Proposal 1 is a wolf in sheep's clothing that could lead to darkness for many New York families. This amendment disregards the lives of unborn and struggling children in the name of political agendas. It could have dangerous consequences for these children and their parents. As they look to make their voices heard in the public square, faithful Catholics should consider these consequences and vote no. Likewise, they should thoughtfully vote their informed conscience up and down the ballot so that we might usher in change for good.

September 5, 2024

Feast of St. Teresa of Calcutta