

## Personal Reflection: Marilyn Antonik

As a Friend of AUSCP who serves on the Climate Crisis and Anti-Racism WG's, I offer my personal plea to Members and Friends. We are at a most critical junction. What happens November 3rd will impact our nation for decades to come. For the most part, our Church has been reluctant to speak out about political elections. I understand not endorsing specific candidates. But John Lewis taught us, "If you see something, say something." So now more than ever, the Church must recognize the responsibility to speak up to educate voters about the critical issues of our day. The soul of our country is at stake.

As you know so well, there are numerous serious issues to consider as we evaluate each candidate all the way down the ballot. Many of these issues require us to examine our conscience and draw upon our spiritual beliefs. Our vote will determine how racist structures will be dismantled and how people of color will be accepted and treated in the future. Our vote will determine the future health of our precious planet – of all of God's creation. Our vote will determine how immigrant families seeking refuge from violent oppression in their home countries are treated at our borders. Our vote will determine how we survive and maybe even thrive through this pandemic. The weight of our vote this November is heavy on our hearts and minds. Now, more than ever, we need the Church's teachings to guide the consequential choices we will soon make.

Our choice for President offers two divergent visions for our nation. Which candidate best represents the teachings of the Gospel? The one who builds walls, stokes fear and fuels hate? Or the one who builds bridges, seeks compromise, expresses empathy and love and restores dignity? Where does the Church stand on these issues? How are we to take the Church's teaching into the ballot booth?

Frequently, we have heard the USCCB statement on abortion as the preeminent issue and have heard Cardinal Dolan's words and presence at the RNC convention, and been bombarded by CatholicVote.org., etc. We know pro-abortion is more than pro-fetus; it encompasses all of life. We're all pro-Life in that sense. Much quieter are the voices of most Bishops and priests except for Bishops Stowe, Cheri, McElroy and a few others and many of you. How do we get these words and the words of Pope Francis and Sr. Simone and Network's counter to CatholicVote, i.e., [www.networkadvocates.org/2020election/scorecard](http://www.networkadvocates.org/2020election/scorecard) to the hearts and minds of the people?

Our faith has taught us to stand up to injustice, bring light to darkness and love to hate. We must now speak out on the election to demonstrate just how critical these issues are. The Church's silence on the election signals indifference and complicity. Now is the time to speak up, speak out. It's both a Chronos and a Kairos moment. Our Church and our country are depending on us. Let's DO it!

With Hope and Joy,  
Marilyn Antonik