

## **U.S. elections 2012: Sustainable peace and security for all**

As the United States approaches the 2012 presidential and congressional elections, Maryknoll missionaries recognize that people around the world are interconnected as never before. While Maryknoll is based in the U.S., Maryknoll Sisters, Fathers, Brothers and Lay Missioners work in over 30 countries, in Asia, Africa and Latin America. Guided by Gospel values and the Social Teachings of the Church, we encourage candidates to address the central issues that affect not only people who reside in this country but also the billions of sisters and brothers with whom we share this Earth. At the same time, we pray that all political candidates, as well as the political action committees (PACs) that support them, practice civility and put aside the use of divisive language that fosters hate and misunderstanding.

Maryknoll missionaries know that the people we serve embrace the same desires for peace, security, economic prosperity and human dignity that people in the U.S. hold. As Maryknoll missionaries exercise their own right and responsibility to foster the common good within the global community and participate in the political processes of our country, we appeal to other U.S. people to remember the golden rule to treat others as we would have others treat us.

It is our hope that presidential and congressional candidates clarify their commitment to the global common good, and that voters scrutinize candidates' policy proposals through the lens of those who, both in the U.S. and overseas, are affected by poverty, war, human rights violations, trade policies and ecological destruction.

In upcoming debates and campaign messaging we call on candidates to address the concrete ways they hope to promote sustainable pathways to true security and peace – through cooperative engagement and support for intrinsic human needs: housing, access to healthy food, access to clean water, medical care. We look to our political leaders to advance U.S. policies that will promote a new economic model that embodies social and ecological values bound by Earth's limits, a sufficiency-based economy where all people, regardless of gender, race or other characteristics, equitably share access to the gifts of the land that nourish and sustain them.

We also call on candidates to uphold their commitment to free elections by rejecting pressure from PACs and corporations when designing policy priorities and campaign messaging. We are concerned with the enormous amount of money that is being spent on the campaigns, and the apparent lack of transparency in this area. This degrades our democracy, and erodes the representation of the majority of people who live in this country. U.S. laws and our election process itself should build on an appreciation of the value of diversity; counter racism in our society; and abide by internationally recognized standards for civil, political, economic and cultural human rights.

We, the Maryknoll leadership, urge U.S. citizens to exercise the right to vote and help our country advance the common worldwide desire for peace, genuine security and human dignity. Let us make these elections a positive contribution to the better world we all believe is possible.

**Maryknoll Sisters**

**Maryknoll Fathers and Brothers**

**Maryknoll Lay Missioners**

