

CONNECT! SUNDAY REFLECTION

25th Sunday in Ordinary Time | For Sunday, September 18, 2022

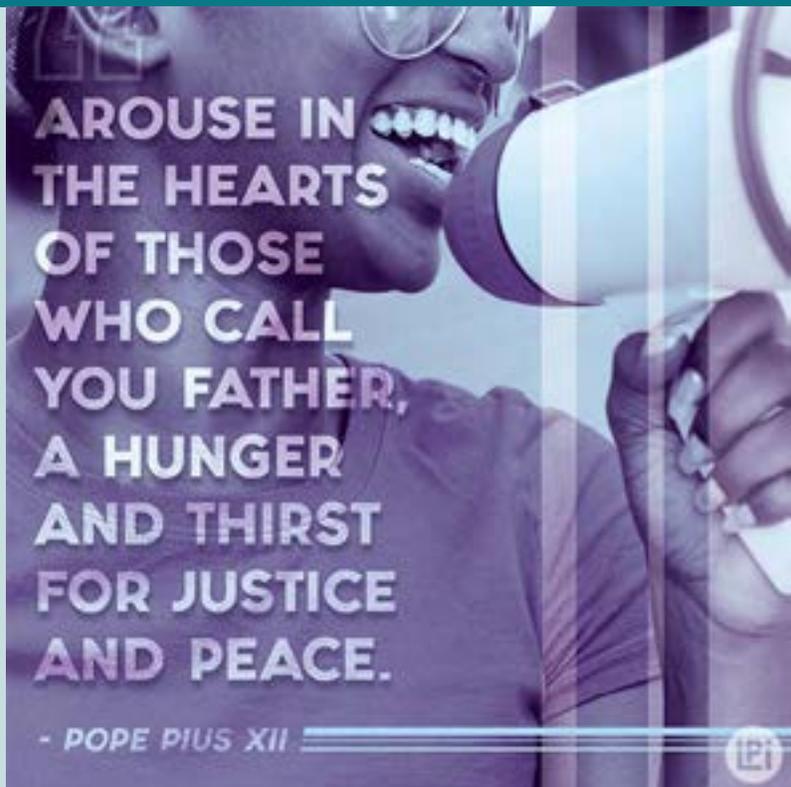
Giving Voice to Our Faith in the Public Square

Written by Douglas Sousa, S.T.L.

Amos 8:4-7

1 Timothy 2:1-8

Luke 16:1-13



Our faith is meant to be at work in every area of our lives — not just the personal and private, but the political and public as well.

People have a tendency today to separate politics and religion. They see religion as having to do with the afterlife and politics with the here-and-now. Religion is private and politics is public. They don't want religious leaders to comment on public policy and they don't want politicians meddling in Church doctrine and discipline. People want a clear separation of church and state.

However, politics and religion are not always easy to keep apart. As followers of Christ, we're not only called to be saints in the kingdom of God but good citizens of our planet. We bring our faith into everything we do. Faith for the Christian is never just a private matter. It touches upon every aspect of our lives including the choices we make as citizens.

Our responsibility to bring our faith into the public square is founded on the commandment that we love our neighbor as ourselves. Politically, our love for neighbor displays itself most keenly in our support for the poor. As followers of Christ, it is our vocation to give a voice to the voiceless. Though they are the ones who most need the support of the government, their concerns often go unheard because they lack the money and influence to lobby politicians.

Many like the unborn and immigrants cannot even vote. It is up to us, then, to use whatever influence we have to make sure that their needs are heard and acted upon.

Why should we care for the poor? Because God does. [This Sunday's reading](#) from the prophet Amos makes it clear that God is aware of injustice toward the poor. Because they have no one else to defend them, our Heavenly Father promises that He will stand up for them. God will judge harshly those who have failed to see justice done for the powerless. When we stand before Him, we want to be sure that we did all we could in this life to be on the side of the little ones whom He cares so much about.

Concern for the poor is not only good religion, it is also sound politics. Government should be on the side of the needy. Wealthy people can take care of themselves. It is the poor who need the government to defend them against those who would exploit them. Also, as the saying goes, "Everyone does better when everyone does better." When the hungry are fed, when the homeless have shelter, when the penniless get an education there is less crime, less disease, and less restlessness in society. We all benefit when the common good is served.

[This Sunday's second reading](#) teaches us that we should pray for politicians and all those who have authority over us. We too often have a disdain for those who enter politics. However, we should be praying for them, asking God to guide their hearts. Their actions have a tremendous influence over our lives so we should be raising our hands daily asking God to give us women and men of courage, insight, and virtue to lead us.

As followers of Christ, we are called to bring the good news of God's love wherever we go including into the public square and the voting booth. In particular, we are called to announce God's love for the poor. Then God's kingdom will increasingly influence the earthly city making His peace and justice more of a reality in our world today.

Douglas Sousa, S.T.L.

PRAYER

Almighty and eternal God,
May your grace enkindle in all of us
A love for the many unfortunate people
Whom poverty and misery
Reduce to a condition of life unworthy of human
beings.
Arouse in the hearts of those who call you Father,
A hunger and thirst for justice and peace,
And for fraternal charity in deeds and in truth.
Grant, O Lord, peace in our days,
Peace to souls, peace to our families,
Peace to our country, and peace among nations.

- Pope Pius XII