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# Love and Citizenship: Catholics in an Election Year

Thomas Hughson

*Marquette University*, [thomas.hughson@marquette.edu](mailto:thomas.hughson@marquette.edu)

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**“LOVE AND CITIZENSHIP: CATHOLICS IN AN ELECTION YEAR”**

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Introduction

Thank you to students, faculty, staff, and administrators at Siena Heights University on whose behalf Dr. Ian Bell offered me the honor of speaking with you in the Chiodini/Fontana Lecture Series. My special gratitude goes to those who commemorated Emilio Chiodini and Mildred Fontana, parents of Catherine Reuther, by endowing the Chiodini/Fontana Lecture Series. Tonight’s talk will be, “Love and Citizenship: Catholics in an Election Year.” Despite the well-known, painful ethical crisis in clerical and episcopal care for children there is much else to appreciate in the American Catholic Church. Sunday worship remains a visible, effective mystery in liturgical assemblies gathered for grace-filled celebrations of the Eucharist. Nonetheless, pastoral and theological problems, if not always crises, often surface in the Church’s temporal pilgrimage in every culture.

Part One in “Love and Citizenship” probes a problem in the political dimension of American Catholic identity and some authors’ explanations. Part Two proposes citizens’ love for the common good and public order as a solution, and Part Three discusses some perhaps unexpected implications for American Catholics in an election year.

By ‘American Catholic identity’ I mean how Americans who are Catholic, approximately 25% of the population, take Scripture and Tradition to themselves individually and as a regional church in continuity with two millennia of international

Catholic life, thought, and practice. By a ‘political dimension’ I refer to being an American citizen. Formation of an individual or regional Catholic identity is a process, sometimes discordant. In any given cultural and political context an integrated identity is a goal that becomes subject to further change. Sociologically, religious identity involves believing, belonging, and behaving, that is, belief, membership, and way of life.

Theologically, each person and regional church constitutes a graced relationship between an ambient culture and the gospel that leavens social, cultural, economic, and political dimensions of social existence.

The problem at issue concerns a disconnect between an element in Catholic tradition and being an American citizen. Catholic Social Teaching supports active citizenship. There are Catholics prominent in public life, from Joseph Biden, Nancy Pelosi, and Jerry Brown to John Boehner, Newt Gingrich, and Rich Santorum. Yet for most Catholics sociological studies have found a comparatively low level of civic and political involvement. Much theological reflection has discussed issues around faith and citizenship. I did in a book years ago, *The Believer as Citizen* and in an article a while back.<sup>1</sup> The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops regularly does every four years in a booklet on faithful citizenship. Inquiry this evening, however, looks to love and citizenship. Why a shift in focus from faith to love?

The main reason has to do with theological frameworks for reflection on citizenship. Pope Benedict has lifted the thought of St. Augustine to new influence in Catholic theology. In the 2005 Encyclical *Deus Caritas Est* Benedict opens Part II with a

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<sup>1</sup> Thomas Hughson, S.J., *The Believer as Citizen: John Courtney Murray in a New Context* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1993); Thomas Hughson, S.J., “Public Catholicism: An American Prospect,” *Theological Studies* 62 (2001) 701-729. See also Thomas Hughson, S.J., “Missional Churches in Secular Societies,” *Ecclesiology* 7 (2011) 173-194.

quote from Augustine on love and the Trinity. Benedict outlines a distinctively Christian and specifically Catholic role for charity in political life. He calls laity and clergy to witness to charity in the political realm of justice and the state by participating in social charity carried out by Church organizations in many nations.<sup>2</sup> That would be activity by citizens indeed but through their Church membership not precisely through their citizenship. Affirming with the New Testament, Augustine, Aquinas, and Benedict the priority of love or charity in all of Christian and Church existence, I wondered if there might be an exercise of charity by citizens precisely in their capacity as citizens that involved social justice. Looking to Augustine as a framework does not mean abandoning St. Thomas Aquinas whose framework has figured in Catholic Social Teaching . Aquinas's analysis of love, I will propose in Part Two, illuminates the problem in the political dimension of American Catholic identity. There is a kind of love proper to citizens that helps solve the problem in Catholic identity.<sup>3</sup>

#### Part One: The Problem Is A Catholic Puzzle

Citizenship in the United States has fallen on lean times. Many experts have warned about a loss of 'public virtue' leaving Americans uninspired by JFK's famous line, "Ask not what your country can do for you but what you can do for your country." Others have spoken about a 'loss of politics' to consumerism in which people think of themselves no longer as citizens but as 'customers' of government. Further, at the very time red/blue political polarization has become most inflammatory instead of increased

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<sup>2</sup> Pope Benedict XVI, *Deus Caritas Est*, accessed at [http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/benedict\\_xvi/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_ben-xvi\\_enc\\_20051225\\_deus-caritas-est\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/encyclicals/documents/hf_ben-xvi_enc_20051225_deus-caritas-est_en.html). He teaches that, "charity must animate the entire lives of the lay faithful and therefore also their political activity, lived as 'social charity'," n. 29, para. 2,

<sup>3</sup> Pope Benedict XVI, *Deus Caritas Est*, n. 29, para. 2,

involvement in party politics many are withdrawing into ‘citizen passivity’. Of 172 democracies in the world, the US ranks 139<sup>th</sup> in voter participation.

Nor does well-known American Catholic generosity in personal and social charity transfer into a high level of citizen activity. Catholics are like most Americans in being generous. A new report from the US Department of Education task force on civic learning and democratic engagement said, “Americans contribute more time and money to those in need than citizens of any other nation ...” Catholics are like most Americans too in a gap between generosity and action of a political and civic nature. The report continues, “There is, evidently, not a shortage of individual acts of generosity, but rather of civic knowledge and action.”<sup>4</sup> Further like their fellow Americans particularly those 18-34 years old Catholics too are sliding into civic and political passivity.

Political passivity in American Catholicism baffles sociologists of religion. Catholic parishioner and sociologist Mary Jo Bane, Professor of Public Policy and Management at Harvard, stated in a 2005 essay that, “I have identified what I call the Catholic puzzle: a strong set of official teachings on social justice and faithful citizenship alongside Catholic participation in civic life that is no higher than that of other denominations, and in a number of areas, lower”.<sup>5</sup> The Social Capital Benchmark Survey found that at present, “Catholics were less likely than other religions to volunteer, to contribute to secular charities, to belong to formal groups, to participate in electoral

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<sup>4</sup> The National Task Force on Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement, *A Crucible Moment: College Learning and Democracy’s Future* (Washington, DC: Association of American Colleges and Universities, 2012) 8, quoting Sylvia English, “Civic Engagement Highest in Developed Countries,” Gallup 2011 accessed September 30, 2011: <http://www.gallup.com/poll/145589/civic-engagement-highest-developed-countries.aspx>.

<sup>5</sup> Mary Jo Bane, “The Catholic Puzzle: Parishes and Civil Life,” in Mary Jo Bane, Brent Coffin, Richard Higgins eds, *Taking Faith Seriously* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005) 63-93 at 64.

politics, or to engage in political activism.”<sup>6</sup> Active rather than passive citizenship means voluntarily entering into civic and political life individually and in associations.

What was so confusing, Bane remarked, was that “As part of their Sunday liturgies, tens of millions of Catholics hear scripture readings and homilies urging them to eschew riches and care for the poor.”<sup>7</sup> Some actual Monday-through-Saturday civic and political effects were anticipated to have flowed from liturgical encounters with a divine option for the poor. American Catholics had been thought to be more well-disposed toward American political life than others. Anticipation of a high rather than medium to low level of active citizenship among American Catholics came from than a century of Catholic Social Teaching at the international, national, diocesan, and parish levels replete with documents, stated principles developing content, open access, and acknowledged authority. Instead perplexity arises in view of a contrast between potential and actual influence from Catholic teaching and worship.

A National Congregations Study compounds the perplexity. Research found that 82% of Catholic parishes reported participation in, “some kind of social service, community development, or neighborhood project.”<sup>8</sup> 45% informed people at worship services about opportunities for political activity; 26% distributed voter guides. Some sponsor community organizing. And yet Catholic parishes take in less income from collections, have fewer classes, choirs, and groups and fewer in them than white Protestant congregations (mainline and evangelical). A picture of Catholic practice emerges in which Catholic men and women, despite the message, liturgy, amount of parish activity with sensitivity to the poor, exhibit lower levels of civic and political

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<sup>6</sup> Bane, 73.

<sup>7</sup> Bane, 63.

<sup>8</sup> Bane, 79.

activity than others and at best are indistinguishable from others. Why the citizen passivity? Comparatively low to medium civil and political engagement is the Catholic puzzle or problem in the political dimension of American Catholic identity.

Bane discounts two explanations for it. One has to do with the large size of most parishes and fewer opportunities for the practice of lay leadership as a rehearsal for civil leadership. However, Protestant mega-churches meet this challenge with many small groups and many congregational leaders. Another explanation points to parish cultures that revolve around religion as affective commitment with an anti-institutional stance. Insofar as that combination has become common it tends to insulate an internal religion from external civic life. But that combination influences Protestant churches even more without lowering civic and political engagement by American Protestants so it cannot account for a Catholic difference. Bane explains 7 structural and organizational features of the American Catholic Church as the source of low civic and political engagement.<sup>9</sup>

1) A hierarchical structure in decision-making abets passivity in clergy and laity. 2) Specialization by national and regional structures (USCCB, Catholic Charities, CHD, federal and state lobbies) centralizes rather than disperses decision-making. 3) Constraints on human resources in parishes do not promote lay leadership (i.e. ordained priests are fewer: in 1950 the ratio was 1 priest per 1K people, now is 1 priest per nearly 3K people) and lay participation in parish management is not high. 4) Financial constraints make less funding available for a large, paid staff some of whom could direct civil outreach. Overworked priests lead to inadequate services, lower attendance, smaller collections. The average in Catholic giving per year is low (\$426 per adult) compared to

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<sup>9</sup> Bane, 87-92.

evangelicals (\$1286), mainline Protestants (\$1143) and Black Protestants (\$637). 5) Preaching about Catholic Social Teaching suffers from bland homiletic materials on social justice, as well as from a gap between presentation of general norms on social justice and particular applications. The result is a distance between hearing the Word of God and realizing how this affects participation in public life. 6) Parishes have not discovered a way to become communities of moral deliberation in which parishioners discuss urgent national issues. 7) A number of challenges to the Church's credibility have diminished the impact when bishops and clergy teach about social matters. In short, Bane explains Catholic passivity as an effect from structural and organizational features that deprive laity of opportunities for practicing leadership and for independent social analysis.

Not satisfied with Bane's structural account, sociologist Jerome P. Baggett at the Jesuit School of Theology in Berkeley argues from cultural studies in a 2009 book, *Sense of the Faithful: How American Catholics Live Their Faith*. Concluding from 2-hour conversations with approximately 300 parishioners in six San Francisco area parishes, Baggett says, "Like other people, then, Catholics actively negotiate with the religious meanings accessible to them in much the same way as they do other meanings."<sup>10</sup> Moreover, each parish mediates the totality of Catholicism in a somewhat distinctive way. All six parishes got people involved in civil society through projects of social charity with short-term effects but not in long-term commitment to structural change whose goals Catholic Social Teaching speaks about.

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<sup>10</sup> Jerome P. Baggett, *Sense of the Faithful: How American Catholics Live Their Faith* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009) 33.

Parishes have succeeded in transmitting, that is, the Catholic tradition of social charity praised by Benedict XVI but not Catholic Social Teaching on social justice and structural changes. With an eye toward endemic, systemic problems like excessive economic inequality, racism, poverty, unemployment, and environmental degradation, Baggett understands parish mediations of social charity and not social justice as ‘civic underachieving’. He recalls familiar data on the political re-alignment of American Catholics. “Since the 1970’s, the percentage affiliated with the Democratic Party has dropped 40% and the number of Catholic Republicans has risen 80%...As they move toward increased political conservatism, they also seem to be moving away from their long-standing affinity for their church’s social teachings...and parish affiliation seems to do very little to remedy this.”<sup>11</sup> People tend to define their civil and political outlooks according to whatever party they are closest to in sympathy if not registered membership.

Baggett refers also to a ‘civic silencing’ that follows from awakened interest in spirituality. Baggett found that, “...people are infrequently encouraged or equipped to think in terms broader than those pertaining to the self.”<sup>12</sup> This leads into people assigning themselves a high level of interpretative authority, so that, “all parishioners are entitled to their own interpretation of church doctrines, biblical principles, and even what constitutes a Catholic in good standing.”<sup>13</sup> Privatized social concern flows from private interpretation of Catholicism as a whole. Privileging private interpretations removes civil and political approaches to systemic issues from the realm of the discussible. That is, each person’s individualized interpretation of how Catholicism intersects with civil and political issues become a private matter taboo in conversations and discussions with

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<sup>11</sup> Baggett, 181.

<sup>12</sup> Baggett, 187.

<sup>13</sup> Baggett, 189.

fellow parishioners. A parish culture of that sort, observes Baggett, discourages seeing much less acting as a citizen on connections between Catholic social teaching and societal issues on the national agenda.

Without gainsaying Bane and Baggett, a final and full explanation, not to mention a solution, involves insights from other disciplines including theology. Theologian Charles Mathewes at the University of Virginia argues a third explanation for Christian political passivity that could apply to Catholics as well. Mathewes respects the primacy of faith in American Christians. They share a “common sense of the obscure distance, and yet obscure connection, between their religious beliefs with [sic: and] their civic lives.”<sup>14</sup> He adds that, “[r]eligious beliefs, they realize, do not typically translate immediately and easily into political behavior, and anyone who says otherwise, they suspect, is doing more salesmanship than theology”.<sup>15</sup>

Practical hesitation results, except in those pre-committed to quick and easy translations of faith into politics. Hesitation may look like indifference or aversion to politics but really is an unfulfilled search for a more adequate model of how to engage faith-convictions with political life. Mathewes offers his book as a reliable model in the tradition of Augustine. There is much to recommend it although I do not think that his analysis fully explains Catholic passivity. He doesn’t account for the formative influence of Aquinas in modern Catholicism. Catholic Social Teaching, for example, presents a relation to the state in citizenship in a more positive light than did Augustine.

Further, chapter 12, “Charitable Citizenship,” never spells out the properly political activities of a citizen, or the nature of the temporal common good. His analysis

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<sup>14</sup> Charles Mathewes, *A Theology of Public Life* (Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press, 2009) 5.

<sup>15</sup> Mathewes, 5.

of charitable citizenship does not lend itself to approving citizenship with a strong option for the poor and social justice since that very option falls under suspicion as maybe already a too hasty link between faith and a political orientation. Charity confers a capacity to affirm the other as other, to respect all, to accept otherness, and to bear with adversarial dynamics.<sup>16</sup> However, no more than Pope Benedict does Mathewes consider charity operative precisely in and through citizenship. Benedict's, Bane's, Baggett's, and Mathewes' explanations do not look at charity operative within the activities proper to citizenship. The Catholic puzzle concerns inactive citizenship. So neither singly nor together do they consider or explain all facets of the problem. The puzzle is about inaction, omission, absence of action. That is a problem in significant part with motivation. Part Two will discuss motivation and propose a solution.

#### Part Two: Toward a Solution—Secondary Love

Ordinary experience and common sense can arrive at something Aquinas pointed out in his *Summa Theologiae*, namely that love is the fundamental motive.<sup>17</sup> All human actions spring in some way from our loves for a full variety of goods real and apparent. Many are our criss-crossing, fluctuating motives. Love for someone or something ignites and directs them all in multitudes of decisions and actions. Hate is love for an apparent good such as destroying a dangerous enemy or asserting power. Correlatively, lack of love for some good cannot instigate any thoughts, decisions, and actions toward it. A deficit in some kind of action stems from deficiency in motivation toward a good, not necessarily and only from ignorance about it. A reasonable inference is that civic and political inaction by American Catholics indicates lack of love for some goods. Without

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<sup>16</sup> Mathewes, 274.

<sup>17</sup> Thomas Aquinas, Eric D'Arcy Latin text, English translation, Introduction, Notes and Glossary, *Summa Theologiae 1a2ae. 22-30, Volume 19, The Emotions* (Britain: Blackfriars, 1967).

specific love to motivate steps toward those goods, the steps are not taken. Consequently, lack of love for citizenship itself, and for the specific goods attainable by citizens explains the Catholic puzzle more fundamentally than do Banes, Baggett, and Mathewes.

Citizenship, the common good, and public order are positive goods that Catholic citizens can love. An overview will provide a context for interpreting that value-judgment. In the history of the Christian West two major theological approaches to politics, Augustine's and Aquinas's, can be represented as ideal-typical alternatives. Historical-theological research has questioned the ideal-type of Augustine's political thought as a satisfactory summation of complex, shifting strands in Augustine's thought that never conceived of a secular politics.<sup>18</sup> But an ideal-type serves as a model, and to some extent has independence from historical authors or individuals. Ideal-typical interpretation of Augustine's political thought contrasts his approach with that of Aquinas. A contrast tends to minimize common ground, a limit in ideal-typical interpretations. What they had in common was that neither agreed with classical antiquity that political life was the pinnacle of human flourishing since both held that communion with God through Christ constituted the redeemed basis and apex of human flourishing. For both, moreover, creation and all political authorities were subject to divine authority. Neither Augustine nor Aquinas knew or was concerned with democratic nation-states yet the model associated with each has implications for democratic citizenship.

Augustine reflected—always most interested in God, self, and salvation—upon the Roman Empire under Christian Emperors. Roughly speaking he concluded that fallen

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<sup>18</sup> Elshtain, Jean Bethke, "Augustine" in Peter Scott, William T. Cavanaugh eds. *The Blackwell Companion to Political Theology* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2003), [Blackwell Reference Online](http://www.blackwellreference.com.libus.csd.mu.edu/subscriber/tocnode?id=g9780631223429_chunk_g97806312234295) 28 January 2012 <[http://www.blackwellreference.com.libus.csd.mu.edu/subscriber/tocnode?id=g9780631223429\\_chunk\\_g97806312234295](http://www.blackwellreference.com.libus.csd.mu.edu/subscriber/tocnode?id=g9780631223429_chunk_g97806312234295)>

human sinfulness shadowed any political organization of society and every political authority. Before the fall of Adam and Eve there was no basis or need for political authority. Hypothetically, had the fall not happened, or if after the fall original and personal sin ceased, political authority, government, and obligatory compliance with them likewise would end because no longer needed. Actually, our fallen humanity has a practical grasp of the need for collective self-defense to ward off two kinds of evil effects due to the influence of original and personal sin. Pirates and aggressor peoples threatened from outside the Empire; brigands, corrupt officials, and other criminals threatened from within. That disordered situation passed into consent to political authority competent to protect the Empire, families, and individuals from external aggression and from internal crime.

Regrettably, rulers were infected by the same sinfulness from whose worst predations they were charged to protect society. Augustine was not enthusiastic about Constantine or his successors being identified with divine power and authority, or the Christian Roman being treated by Christians as the Kingdom of God on earth pure and simple.

Applying an Augustinian model to a democratic state and citizenship, it follows that they too depend for their existence on agreements to counter the worst social effects of original and personal sin. Calvinist, Puritan convictions about human depravity and readiness to abuse power formed colonial New England political culture. Out of the widespread sway of that outlook came a founding with a successful set of institutional checks and balances to off-set abuse of power in the new Republic. Still, in that model government and citizenship remain, like the War of Independence itself, more necessary

evils able to be enthusiastically supported but hardly realities Christians could love for their intrinsic goodness.

On the other hand, Aquinas and Catholic social teaching have proceeded less in reference to the First Commandment than to the Incarnation as divine affirmation of created reality and redemption of a socio-political human nature. Political authority, the state, government, and by implication democratic citizenship were conceived as created realities invested with a positive purpose beneath and in addition to a defensive, corrective purpose outlined by Augustine. For Aristotle, political authority and governing were uniquely suitable and effective means by which a supra-familial society made decisions and coordinated activities pertaining to all. For Aquinas various types of monarchy were most in evidence yet some of his principles pertain to democratic government and citizenship. His *On Government* addressed to the king of Cyprus upheld monarchy as a mode of political authority that like all kinds existed for the sake of the common good. He condemned its perversion into tyranny that rules for the sake of the rulers instead of ruling for the sake of the ruled.

Aquinas outlined the advantages of a limited monarchy, recommending that the people should have power to choose a king or to depose him if he became a tyrant. He subordinated political authority and laws to the authority of reason thereby grounding a rule of law subject to a standard higher than a ruler's arbitrary decisions. He advised rulers to respect the consent of the governed, thereby articulating a principle operative in the Magna Carta. Likewise the *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* affirms that, "the common good is the reason that political authority exists."<sup>19</sup> Political authority

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<sup>19</sup> Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, US Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* (Rome: Libreria Editrice Vaticana: 2004; Washington, D.C., USCCB Publishing:

indeed wielded coercive power in society's common defense and in policing but more basically coordinated and guided unified action out of the normal contestation, tensions, and conflicts arising from lots of people with varying ideas about what should be going on in a society. Government is needed not first of all because of sin but because a society contains a multitude of intelligent agents not all of whose ideas and plans can be followed at a given time if coordinated decisions and actions on the common good are to take place. One has only to think of faculty meetings to realize the wisdom of that principle.

For Aquinas the existence of an organized political authority did not arise from sin but from the social dimensions of created human nature, from the existence of a common good in a society, and from the goal of human flourishing. Consequently, a state and citizenship are positive realities in the order of creation. They are good and in a democracy can attract a response of appreciation that motivates citizens to exercise their share of political authority for the common good and public order.

John Courtney Murray made a case for England as the land and political tradition that kept alive the best of medieval political thought that the Catholic countries of Europe forsook for divine absolutism. In line with English legal and constitutional tradition of increasingly limited monarchy and respect for subjects as possessors of rights eighteenth-century American colonists claimed the full rights of Englishmen in rejecting George III's rule over the colonies as tyranny. Murray ignored, it is true, Puritan federal theology on when a political covenant can be abrogated and the founders' recourse to classical Roman ideals of a pre-imperial republic of free citizens. He interpreted Locke's social contract theory as a faulty but real historical mediation of medieval natural law ideas on political life.

So, who and what are American citizens? They are heirs to the “People of the United States” who in the stirring words of the Preamble to the US Constitution, “in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general Welfare, and secure the blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.”<sup>20</sup> The Citizenship Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment to the US Constitution reads: “All persons born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and of the State wherein they reside.”<sup>21</sup>

Citizenship is a legal, political status relating an individual person to the state and government. Citizenship confers legal capacity and rights to cooperate in and benefit from the state’s purpose, laws, institutions, and governance by executive, legislative, and judicial branches at federal, state, and levels. Citizens pay taxes, vote, hold passports, serve on juries, run for office, serve in the military. They drive on government-subsidized freeways, enjoy police, fire, and national defense protections, receive Social Security, send their children to public and private schools, etc. The first and most fundamental political office in a democracy is that of citizen.

Discussion of citizenship seldom invokes the language of love. Still, some citizens appeal to ‘love of country’ as a motive for seeking elected office or in volunteering for military service. Before the Iowa caucuses TV pundits described Iowa Republicans ‘falling in love with’ one candidate after another. Reference to love, then, is

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<sup>20</sup> Preamble to the U S Constitution, quoted in The National Task Force on Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement, *A Crucible Moment: College Learning and Democracy’s Future* (Washington, DC: Association of American Colleges and Universities, 2012) 1.

<sup>21</sup> *Wikipedia*, “Citizenship in the United States,” quoting the Fourteenth Amendment.

not altogether foreign to ordinary thinking and speaking about citizenship but seldom appears in theoretical discussion. Aquinas's analysis of love can be extended to an understanding of American citizenship. Love already has a normal role internal to citizenship insofar as citizens appreciate and act for a common good.

According to Vatican II's *Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World* a society's common good, "embraces the sum of those conditions of social life by which individuals, families, and groups can achieve their own fulfillment in a relatively thorough and ready way."<sup>22</sup> The common good includes everything from physical nature and natural resources in a given territory, language, culture, religion, and customs, to the family, educational institutions, the economy, and the state. Institutions of higher learning whether under state or religious auspices belong to the common good. Colleges and universities provide conditions in which students fulfill their capacity for learning. For Aquinas bonds of social unity and civic friendship also belong to the common good.

Only part of the common good called public order, emphasized Catholic social teaching, Murray, and Vatican II's *Declaration on Religious Liberty*, falls primarily to state responsibility and so under political authority. Public order involves far more than law and order. Public order is a composite of four things besides the institutions of democratic governance themselves: 1) protection of human rights; 2) major, non-state institutions and associations acting and interacting in a cooperative, just fashion; 3) social peace as a general condition flowing from that justice; 4) societal consensus on shared values and moral norms undergirding regulation of individuals, associations, and major institutions so they do not violate the common good, human rights, and human dignity.

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<sup>22</sup> Second Vatican Council, *The Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World* in Walter Abbott, ed., *The Documents of Vatican II* (New York: America Press/London/Chapman, 1966) 198-308 at 284.

Governmental responsibility and authority limited to public order respects and supports the independent existence and authority of the family, religions, education, the economy, voluntary associations, civil society, and citizens individually. Still, the federal, state, and local authorities have a legitimate interest in seeing to it that these independent entities work together in social peace according to the rule of law so that a just social order supports flourishing across the breadth of the common good. Citizenship pertains especially, then, to governmental activities securing public order as a crucial aspect of the common good.

Citizenship has to be a good loved before someone can begin to exert an influence on civic and political activities. True, when government in which citizenship has a part already has succumbed to massive, aggressive evil that, like the Roman Empire portrayed in the Book of Revelation or Hitler's Third Reich confronting the Confessing Church in Germany, then resistance and refusal of the duties of citizenship can be the only Christian option. If, on the other hand, a state, for example the United States, indeed mixes justice with injustice, with some preponderance of justice, then citizenship has a role in fostering justice and resisting only unjust policies and practices, not the government as a whole. How then does love play a role in citizenship? What can we learn from Aquinas in two sections of the *Summa Theologiae* treating love?<sup>23</sup>

For Aquinas, sums up W. S. Sherwin, "...before love is a principle of action love is a response to value...."<sup>24</sup> Love's first act is "an affective enjoyment and affirmation of

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<sup>23</sup> Thomas Aquinas, Eric D'Arcy Latin text, English translation, Introduction, Notes and Glossary, *Summa Theologiae 1a2ae. 22-30, Volume 19, The Emotions* (Britain: Blackfriars, 1967); and Thomas Aquinas, R.J. Batten, O.P., Latin text, English translation, Notes, Appendices & Glossary, Thomas Gilby, O.P. Introduction, *Summa Theologiae Volume 34, Charity, 2a2ae. 23-33* (Great Britain: Eyre & Spottiswoode Ltd, 1975).

<sup>24</sup> W. S. Sherwin, *By Knowledge and By Love: Charity and Knowledge in the Moral Theology of St. Thomas Aquinas* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2005) 93.

some good thing made known to us by reason...love is a response to the goodness of reality, to the real as it is or as it could be...a good that is [judged by reason as] somehow already in harmony with us.”<sup>25</sup> A concrete good impresses us and evokes a positive response of appreciation that can become a motive for action. Citizenship and public order are concrete, historically-formed realities of an institutional sort. Are they loveable goods that evoke appreciation and then become principles of action? Indeed they are but only if perceived as valuable. A Thomist rather than Augustinian perspective fosters a perception of citizenship as valuable, a good eliciting appreciation that prepares for decisions and actions.

Aquinas distinguished two objects in the love of friendship.<sup>26</sup> Sherwin points out that “in both early and later works Aquinas discerns a twofold tendency in love: the action of love directed toward a person (in the love of friendship) and toward the good we affirm for that person.”<sup>27</sup> Primarily, friends are appreciated for their own sake. Secondly, good things are desired for friends and so love of friendship extends to those good things we want friends to have. Love of friendship includes a primary appreciation for persons and a secondary desire for their welfare. The desired welfare comes about in some measure by access to goods essential to human flourishing. Love for friends includes love for those essential goods. Today those goods could be economic opportunity, food, clothing, shelter, clean water, access to health care, effective public order, protection of human rights, opportunity for education, close friends, a happy marriage, and access to cultural activities. All of these either are part of or depend on the

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<sup>25</sup> Sherwin, 95.

<sup>26</sup> Thomas Aquinas, Eric D’Arcy Latin text, English translation, Introduction, Notes and Glossary, *Summa Theologiae 1a2ae. 22-30, Volume 19, The Emotions* (Britain: Blackfriars, 1967), Q. 26, 4.

<sup>27</sup> Sherwin, 80.

temporal common good distinguished from the redemptive, eternal, supreme common good that is the Trinity and all of creation in communion with divinity. Citizenship obviously pertains to the temporal common good as does the state and government.

Aquinas's distinction between primary and secondary goods in love of friends can be extended to citizenship. People's commitment to public order through citizenship involves a primary love that appreciates neighbors as potential friends and a secondary love that desires them to contribute to and benefit from the common good in the aspect of public order. Public order makes the common good realistically accessible, enabling all to seek their human fulfillment according to their abilities. Citizens espouse a secondary good in love of friendship by desiring public order that benefits all. Citizens' love for public order, that is, desires a good essential to their neighbors' flourishing. Primary, direct love for neighbors proceeds through citizens' indirect love of neighbors that loves and seeks for them a secondary good, public order. Secondary indirect love for neighbors takes place in love for good things citizens want for their neighbors and potential friends. Citizenship itself, in fact, is one of those good things.

### Part Three: Citizenship Appropriated

There is no en bloc Catholic vote anymore. Approximately 35-40 % of Catholic voters go with the Republicans and about the same percentage go with the Democrats. The rest move around as Independents. US Catholic voters in 2012 face a forced choice between parties, platforms, and candidates that mix what is unjust with what is just. Some have said that Catholics have to be uncomfortable belonging to and voting for either party's candidate. In that situation the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops teaches as follows:

A Catholic cannot vote for a candidate who takes a position in favor of an intrinsic evil, such as abortion or racism, if the voter's intent is to support that position. In such cases a Catholic would be guilty of formal cooperation in grave evil. At the same time, a voter should not use a candidate's opposition to an intrinsic evil to justify indifference or inattentiveness to other important moral issues involving human life and dignity.<sup>28</sup>

That's an unimpeachable application of ethical norms derived from Scripture, tradition, and natural law.

However, besides deliberate moral decisions made according to Scriptural, traditional, and ethical propositions there is a more mysterious, non-verbal dimension pertaining to Christian and Catholic political identity. I refer to the promised, silent movement of the Holy Spirit within hearers of the Word of God in Scripture and Tradition. In and out of an election year the Holy Spirit draws the faithful toward more complete charity in imitation of Christ. Charity affects Catholic political identity active in citizenship. Charity under the aegis of the Holy Spirit transforms all loves. Charity draws citizens' indirect love in a constant inward gravitational tug toward the universality of charity. Israel had a tradition of love for God, family, friends, neighbors, and nation. Jesus expanded love for family, neighbor, friends, and Israel to love for strangers, those in need, enemies, and all humanity.

That expansion to universality participates in divine love's universality and influences love for neighbors and citizens' love for the common good and public order. Spirit-led charity breaks love for the common good away from individual narrowness, group bias, and nationalist identification of the whole nation with one group or class so that only citizens in that group or class are the real Americans. The Spirit and charity, that is, liberate indirect love for neighbors active in citizenship. Charity fortifies and pushes

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<sup>28</sup> *United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship: A Call to Political Responsibility from the Catholic Bishops of the United States with Introductory Note* (Washington, D.C.: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2011) n. 34, 11.

love for the common good and public order toward benefit to everyone. And charity's liberating effect begins, surprising to say, in authentic Christian love for self.

Authentic self-love is an outcome from the silent momentum of the Spirit. Christ's message centered in love of God and neighbor presupposes love for oneself that serves as the measure for love of one's neighbor, as oneself. Christians are taught and encouraged to love their neighbors as themselves. Loving oneself in a Christian manner seems unending and almost automatic. Yet in a consumer culture and harsh political environment perhaps love of oneself has become elusive and subject to distortion into narcissism or its opposite, self-loathing. In that context authentic Christian self-love cannot be by-passed or taken for granted. The Catholic puzzle outlined in Part One indicates that American Catholics are not loving themselves enough as citizens. Learning to love oneself as a citizen occurs first of all in self-appropriation of citizenship.

Taking to oneself, claiming, letting into one's identity what already lies within oneself, citizenship for example, but may be dormant or unnoticed is a personal activity called self-appropriation. The self is the person who is citizen and takes citizenship to himself or herself. The act is inalienably personal. No one, not a parent, family member, neighbor, spouse, friend, Church leader, teacher, university professor, mentor, expert, group, parish, or government official can do that for anyone except for themselves. At the same time every person is both individual and communal, so self-appropriation of citizenship takes place in words and sentences from a common language about political life, in a public field of reference known probably from observation, opinions of others and the media. Most likely appreciative taking of citizenship to oneself involves reading

or talking with others. What anything further be said about self-appropriation of citizenship?

For one thing, I think a Thomist approach to politics, and here I could mention social ethicists Bryan Hehir, Leon Hooper, and David Hollenbach among others, gives a basis for more easily and deeply appropriating citizenship than does an Augustinian approach. However, I have come to realize, and it's quite exciting in theory, that Augustinian and Thomist models are not in absolute contradiction and do not have to be understood as self-contained, rival systems of thought between which we must choose. We can receive both. Aquinas lifts up the created good that is our socio-political nature and allows an inference that democratic citizenship expresses that nature in a concrete, contingent, political status called citizenship. At the same time, a contemporary Augustinian model, and here in addition to Charles Mathewes I probably should refer to John Milbank, Stanley Hauerwas, William Cavanaugh, and Michael Baxter among others, concentrates on theological critiques of social, cultural, and political dimensions of the problem of evil in a fallen world.

Their theological and socio-critical analyses are invaluable and stimulating. But their criticism of Christian complicity in the misprisms of the modern nation-state focuses mostly on public positions taken by official statements. In these critics' view, any church's teachings on social justice and the common good grant too much to a consolidated capitalist economy and democratic polity. To instruct Christians in the duties of a citizen only accommodates secular politics. Churches should stick to faith, liturgy, formation of virtuous consciences, and bearing witness in the churches internal lives to social existence redeemed by Christ.

The relationship between Augustinian and Thomist models goes beyond tolerant, non-contradictory co-existence, beyond a weak complementarity that notices only common ground. May the models not best be related as dialectical opposites whose mutual impact on each other modifies each and yet does not remove the other from consideration? Bernard Lonergan defines a dialectic as, “any concrete unfolding of linked but opposed principles that are modified cumulatively by the unfolding.”<sup>29</sup> I follow Robert Doran’s nuancing of this idea in supposing that not all opposites are irreconcilable contradictions, and that some are contraries that exist in tension with each other.

Accordingly, self-appropriation of citizenship can begin in and maintain a grounding in Thomist love for our socio-political human nature, for citizenship as an expression of it that involves love of neighbors through the common good and public order. A Thomist approach solidly grounds citizens’ participation in civil and political life but by itself cannot escape a criticism of being naïve optimism. The problem of evil, and everyday perceptions of something awry in the US can hearken to the Augustinian model without forsaking Aquinas’s insights. Contemporary adherents of Augustine pay incisive attention to systemic blindnesses and historically-formed malfeasances operative in society and political life. The Thomist model keeps us anchored in the goods of creation while the Augustinian model compels attention to, for example, a very disturbing piece of research on American Catholics who have become Republicans.

Political scientists David C. LEEGE and Paul D. Mueller report that, “The evidence is very compelling that what moved Catholics most from their political moorings [Democratic] from 1968-1992 were negative feelings on race and the role of

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<sup>29</sup> Bernard F.X. Lonergan, *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding* (New York: Harper and Row, 1978) 244, quoted in Robert M. Doran, *Theology and the Dialectics of History* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990) 69.

the government as an engine for change and equality”.<sup>30</sup> Still worse, they report a finding from American National Election Survey data that compares white American Catholics with other white American church-goers. Their research had to face an unpleasant finding that “White Republican Catholics are *less* empathic to people of color or lower status, are *less* willing to respect human life except for that of the unborn, and *less* willing to use government as an engine for increasing opportunity for those of color or lower estate.”<sup>31</sup> Though it seems less likely, further research on Catholics who maintained a link with the Democrats might turn up a parallel aversion to the unborn and to the pro-life movement. They note that only in 1992 and especially after 1996 did many Catholics become Republicans for pro-life reasons.

Leege and Mueller also came upon a disquieting correlation between young Catholic women being more aligned with Democrats than young Catholic men. The higher percentage linked with the Democratic party had to do with favoring a pro-choice agenda under the heading of women’s reproductive freedom.<sup>32</sup> That correlation can’t be good. In view of these findings much can be learned from Mathewes’ Augustinian approach that conceives citizenship as potentially a spiritually perilous condition and always as a training ground in Christian virtue.

Evaluating the Augustinian model in comparison with the Thomist has to take account of the fact that historically-experienced, tried and true, African-American political sentiments on liberty, government and citizenship do not run primarily along the Augustinian path and mostly have no use for constant resentment against the federal

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<sup>30</sup> David C. Leege, Paul D. Mueller, “How Catholic Is the Catholic Vote?” in Margaret O’Brien Steinfels (ed) *American Catholics and Civic Engagement*, 213-250 at 227.

<sup>31</sup> Leege, Mueller, 233.

<sup>32</sup> Leege, Mueller, 233.

government. Whereas an objection to the Thomist model could claim it leads American Catholics into a naïve optimism, an objection to the Augustinian model could argue that it so undermines confidence in citizenship as to leave people adrift in cynical apathy.

### Conclusion

A closing comment on the relevance of traditional Catholic respect for human reason in election year 2012 will conclude this talk. In *Deus Caritas Est* Benedict reaffirmed the role of reason in politics and by implication in citizenship. “We have seen,” he observed, “that the formation of just structures is not directly the duty of the Church, but belongs to the world of politics, the sphere of the autonomous use of reason.”<sup>33</sup> He adds that the question, “what is justice?... is one of practical reason; but if reason is to be exercised properly, it must undergo constant purification, since it can never be completely free of the danger of a certain ethical blindness caused by the dazzling effect of power and special interests.”<sup>34</sup> Benedict’s strong appreciation for reason almost sounds like the Church’s best-known Augustinian has kept that model in dialectical tension with a Thomist model incorporating a strong role for reason. Benedict directs readers nonetheless to an Augustinian critical “purification” of political reason. I think charity purifies reason by keeping its activities tied to authentic love of concrete goods. Consequently, self-appropriation of citizenship involves appreciative self-appropriation of one’s reason, or in the terms of Lonergan, of one’s intentional consciousness.

That is to say, charity toward self and citizenship in self-appropriation of citizenship motivates a person’s primary and secondary love for neighbors. But, to bring that love into effective decisions and actions depends on the activity proper to citizens in

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<sup>33</sup>Benedict XVI, *Deus Caritas Est*, n. 29, para. 1.

<sup>34</sup>Benedict XVI, *Deus Caritas Est*, n. 28, para. 2.

the realm of reason not faith. Charity ushers citizens into activities of reason, acts of intentional consciousness that Bernard Lonergan distinguishes into experience, understanding, judgment, and decision. Experience observes words and deeds, absorbs from the media including the Internet information about the political processes, structures, policies, platforms, and candidates. Understanding seeks the meanings embedded in processes and structures, along with meanings articulated in policies and by parties and candidates. Familiarity with historically conscious social analysis on the level of theory like that in *Social Analysis* by Joe Holland and Peter Henriot provokes new insights into operational meanings.

Much public and private discussion by citizens revolves around an act of reason that Thomas and Lonergan both call judgment. Judgment does not assume every interesting idea is valid. Judgment works toward the validity of meanings understood to be present in policies, and in positions associated with parties and candidates. Judgment weighs evidence adduced, examines the arguments, considers likely outcomes, and comes to regard one idea or policy more valid than others. Decision builds on judgment and moves to a choice of a candidate. These acts of intentional consciousness too are irreducibly personal in matters of politics. Active reason is fully in accord with Catholic respect for reason. Active reason makes for active citizens seeking the truth in and through the opinions of others. Conversations are a testing ground for exchanged opinions en route to judgments on them, followed by decisions.

When action follows from decisions the question of where to start comes up. Paul Rogat Loeb's widely-read *Soul of a Citizen: Living with Conviction in a Cynical Time* answers that question with wisdom born of listening to many peoples' stories. People

have learned that the most misplaced question in the face of a large political picture and with conviction about a local issue is, “what can I do?” That goes nowhere but to frustration. The fruitful question is, “what can we do about X or Y?” Self-appropriation of love of neighbor and exercise of reason in citizenship asks among friends, in a family, at school, in the parish, “can we talk about X or Y?” and “how will we act?”

NOTES