



BULLETIN INSERTS

November 1, 2020 – All Saints’ Day (A) Kingdom Unity – A Reflection

As the U.S. approaches Election Day, November 3rd, Sermons That Work is teaming up with The Episcopal Church’s Office of Government Relations and four writers from across the Church to reflect on the Christian call to participate in our common life together through voting.

God designed us for relationship. We’ve seen this lived out in profound ways this year as we’ve faced the pandemic and resultant isolation.

Isolation can invite transparency and real depth, but it can also invite insecurity and craziness. Studies have shown us the increase in broken marriages and in people acting out in ways we never would have anticipated. During lockdown and isolation, their inner demons came roaring to the surface, and they hurt themselves and other people in profound, often irreversible, ways.

As I read the epistle for today (1 John 3:1-3), it strikes me that what we are experiencing now, with our isolation and separation and division, goes directly against what John the Elder tells us will happen at the end of the age. On that day, we who know and love Christ will stand among the “great multitude that no one could count.” And we will stand there not with people just like ourselves but with those from “every nation, all tribes and people and language.”

Like it or not, our culture – particularly television – has trained us to view almost any commentary around our common life as a statement of political affiliation. We somehow define ourselves over against the political beliefs of someone else. We don’t think of them as those created in the image of God; instead, we tie their identity to a particular political party or ideology.

But disagreement itself isn’t wrong. And if I’m already in relationship with people who trust me, who believe I’m a person of integrity, and I have the same view of them, we have the freedom to enter into conversations about the things that matter.

In other words, people who trust me aren’t afraid to disagree with me. And I believe the people who are making the most difference are those who approach life with that kind of inner integrity.

They have also done something else. They have cultivated a knowledge based on an ongoing inner conversation with the scriptures themselves. In this way, they look at life through the lens of scripture rather than the other way around. And they take that knowledge and that responsibility seriously because they do more than believe blindly or follow foolishly. They discuss, debate and pray, and they take the time to vote.

As we look toward and beyond the upcoming election, let us focus on relationships with one another, with the God of the Bible and with the scriptures. When we have all three in place, we will align with God’s kingdom yet more and more.

As we walk with God and with one another, God will prepare us for the day we gather around the throne as one. Forever and ever, Amen.

This reflection was written by the Rt. Rev. Greg Brewer, Bishop of Central Florida. Find more resources for election engagement at iam.ec/ogrcivicengagement.

