

November 13, 2016
33rd Sunday in Ordinary Time

For you who fear my name, there will arise the sun of justice with its healing rays

*Then the lion shall be a guest of the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid. The calf
and the young lion shall browse together, and the cow and the bear shall be neighbors. The
baby shall play by the cobras den, and the child shall lay his hand on the adder's lair.
There shall be no harm or ruin on my holy mountain.*

It's Over

Well, the election is finally over. Now that the outcome is known, what do we do with all those roller coaster feelings and reactions evoked during the campaign? Despair because “we lost,” or gloat because “we won”?

Now What Do We Do?

The following is a statement released by Dottie King, the president of St. Mary of the Woods College near Terre Haute, Indiana. I found it quite helpful, and hope you do too.

“The emotions that accompany the election this week have been strong and evident on television, social media and in our daily interactions. There is hurt, grief, anger and strife all around. The Civil War has come to my mind several times. During those days, like these, the country was deeply divided and friends and families were torn apart by the strife. President Lincoln wrote prolifically about his experiences of leading the country during the war, especially this quotation which seems relevant for today:

*“I have been driven many times upon my knees by the overwhelming conviction
that I had nowhere else to go. My own wisdom and that of all about me seemed
insufficient for that day.”*

“We are not immune from the occurrences of our country nor of the turmoil that surrounds us. We are, however, blessed by a legacy of genuine care for one another. Care-filled listening and responsible conversation can lead us to deeper understanding of ourselves and of one another. Our Catholic heritage compels us to live our lives for justice, inclusivity and love for all.

*“I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. Be completely
humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love.” Eph 4:1,2*

“Let us use this moment to demonstrate greater compassion and love. Let us seize this opportunity to put our faith into action and bring light to a hurting world. Let us go forward in unity by caring about one another. We can trust in the Providence that so far has never failed us.”

Another Reflection

I would like to share another reflection by Jesuit Fr. Thomas Reese that was printed in this year's November 10th issue of the National Catholic Reporter. I hope you also find these reflections helpful. The article is titled:

“The Catholic church can play a vital role in the healing of the nation.”

“Now that the election is over, the Catholic church needs to play a positive role in healing the nation's severe divisions. The country is divided Republican vs. Democrat, black vs. white, Hispanic vs. Anglo, rural vs. urban, old vs. young, college educated vs. those not, and even male vs. female.

“Divisions over policies have been stark over taxes, minimum wage, immigration, government regulations, global warming and abortion. There are divisions over accusations of racism, intolerance, incompetence, immorality and criminality. Both sides predicted disaster of apocalyptic proportions if their side lost.

“Can the nation heal, or are these divisions going to continue to fester into the future? The Catholic Church is uniquely placed to help in the healing of this country. It is not only present in almost every corner of the nation, it is one of the few organizations whose membership includes Republicans and Democrats, Hispanics and Anglos, blacks and whites, men and women, rich and poor, college educated and not, as well as members of every generation.

“Pope Francis says that the church should be like a field hospital that cares for the wounded. Can the church foster the reconciliation and healing that is needed by the rest of the country, or will the nation's divisions split the church? Ecumenical dialogue has led to greater understanding and better relations between Catholics and Protestants, who at one time thought they were doing God's work when they were killing each other. If Democrats and Republicans got along as well as Catholics and Protestants do today, our nation would be in great shape.

“The tools that the church developed for ecumenical dialogue could be adapted for political dialogue. We have learned the importance of beginning discussions focusing first on areas of agreement rather than disagreements. The purpose of dialogue is to learn about the other, not convert him or her.

“Imagine if every bishop invited to dinner four Catholic politicians, two Republicans and two Democrats, for an off-the-record conversation. The role of the bishop would be as neutral convener and listener. The participants could begin by sharing individual faith stories, including the role that faith has in his or her political vocation. The purpose of such an encounter would be to increase understanding and respect, not to convert the other to a specific point of view. Nor need this only be done by bishops. It could be done in parishes, Catholic colleges, and other Catholic organizations containing both Democrats and Republicans.

“Political dialogue, like ecumenical dialogue, could include the ‘*dialogue of life*,’ which is about attitude and the spirit that guides personal conduct. ... about witnessing to the Gospel in all facets of life while engaging and living peacefully with political others.

“The church encourages what it calls the ‘*the dialogue of common social action*,’ where groups of different religious and political backgrounds come together to combat homelessness, hunger, the lack of workers' rights, and other social ills. If the church could bring together Republicans and Democrats to work together on dealing with social ills, this would be a great witness to the nation. Imagine a Republican and Democrat working together to find shelter and resources for a homeless family.

“The church must either be part of the solution, or it will be part of the problem. It will either be an agent for reconciliation and healing, or it will be divided by the political environment in which it lives. The church has the people, the resources, and the tools to do this. Let's begin.”

When we choose to do this:

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