

PART FOUR: CLOSING PRAYER

Close your time of prayer and discernment with Psalm 146.

Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord, O my soul!	Who executes justice for the oppressed; who gives food to the hungry. The Lord sets the prisoners free;
I will praise the Lord as long as I live; I will sing praises to my God all my life long.	The Lord opens the eyes of the blind. The Lord lifts up those who are bowed down; the Lord loves the righteous.
Do not put your trust in princes, in mortals, in whom there is no help.	The Lord watches over the strangers; he upholds the orphan and the widow, but the way of the wicked he brings to ruin.
When their breath departs, they return to the earth; on that very day their plans perish.	The Lord will reign forever, your God, O Zion, for all generations. Praise the Lord!
Happy are those whose help is the God of Jacob, whose hope is in the Lord their God,	
Who made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them; who keeps faith forever;	

RESOURCES FOR DISCERNMENT

Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship. United States Conference of Catholic Bishops; http://bit.ly/Faithful_Citizen

Catholic Social Teaching in 3 Minutes. A video by Trocaire, the Catholic Church's social justice arm in Ireland. http://bit.ly/CST_Trocaire

Dominican Call to Justice 2015-2017: A call to justice from the Dominican Family of North America. http://bit.ly/Dominican_Justice

Free copies of *Take it to Prayer* at dominicansistersconference.org.

Dominican Sisters Conference, a membership organization of Dominican religious women and associates in the U.S., has a mission "to preach the Gospel of Jesus, standing as a clear voice for truth, justice and peace."

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TAKE IT TO PRAYER

A SPIRITUAL REFLECTION FOR VOTERS

YOU ARE INVITED TO SPEND A FEW MOMENTS WITH GOD BEFORE YOU GO INTO THE VOTING BOOTH.

Take it to Prayer: A Spiritual Reflection for Voters, was developed by the Dominican Sisters of Springfield, Ill., and is distributed through the Dominican Sisters Conference to help busy people prepare themselves spiritually before they vote.

'Why does my ballot matter?' you might think. Because we are citizens of the most powerful nation on Earth, the tiny pebble that is my ballot can make big waves around the universe—especially when we consider that the health of Creation, which Pope Francis has called "our common home," may depend on it.

Take it to Prayer was inspired by the Catholic tradition of examination of conscience. Often used by Catholics as a prayer at the end of the day or before going to confession, an examination of conscience is a way to discern where and how a person has acted in accord with God's grace, or not, in the course of a day.

PART ONE: THANKSGIVING

Acknowledge the presence of God. Consider gratefully your right and responsibility to vote and to participate in public life in accord with your faith.

Prayerfully consider these words of Pope Francis from his encyclical, *The Joy of the Gospel*:

An authentic faith . . . always involves a deep desire to change the world, to transmit values, to leave this earth somehow better than we found it. We love this magnificent planet on which God has put us, and we love the human family which dwells here, with all its tragedies and struggles, its hopes and aspirations, its strengths and weaknesses. The earth is our common home and all of us are brothers and sisters. If indeed “the just ordering of society and of the state is a central responsibility of politics,” the Church, “cannot and must not remain on the sidelines in the fight for justice.”
(*Evangelii Gaudium*, no.183)

PART TWO: CALL ON THE HOLY SPIRIT

We wait for the Spirit
In a time of confusion and concern,
A time of polarization and poverty of heart.
We open ourselves to the Spirit
Despite our frustrations and fears,
Hoping for the sound of the rushing wind,
The sight of a flickering flame.
We pray for the Spirit
To move us beyond the boundaries
We have created,
So we can breathe in new life
And welcome new gifts.
We wait for the Spirit
In the darkness created by human frailty
With hope for the light
That will bring us all to metanoia,
The turning that takes us to conversion,
That takes us to community
Where all have a place at the table.



Center of Concern, 2012 (Educationforjustice.org)

“To live charitably means not looking out for our own interests, but carrying the burdens of the weakest and poorest among us. —Pope Francis



PART THREE: DISCERNMENT

Call to mind each candidate for whom you are considering casting your ballot. Ponder these questions.

- ◆ Does this candidate “speak the truth in love,” respecting the worth and dignity of every human being?
- ◆ Would the candidate’s policies support Jesus’ call to give preference to the needs of people who are poor or marginalized in the United States and around the world?
- ◆ Does his/her philosophy of governance take into consideration the right of all citizens to have their voices heard in civil discourse?
- ◆ How would the candidate’s stated policies affect Creation, “Our common home”?
- ◆ How would this candidate’s approach to economic policy protect the rights of workers to productive work, just wages, adequate benefits, the choice to unionize, and the status of immigrant workers?

