



Diocese of Davenport

Office of the Bishop

October 21, 2020

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

Pope Francis encourages us: “Good Catholics meddle in politics, offering the best of themselves.” Election Day, November 3, is drawing close. As mentioned in *Faithful Citizenship*, we are called to exercise the right to vote, bringing our best selves to the public square. Being our “best selves” means taking the time to form our consciences, drawing from the rich tradition of Catholic social teaching that impels us to affirm the dignity of every human person and to work for the common good. Being our “best selves” also means engaging in politics with civility, clarity and compassion, as my brother bishops and I call for in our *Civilize It* campaign. As we “meddle in politics,” we must love our neighbor in spite of divisions and disagreements, listen respectfully to one another, and work for a unity that transcends partisanship.

There has been great interest in the 2020 elections. This is evident in many ways, most notably in the number of people who have already voted. As a reminder, if you have a ballot, it must be postmarked by November 2nd and received by November 9th to be counted. Just about everything is different in 2020, and the election will be no exception. Because of the pandemic, more people than usual will be voting using absentee ballots, which take longer to process. Following protocols to prevent spreading COVID-19 among election workers also takes extra time. It may very well be that final results will not be known on the night of the election. Some of you may recall that Congress did not certify a winner in the 2000 Presidential elections until January 6th. We will need to be patient as the process unfolds; every vote needs to be counted. A delay means that our democracy is working, that votes are being counted and verified.

As faithful citizens, our politics ought to be rooted in prayer. Therefore, in addition to voting, I am asking each parish to consider opening their doors on Election Day for those who wish to pray prior to voting, for those who have already voted, and for all of us who hope that this democratic process may be completed peacefully and civilly. I ask that this prayer be made available to those who spend time in prayer that day:

Gracious and loving God, let your spirit be with us today.

Hear our prayers and increase in us the will to follow your Son Jesus.

Help us to draw on the resources of our faith as we use the opportunities of our democracy to shape a society more respectful of the life, dignity and rights of the human person, especially the poor and vulnerable.

We ask this through Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God forever and ever. Amen.

Finally, I wish to stress that although there may be relief on November 4th that the political campaigns are over, our responsibility as faithful citizens merely enters a new chapter. I encourage you to stay involved and in contact with elected officials in order that the legislation they enact reflects our deep commitment to the dignity of life and protecting the poor and vulnerable.

Blessings,

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Most Rev. Thomas R. Zinkula
Bishop of Davenport