**Sister of Charity of Saint Elizabeth**

**From the Office of Peace, Justice, and Ecological Integrity**

**Reflection for Election 2020**

**From the Address of Pope Francis to the US Congress, 9/24/15:**

Here I think of the political history of the United States, where democracy is deeply rooted in the mind of the American people. All political activity must serve and promote the good of the human person and be based on respect for his or her dignity. “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness” (Declaration of Independence, 4 July 1776). If politics must truly be at the service of the human person, it follows that it cannot be a slave to the economy and finance. Politics is, instead, 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…A nation can be considered great when it defends liberty as Lincoln did, when it fosters a culture which enables people to “dream” of full rights for all their brothers and sisters, as Martin Luther King sought to do; when it strives for justice and the cause of the oppressed, as Dorothy Day did by her tireless work, the fruit of a faith which becomes dialogue and sows peace in the contemplative style of Thomas Merton.

**Reflection:**

The history of the American Sisters of Charity is very much tied up with the history of the American Republic. Young Elizabeth Seton danced at George Washington’s inaugural ball in 1789. She was friends with Elizabeth Schuyler Hamilton who met her husband Alexander in Morristown, NJ. Together with Eliza Hamilton, Elizabeth Seton established the Society for the Relief of Poor Widows, the first social service agency directed by women in the United States. What wisdom do you think Mother Seton could offer on the current polarization of our country? On this holiday weekend, spend some time reflecting and listening to her.

**Deeper Dive:**

At this link you can find the Summer 2020 issue of *A Matter of Spirit*, a publication of the Intercommunity Peace and Justice Center in Seattle, WA devoted to *Elections 2020: God Help Us Take Our Democracy Back*. We recommend especially the article, “We need more than civility-We need Grace,” by Beth Silvers and Sarah Stewart Holland. <https://www.ipjc.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/AMOSsummer2020-fl2-WEB.pdf>

**Prayer:** From Archbishop John Carroll’s *Prayer for Government* composed for the Inauguration of George Washington

We recommend likewise, to your unbounded mercy, all our fellow citizens throughout the United States, that we may be blessed in the knowledge and sanctified in the observance of your most holy law; that we may be preserved in union, and in that peace which the world cannot give; and after enjoying the blessings of this life, be admitted to those which are eternal.  
Grant this, we beseech you, O Lord of mercy, through Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior.  Amen.