

## 2012 Election Exposes National Trends

by Father Jeffrey Montz



I want to begin today by thanking those of you who went out on Tuesday and voted for the sacredness of human life. Just as the widow's deed in our 1st reading will never be forgotten as long as the Scriptures are read, be assured that no righteous deed that we ever undertake will be forgotten by Almighty God.

This past Wednesday, the day after the election, I received a message on my phone at the parish office, from a gentleman who didn't identify himself by name but who said he was a parishioner. And in this message, this gentleman ranted for several minutes about Tuesday's election results. And here were the first words out of his mouth, "You lost Father; you lost!" Well, the first thing I want to say about Tuesday night's election results is that I didn't lose on Tuesday night our entire country lost!

Now, having said that, I know that there are several of you who have just decided to tune me out, or you're now burning up with anger at me because of what I just said and you can't wait to give me a piece of your mind. But let me say two things in this regard. Number one, I am a priest of Jesus Christ, not because of any merit of my own, not because I'm any better than anyone else. God probably chose me because I am nothing and He wants to make something out of me. But I have been anointed and consecrated by God to preach His truth. And so, you can tune me out, but be warned, you do so at your eternal peril.

Second, if you're angry because you read into my words that this homily is going to be about one elected official that you probably voted for, you're wrong. What I have to say today goes far beyond just one elected official. What I have to say is about the over all trend that was put on display in Tuesday's election results.

Did you know, for instance, that on Tuesday several states voted by popular majority to legalize the recreational use of marijuana? Did you know that a plan to legalize physician assisted suicide was barely rejected in Massachusetts? Did you now that for the first time in our country's history several states, by popular vote, chose to legalize gay marriage? Did you know that two of these states are run by Catholic governors who actively encouraged their constituents to vote in favor of same sex unions? Did you know that in Florida, a ban on tax payers funding of abortion was rejected by the people? Add to all of this the fact that some who were elected in Tuesday's elections are pathological liars, people who have been exposed in their lies numerous times. Apparently, a majority of Americans now condone lying, or perhaps worse, for them the lie has become the truth, evil has become good. Now can you begin to see the trend?

In the days after the elections all the talking heads in the media have been trying to explain how this all happened. But not one person in the mainstream media has gotten it right. You see, these election results are not about one party's marketing advantage over another. Ultimately, they're not about the appeal of one person over another, nor are they about one party being more up-to-date while the other is behind times. What we saw on Tuesday night IS about the moral decline of our nation.

Tuesday's voting results are a mere confirmation of a choice that a majority in this country made, some as far back as 50 years ago, to reject God and to embrace evil in one form or another! And who's to blame for this choice? Well, ultimately, each individual is responsible for his or her choices. Those who chose to vote with evil are to blame for their own choices, and they all have to answer to God for the way they voted. But the reality is I don't think any of us can take ourselves completely off the hook on this one. Why? Because one of the worst contributing factors to the moral decline of our country has been the lukewarmness that has plagued the Catholic Church for years all the way from the Bishops down to the people in the pews.

Pope St. Pius X once said that "All evil in the world is due to lukewarm Catholics." Think about that for a second,

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Well, I have to be honest with you. I've seen this lukewarmness in every church parish at which I've served. But you know where else I see this lukewarmness? I see it when I look in the mirror; I see it in myself. And if we're honest with ourselves I think all of us would see one or more area of lukewarmness in our own spiritual lives.

My brothers and sisters, each one of us has a moral obligation to do all that we can to try to reverse the moral decline of our nation. And the first place that we have to begin is within ourselves. We have to begin by

responding to that vocation which is common to all of us, what the Church calls the universal call to holiness, the call from Jesus to each one of us to become a saint!

In his letter to the Philippians, St. Paul says, "work out your salvation with fear and trembling." How many of us, each day, tremble as we strive for holiness?! How many of us live with a lively fear of hell, a place that is real and a place where souls go for all eternity?! Or have we instead accepted mediocrity in our spiritual lives? 'Oh, I'm too busy to pray Lord; I just don't have the time... I'm too tired to pray; I'll get to it tomorrow... Oh, I don't like that teaching of the Church, I am not going to do that, who do they think they are coming up with this stuff... Well, I think I've done enough for God; what more do I have to do for Him...'

In one of His parables Jesus poses an important question that we would all do well to ask ourselves. "Which of you wishing to construct a tower does not first sit down and calculate the cost to see if there is enough for its completion?" Well, what cost is Jesus talking about? He's not giving construction advice to builders and contractors. The context of that Gospel is the cost of discipleship, what it costs to be a saint, ultimately what it costs us to get to Heaven. But all too often we act as if that cost is cheap! 'Well, I go to Mass on most Sundays. I'm a good person; I haven't murdered anybody. Of course I'm going to Heaven!'

Jesus dealt with this kind of cheap discipleship in the Gospels when He said, "Not everyone who says to me -Lord, Lord will enter the Kingdom of Heaven." On the day of judgment many will say to Jesus, 'Well, didn't we go to Mass fairly often on Sundays and didn't we put some money in the collection basket? Didn't we accept at least some of the Church's teachings? Besides, as I said before, I'm a good person; I didn't murder anybody. Then Jesus will declare to them, "I never knew you; go away from me you evildoers!"'

My brothers and sisters, in ordinary times lukewarmness in our approach to salvation is deadly. But we are not entering into ordinary times. We are not moving forward into ordinary times. There is a great battle brewing; in fact this battle is already upon us, a battle in our country between good and evil and I can feel this battle in the very marrow in my bones. If we are not striving for holiness with every fiber of our being we will not have what it takes to pay the cost of discipleship, we will not have what it takes to get to Heaven! As Jesus says near the end of Matthew's Gospel, "For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been from the beginning of the world until now and never will be. And if those days had not been shortened, no one would be saved...no one would be saved; but for the sake of the elect those days will be shortened."

It's clear from the trends that we see in Tuesday's election results that people of faith in this country are going to be attacked relentlessly over and over again by one wave of evil after another. And so we must be sure that we have included these attacks in our calculations. A lukewarm faith will never survive the attacks of an army of evil that is Legion. We must become saints! And do not wait for tomorrow to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for tomorrow may be too late. Today let us resolve to root out all sin from our lives! Today let us resolve to remove all evil from our hearts! Today let us double our efforts at prayers! Today let us pray that Mary, the Mother of God, our Mother, will once again crush the head of Satan, and intercede for us the grace of perseverance!

Today, let us resolve to take up our cross and be a disciple of Jesus Christ! Christ, who in the words of the Servant of God Bishop Fulton J. Sheen, "will restore within us moral indignation, Who will make us hate evil with a passionate intensity, and love goodness to a point where we can drink death like water!"

The final message that I received from that gentleman's call on Wednesday was that I need to stop preaching the way I do. I need to stop telling people how they ought to live their lives, what teachings of the Church they need to follow. "If he wants to support gay marriage I just need to shut up and give him a choice."

Well, sir, in answer to your request I give you a choice: You can either come here to this Catholic Church and listen to the Word of God and to the teachings of Jesus Christ and His Church or you can leave and go somewhere else!