

**From the Office of Peace, Justice, and Ecological Integrity
Sisters of Charity of Saint Elizabeth
Reflection for Election 2020 – October 23, 2020**

From *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship*, # 7

“In this statement, we bishops do not intend to tell Catholics for whom or against whom to vote. Our purpose is to help Catholics form their consciences in accordance with God’s truth. We recognize that the responsibility to make choices in political life rests with each individual in light of a properly formed conscience, and that participation goes well beyond casting a vote in a particular election.”

Reflection:

As we reach the end of a time of discernment for Election 2020, we invite you to reflect on Pax Christi USA’s “Statement of Principles for the 2020 Elections.” Pax Christi states, “We envision this statement to be a living document, one open to the discernment and dialogue to which the future calls us. Its content has been shaped, first, by our deep trust in the gospel message of Jesus which reminds us that what is foundational to every decision we make is our responsibility to love God through loving our neighbor, both near and far, with a preferential option for those who are impoverished. Second, these priorities are shaped by the transformational principles of Catholic Social Teaching, designed to guide us in applying the gospel message to our common life together as one people, within and outside current borders. Pax Christi USA’s engagement in this election is thus guided by a spirituality of nonviolence, our history as peacemakers, and a commitment to work for that justice which affirms the dignity of all human beings, individually and collectively, and assures peace for all creation.”

Pax Christi’s statement of principles is a beautiful summary of the journey we have been on since the July 4th weekend – discerning our participation in Election 2020 through the lens of the gospel, Catholic Social Teaching, the guidance of Pope Francis, and the USCCB document *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship*. The bishops remind us that our participation in political life goes well beyond the casting of a ballot. At the link below you can find the *Pax Christi Statement of Principles*. Why not print them out, hang them on your refrigerator, glance at that over your morning coffee, and ask yourself, not just on November 3, 2020, but every day, what is one thing you can do, learn, discuss, pray to advance their vision?

<https://paxchristiusa.org/2020/09/16/statement-of-principles-elections-2020/>

Deeper Dive:

Watch the video of the 2020 Elections Virtual Teach-in, “Working for Peace with Justice” for deeper dives into racial justice, (im)migration, the climate crisis, nuclear disarmament and militarism

https://www.facebook.com/watch/live/?v=649982665656854&ref=watch_permalink

Prayer:

God, Promise Keeper of the new creation, in this election season guide us to be Gospel-informed voters, who stand on the side of justice and truth.

As a community of conscience, we recognize our shared responsibility in righting the wrongs that dishonor and dehumanize the dignity of the most vulnerable among us.

As a community of conscience, we acknowledge the harm that has been done to the environment and the urgency to work collectively to care for the Earth, our common home.

We see our country in turmoil—experiencing a time of chaos that not only impacts every person of this nation, but peoples from across the globe.

As individuals and a faith community, we recognize that we bear both a privilege and a burden to vote our conscience and to make choices that will and do affect the future of everyone.

As we ready ourselves to go to the polls this November, may our time of discernment be rooted in the teachings of our faith and our common life together.

May our faith guide us to vote for genuine servant leaders, who, like Jesus, will welcome the stranger, feed the hungry, clothe the naked, visit the prisoner, embrace the sick and dying, and promote peace and nonviolence.

Send your Spirit to be with us as we cast votes for the common good and, regardless of the outcome of the elections, may we continue to work for a more just and sustainable world. May we always stand on the side of justice and truth. Amen.

Dianna Ortiz, OSU