



# SHIFTING SANDS



## Spiritual note

### After the fact

I am writing this two days before the election; you are reading it after the fact, when –barring any lengthy legal wrangling– we will have a new president of the United States. We have all heard the pros and cons, the insults, the innuendos *ad nauseam* –which, as you know, it means to the point of getting physically sick. So there will be no rehashing here. But I do suggest an after-the-fact examination of conscience. Not any candidate's or political party's or the media's conscience, but an examination of my conscience and your conscience.

It is an evening-prayer Christian tradition to look over the activities of the day just ended to see how faithful one has been in the choices made. Did I act today as Christ would have expected? Were the choices I made in conformity with Gospel values? Examination of conscience is a technique to promote spiritual growth, to bring my life's decisions more and more into conformity with the prayer I so often say: *Thy kingdom come, thy will be done*. We will again someday be voting for a president and for other officials who will lead us in government; as in other endeavors, it is good to learn from our mistakes and reinforce the good choices we have made in the expression of whatever political influence we have.

It may sound corny, but the old WWJD bracelets had deep wisdom: What Would Jesus Do? Would Jesus, for instance, vote on how the results would benefit him personally, or would he be more concerned with the welfare of the poor and downtrodden? Would he be focused on legalities or on how the law affects people? And the issues at stake: would he be more concerned with the status quo or with the long-term effects of policies on our long-term living on the environment? And then we can always turn to the Beatitudes, the "talking points," so to speak, of Jesus' first sermon: blessed are the peacemakers, the poor, those who mourn, the meek, those who show mercy. Did any of that play into the political choices I made?

All this may sound naïve or Pollyannaish, but if our faith does not find its way into important decisions we make in our everyday life, what kind of a faith is it? Come the next election, it might be good to turn off the TV and put down the newspaper after hearing the candidates and considering the issues, and pick up the gospel for a refresher course in the political considerations that count.

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