

FROM THE OFFICE: CELEBRATING ELECTION DAY



By the time you read this Election Day will be a week away. It is a day to celebrate.

Although the Catholic Church obligates us to vote ("Citizens are required to promote the common good through the exercise of their voting privilege." Catechism of the Catholic Church, #2240), I pray that we each arrive at a place in our hearts where we *want* to vote.

We find joy in reaching out to others and being a part of this world. Voting makes us part of this world.

Americans fought (Revolutionary War), advocated (Suffragette Movement) and demonstrated (Civil Rights Movement) for the fundamental right to vote. We cherish this right.

We may also come to experience joy when we vote, when we engage in the public arena and participate in "shaping the moral character of society."

We influence the moral character of society by seeking the common good. Because we seek the common good, we work for justice, peace and liberty. These lie at the heart of the common good. These define the moral character of society.

As Catholics seek to advance the common good, where *everyone* is invited to the table and there is a seat for everyone – JOY! – we must carefully discern which public policies are morally sound and will advance the common good.

When we vote, we are not going to agree on how to protect human life and dignity and help build a more just and peaceful world. But to quote Pope Francis, "we need to say what one feels duty-bound in the Lord to say... And, at the same time, one must listen with humility and welcome with an open heart what the brothers say."

Catholics may choose different ways to advance the common good. The path we walk is for each individual and his or her well-formed conscience to decide. Voting is a decision made by each Catholic guided by a faithful conscience, because Catholics care and Catholics vote. There is joy in that.