

## **Save America, Save our Democracy**

29<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time (Year A)

October 17, 2020

Fr. Tony Davis

We are now about 2 weeks out from our 2020 Presidential Election. This one may be unlike any other, especially if it is a close race. We will see what happens! Over the past few months, one of the words that I see and hear being used on both sides is 'save.' 'Save America' or 'save our democracy' (I think you know which one is which). While I understand where both sides are coming from and a lot is on the line, as a Christian, I am somewhat uncomfortable with the word 'save' being use in a political context. Properly speaking, for Christians 'to save' is a religious concept. Salvation belongs to God alone and our one savior is Jesus Christ. No president or political figure can bring about salvation, no matter how good they are.

The words of Isaiah in our First Reading say it very clearly. "I am the LORD and there is no other, there is no God besides me." These words are a challenge to all of us, regardless of who we will (or already have) voted for this year. After the election, we will still have similar problems to face and an ongoing pandemic to handle. To claim that our candidate is the definitive answer to the problems of today is an over statement. We hope that our future president will make a positive impact on our nation and our future, but if we are looking for something to be saved, one person and four years isn't going to do it.

Conveniently, our Gospel reading for today is the famous passage: 'render unto Caesar what belongs to Caesar and to God what belongs to God'. It is true, we do owe something to those in authority positions

and we do owe something to God. We are citizens of earth and citizens of heaven. The important part, though, is that these two are not equals. 'I am the Lord and there is no other.' We prioritize our religious beliefs over our politics. Our ultimate loyalty is to our one God and our only savior, Jesus Christ. That should be a connecting point for people on both sides of the aisle who share a common Christian (or Catholic) faith.

One of the points made by Sarah Stewart Holland and Beth Silvers in their book *I Think You're Wrong, but I'm Listening* is that in the past, there was always a small segment in both the Democratic and Republican parties who had 'a very unfavorable view' of the other party. This is to be expected. The alarming part, however, is that in the past 4 years, they note that we have reached the point where almost half of the members in each party have 'a very unfavorable view' of the other party. Furthermore, not only has it been harder to achieve bipartisanship, but people on both sides are claiming that the other party is a threat to the future of our country. (25) Thus, the language of 'save America'/'save our democracy.' For many, politics is their god and their salvation. Sad to say, these people are going to be deeply disappointed.

*We are saved by God, not by an election.*

As we move through these next weeks and months, regardless of the results, our nation is going to need healing. As people who already have a savior, let us not ask who can save America or who can save our democracy, but instead, let us ask, 'how can we give to God what belongs to God?'