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Catholics go into the confessional booth to repent of their sins. But is it possible that another booth – the voting booth – can be a place for them to commit the sins they need to repent?

According to Benedictine Father Matthew Habiger, it certainly is. In his April 1996 essay in *Human Life Reports*, a monthly newsletter published by the pro-life group Human Life International, he wrote, "It is clearly a sin to vote for pro-abortion politicians."

"The legislator who votes for abortion is clearly a formal accomplice, giving formal cooperation with abortion," contends Father Habiger, who lives in Virginia. "He shares both in the intention of the act, and in supplying material support for the act. If I vote for such a candidate, knowing full well that he will make available public monies for abortion, or continue its decriminalization, then I am aiding him."

Before Catholics start thinking twice about how they will vote Tuesday, Nov. 3, they should know that not every priest would agree with Father Habiger. Certainly not Father Brian Cool, chairman of the Diocese of Rochester's Public Policy Committee, and co-pastor of St. Michael's Church, Penn Yan.

"I don't think that respects the mud-diness of human situations, human living and American politics," he said of Father Habiger's view.

Like other political observers interviewed by the *Catholic Courier*, Father Cool maintained that Catholics have to take into account *all* a candidate's positions on life issues – euthanasia, war, economic injustice, the death penalty – as well as abortion, if they want to bring their faith to the ballot box.

"Someone who espouses all the Catholic beliefs – you're not going to find them," he further advised.

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Story by Rob Cullivan