



DIOCESE OF SAGINAW

OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

September 29, 2020

Dear Fathers and Parish Life Directors,

As you are aware, the 2020 election season is underway. Early voting began on September 24th and continues through Election Day, which is November 3 this year. I would ask that you please remind parishioners of the importance of participating in the political arena with a properly formed conscience. We can help them learn and take to heart the moral and social teaching of the Catholic Church, and then apply those principles in the voting booth and the public life of our society.

Please find attached some resources and materials to help form the consciences of Catholic voters. As written in the document *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship*, "In the United States and around the world, many challenges demand our attention. The threat of abortion remains **our preeminent priority** because it directly attacks life itself, because it takes place within the sanctuary of the family, and because of the number of lives destroyed. At the same time, we cannot dismiss or ignore other serious threats to human life and dignity such as racism, the environmental crisis, poverty and the death penalty."

It is important that seek to build a "culture of encounter" with those with whom we might disagree by practicing civility. To help with this, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops has launched a "Civilize It" campaign. You may have seen some commercials on local television regarding this campaign. The purpose is to invite Catholics to model civility, love for neighbor, and respectful dialogue. There are three elements to the campaign:

- Civility. Recognize others' human dignity. Treat others with respect.
- Clarity. Stand up for your convictions while seeking to understand those of others. Root your viewpoints in the gospel and a well-formed conscience.
- Compassion. Presume other's best intentions and listen with empathy. Strive to understand.

A variety of helpful resources, including videos, bulletin announcements, lesson plans and prayers are available at www.faithfulcitizenship.org. Additional resources can be found on the Michigan Catholic Conference website as well at www.micatholic.org.

The Church does not endorse or oppose any candidates or a particular political party. Advocacy for or endorsement of a particular candidate or party is not permitted and jeopardizes the tax-exempt status of our Catholic churches. No signs or materials supporting a particular party or candidate can be placed on or distributed within church/institutional property.

Thank you for your assistance with this effort.

Peace and joy in Christ,

+ Bishop Gruss

Most Rev. Robert D. Gruss
Bishop of Saginaw