



ROMAN CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF SYRACUSE

OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

240 E. ONONDAGA STREET, SYRACUSE, NY 13202-2608

October 21, 2020

Dear Collaborators in Pastoral Ministry,

In 12 days, Election Day will be upon us. I realize that it is possible already that voters have been to the polls, especially through the use of absentee ballots. However, more than ever Catholics need to hear the consistent voice of the Church identifying with the fundamental right to life and “the protection of the unborn as a pre-eminent priority.” Pope Francis himself states that if we fail to protect life, no other rights matter. No matter our political party, such emphasis cannot be lost. We readily profess as Americans, “In God We Trust” and we must allow that relationship to define us not just in our ministry, but in our citizenship as well.

As the US Catholic bishops note in their call to political responsibility: “*The call to holiness, Pope Francis writes, requires a ‘firm and passionate’ defense of ‘the innocent unborn.’ ‘Equally sacred,’ he further states, are ‘the lives of the poor, those already born, the destitute, the abandoned and the underprivileged, the vulnerable infirm and elderly exposed to covert euthanasia, the victims of human trafficking, new forms of slavery, and every form of rejection. [Gaudete et Exsultate, 25] Our approach to contemporary issues is first and foremost rooted in our identity as followers of Christ and as brothers and sisters to all who are made in God’s image. For all Catholics, including those seeking public office, our participation in political parties or other groups to which we may belong should be influenced by our faith, not the other way around.*”

Bearing in mind our nation’s challenges and the need for wise, moral, civic leadership, I would like to invite you and your parishioners to join me in an Election Novena invoking the Holy Spirit to help Catholics as they prepare for the upcoming election. For nine consecutive days, Monday, October 26 through Tuesday, November 3, participants will be encouraged to pray **one Our Father, Hail Mary, and Glory Be** for the day’s intention which can be found at www.usccb.org. A closing prayer for elected leaders will be offered on day 10, Wednesday, November 4th.

A great document for all of us to review over the next few days is, “Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship” available again on the USCCB website, www.usccb.org. My homily from Respect Life Sunday, along with my last two columns for the *Catholic Sun* are available as attachments, along with a video on “Faithful Citizenship by me on You Tube.

I hope all of this will help you in your own discernment as you approach the voting booth and seek in your own way to influence public policy and proclaim the Gospel of Life. Know of my prayers for you and our nation. Please pray for me.

In the Name of Jesus,

Most Reverend Douglas J. Lucia
Bishop of Syracuse

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