



The Episcopal Diocese of Georgia

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A Pastoral Letter to the People of the Episcopal Diocese of Georgia

October 4, 2020 – The Feast of St. Francis Assisi

“You do well if you really fulfil the royal law according to the scripture,
‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’”
- James 2:8

Dear Followers of Jesus,

In less than a month, we will have all cast our votes for the next President of the United States. I write to call upon you to pray, to vote, and to show your love of God as found in Jesus Christ, through your words and actions, as you love your neighbor as yourselves. In these ways, we demonstrate our essential trust in the Holy Spirit as we take part in the political process.

I have heard that the soul of our nation is at stake in this presidential election. I have heard that sentiment from across the entire political spectrum, from liberals to conservatives and everyone in between. I do believe that this election is momentous because the tensions that have accrued in this unusual year may tempt us to lose sight of the mark set by Jesus to love God and love our neighbors as we love ourselves. Everything, as Jesus clearly told us, hangs on these two commandments.

This month I ask you join me in praying, voting, and loving:

Pray

Daily prayer always matters as we offer those needs in our hearts and minds. The Apostle Paul writes in Romans that even when we do not know how to pray, the “Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words.” Forward Movement will offer a Novena, an ancient practice of nine successive days of prayer, in the week before through the day after the election. You can sign up for A Season of Prayer: For an Election [online here](#). Whether you opt for praying the prayers offered by this Episcopal Church ministry of discipleship and evangelism or not, I hope you will join me in praying daily as we approach the election and in the days following.

Vote

As we pray faithfully for God’s will, we are also called to act. We have a duty to our country to cast our ballots as our faith and prayers lead us to vote.

Love

I so value that each of our congregations have people who disagree strongly on politics yet enjoy gathering together to worship and serve God. Even though we can't kneel alongside others at the altar rail right now, I know that those same connections remain strong. Following Jesus isn't easy. Even as we hold strong convictions, we must do so without demonizing those who disagree with us. Our words and actions toward those whose political choices are opposed to ours, reveals our love of God and neighbor and is our witness to the world.

Holding an election in a pandemic means we will also need to have patience as we await the results, continuing to pray as we wait.

No matter which candidate is elected, we must not lose sight of love, even if we were to gain the whole world, we could lose our own souls. Each of the candidates is a flawed human being who will fall short of the glory of God, as do we all. Neither candidate will bring about the Kingdom of God on earth. But if we respond to the neighbor whom we know with anger or hatred for their differing political views – or for any reason – we are unfaithful to Jesus' call to love even our enemies. And it is that steadfast love that bears witness to Jesus and carries on Christ's work of reconciliation in the world – the responsibility of every Christian.

No matter who is elected, scripture calls us to pray faithfully for that person once in office. Knowing the weight of responsibility a President of the United States bears, everyone who serves in that role needs our steady prayers. And no election ends our call to remain active citizens, writing to those who represent us to advocate on behalf of causes our faith enlivens us to support. For no matter what happens, we know that long after we have voted, we will still need to pray and to love and so follow the way of Jesus.

Pax et Bonum,

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The Rt. Rev. Frank S. Logue
Bishop of Georgia