Pastor's Letter

October 18, 2026 – 29th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Dear Church Family,

As Election Day draws near, both our Old Testament and Gospel readings point out two basic principles that should be guiding our choices, not just on who to vote for, but in every area of our lives.

The first principle is expressed in our reading from the prophet Isaiah; God says, "I am the Lord, there is no other." Of all the claims to our allegiance, this is the first and most fundamental. All other powers and authorities must take a back seat to the authority of God who is the source of everything that is and who establishes the values by which we live. God's revelation of himself in the world as love and his call to Christians to be love in the world must be the guide that shapes the structures that help us live together in society. This principle is not, of course, shared by everyone. We share this world with people who are not believers. Some would prefer that we keep our beliefs to ourselves. Some see religion as a private affair. Pray at home or in church if you want but keep religion out of the public square. For Christians though that is not an option. Faith is not something that we can separate from a part of our lives. God's vision for human life concerns the whole person, including in a special way, how we relate to others. In our country, the separation of church and state means that we cannot force others to believe what we believe but it also means that the state cannot keep us from expressing our religious convictions and adding them to the mix of ideas and proposals that goes into shaping our life as a society. We do so in a way that respects different viewpoints, but we cannot just lay them aside. Because God is Lord, he is the one who points the way. We come from him, we live in him, and all creation will one day return to him. He will have the final word on how well we have used the lives he has given us.

The second principle is that even though human governments are secondary in authority to God, they have their place. As Jesus says in our Gospel reading, we also must repay to Caesar what belongs to Caesar. We are all called to be good citizens. We have a responsibility to participate in the common life of our nation. We vote, we pay our taxes, we hold office, we participate in public debate and conversation. We do so in a Christian way, without violence or hatred. Our faith doesn't just form our political opinions; it also forms the way we express those opinions. We speak the truth in love in the same way that Jesus did. We respect the rights of all, and we seek the good of all.

I often tell couples preparing for marriage that when they get into an argument it's important to go into it with the right intentions. Instead of just trying to win, they should have as their primary goal to come out of their disagreement stronger as a couple. That might be a worthy goal for our nation as we go into the elections. My prayer is that we will come out of it stronger and more united as a nation. That's a tall order, but if we who call ourselves Christians enter the public conversation with the integrity of our belief in the dignity of every person and their right to follow their conscience even as we stand up and vigorously defend our values, then we will give witness to the goodness of life lived under the lordship of God.

Blessings,

Fr. Scott