

## Homily 30th Sunday in Ordinary Time - Election

We hear one of the scholars of the law ask Jesus: "What is the greatest commandment in the law?"

Naturally, Jesus replied: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul and mind."

Jesus affirmed that this commandment was the first and the greatest of all the commandments.

Jesus then continued and said: "The second commandment is similar: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. The whole law and the prophets depend on these two commandments."

Today Jesus is asking us to be wholehearted. He desires that we love God wholeheartedly. God should be first and foremost in our lives. However, Jesus also tells us to "love our neighbor as we love ourselves."

Both commandments are challenging.

However, the instruction to love our neighbor as we love ourselves may be more challenging than the first commandment!

This 2nd commandment often stretches us in uncomfortable ways.

We don't always like our neighbor.

Our neighbor may be an individual who may have wounded us, insulted us or ignored us.

Our neighbor may be a complete stranger who looks and talks differently than us.

Our neighbor may be someone with whom we totally disagree.

Our neighbor might be someone from another country, a different color than us, or someone without health care.

The neighbor might be unemployed, they might be a woman who is struggling with the decision about having an abortion or keeping her baby because she is under employed.

Our neighbors include our LGBTQ sisters and brothers who have the right to live with those whom they love as children of God.

We as Catholics and Christians have a set of principles to guide us as we live our lives each and every day; they act as a guide for how we make decisions to that way.

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These principles are the seven principles of Catholic Social Teaching. They are:

1. The Life and Dignity of the Human Person
2. Call to Family, Community, and Participation
3. Rights and Responsibilities
4. Option for the Poor and the Vulnerable
5. The Dignity of Work and the Rights of Workers
6. Solidarity
7. Care for God's Creation

Catholic social teaching communicates to us the truth that we live in community.

We live as members of our family; of our local, national, and global community; and of the Church.

Our call is to participate actively in the communities to which we belong.

The goal of our participation at all levels is the common good, and everyone's flourishing, including the least among us.

I have been asked many times this election cycle, "Father Terry, how do I decide for whom to vote"?

I cannot and will not and am not trying to tell you how to vote, but I do offer all of us a kind of Voting Examination of Conscience.

I invite you take a deep breath and call on the God who surrounds you and loves you each day and who is with all of us in this election year and in the craziness of 2020.

I will name the Social Justice Principle and then offer some reflective questions.

The first of the questions are about our own ways of living out Catholic Social Teaching and the last couple questions in each category are questions to consider when choosing whom to vote for on November 3.

These questions are taken from a prayer service called "Near the Time of a Political Election" published by Liturgy Training Publications in Chicago.

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### **1. *The life and dignity of the human person.***

Do our candidates respect the life and dignity of every human person from conception through natural death?

Do they recognize the dignity of all people, whatever their race, class, age, or abilities?

Do they work to protect the dignity of others when it is being threatened?

Am I committed to voting for those who protect human life and ensure that every human being is able to live in dignity?

### **2. *The call to family, community, and participation.***

Am I aware of problems facing my local community and involved in efforts to find solutions? Do I stay informed and make my voice heard when needed?

Do the policies, attitudes, and choices of our political candidates strengthen or undermine the institution of the family?

Do their policies support the efforts of poor persons and work for change in our neighborhoods and communities?

Do their attitudes and interactions empower or disempower others?

### **3. *The rights and responsibilities of all people.***

Do I live in material comfort and excess while remaining insensitive to the needs of others whose rights are unfulfilled?

Do I urge those in power to implement programs and policies that give priority to the human dignity and rights of all, especially the vulnerable?

Do our candidates recognize and respect the economic, social, political, and cultural rights of others?

Do our candidates take seriously their responsibility to ensure that the rights of persons in need are realized?

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### **4. *The option for the poor and the vulnerable.***

Am I disproportionately concerned for my own good at the expense of others?

Do I engage in service and advocacy work that protects the dignity of poor and vulnerable persons?

Do our candidates give special attention to the needs of the poor and vulnerable in my community and in the world?

### **5. *The dignity of work and the rights of workers.***

As a worker, do I give my employer a fair day's work for my wages?

As an owner, do I treat workers fairly?

Do I treat all workers with whom I interact with respect, no matter their position or class?

Do my purchasing choices take into account the hands involved in the production of what I buy?

When possible, do I buy products produced by workers whose rights and dignity were respected?

Do our candidates support the rights of all workers to adequate wages, health insurance, vacation, and sick leave?

Do they affirm the right to form or join unions or work associations?

### **6. *Solidarity with all of humanity and creation.***

Does the way I spend my time reflect a genuine concern for others?

Is solidarity incorporated into my prayer and spirituality?

Do I lift up vulnerable people throughout the world in my prayer, or is it reserved for only my personal concerns?

Are our candidates attentive only to those of our country or also those across the globe?

Do our candidates see all members of the human family as our brothers and sisters?

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### 7. *Care for God's creation.*

Do I live out my responsibility to care for God's creation?

Do I litter? Live wastefully? Use energy too freely?

Are there ways I could reduce consumption in my life?

Are there ways I could change my daily practices and those of my family, school, workplace, or community to better conserve the earth's resources for future generations?

Do our candidates see care for creation as connected to concern for the poor?

Do our candidates implement policies that will protect the earth from overconsumption, waste, and pollution?

### **Our participation in the election this year and always is an act of love.**

Love for our country, love for and hope for social justice and equality for all people and it is a concrete way we love our sisters and brothers with whom we are all children of God!

Jesus calls us to love each and every person we encounter: the ones we like as well as the individuals we prefer to keep at a distance.

To consciously strive to love each and every person you encounter, no matter how you feel about them.

Who knows: you may encounter an individual who consciously may be striving to love you!

**Please Vote on November 3.**