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Cardinal O'Malley Statement on the Election

BostonCatholic.org

Today our country, one of the oldest democracies and most diverse societies in the world, should take pride in the success of the electoral process. We thank all the candidates who have participated in the elections and commend the historic voter turnout, a tribute to the citizens who voted in such striking numbers, in stark contrast to earlier elections. That encouraging sign has opened the way to begin a process of participation among all citizens however they voted. As Catholics we are committed to the common good, social justice and the Gospel of Life. Participation in the political process is a sacred duty. In a country facing the threefold challenge of addressing a global pandemic, repairing a fractured economy and renewing a national commitment to the goals of racial justice and equality, the broad participation of citizens in the election should be a foundation for rebuilding our unity as a people.

The President and those who will serve with him have both the opportunity and the challenge of rebuilding civic trust, of providing a sense of hope in a time of social crisis, and of calling us all to share our best talents and energies in a common task. Our prayers should be with all those called to lead the country.

The task we face is not fully captured in the data; the numbers, charts and graphs, the task is also a spiritual challenge. As Pope Francis shared in the recent Encyclical Letter, *Fratelli Tutti*, we are called to promote ‘friendship and an acknowledgement of the worth of every human person, always and everywhere’. Each citizen, each person, across lines of color, ethnicity, of faith and philosophy, can and should be asked to place solidarity over inequality, compassion over revenge, generosity over self-interest.

An election is never only about who wins and loses. It is always about a moment in time when a new beginning is possible. Such a beginning relies upon our best traditions and aspirations: belief in our common humanity and the unique dignity of each person in the land; beliefs which can bind us together, rich and poor, black and white, citizens and dreamers, women and men. We are now at a moment when a new beginning is not only possible but urgently necessary. The work at hand calls us to respect the opinions of others, to dialogue about differing perspectives, to seek reconciliation where there has been estrangement, to work for healing among the people of our country. I confidently believe that as a nation we can achieve these goals, to rise above our differences, to embrace our unity as brothers and sisters who lives are a gift from God and who share a mission to build a just society.

We must not succumb to resentments based in divergent political views and divisions that have emerged from the stress of recent months. The challenge is always to transform a crowd into a community, a people who share a commitment to building a civilization of love and a culture that can sustain democracy, freedom and respect for human rights. Let us remember the unity and charity we are called to at the celebration of the Eucharist and in the proclamation of the Scriptures. Let us witness to the ideals of the Gospel, striving to have a positive impact on our families, communities and the nation in these crucial days. Let us follow Jesus’ call to love one another as He has loved us.