



NOVENA FOR ELECTIONS

Based on reflections from LCWR



DAY 1 MONDAY OCT 26

*“Enlarge the space of your tent. Stretch out your tent cloth unsparingly.”
(Isaiah 54:2)*

Reflection

Building a future of freedom requires love of the common good and cooperation in a spirit of subsidiarity and solidarity... Our efforts must aim at restoring hope, righting wrongs, maintaining commitments, and thus promoting the well-being of individuals and of peoples... Politics is an expression of our compelling need to live as one, in order to build as one the greatest common good: that of a community which sacrifices particular interests in order to share, in justice and peace, its goods, its interests, its social life. I do not underestimate the difficulty that this involves, but I encourage you in this effort. (Pope Francis, [Address to the US Congress](#), September 24, 2015.)

We are challenged to stretch out our tent cloth unsparingly. What might that call look like in today’s world? What parts of my tent need stretching?

PRAYER: God of all, in this year of election, in these days of discernment, **IGNITE** us with the fire of your love. **ENFLAME** our hearts with courage to embrace dialogue that transforms and truth that frees. **KINDLE** our love with kindness to heal divisions and reconcile relationships. **LIGHT** our imaginations with insight to envision and create a world where all are one. **STIR** our actions with justice and peace to engage critical concerns and cherish all of life. **FIRE** our lives with audacity and hope to risk all for God’s mission. (Roxanne Schares, SSND)

DAY 2 TUESDAY OCT 27

“May they all be one as you are in me and I am in You; may they be one in us...(John 17:21)

“I do not think of political power as an end. Neither do I think of economic power as an end. They are ingredients in the objective that we seek in life,” wrote Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., “Our goal is to create a Beloved Community and this will require a qualitative change in our souls as well as a quantitative change in our lives.”

[According to The King Center](#), for Dr. King the Beloved Community was not a lofty utopian ideal... Rather, the Beloved Community was for him a realistic, achievable goal...

Dr. King’s Beloved Community is a global vision, in which all people can share in the wealth of the [E]arth. In the Beloved Community, poverty, hunger and homelessness will not be tolerated. Racism and all forms of discrimination, bigotry and prejudice will be replaced by an all-inclusive spirit of sisterhood and brotherhood...Love and trust will triumph over fear and hatred. Peace with justice will prevail...

The core value of the quest for Dr. King’s Beloved Community was agape love...which he described as “understanding, redeeming goodwill for all,” an “overflowing love which is purely spontaneous, unmotivated, groundless and creative”...“the love of God operating in the human heart.”

He said that “Agape does not begin by discriminating between worthy and unworthy people...It begins by loving others for their sakes” and “makes no distinction between a friend and enemy; it is directed toward both... Agape is love seeking to preserve and create community.” (The King Center, “[The King Philosophy](#),” downloaded 8/28/20.)

[What kinds of “qualitative change in our souls as well as quantitative change in our lives” are necessary if we are to build the Beloved Community ?](#)

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DAY 3 WEDNESDAY OCT 28

“The Lord Rebuilds Jerusalem, and gathers the dispersed people of Israel, healing the brokenhearted, and binding up their wounds.” (Psalm 147: 2-3)

Despite our sharp disagreements on the nature of the American dream, many of us on the left and on the right and in the center have at least this much in common: a shared experience of heartbreak about the condition of our culture, our society, our body politic. That shared heartbreak can build a footbridge or mutual understanding on which we can walk toward each other. Our sharpest disagreements need not be the seeds of our democracy’s destruction. If we know how to hold their tensions in ways that open our hearts, they can become proof of democracy’s genius and drivers of its renewal. –*Parker Palmer, Healing the Heart of Democracy*

What are your primary concerns about how our democracy is functioning? What breaks your heart?

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DAY 4 THURSDAY OCT 29

“Politics, according to the Social Doctrine of the Church, is one of the highest forms of charity, because it serves the common good. I cannot wash my hands. We all have to give something! A god Catholic meddles in politics, offering the best of him or herself, so that those who govern can govern.” (Pope Francis, September 13, 2013)

In every life there is a crossover moment after which a person will never be the same again. Somewhere, somehow the challenge comes that sets us on a different path. The path of purpose. The path of integrity. The path of transcendence that lifts us—heart, mind and soul—above the pitiable level of the mundane. It is the moment at which transcending the expected, the petty, the daily, becomes more impacting, more holy-making than any amount of political success. As a culture, we may have come to that point in this culture en masse. It is a call to all of us to be our best, our least superficial, our most serious about what it means to be a Christian as well as a citizen. The system we have divided from itself must be put together or we may never really be One, be united as a people, again. MORE (Joan Chittister, OSB, “A Moment for Something More Soulful than Politics:” Fall 2017.)

What does it mean to live the deepest values of the gospel in the exercise of citizenship? Where might our spiritual and civic selves meet?

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DAY 5 FRIDAY OCT 30

Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me. (Matthew 25:40)

In response to a question from a group of young Catholics about how our faith should inform our politics and our voting decisions Cardinal Blase Cupich points to Pope Francis: “Our defense of the innocent unborn, for example, needs to be clear, firm and passionate, for at stake is the dignity of a human life, which is always sacred and demands love for each person, regardless of his or her stage of development. Equally sacred, however, are the lives of the poor, those already born, the destitute, the abandoned and the underprivileged, the vulnerable infirm and elderly exposed to covert euthanasia, the victims of human trafficking, new forms of slavery, and every form of rejection.” What the Holy Father is urging is that we attend to the interconnection of moral issues. I reminded the audience that Cardinal Joseph Bernardin made the same point decades ago when he pressed for a consistent

ethic of life. “The purpose of proposing a consistent ethic of life is to argue that success on any one of the issues threatening life requires a concern for the broader attitude in society about respect for human life ... the viability of [this] principle depends upon the consistency of its application.” The point is that Catholic social teaching cannot be neatly fitted into the partisan political framework that governs American public life, then or now. MORE (Cardinal, Blase Cupich “The Call to Holiness in an Election Year,” ChicagoCatholic, 11/20/19)

Are their seams in your own garment? How can our faith help us discern those choices that are most consistent with gospel values?

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DAY 6 SATURDAY OCT 31

“Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.” (Joshua 1: 9)

And now -- now we must look to the future. Let us heed the voice of the people and recognize their common sense. If we do not, we not only blaspheme our political heritage, we ignore the common ties that bind all Americans. Many fear the future. Many are distrustful of their leaders, and believe that their voices are never heard. Many seek only to satisfy their private work -- wants; to satisfy their private interests. But this is the great danger America faces -- that we will cease to be one nation and become instead a collection of interest groups: city against suburb, region against region, individual against individual; each seeking to satisfy private wants. If that happens, who then will speak for America? Who then will speak for the common good? (The Honorable Barbara Jordan, Democratic National Convention Keynote Address, July 12, 1976, NY.)

At a practical level, how might we step out in faith, look fear in the face and meet the challenges of today and the weeks ahead?

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DAY 7 SUNDAY NOV 1st

FEAST OF ALL SAINTS

Be still before the Lord, wait for God. (Psalm 37:7)

I believe that the combination of human action from a contemplative center is the greatest art form, one that takes our whole lives to master. When action and contemplation are united, we have beauty, symmetry, and transformation — lives and actions that heal the world by their very presence. ...The contemplative side of the soul will reveal itself when we begin to ask, “How can I listen for God and learn God’s voice? How can I use my words and actions to expand and not to contract? How can I keep my heart, mind, and soul open, even ‘in hell’?” ...True contemplation is really quite down to earth and practical... Contemplation builds on the hard bottom of reality—as it is—without ideology, denial, the contemporary mood, or fantasy. The reason why the true contemplative-in-action is still somewhat rare is that most of us are experts in dualistic thinking. And then we try to use this limited thinking tool for prayer, problems, and relationships. It cannot get us very far. We cannot grow in the great art form of action and contemplation without a strong tolerance for ambiguity, an ability to allow, forgive, and contain a certain degree of anxiety, and a willingness to not know—and not even need to know. This is how we allow and encounter Mystery. (Richard Rohr, *Dancing Standing Still: Healing the World from a Place of Prayer*, Paulist Press: 2014

Our faith and all we desire for our world calls us to be contemplatives in action. What does that mean?

How might the practice of contemplative action inform our decisions in the 2020 election and our actions in the public square?

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DAY 8 MONDAY NOV 2nd

“Study the proposals well, pray and choose in conscience.” Pope Francis 2016

As we approach this election day, let us be mindful of those who will be working at the polls, the board of elections, the civic volunteers, the mail carriers, and all those who help the processes of our democracy. Let us pray for the candidates and all those who have given themselves in public service.

Let us also pray especially for those who cry out for mercy and justice. let us remember the one who called us, who lives within us, who gifts us with being in this place and this time.

Whose voices do we want to amplify as we elect? How do we advocate for those who are on the margins after the election?

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DAY 9 ELECTION DAY NOV 3rd

THE PULSE OF MORNING (attached)

**You are invited to Join the prayer in the Motherhouse Chapel for Holy Hour
united with our Sisters in LCWR**