

IS VOTING EVIL?

Is voting evil? Of course not! Voting is simply the act of making a choice. In itself it is a morally neutral act. “I vote for purple as the most beautiful color.” “ I vote for Ted Williams being the best hitter in the history of baseball.” “I vote that we go to New Hampshire rather than Cape Cod for a vacation.” Voting *per se* is not evil.

It is what a person votes for that turns the act of voting into a good or evil act. To vote for an evil is to choose to participate in and support that evil. If I am in the Mafia and vote to have Big Louie poison a politician who has taken Mafia bribe money and not delivered on the promise he made when taking the bag of cash, am I not voting for evil and therefore am I not doing evil? Suppose the only choices that are given to me by the Godfather are to vote for either Big Louie or Sammy the Snake to poison the disloyal politician. Regardless of which choice I make, am I not doing evil? Can I morally justify myself as a disciple of Jesus for voting for one or the other by saying, “But these were the only choices the Godfather gave to me?”

If, *mutatis mutandis*, the above moral problems of voting and evil are presented in terms of that organization called the state rather than the one called the Mafia, does anything change morally in terms of the disciple of Jesus?

Consider: If a person has a long history of murdering people, destroying innocent lives in-utero and post-utero, in order to get done what he or she wants to get done, how morally reasonable is it to think he or she will abandon this practice if elected Godfather or President or Prime Minister, etc.? In the realm of abstract logic it could be argued that once this person got control over all the levers of violence that the Mafia or the state possesses he would change his ways. It could be so argued, but it would be logic at the service of an illusion. Once the appetite for controlling people by the use of the power of violence (hurting and killing people) has been whetted and fed for decades, it is fantasy to believe that it will not be fueled in such a person by getting access to even greater avenues and instruments of violence. Voting is not evil, but voting for a person who is going to do is evil. The greater the evil he or she will do, the greater the evil in which the voter for that person participates and for which he or she is morally responsible.

But if a person cannot vote for any of the choices given him or her to vote on because all choices are committed to doing evil, then to where or to whom can he or she go to make a difference, to make a better world for people, to help humanity out of its present cauldron of pain and evil?

-Emmanuel Charles McCarthy