

A Benediction for the Election

May you remember that all politics and all platforms and all legalities and all borders and all leaders are temporary.

May you recall that political movements and boundaries and personalities and programs are here one day and gone the next. All of these are passing away.

May you resist the temptation to place ultimate trust in any person, policy, party, movement, or nation—even a beautiful idea that is embodied by a nation—because there is no nation with an eternal foundation.

May you know that your kingdom is not of this world but of the world that is coming to this world and that is not yet here.

May you in the same breath grasp that *engagement* with the things of this world—not escape from its harsher, darker realities—is the sacrificial pattern of Jesus Christ.

May you discover your role in the just and merciful governance of the world God made good and pursue that cosmos-converting vocation with love amid the world's brokenness and grittiness.

May you see your work in the world—all of your callings and activities—as a participation in bringing the kingdom of heaven to earth.

May you have strength and beauty and determination and wisdom as you love your neighbor and your enemy as Christ has loved you, seeking with all persons to bring justice, mercy, and lasting peace.

May you comprehend that your salvation is not dependent on who you vote for in an election, or in whether or not you vote; that you are under no biblical or theological or moral obligation to vote for a person or party or proposal or initiative if that vote violates your conscience.

May you have empathy for the political decisions of others that you find troubling—particularly those of family and close friends. May you have ears to hear what lies at the heart of their political concerns, and eyes to see the noble but imperfect search for goodness that is motivating their choice, especially if you strongly disagree with the candidate, party, or politics they support.

May you be grateful for the opportunity to participate in your government, and if you choose not to participate in the election, may you find ways to make that non-participation more than a protest. May you act to help and protect the poor, oppressed, and defenseless who might have been helped or shielded by your vote.

May you realize that the kingdom of God is within you and that the Son of God sets you free even as you vote for *whomever* your conscience dictates, without anxiety or fear, for the Spirit the Father gives us does not make us timid, but bestows on us power, love, and self-discipline.

May your posture toward every human leader be driven by respectful prayer, and where protest, prophecy, and non-violent resistance are needed, may you have the courage to speak, oppose, and critique—in humility and charity—their ideas and actions that oppose Christ and his kingdom.

May God grant you grace to affirm the humanity—the image of God—in every political candidate and leader, and civility to impartially and energetically embrace any pursuit of genuine human flourishing they propose.

May you perceive God's love for creation in sending Jesus to embody a New Humanity, and may you join in Christ's care for the earth and all its creatures and resources, for we await with patience not only the coming of the Son in the flesh but his perfect bride, a people who beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks.

May you trust that Providence is working behind the scenes of history to draw all things to a good and fitting and proper end with justice and mercy. Amen.

This benediction was posted on the Breakpoint blog on October 27, 2016, by permission of Father Kenneth Tanner, Holy Redeemer Church, Rochester Hills, Mich.

Isaiah 9:6-7

⁶For to us a child is born,
to us a son is given,
and the government will be on his shoulders.

And he will be called
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

⁷Of the greatness of his government and peace
there will be no end.

He will reign on David's throne
and over his kingdom,
establishing and upholding it
with justice and righteousness
from that time on and forever.

The zeal of the LORD Almighty
will accomplish this.