



CIVILIZE IT

DIGNITY BEYOND THE DEBATE

2020

A divided country. Fights at the dinner table. Political vitriol. What does it mean to love our neighbors in the midst of such a climate?

As Catholics, we have a long tradition of engagement in the political process as a means of putting our faith into action. We are called to bring the best of ourselves and our faith to the public square—and yet today, many shy away from such involvement because our national and local conversations are filled with vitriol and harsh language, often directed at people themselves.

When personal attacks replace honest debate, no one wins. This kind of attack, no matter the reason, only serves to further divide our communities. As Catholics, we

must model a better way. We invite you to join the *Civilize It* campaign by taking the

pledge below as a way to promote civility, love our neighbors, and build community.

Civilize It is about making room in your heart for those with whom you disagree. We are called to recognize that each one of us is a beloved child of God and to respond in love to that reality. *Civilize It* is a non-partisan call to focus on the dignity of all people, even when we disagree, and to put faith in action by bearing witness to a better way forward.

Take the pledge below as an individual, family, or community. Anyone and everyone can commit together to honoring human dignity through civil conversation.

I pledge:

Civility

To recognize the human dignity of those with whom I disagree, treat others with respect, and rise above attacks when directed at me.

Clarity

To root my political viewpoints in the Gospel and a well [formed conscience](#), which involves prayer, conversation, study and listening. I will stand up for my convictions and speak out when I witness language that disparages others' dignity, while also listening and seeking to understand others' experiences.

Compassion

To encounter others with a tone and posture which affirms that I honor the dignity of others and invites others to do the same. I will presume others' best intentions and listen to their stories with empathy. I will strive to understand before seeking to be understood.

Signature

Date



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Make Me an Instrument of Your Peace: A Prayer for Civility

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace.

Where uncivil words prevail, show me how to model love.

Help me remember the God-given dignity of all and invite others to do the same.

Show me how to build bridges and not walls

and see first what unites us rather than how we diverge.

Let me seek to understand before asking to be understood.

Give me a listening heart filled with empathy and compassion.

May I be clear in sharing my own position
and respectful and civil in describing those of others.

Let me never tolerate hateful ideas.

May I invite all to charity and love.

Lord, help me to imitate your compassion and mercy.

Make me an instrument of your peace.

Amen.

Inspired by [Nine Rules for Civility from the Catholic Tradition](#), Bishop Zubik

