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Uniting Word & World

For Sunday, August 9, 2015

Faith Should Always Trump Politics

This Sunday's Scripture Readings

19th Sunday in Ordinary Time

<http://new.usccb.org/bible/readings/080915.cfm>

1 Kings 19:4-8

Ephesians 4:30—5:2

John 6:41-51



Presidential election politics are heating up and, unbelievably, the election is over a year away! It would be easy to become overloaded as this period of time passes by. As I am writing this, I think at least twenty-four people are running for President of the United States. Wow! But if you are a political junkie, you may be in heaven. You might be glued to twenty-four-hour news channels on your television every night, and to talk radio in your car every day. Whatever your current involvement in the political landscape, you have to admit that it is close to impossible

to tune it all out completely. The reality is that you shouldn't want to do that either.

In the USCCB document on a Catholic's political responsibility, [*Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship*](#), the US Bishops state that we have a moral obligation to participate in political life, since responsible citizenship is a virtue. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* informs us that we are all called to participate in promoting the common good. We have these obligations placed on us, not just because we are American citizens, but *primarily* because we are baptized disciples of Jesus Christ who are called to bear witness to the good news of Jesus Christ in all we do. In this reality, we find what must be our true motivation for political involvement.

However, especially during presidential election years, many of us trade our Christian convictions for political ones. People begin with a calling to be disciples of Jesus Christ, but in the end define themselves as more Republicans or Democrats at heart. Politics is not a faith. I have had friends over the years trade their trust in God for trust in a candidate. No political candidate has all the answers or a map detailing the route to a promised land. However, as mature disciples we are obligated to participate in a political process because the One who does provide all the answers has saved us: Jesus Christ.

So often, those who find themselves having substituted politics for genuine discipleship have done so because they have not been fully formed in their faith. The *Forming Consciences* document points out that a Catholic working to influence public policy and bring about justice in society is required to have a mind and heart that is fully educated and formed to know and practice the entirety of the Catholic faith. It can be easier for us to place politics, or materialism, wealth, or power for that matter, ahead of our faith when we are not well-catechized or transformed intentional disciples. Our faith must provide the lens through which we see all things, including politics. Politics should never be the lens through which we see our faith.

The readings for this Sunday and recent Sundays present to us a God that provides all we need. Whether it is manna in the desert for the Israelites, a hearth cake and water jug for Elijah, or the living Bread of Life for you and me, God provides for us what we need. God is in control and we are invited to place our trust in him. Some will take this truth and distort it to end up with justification for not becoming politically active. These distorters of the message may even proclaim that what happens in the political world has no bearing on them because they are citizens of the kingdom of God. However, nothing could be further from the truth.

The reality is this: as Catholics and mature disciples of Jesus Christ, we have a message to share with all in our society that has the power to transform our communities and the way those communities are governed. That message is rooted in the good news of Jesus Christ and it has the power to free the oppressed, provide hospitality for the disenfranchised, and console the afflicted. Those who have ears to hear it, and who allow it to transform their lives, will give voice to the voiceless, provide nourishment for those who hunger and thirst, and will construct systems that ensure the God-given rights of all. God will provide if we keep clear the pathways that lead to grace. And no political construct can be allowed to compromise the integrity and primacy of this message.

So, dive into the political year! Go into it not primarily as Democrat, Republican, or Independent. Go into it as an intentional disciple that bears good news, and make sure you come out of it next November with your faith still intact and placing your trust in the God who delivers us from all evil, and saves us from all that works against his word, sometimes even ourselves.

What better way to involve ourselves in the political process than by praying? Follow this link to a resource from the USCCB on [Praying Like a Faithful Citizen](#).

Tracy Earl Welliver, MTS

PRAYER

Father, we praise you and thank you for your most precious gifts of human life and human freedom.

Touch the hearts of our lawmakers with the wisdom and courage to uphold conscience rights and religious liberty for all. Protect all people from being forced to violate their moral and religious convictions.

In your goodness, guard our freedom to live out our faith and to follow you in all that we do. Give us strength to be bold and joyful witnesses.

We ask this through Christ, our Lord.
Amen.

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NOTICES

BACK TO SCHOOL

Many parishes will be planning for back-to-school and religious education events in the next few weeks. Liturgical Publications Inc (LPi) has a wealth of resources available on the LPi Art & Media Portal. If you don't yet have LPi as your parish publishing partner you can try a sample account. Visit: <http://www.portal.4lpi.com/signup/index/promocode/BRIGHT> to sign up for a thirty-day trial.

WORLD YOUTH DAY 2016, Krakow

Registration for the 2016 World Youth Day officially began on July 26, 2015. For information on registering for WYD, visit <http://www.krakow2016.com/en/informacie-en>. You can also find more information and resources from the USCCB at <http://www.usccb.org/about/world-youth-day/wydusa-news-and-updates.cfm>.

CATHOLICTECHTALK.COM

CatholicTechTalk.com is an online community for Catholics passionate about technology and social media. This includes priests, laity, bloggers, writers, technologists, website developers, graphic designers, and all who wish to use technology more effectively in their ministry and personal life. The blog is a group effort by Catholic technology enthusiasts working to fulfill its mission to "make the name of Jesus Christ known and loved" through the use of technology and social media.

Visit the LPi website for information on services and publications to build a vibrant parish.

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