

ELECTION WATCH

By the time you read this article, the election may have already been decided. Here is a quick look at the most important issues of critical importance to Catholics.

Voters in Arizona, California, and Florida will decide whether to support the traditional idea of marriage as a union between a man and a woman. An enormous amount of money and lobbying has been done in these states by both sides, and this is especially true of California.

South Dakota will decide whether abortion should be limited to rape, incest and the life of the mother, voters in Michigan are grappling with allowing public funding of embryonic stem cell research and the state of Washington has an initiative permitting assisted suicide on the ballot. Coloradoans will decide whether to amend the state constitution to say that personhood begins at conception.

Catholic bishops in all these states are standing fast on Catholic principles, and this certainly includes Archbishop Charles Chaput of Denver: for wholly prudential reasons, Chaput, along with the National Right to Life, are not endorsing the personhood measure. They see it as a bad tactical move (at this time) that could easily secure the ruling in *Roe v. Wade* even further.

The situation in Washington has triggered an anti-Catholic backlash against Catholics fighting for a culture of life. A group called Death with Dignity has been the most offensive, drawing fire from the Catholic League. The results in all these states will have dramatic effects.