

VOTERS HIGHLY POLARIZED; CATHOLICS ALSO SPLIT

With the November elections almost upon us, all signs show a very polarized electorate. There are many key issues at stake, both at the national level and in the states. Surveys show the Catholic community is just as split as the rest of the country.

The Catholic vote is not hard to determine. Practicing Catholics, for whom the life issues are paramount, have mostly left the Democratic Party for the Republicans. The other half, the non-practicing Catholics, are not exercised over abortion or euthanasia; most have stayed with the Democrats. Independent Catholics, like independents generally, can swing either way, motivated more by economic issues than social ones.

There was no controversy over religion at the Republican National Convention, but the Democrats experienced plenty at theirs. God was thrown out of the Democratic Platform, only to be reinstated after a rigged vote. As Democratic stalwart, and loyal Catholic, Cokie Roberts pointed out, the Democrats did themselves no favor with Catholics by inviting speakers who uniformly endorsed the radical abortion agenda.

At the state level, gay marriage is on the ballot in Maine, Minnesota, Maryland and Washington. Homosexual activists have been raising a ton of money from all over the nation to affect the outcome. In Florida, voters will decide the fate of the anti-Catholic Blaine Amendment that is still on the books. And in Massachusetts, physician-assisted suicide is on the ballot.

Several attempts to silence Yakima Bishop Joseph Tyson in Washington over the gay marriage issue have been made; he has bravely stood up to the bullies. Gay marriage is legal in

Washington, but the voters were never asked to cast a ballot on this issue. The bishops rightfully sought to have a referendum, and on election day it will happen.

Boston Archbishop Sean Cardinal O'Malley has made very cogent arguments against doctor-assisted suicide. He points out that the way the law is written, friends and relatives would be granted considerable power to determine the fate of a person said to be dying. The sad news is, as O'Malley told Raymond Arroyo, the majority of those who live in Massachusetts these days are secularists. Which means in all likelihood that most were once practicing Irish Catholics.

Keep your eyes on this issue. Doctor-assisted suicide is already legal in Washington and Oregon. Not surprisingly, the residents there, like those in Massachusetts, are disproportionately agnostic or atheist. Unfortunately, they have turned a deaf ear to Catholic teachings on human dignity, the net losers being the elderly and the disabled.