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Cardinal Joseph Tobin of Newark, New Jersey, answers questions alongside Archbishop Jose G

Cardinal Joseph Tobin of Newark, New Jersey, answers questions alongside Archbishop Jose Gomez of Los Angeles, president-elect of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, during a news conference at the fall general assembly of the USCCB in Baltimore Nov. 12. (CNS/Bob Roller)

In a Nov. 25 statement, [Roman Catholic Women Bishops](#) criticized the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops for citing abortion as the "preeminent priority" for Catholic citizens to consider heading into the 2020 election.

"As people in search of the common good, we must grapple with many social justice problems without the limitations implied by one preeminent priority," the [statement](#) said.

The statement, signed by 13 women bishops, was a direct response to "[Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship](#)," the teaching document released by the U.S. bishops' conference on Catholic political responsibility. In their document, the

bishops' conference included the phrase, "The threat of abortion remains our preeminent priority."

Roman Catholic Women Bishops are members of Roman Catholic Women Priests – USA, an independent international organization that ordains women priests. According to its website, ordained women minister in 34 states across the country and are located in a number of countries around the world.

The women bishops said that language of preeminence "effectively dilutes the importance of all other prominent social issues."

"It is our fervent hope that all citizens will exercise their responsibility to inform themselves and weigh the consequences of each and every moral issue of the day," the statement wrote.

Other issues of concern mentioned in the statement included climate change, U.S. immigration policies of family separation, efforts to repeal the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals status of undocumented people brought to the U.S. as children, gun violence and racism.

The women bishops also applauded Bishop Robert McElroy of San Diego, Cardinal Blase Cupich of Chicago and Cardinal Joseph Tobin of Newark for advocating against "exclusive, single-issue choices."

"Pope Francis, in his exhortation, [\*Gaudete et Exsultate\*](#), also pointed to the danger inherent in the reductionist approach of defending only one issue," said the statement.

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