



ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST Catholic Church & School

November 4, 2020

Dear Parishioners,

I am writing this early in the week, before the final votes have been cast on Tuesday and, therefore, long before the outcome of the presidential election has been definitively determined. I have no crystal ball to tell me whether Pennsylvania, Michigan and Wisconsin will go “red” or “blue,” and since the 2000 election with Florida’s chads debacle I’ve been very hesitant to trust exit polls and pundits’ projections.

Obviously, there’s more than one election outcome which it would be good to track. Case in point: as important as who wins the White House is, which party will control the Senate and the House of Representatives for the next two years is also of more than passing interest. As our own State’s recent history so clearly demonstrates, a victory in the executive branch rings rather hollow when the legislative machinery rests in the hands of people at ideological odds with the executive.

A too-often-made claim of the exuberant victor in a hard-fought election is to a “mandate” of one sort or another, asserting that “the people have spoken.” Really? Do you know that in the last five presidential elections the largest percentage of the popular vote garnered by a winning candidate was 52.9% (in 2008), while in two instances the winner was “swept into office” with less than half of the popular vote (47.9% in 2000 and 46.1% in 2016)? This means that in each of these elections at least 47 out of every 100 voters cast their ballots for someone other than that year’s winner. Now, this could mean that those 47 out of 100 voters just didn’t like the person who ultimately won, and/or that they took issue with one or more “planks” in the winner’s platform. Seems to me such numbers potentially make for a pretty substantial bloc standing in opposition to some aspect(s) of the winner’s agenda.

Of course, if the winner’s party also controls the legislative process, then that party has the numbers to do just about anything it wants – provided it doesn’t mind creating a field of bitterness, resentment and distrust that can last a lifetime.

My mid-week heart-felt prayer is that as the dust settles and outcomes to Tuesday’s elections become clearer, we will be able to find the faith, the humility, and the confidence we will need to move forward together as a nation of the United States.

Father Phil