

focus

VOL. 48, NO. 3, SEPTEMBER 2020



MICHIGAN
CATHOLIC
CONFERENCE

THE ISSUES, THE CANDIDATES, AND YOUR VOTE 2020

This year, Michigan voters have the privilege and freedom to participate in the greatest exercise of democracy by voting for candidates who have come forward to serve their communities. Tuesday, November 3, 2020 is Election Day, where the following offices—from the local township hall to the president of the country—will be decided:

- **Federal:** President of the United States of America, one of two Michigan U.S. Senate seats, and all fourteen U.S. Representatives in Michigan's Congressional Delegation.
- **State:** Two justices for the Michigan Supreme Court, two members of the State Board of Education, and all 110 State Representatives.
- **Local:** Probate judges, county commissioners, and various other local, township, and municipal officials. In many areas, Michiganders will also weigh in on critical ballot issues that impact services and policies within their local communities.

By Election Day, most Americans will likely have become exhausted by candidates, commentators, and political operatives who promote partisanship, division, fear, and name-calling. While running a campaign should be an opportunity for candidates to share their talents and abilities, past elections have led many to disengage from the political process, even though elected officials will have a significant impact on local neighborhoods, schools, and services.

In the days and weeks leading up to the election, Michigan Catholics have the responsibility to consider how they can best serve their communities through election choices and contribute to a climate of civility in the face of divisiveness and disagreement. In fact, Catholics can play a large role in returning civility and respect to the political process.

During the election, and perhaps just as importantly in their daily lives, Catholics are reminded to allow their faith to guide their politics. The principles of faith that govern one's daily life should also guide political viewpoints, and when necessary, "transform the political party...to which [he or she] belongs."¹ Rather than considering what a certain party would do, Catholics have the opportunity to ask:

- What does God want me to do?
- How will my voting choice help to promote the common good and protect human dignity?
- How can I speak up about the issues that matter in a respectful way?

This **focus** publication will examine the role of conscience formation and civility in the 2020 Election and provide questions and thoughts for consideration before Michiganders cast their ballot. It also offers insights from the lives of several Catholic saints, whose examples in public life teach the importance of courage, faith, and a love for others. ●