



St. John Catholic Church

Est. 1917

September 22, 2020

Dear Beloved and Much Missed Parishioner,

We miss you!!!

It has been a while since we have written so I wanted to connect and discuss a couple things.

First and foremost, do not hesitate to reach out and ask for help if you need anything. We are here for you. If you are lonely, bored, spiritually struggling, financially troubled, or whatever, we are here for you. We are a family and must be there for one another.

Second, thank you to all who are continuing to support the parish. I know times are tight with the finances, and we at the parish as well are struggling financially. I ask you, especially for the folks who are still working and have not been adversely financially affected, to please be generous to our parish. Christ will reward you for your generosity. That's a guarantee! You can give online through e-giving or just mail your donations to the parish. Thank you very much. We are very grateful.

Third, we have begun our religious education programs at the parish. Please enroll your child when you are comfortable and ready. Religious education is very important and cannot be neglected in the life of children (or adults!). It is the responsibility of parents to ensure their children learn the life-giving and saving teachings of our Catholic faith. While math, literature, and social studies are good, religious education has eternal consequences!

Fourth, in celebration of our Diocese's 200th anniversary we are conducting a day of service to help those in need. We have a few things planned, including helping a few homebound elderly folks with landscaping as well as cleaning of their homes. While many of you may not feel comfortable assisting with this, we have something everyone can help with, and that is collecting food items for our food pantry at each of the parishes. It is very simple. All you have to do is buy an extra bag or two of groceries next time you go to the store and drop it off at the parish. You can drop it off when you come to Mass or during office hours. If you aren't comfortable, you can call the parish and coordinate a drop off time. It may not seem like a big deal to you, but it is a very big deal to someone who is struggling financially and in need.

Fifth, included in this letter is a guide from our Bishop regarding the upcoming elections and voting. Please read it with an open heart towards God. While many issues are important, some issues are more important than others.

Finally, I want to let you know that I hope to see you back at Mass soon. I can promise you that you are safer at Mass than at Walmart, Target, or any restaurant. Everyone at Mass wears a mask, everyone sits 6 feet apart, and the Church is cleaned between every Mass. I have heard it said many times that Church is about the safest place you can be. Plus, the food you get at Walmart only helps your body whereas the Holy Communion you receive at Mass nourishes your spirit and your soul. If you can only choose one, always choose the latter.

Hope to see you soon!

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Rev. Dino Rossi".

Fr. Rossi



A Different Kind of Political Engagement

September 2020

Election Day is November 3. In *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship* (www.faithfulcitizenship.org), we and our brother U.S. bishops noted, “Unfortunately, politics in our country often can be a contest of powerful interests, partisan attacks, sound bites, and media hype. The Church calls for a different kind of political engagement: one shaped by the moral convictions of well-formed consciences and focused on the dignity of every human being, the pursuit of the common good, and the protection of the weak and the vulnerable. . . . We are called to bring together our principles and our political choices, our values and our votes, to help build a civilization of truth and love” (no. 14).

To grow in holiness, a question each one of us must answer is: How will I respond to this call for a different kind of engagement? This question is key as we approach Election Day, as well as every day before and after it, as faithful citizens.

In a pre-election letter on voting decisions we issued last year, we offered three main points:

- **Many issues are important.**
- **Not all issues have equal moral weight.**
- **Protecting life is paramount.**

As bishops responsible for the pastoral care of the faithful in our two dioceses, we re-offer these points here for your continued prayerful consideration, as an essential framework not only for the critical voting decisions that must be made each year but also for the vital prayer and advocacy that must be done on a constant basis.

Whenever human dignity is at stake for any of our brothers and sisters in the human family, we must be attentive and engaged. “[R]espect for the dignity of every person . . . is the core of Catholic moral and social teaching” (*Faithful Citizenship*, no. 10).

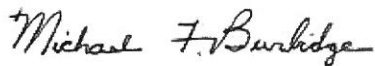
Our moral obligation to oppose intrinsically evil acts – which are “always incompatible with love of God and neighbor” (*Faithful Citizenship*, no. 22) – “has a special claim on our consciences and our actions” (no. 37). Of these, abortion is the “preeminent priority because it directly attacks life itself, because it takes place within the sanctuary of the family, and because of the number of lives destroyed” (*Faithful Citizenship*, Introductory Letter). Since the 1973 *Roe v. Wade* decision, there have been more than 61 million abortions in our country. Other issues of grave moral importance “undercut the dignity of the human person” (nos. 22, 23). Our priority must be to protect life to the fullest extent possible.

For more on the principles involved in voting with a well-formed conscience, we encourage you to read paragraphs 34-37 of *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship*

(www.faithfulcitizenship.org). For a side-by-side comparison of what the two major-party Presidential candidates have said or done on a wide range of issues of importance to Catholics, visit www.vacatholic.org. The side-by-side comparison was compiled jointly by a number of state Catholic conferences, including the Virginia Catholic Conference.

On November 3, please vote. Every day, please seek and live out the “different kind of political engagement” that will provide a clear example to others of the civility and consistent concern for the common good we are all called to embrace.

Faithfully Yours in Christ,



Most Reverend Michael F. Burbidge
Bishop of Arlington



Most Reverend Barry C. Knestout
Bishop of Richmond