

**Fall Assembly Opening Prayer
October 17th, 2020**

The Politics of Peace

Rosemarie:

Introduction: On September 16th, 2013, Pope Francis offered a homily that included this message, “A good Catholic meddles in politics, offering the best of himself (*sic*) - so that those who govern can govern. But what is the best that we can offer to those who govern? Prayer!” Today’s Fall Assembly has as its theme, *The Politics of Peace*. We are indeed meddling in politics and we begin with prayer.

Marian Ronan:

Opening Prayer from the Social Justice Resource Center, October, 2020

Loving God, help us to serve you by serving our human family. Give us the courage to build a just and sustainable society, to walk with the excluded and to safeguard the abundant world you have made. Bless us with strength and determination to take action. Fill our hearts with compassion and our minds with wisdom and vision. Empower our spirits with faith and truth. As we work together with others of good will, may you always be present in our assemblies and courts, our principles and laws, our policies and programs, and may we see you in all the people of our world, especially those living on the margins. Amen.

Fr. Frank Breen, MM:

A Reading from the encyclical, *Fratelli Tutti*, by Pope Francis, October, 2020

“...what is needed is a politics which is far-sighted and capable of a new, integral and interdisciplinary approach to handling the different aspects of the crisis”. In other words, a “healthy politics... capable of reforming and coordinating institutions, promoting best practices and overcoming undue pressure and bureaucratic inertia”. (177)

Pat & John Tweedy:

A Prayer for This Election Season by Dianna Ortiz, OSU, PCUSA Deputy Director

God, Promise Keeper of the new creation, in this election season, guide us to be Gospel-informed voters, who stand on the side of justice and truth.

As a community of conscience, we recognize our shared responsibility in righting the wrongs that dishonor and dehumanize the dignity of the most vulnerable among us.

As a community of conscience, we acknowledge the harm that has been done to the environment and the urgency to work collectively to care for the Earth, our common home.

We see our country in turmoil—experiencing a time of chaos that not only impacts every person of this nation, but peoples from across the globe.

As individuals and a faith community, we recognize that we bear both a privilege and a burden to vote our conscience and to make choices that will and do affect the future of everyone.

As we ready ourselves to go to the polls this November, may our time of discernment be rooted in the teachings of our faith and our common life together.

May our faith guide us to vote for genuine servant leaders, who, like Jesus, will welcome the stranger, feed the hungry, clothe the naked, visit the prisoner, embrace the sick and dying, and promote peace and nonviolence.

Send your Spirit to be with us as we cast votes for the common good and, regardless of the outcome of the elections, may we continue to work for a more just and sustainable world.

May we always stand on the side of justice and truth. Amen.

**Fall Assembly Closing Prayer
October 17th, 2020**

The Politics of Peace

Janet & Lou Tullo:

God of Justice, we thank you for the time we have spent learning about a politics that is still more aspiration than reality, but that we affirm and commit to helping create, a politics based on the principles of Catholic Social Teaching and the teachings of the best of all faiths. We affirm that:

- Human life is sacred, and the dignity of the human person is the starting point for a moral vision for society.
- Human dignity can only be realized and protected in the context of relationships with the wider society. How we organize our society — in economics and politics, in law and policy — directly affects human dignity and the capacity of individuals to grow in community.
- The obligation to “love our neighbor” has an individual dimension, but it also requires a broader social commitment.
- Everyone has a responsibility to contribute to the good of the whole society, to the common good.
- The moral test of a society is how it treats its most vulnerable members. The poor have the most urgent moral claim on the conscience of the nation. We are called to look at public policy decisions in terms of how they affect the poor.
- Every person has a fundamental right to life and a right to those things required for human decency — starting with food, shelter and clothing, employment, health care, and education. Corresponding to these rights are duties and responsibilities — to one another, to our families, and to the larger society.
- The state has a positive moral function. It is an instrument to promote human dignity, protect human rights, and build the common good. All people have a right and a

responsibility to participate in political institutions so that government can achieve its proper goals.

- The economy must serve people, not the other way around. All workers have a right to productive work, to decent and fair wages, and to safe working conditions. They also have a fundamental right to organize and join unions. People have a right to economic initiative and private property, but these rights have limits. No one should amass excessive wealth when others lack the basic necessities of life.
- The goods of the earth are gifts from God, and they are intended by God for the benefit of everyone. There is a “social mortgage” that guides our use of the world’s goods, and we have a responsibility to care for these goods as stewards and trustees, not as mere consumers and users. How we treat the environment is a measure of our stewardship, a sign of our respect for the Creator.
- Peace is not just the absence of war. It involves mutual respect and confidence between peoples and nations. It involves collaboration and binding agreements. There is a close relationship in Catholic teaching between peace and justice. Peace is the fruit of justice and is dependent upon right order among human beings.
- All people have a right to participate in the economic, political, and cultural life of society. It is a fundamental demand of justice and a requirement for human dignity that all people be assured a minimum level of participation in the community. It is wrong for a person or a group to be excluded unfairly or to be unable to participate in society.
- We are one human family. Our responsibilities to each other cross national, racial, economic and ideological differences. We are called to work globally for justice.

from the Social Justice Resource Center, September, 2020

Rosemarie and All (on mute):

Dear God,

Give us the grace to practice your politics, the politics of universal peace, love and nonviolence.

From now on, dear God, we are citizens of your kin-dom of nonviolence, citizens of your realm of universal peace and love. From now on, we live in your reign, in your presence, in your will. Amen.

~~from “Make Us Citizens of Your Reign” in *Radical Prayers on Peace, Love & Nonviolence* by Fr. John Dear