

November 2, 2008

We are all keenly aware that next Tuesday is Election Day. We have had many opportunities to scrutinize the position of candidates on the full range of issues, as well as their personal integrity, philosophy, and performance abilities. Now is the time for us to conscientiously and prayerfully cast our votes. Every vote counts.

We each need to do our part to build a better society – one that is focused more on moral principles than on politics; focused more on the needs of the weak than on the benefits for the strong; and focused more on the pursuit of the common good than on the demands of narrow interests. Such a society reflects the social teaching of the Church and the best traditions of our country.

In his first encyclical, “God Is Love” (“Deus Caritas Est”), The Holy Father reminds us of our responsibility to do our best to build a better future: “The direct duty to work for a just ordering of society is proper to the lay faithful. As citizens of the State, they are called to take part in public life in a personal capacity. So they cannot relinquish their participation in the many different economic, social, legislative, administrative, and cultural areas, which are intended to promote organically and institutionally the common good.”

As Catholics, we are a people of hope. We followers of Jesus believe that conversion is both possible and necessary. I like the way Robert Kennedy put it: “Some people see things as they are and ask why. I see things that never were and ask why not.”

The Church urges us to engage in the arena of politics because it is where the injustices that contradict the Gospel can be confronted and transformed. It is possible to build a society where the life and dignity of every human being is

cherished and respected, where war and violence can be eliminated, where the common good can be pursued over selfish interests, where the weak and the vulnerable are protected, where health care is affordable and accessible to all, where safe and affordable housing can be expected.

Patriotism is a virtue. It is much more than singing the National Anthem before sporting events. It includes taking the time and effort to cast our ballots on election days. It means voting in a well-informed manner and doing our best to be guided by the principles of the Gospel in making choices which will advance a society based on moral principles, the defense of human life from conception until natural death, the needs of the weak, and the pursuit of the common good. God bless you as you fulfill your privilege and responsibility on Tuesday!