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The hard work begins now that the election is over

Tony Magliano | Nov. 12, 2012 Making a Difference

Struggling to figure out what candidates would do the most good and the least harm, especially to the poor and vulnerable, then showing up to vote was the easy part.

Now the hard work begins.

With so many elected officials enjoying the security of a full term in office in many cases largely because of huge financial support from corporations, super PACs and wealthy individuals who will expect special attention and favors, it is morally essential for every Catholic, and all people of goodwill, to become the voice of the voiceless.

Because the unborn, poor, hungry, homeless, war-torn, medically uninsured, undocumented, unemployed and underemployed had no money to feed the financially engorged political beasts of both major parties and because they were struggling to survive and had no time for political organizing, they went unheard and unseen during this last political campaign, and virtually every campaign before it.

The voices of the invisible poor and vulnerable will surely continue to remain unheard by the powers in Washington, D.C., and state capitals throughout the United States unless you and I put our faith into action.

Yes, voting is certainly important, but committed lobbying throughout the years after the elections is even more important.

Church efforts to pass anti-abortion, peace-building, social justice and environmental legislation often fail because most Catholics remain silent. Elected officials monitor their phone calls, letters and emails to determine how their constituents want them to vote. Our silence sends them the wrong signal.

Make no mistake about it, when we fail to infuse Gospel-based moral values into the political arena, others rush in to fill the void with immoral public policies. We must not let that happen.

In their document "Faithful Citizenship: A Catholic Call to Political Responsibility," the U.S. bishops urge us to remember that "Jesus called us to 'love one another.' Our Lord's example and words demand care for the 'least of these' from each of us. Yet they also require action on a broader scale. Faithful citizenship is about more than elections. It requires ongoing participation in the continuing political and legislative process."

Because very few elected officials demonstrate passionate concern for the poor and vulnerable in the United States and throughout the world, it is up to us to put and keep the pressure on them to enact legislation and advance public policy that will protect the lives and promote the dignity of every single human being.

It has been accurately noted that most politicians do not see the light until they feel the heat. So let's turn up the heat.

The following outstanding organizations are ready to help us:

- United States Conference of Catholic Bishops [1]
- Your state Catholic conference
- Pax Christi USA [2], a national Catholic peace organization
- Catholic Peace Fellowship [3]
- Just Foreign Policy [4]
- Catholic Relief Services [5], a U.S. Catholic international emergency relief and development agency
- Catholic Charities USA [6], a national Catholic domestic emergency relief and development office
- Bread for the World [7]
- Priests for Life [8]
- The Center for Bio-Ethical Reform [9]
- NETWORK [10], a national Catholic social justice lobby
- Parents Television Council [11]
- Union of Concerned Scientists [12]
- Greenpeace [13]
- Catholic Climate Covenant [14]
- Institute for Global Labour and Human Rights [15]

Please sign up to receive their action alerts.

Politically, U.S. Catholics are 66 million weak. With your help, we can turn that around to 66 million strong for the voiceless.

[Tony Magliano is an internationally syndicated social justice and peace columnist.]

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[3] http://www.catholicpeacefellowship.org/
[4] http://www.justforeignpolicy.org/
[5] http://www.crs.org/
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