

Maryknoll Leadership Statement on the 2020 U.S. Elections

As the United States approaches the 2020 presidential and congressional elections, Maryknoll missionaries recognize their importance on a global level and the urgent need for what Pope Francis calls a “better kind of politics.” Guided by Gospel values and the social teachings of the Church, we encourage voters, election officials, and candidates to act truly in the service of the common good.

While Maryknoll is based in the United States, Maryknoll Sisters, Fathers, Brothers and Lay Missioners work in over 26 countries in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. Given the powerful position of the United States on the global stage, the results of our elections are of global concern. We know the depth with which people in other nations count on the United States to honor its founding principles of democracy, constitutional order, and the rule of law.

As Election Day nears and with voting already underway, we are alarmed by the parallels we see between emerging conditions in the United States and those we have witnessed at times in other countries during more than one hundred years of mission when elections have not been transparent, inclusive, and accountable. We are troubled by efforts at voter suppression, especially as it relates to historic systemic racism in the United States. We are also concerned by the spread of misinformation aimed at eroding trust in our democratic institutions. As the United States often instructs other countries, in order to be credible elections must reflect the free expression of the will of the people.

God calls each of us to participate in public life. In that spirit, we pray that all political candidates practice civility and put aside the use of divisive language that fosters hate and misunderstanding. It is our hope that voters scrutinize candidates’ policy proposals through the lens of those who, both in the U.S. and overseas, are affected by poverty, violent conflict, human rights violations, trade policies and ecological destruction.

Because of difficulties related to the pandemic, we encourage voters to make a plan and vote early. We encourage citizens to remain patient and confident if it takes longer than usual to count the ballots. We call on officials to ensure that everyone has a chance to vote in a free, fair, and safe manner, and that every vote is counted. We call on legislators and candidates to ensure that the results of the election are respected with a peaceful transfer of power.

Maryknoll Sisters Maryknoll Fathers and Brothers Maryknoll Lay Missioners Maryknoll Affiliates