

FR. BRAD HAGELIN

PASTOR

My dear Kirkland Catholics,

I will be really honest: I very much dislike partisan politics, and especially what it has seemingly done to our country over the past decade or so. Studies have shown that members of the two major political parties have become *far more negative* in their view of members belonging to the “other party” over the past 25 years. Polarization is just about the opposite of what Jesus desires in the Church for sure, but one suspects He probably doesn’t desire it in any given society either.

The thing that drives me the craziest is that such a high percentage of politicians seem to care more about *winning* than being *truthful*. We cannot do a lot about that as individual citizens, and so the **principle of subsidiarity** in Catholic Social Teaching has a lot to say about how we are to engage politics, etc. for the common good. That is, we are to put more energy personally in things that have a more immediate and local impact. Let’s be honest, my vote for president in Washington State, although important, will not have an actual electoral consequence as Washington is so blue that there is no question about which party will receive Washington’s twelve electoral votes.

And so, with voting and with making an impact in our community, we need to be aware of the local issues first, and also do our best to educate ourselves on candidates for races that our vote and energy will have the most impact. For example, the Commissioner for Public Lands primary this year was settled by less than 50 votes. In those types of local and close races we have a serious obligation to really do our homework and vote well. We should do our best to find out as much as we can about people in other races like judges, councilmembers, etc. The Church is clear that we have an obligation to vote, and to vote in an informed way.

The Social Justice Committee put together a packet that I hope you will take and prayerfully reflect upon as you prepare to cast your ballot next month. Let us pray for our country and our leaders as Scripture mandates (1 Timothy 2:1-2; Jeremiah 29:2), especially for greater unity and concern for “the sanctity of human life, the equal dignity of all individuals, the obligation to protect the vulnerable, the nature and purposes of sex, marriage, and family.” (www.usccb.org/resources/Role-of-Church-In-American-Political-Life.pdf).

With love in Christ,

Fr. Brad