

## The Election Is Over, But Our Job Has Just Begun

The elections are over. The airways are no longer dominated by smiling politicians, telling us “they approve this message”. Some of our candidates probably won, and I’m sure a few lost, but the electorate has chosen, and we know who are leaders will be for the next two years.

Hopefully you voted and were a part of the process to choose our leaders. If you voted, by your participation alone you were a winner. But our obligation as Catholics isn’t over when we vote, its just the first step.

The US Catholic Conference Of Bishops in their call to political responsibility state, “In the Catholic tradition, responsible citizenship is a virtue; participation in the political process is a moral obligation.” As Catholics we are called to be a part of shaping a society with increased respect for the life and dignity of all persons, and a greater commitment to justice and peace.

We started by becoming informed voters and voting for candidates who support those Catholic values. Now we enter the process of working with our elected officials to assist them in promoting those values.

Sometimes we don’t believe we can make a difference. We are just one person, how could we possibly make a difference. Mother Teresa when asked how to do as she does, feeding hundreds of hungry people, she asks them to, “If you cannot feed many, then feed one”.

We use our Catholic social teachings as our guide, and speak to support the preferential option for the poor. If our efforts in the halls of justice do not feed many, hopefully they will feed one. It is from feeding one that we are able to feed two and perhaps then many more. It is from one voice raising up to speak for those the least among us that another notices and stands with us. From the two we gain others, and from the many voices our politicians will notice and respond.

The greatest inhibitor of action is the lack of information. We cannot respond to what we don’t know is happening. This is where the Montana Catholic Conference Email Alert Network and new website fit in. Our network will enable the Conference to send information directly to you. All you need to do is sign up. We will provide a weekly briefing of legislative issues we are working on, and will send out alerts when your voice is needed to assist legislators with their decisions. Those alerts may happen when a bill is being heard in Committee, or when a bill is about to be debated on the floor. We will send you contact information, email addresses or links to those addresses for your legislators in your area. You can email call or write them so your wishes will be heard. There are times our legislators get overwhelmed, and don’t have enough information to make good decisions. These are the times they need to hear from you. It may be your voice that makes the difference.

WE are also upgrading our website. [www.montanacatholic.org](http://www.montanacatholic.org). We have links to the Montana Legislator. You can check bill status, find contact information for legislators, and get the daily hearing schedules, and floor agendas. We will also have links to US Catholic Conference of Bishops (USCCB) to get the views of our Bishops, and an incredible array of information. In addition the site will post statements by Bishop George Leo Thomas, and Fr Jay Petersen, Diocesan Administrator, as well as articles and statements from the Conference Director. We

will also list alerts for legislation on the national level. We are trying to make it easy to use and yet have all the information you need to assist you in your legislative efforts. Please take a look, and let us know what you think, what we should keep, and what we should change.

As I write this I cannot forget the words of Dorothy Day. “We can to a certain extent change the world...We can throw our pebble in the pond and be confident that its ever widening circle will reach around the world.” Your job is to throw the pebble. Our job is to help you find the pond.

## **Gospel**

[Lk 14:12-14](#)

On a sabbath Jesus went to dine  
at the home of one of the leading Pharisees.  
He said to the host who invited him,  
“When you hold a lunch or a dinner,  
do not invite your friends or your brothers or sisters  
or your relatives or your wealthy neighbors,  
in case they may invite you back and you have repayment.  
Rather, when you hold a banquet,  
invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind;  
blessed indeed will you be because of their inability to repay you.  
For you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous.”