
ELECTION TIME : GROWING AS A SOCIETY!



Through appropriate action, politicians make visible the very love of God.” It was in these words that, at the close of my episcopal ordination, I addressed those involved in the political arena at the local, provincial and federal levels, to thank them for all they were doing for their fellow-citizens. I hold the same conviction today, and in the words of my episcopal motto, I want to tell them once again that to a good extent the love of God is from age to age, through the just legislation they adopt and the community development they foster. It is for these reasons that I urge you to be part of the present electoral campaign and to actively participate in the electoral process by exercising your right to vote, on June 9. This is an opportunity for us to grow as a society.

FOR A JUST AND FRATERNAL SOCIETY IN SOLIDARITY WITH ONE ANOTHER

In the wonderful conciliar document on the Church in the modern world, we read that we must clearly distinguish between earthly progress and the growth of the reign of Christ; however, this progress is very important to the kingdom of God inasmuch as it contributes to a better organisation of society. In fact, the values of human dignity, fellowship, and freedom, all the outstanding fruits of nature and of our freedom which we shall have sown on earth in the Spirit of the Lord and according to His will, all of these we shall find again later when Christ will hand over to his Father a limitless and unending reign, a reign of life and truth, a reign of grace and holiness, a reign of justice, of love, and of peace. This reign is already mysteriously present here on earth, but when the Lord returns, it shall attain its perfection. I believe that this teaching of the Church is most stimulating to whoever works for a just society, where there is fellowship and solidarity. Political involvement is one of the highest forms of community service. What are the values we want to promote, both during this campaign and in the years to come? In what measure do they promote respect for human dignity, fraternity, and freedom?

STEWARDS OF A COMMON LEGACY

Pope John Paul II’s memorable words to government leaders, in his September, 1984 visit to Canada, are still an importance point of reference: “Every person and every nation must remember that they are stewards of a common legacy and servants of a common destiny.” Then, looking at political action as a whole and the politicians themselves, he noted that “real progress has actually been made in many areas, and this must be gratefully recognised.” These words open up interesting perspectives. How do we view those who are involved in politics or who are considering being involved? What is our opinion of them? How do we view them? It seems to me that, in all honesty, we must look closely and know those we elect, whether they be members of the party in office or of the opposition, and at what they have accomplished during their mandate. Let us not be satisfied with merely repeating stereotyped judgements, let us look at the quality of those we have elected or want to elect. Through their commitment they are called to be “servants of a common destiny” and “stewards of a common legacy.”

BUILDERS OF A NEW SOCIETY

Pope John Paul continues: “Today I call on you to be defenders of a new way of looking at humankind, a concept that looks at the problems of society not only as it relates to economic, technical, or political

conditions, but as it refers to living persons, human beings created in the image and likeness of God and called to an eternal destiny. It is a way of looking based on real human values and, therefore defending them, a way of looking which overcomes self-satisfaction, insensitiveness, and selfishness. Is this not especially the mission of those who have been given the charge of a public responsibility, to promote this understanding of humankind which enables us to tap into the goodwill found in the heart of every citizen? Is it not their responsibility to promote the sense of political will to implement changes necessary to the best use of the human and technical potential available to our society? None of us can remain passive to the challenges of our times. We know that the modern world has immense reserves of technical knowledge and of natural resources which can be used to help solve the problems of humankind. I have offered you a lofty vision of humankind: may it be for you food for thought and encouragement in the exercise of your noble functions. Always keep this vision in mind. May it be to you an invitation to act and to work in the world at building up peace and justice, a world which God has handed over to your care.”

THE FRUITS OF SUCH A VISION

It is intentionally that I share this lofty vision of all political commitment with you. The teaching has the highest value, but it remains that every man and woman elected continue to give flesh to such an ideal. Areas of application are many: redistribution of economic goods, education, health, labour, justice, culture, arts, fisheries, environment, agriculture, natural resources, transportation, communications and mass media, intermunicipal and interprovincial affairs. Our personal and community future depends on this, as well as the growth of our province in time to come. We must continue supporting and encouraging those we have elected, especially in those difficult periods that every person and every society experience, through the year. Let us pray for all these people so that, faithful to their given word and their commitment, they always keep faith with their fellow citizens. With the strength which comes from such a vision and solidarity, we can still look forward to beautiful days for everyone in our province. I wish you all a beautiful and fruitful electoral campaign.

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