



## **Diocese releases clarification on 2020 Presidential Election statement**

November 18, 2020 (Kalamazoo, Mich.): Bishop Paul J. Bradley has released the following clarification regarding the 2020 Presidential Election statement:

“Recently I issued a public Statement on the 2020 Presidential Election. Shortly after doing so, in my prayerful reflection, I realized that my statement was not only premature, but very possibly misleading. I regretted issuing the statement. Soon, I began receiving a few letters expressing shock, sadness and disappointment.

“In light of those letters, each of which I have addressed individually, and the likelihood that there are many others who may have the same response, I want to make this clarification, and issue a re-statement.

“Not only was the original statement premature, since the election results have not been certified due to ongoing legal challenges; it quite possibly led people to conclude that I was celebrating the victory of Joe Biden and Kamala Harris, and even worse, that I was somehow endorsing what they stand for. I point to all my former statements, initiatives, and Letters to the Faithful to verify that I have always strongly advocated for the unborn, and support and encourage all our Pro Life programs across the spectrum of human life. Most recently, in my Pastoral Letter prior to the Election, “Let Faith Form our Consciences”, I would hope that it is clear that I would never support those with such extreme positions and policies that are antithetical to the teachings of the Church. I have removed my original statement from our diocesan website. And I issue this clarification as a further step to make clear my position.

“While Mr. Biden, if his election stands, would be the second President to profess the Catholic faith, never before has any Catholic leader, at any level of public office, so openly supported abortion, and so defiantly made it clear how he intends to aggressively pursue those radical policies immediately, in the face of one of the most important teachings of our faith. Once

again, if his election stands, I will encourage dialogue and we should pray for him, but my prayer will be for him to turn from his errant positions and to be concerned for his eternal salvation. Unfortunately, it is also a sad fact that neither Presidential candidate nor political party is perfectly aligned with the Church's teachings and practices. Therefore, no matter who is ultimately certified as having won this election, we as People of Faith will need to pray, encourage dialogue, and work for change as we continue to advocate for the qualities that help to build up Jesus' Kingdom of justice and peace.

"I am fully aware that Catholics are divided on this election, as is the rest of the country. I realize every person is responsible for their own beliefs, based on their own conscience. However, if I have in any way contributed to misleading anyone to believe that I am supporting the extreme positions represented in the person of Mr. Biden or Ms. Harris, I humbly ask your forgiveness. We must stand up for the precious gift of human life, beginning with the most vulnerable and precious stage of life of the unborn; we must protect and respect every stage of human life along the spectrum until the final natural breath we take; we must advocate for a society that supports Gospel values. We must do so because all human life is a Gift from God. As Bishop of our Diocese, I intend to continue leading and encouraging that effort in every way I can."