



A man sanitizes a voting booth to fight the spread of the coronavirus disease at a polling station Oct. 25 on Staten Island, New York. (CNS/Reuters/Andrew Kelly)

by NCR Staff

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November 3, 2020

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Editor's note: *The long-awaited Election Day is here, and once again Catholic voters are poised to be crucial to determining who will lead our country for the next four years. NCR reporters and analysts around the country will be tracking*

developments at the intersection of faith and politics throughout the day Nov. 3 — and until a winner can accurately be determined. Find regular updates here, or by searching #CatholicsVote2020 on social media.

7:28 p.m. CST, Nov. 4, 2020

As Georgia counts its last votes, suburban Catholic women are divided

By Lucy Grindon

With Donald Trump up 1.4 points as Georgia finishes counting its early votes and absentee ballots, I spoke with three Catholic women in the suburbs of Atlanta about how they voted and why. (Full disclosure: one of them was my grandmother.)

Of the three women I talked to, two voted early in person, and one voted by mail. Two voted for Joe Biden and one voted for Trump, but the two Biden supporters said their parish communities were mostly pro-Trump. All three said their Catholic faith was a significant factor in their voting decisions.

Joan Grindon (my grandmother) chose not to vote for a presidential candidate in the 2016 election. "At that point, I thought I was still a Republican, but I just knew I couldn't vote for Trump," she said. A devout Catholic and the leader of a prayer group at All Saints Catholic Church in Dunwoody, a suburb in DeKalb County just north of Atlanta, she had voted Republican her whole life.

The 2020 election is the first time she has ever voted for a Democratic candidate for president. Her biggest priority was to get Trump out of office, she said, but she also cast her vote for immigration reform, racial equality and the climate, issues she relates to her Catholic faith.

"I'm a lover of Pope Francis and I read what he writes," she said.

"I am pro-life," she continued, telling how she volunteered for years at [Birthright of Atlanta](#), a crisis pregnancy center, which according to its website offers women "abortion alternatives." But she does not believe Trump can truly be called pro-life, in part because of his policy of separating immigrant children from their families and his decision to pull the United States out of the Paris Agreement on climate change, which takes effect today.

Among her fellow parishioners, though, Grindon says most people support Trump.



Photos of Georgia bishops hang on a wall at St. Jude the Apostle Church in Sandy Springs, Ga., on Election Day Nov. 3, 2020. The church was a polling place for voters. (Michael Alexander/The Georgia Bulletin/CNS)

Maureen Otness, who also attends All Saints, voted early to reelect the president because "history has shown that socialism does not work," she told NCR. "As the Democrat Party's younger members have become more and more socialistic and are forcing older members to adhere to their tenets, I just find that immoral. Because what happens with socialism is you no longer value individual life."

Calling Trump "the most pro-life president in my lifetime," Otness said she is obligated as a Catholic to consider candidates' beliefs about life issues, including abortion and euthanasia. Otness linked fears about euthanasia to her concern about socialism: "When we look at countries that have gone more into socialized medicine, you start seeing that it's the doctors who are deciding who lives and who dies," she said.

A registered independent, Otness told NCR she was raised an "Irish Catholic Massachusetts Democrat," but she has been voting for Republicans since the presidency of Bill Clinton. (Clinton's sexual behavior in the White House influenced that personal shift, she said.)

Today, Otness says illegal immigration is another important issue for her. "We have the right to protect our citizens, and to protect our borders," she said. "And that is very much in line with the traditional historical Catholic faith."

The third woman, Eileen Cardillo, attends St. Brigid Catholic Church in John's Creek, another Atlanta suburb. Cardillo considers herself a moderate, and in 2016 voted for a write-in presidential candidate. "This was my first time [voting for a Democrat for president], and I voted all blue, I really did," Cardillo said. "That was a very big change, having been raised in a Republican household."

Cardillo was raised Catholic — and Republican — by none other than her late father John Sirica, the federal judge who presided over the Watergate trials and mandated that Richard Nixon turn over the Watergate tapes. In this election, Cardillo said she opened her eyes beyond any one issue to think about the character of the candidates.

"[My dad] chose country over party, and that has stayed with me my whole life," she said. "I cannot stand for somebody who does not treat everyone — and we are all children of God — with respect and dignity, and unfortunately I think that's what we've been dealing with the last few years," she said.

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4:59 p.m. CST, Nov. 4, 2020

Santorum: Trump's 'caustic nature' likely will cost him election, but save GOP

By Christopher White

Rick Santorum [said on Wednesday](#) he believes President Donald Trump is likely to lose the election, but that the candidate has "transformed the party" in a way that will "help it survive in the future."

The Catholic former Republican senator from Pennsylvania made his remarks during a conversation sponsored by [the Napa Institute](#), a right-wing group that regularly hosts conferences, seminars and pilgrimages for affluent Catholics and various apostolates.

Santorum, a regular fixture at Napa events, said Trump's "caustic nature" has had a "corrosive effect" on voters who are willing to vote for the Republican Party but are put off by the president's character.

Yet Trump has "opened up doors" for African Americans and Latinos, said Santorum, "and future GOP candidates without [Trump's] character flaws may have an easier time going through that door."

"As bad as the Trump news will probably be, the Senate news is actually encouraging," he said, noting that Republicans are set to hold control of the chamber.

Santorum said he expects Biden to win Michigan, and that while the president still has a narrow path to victory, he said it was increasingly limited. He also dismissed the idea that a recount in Wisconsin would alter the state's results.

The former senator said that he has issues with mail-in ballots and early voting, but he does not subscribe to the view that it is fraudulent.

"The cases of fraud are just as easy to commit in person as they are by mail," he said.

In looking ahead to a potential Biden presidency, he said if the Republicans lost the Senate, Biden would be a "toxic" figure and would push through a radical agenda.

"Now he has an opportunity not to be that," said Santorum.

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4:37 p.m. CST, Nov. 4, 2020

Manhattan College responds with a post-election interfaith prayer

By Kevin Glauber Ahern

With no clear winner yet announced in the election, dozens of students, faculty and staff of Manhattan College in Riverdale, New York, gathered at noon on Nov. 4 in front of the chapel on the campus quadrangle for a "Post-Election Interfaith Prayer Service for Hope and Healing."

The prayer service was organized in the days leading up to the election in anticipation of the highly contentious outcome, with an eye to bringing together the campus for a moment of self-reflection, community and hope. Like so many college campuses across the country, our campus is not immune to the political dynamics dividing the nation. This was evident in 2016 with the distress experienced by many students and the celebrations of others to the news of President Donald Trump's election.

In addition to increasing counseling services and planning upcoming events to unpack the election at a more academic level, we felt called as a Catholic community to organize a moment of prayer and reflection. With social distancing measures in place, we gathered at the heart of our campus to ask God for a peaceful path ahead.



The "Post-Election Interfaith Prayer Service for Hope and Healing" is held Nov. 4 at Manhattan College in Riverdale, New York. (Kevin Glauber Ahern)

The interfaith prayer service drew heavily from key themes in Pope Francis' recent encyclical, [*Fratelli Tutti*](#). "Prayer of St. Francis" served as an opening song. Our campus chaplain, Capuchin Fr. Thomas Franks, then led the community in a litany of forgiveness based on the beatitudes. Listing each of the beatitudes by name, we asked God for forgiveness for the ways in which we have failed to live up to these challenges of the Gospel, from being poor in spirit to being peacemakers.

This was followed by a Jewish prayer for our country read by Claudia Setzer, a religious studies faculty member, and a reading of the beautiful *Al Hujrat* (Surah 49) from the Quran by Mehnaz Afridi, the director of the college's Holocaust, Genocide and Interfaith Education Center.

Student leaders followed these prayers with an excerpt of the poem by Maya Angelou read at the first inauguration of Bill Clinton, "On the Pulse of the Morning,"

and prayers of petition for peace. Participants were then invited to do "a social-distanced sign of peace."

One of the more powerful moments, for me, came at the end. As a conclusion, the community recited together one of the prayers included in the last section of *Fratelli Tutti*, where Francis invites us to ask God to "pour forth into our hearts a fraternal spirit and inspire in us a dream of renewed encounter, dialogue, justice and peace." Like the encyclical as a whole, the prayer reminds us of the need to not neglect demands for justice as we seek to overcome division and build a deeper sense of siblinghood. How we do that, however, is not easy and will demand God's help and prayer.

As we go down the path ahead, wherever it will take us, the experience of this interfaith service speaks to the need to take the time to come together, not only for action and analysis but also for prayer, lamentation, reflection and community.

[Kevin Glauber Ahern is an associate professor of religious studies at Manhattan College and is on leadership of ICMICA-Pax Romana, a global Catholic lay movement. You can follow him on Twitter: [@kevin_ahern](https://twitter.com/kevin_ahern).]

3:43 p.m. CST, Nov. 4, 2020

Biden campaign: Michigan, Wisconsin numbers up due to people of faith

By Christopher White

At a Believers for Biden briefing on Wednesday afternoon, Joshua DuBois — who led faith outreach for the Obama White House — told attendees that vote counting is "trending in the right direction" and that the former vice president's numbers are up in Michigan and Wisconsin.

DuBois specifically credited people of faith for delivering Joe Biden what appears to be a margin of victory in those states.

"That is a big deal," he said. "Imagine where we'd be if y'all would not have spoken up."

Ashley Allison, national coalitions director for the Biden campaign, said she is confident that Biden would prevail in Michigan, Arizona and Nevada.

"A lot of votes are still out in Pennsylvania and we think they're our votes," she added.

Allison specifically pushed back against President Donald Trump's false claims that he had won the election, saying, "I'm not paying attention to what Donald Trump is saying. We're looking at the votes."

While she acknowledged there was some "residual trauma from 2016" when Trump surprised the nation by defeating Hillary Clinton, she attempted to draw a stark contrast between the two elections.

"This is not 2016 anymore. This is a new election," she said. "And votes are coming in for Joe Biden."

In response to questions about the razor-thin lead that Biden appears to hold, she said that Biden has made his campaign about the soul of the nation and that change will come through both policies but also in "people changing."

"We are people of faith and we believe we can change people's hearts and minds," she said.

Josh Dickson, national faith engagement director for the Biden campaign, told attendees that in the last day he had found solace in the words of [Psalm 30](#).

"Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning," he recited.

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1:08 p.m. CST, Nov. 4, 2020

Nation as divided as before Civil War, Winters says

By Madeleine Davison

The 2020 election was not the repudiation of President Donald Trump "and everything he stands for" that many Democrats had hoped it would be, said Kansas

City Star columnist Melissa Henneberger during an [NCR Facebook Live panel](#) Nov. 4.

Although several key battleground states are still counting ballots and no winner has been declared, the results thus far look optimistic for former Vice President Joe Biden's campaign, said NCR political columnist Michael Sean Winters during the session moderated by NCR opinion editor Olga Segura.

Still, Democrats didn't do as well as they'd hoped among Latino voters, particularly in Texas and Florida, Winters said. The nail-biting margins show how divided the country is.

"We are just as divided as we were in 1861," Winters noted, calling to mind the eve of the U.S. Civil War. "Lincoln appealed to better angels of our nature, and the war came anyway. Trump is appealing to the worse angels of our nature and I don't know how America will get its groove back."

Exit polls — which are not always reliable — suggest that the Catholic vote was split almost evenly between parties, Winters said. He said this implies Catholics go into the polls as Republicans or Democrats, not as Catholics first, as church officials have long assumed.

"The bishops ... have to take five steps back and examine the degree to which they've embraced a culture warrior mentality," he said, adding that churches should embrace the power of mutual aid efforts to help their communities with resources and childcare.

Analyzing why Democrats have struggled to pick up Senate seats and win presidential elections in recent years, Winters said he thinks they need to stop looking down their noses at white working-class people, and market their policies to them rather than to elites.

Henneberger disagreed, arguing that Democrats are actually better aligned with the American public than Republicans on issues.

"The president is in constant communications with our 'lesser angels,' " she said. "I don't know that you fight that with better and more disciplined rhetoric on student loan debt."

Winters said while he has empathy for white working-class voters struggling with the opioid crisis and economic disparities, some Trump voters are simply wealthy and

racist.

"Those people can rot in hell," he said. "I'm sorry, I know that's not a very Christian thing to say."

Looking ahead to the new legislative session, Henneberger said if Biden is elected and the Republicans maintain a majority in the Senate, the Senate will become even more obstructionist.

"The Senate is just not doing its job," Henneberger said. "Except for pushing through Amy Coney Barrett, what have they done? They did not respond to the needs of the people in this pandemic."

Winters predicted that regardless of election outcomes, the coming months will see hundreds of thousands more deaths, thousands of small business failures and millions more people out of work.

"This winter is going to be very dark and very grim," he said.

To hear what Winters and Henneberger had to say, head to [NCR's Facebook page](#).

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11:53 a.m. CST, Nov. 4, 2020

An early (but fuzzy!) snapshot of the Catholic vote

By Christopher White

Last month an EWTN News and RealClear Opinion Research [poll showed](#) that 52% of "likely Catholic voters" supported former Catholic candidate Vice President Joe Biden, while 40% supported President Donald Trump as of Oct. 19.

[Another poll by Pew Research Center](#), released on Oct. 15, showed Biden leading Trump by a similar margin: 52% to 42% among Catholic voters, with Biden doubling Trump when it came to Latin voters (67% to 26%).

While ballots are still being counted — [a normal process](#) which is expected to take at least several days until a clear winner can be determined — two polls offer an early,

but fuzzy, snapshot of how those numbers held up.

According to the Associated Press, the Catholic vote shows a dead event split, with 49% of Catholics voting for Trump and 49% voting for Biden.

NBC News [offers different numbers](#) showing 37 percent of Catholics as voting for Biden, and 62 percent of Catholics voting for Trump.

If you're scratching your head and thinking these numbers don't reflect October polling numbers, here's an important caveat: the AP numbers only reflect 22% of voters and NBC's exit polling only reflects 27% of voters. Given the high percentage of mail-in ballots, exit polling this year is far from comprehensive and it could take weeks or months for a clearer picture to emerge.

For those wondering how Catholics voters in comparison to other Christian groups, according to the same exit polling data: Trump received 81% of the white evangelical vote, compared to Biden's 17% according to the AP. NBC uses the category of Protestant (rather than evangelical), and according to their data, Trump won 68% of the "Protestant or other Christian" vote compared to Biden's 31%.

As for the general vote count, on a call with reporters and supporters Wednesday morning, Biden campaign manager Jen O'Malley Dillon said that "Joe Biden is on track to win this election, and he will be the next president of the United States."

"The vice president will fight for every vote to be counted," she said, regardless of whom those votes are cast. "We are confident that Vice President Joe Biden will be the next president of the United States." Similarly, Trump campaign manager Bill Stepien held a call with reporters saying: "If we count all legal ballots, the president wins."

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10:45 a.m. CST, Nov. 4, 2020

US sisters finish eight weeks of contemplation, look to post-election season

By Dan Stockman

The leadership group representing 80% of the women religious in the United States has been working for months to help heal the chasms between voters.

In a written statement, Sr. Carol Zinn, a Sister of St. Joseph of Philadelphia and the executive director of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious, said the organization knew it had to set an example.

"The Leadership Conference of Women Religious is deeply concerned about the state of our nation and the future of our democracy and committed to using our voice in the public square to speak about matters of justice and moral good," Zinn wrote.

"Months ago, we knew we were facing one of the most consequential elections of our lifetimes in a nation increasingly divided. We knew that this election called us to take action to repair our democracy and contribute to the work of building a more perfect union. That's why we invited people across the country to join us in eight weeks of contemplative dialogue, deep listening, and mutual respect believing those actions to be the most powerful and prophetic we could offer.

"Hundreds of Catholic sisters, their ministry colleagues, and families joined us in the journey '[Towards a More Perfect Union: 2020 Election Reflections](#).' We hope the skills of contemplative dialogue, deep listening, and mutual respect that center on the dignity of all people — even those with whom we disagree — helped to increase understanding, heal division and promote the common good. We look forward to continuing to bring God's word of justice and healing to our communities in the post-election season. "

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10:15 a.m. CST, Nov. 4, 2020

Louisiana voters approve, Colorado voters reject statewide abortion measures

By Dennis Sadowski, Catholic News Service

Louisiana voters by a wide margin Nov. 3 passed a measure declaring there is no state constitutional right to abortion, while Colorado voters defeated a proposal to ban abortion beginning at 22 weeks of pregnancy.

Unofficial results show that the Louisiana measure, known as the Love Life Amendment, passed 62.1% to 37.9%. It will add language to the state constitution that declares a right to abortion and the funding of abortion shall not be included in the document.

Despite the language being added, abortion remains legal in the state, amendment supporters said.

In Colorado, Proposition 115 went down 59.1% to 40.9%, according to unofficial results. The measure included exceptions to save the life of the pregnant woman but not for instances of rape or incest.

If it had passed, doctors who continue to perform abortions at 22 weeks would have faced a fine up to \$5,000. Under the measure, the mother was not subject to any criminal penalties.

Voters in the state had defeated previous initiatives to limit abortion in 2008, 2010 and 2014.

The abortion-related measures were among 120 proposed state laws and constitutional amendments on the ballot in 32 states. Other measures included those to legalize marijuana for adults, decriminalize the possession of small amounts of hard drugs and raise the minimum wage.

Louisiana's Love Life Amendment earned enthusiastic support from the state's Catholic bishops. The Louisiana Conference of Catholic Bishops twice issued statements backing the amendment in the months leading up to the vote.

Meanwhile, voters in several states were approving measures to legalize marijuana use by adults. Measures were winning by wide margins in Arizona, Montana, New Jersey and South Dakota, as votes continued to be counted early Nov. 4. Medical marijuana also was being approved by wide margins in Mississippi and South Dakota as tallies continued.

Elsewhere, Nevada voters approved a constitutional amendment to remove the ban on same-sex marriage from the state's constitution that has existed for two decades.

The measure was an effort to clean up constitutional language following the 2015 U.S. Supreme Court ruling in *Obergefell v. Hodges* that struck down state bans on same-sex marriage as a violation of the U.S. Constitution.

Unofficial results showed the issue was passing 61.5% to 38.5% early Nov. 4. State election officials said they would wait until Nov. 5 before announcing any further results.

In Florida, voters endorsed a constitutional amendment to raise the state's minimum wage to \$15 an hour by September 2026. The amendment needed a supermajority of 60% of voters for it to be adopted. Final unofficial results showed the measure received 60.8% approval.

9:45 a.m. CST, Nov. 4, 2020

An unusual election has a glimmer of civility

By John Kenneth White

From a personal Catholic perspective, 2020 was the most unusual election I have ever witnessed.

I have taught at The Catholic University of America for 32 years. For the *first* time, student leaders of the College Democrats and College Republican chapters were asked to sign a civility pledge. They did so and behaved very civilly. Both leaders like and respect each other.

But the partisan tensions between faculty and administration are very apparent, and there have been some uncivil tweets. In addition, campus public safety issued a notice that while there may be disruptions and civil unrest in downtown Washington, D.C., they did *not* expect such disruptions to occur either on campus or in the immediate vicinity. This, too, is a first. Never before have our campus public safety leaders sent out this kind of notice before an election.

A Catholic parish in Bethesda, Maryland, held a holy hour the night before the election to pray for the country. Having been a member there for many years, I know that this, too, is a first. It's a welcome thing but, again, just hasn't happened before.

It's very clear that the divisions within the Catholic Church are not healed but only exacerbated. Catholic priests and bishops argued before the election, and they will continue to argue after it. I have seen divisions within parishes and parish communities. The pandemic has made it easier for Catholics, like me, to "church hop" from one parish to another online. And as that happens, individual Catholics, like me, tend to find their own comfort zones.

The one hopeful sign I take away from the election is that at least at Catholic University, students are largely civil, tolerant and respectful. In the recent past, campus Democrats and Republicans have held many joint activities, and there is a spirit of friendship and cooperation. A few students even belong to both groups just to dabble in the different experiences offered by each one.

[John Kenneth White is a professor of politics at the Catholic University of America and the author of *What Happened to the Republican Party?* He is a national co-chair of [Catholics for Biden](#).]

7:15 a.m. CST, Nov. 4, 2020

As Trump falsely calls 'fraud,' expert says vote counting going normally

By Christopher White

Shortly after midnight, President Donald Trump falsely tweeted "We are up BIG, but they are trying to STEAL the Election. We will never let them do it." During a speech at the White House in the wee hours of the morning, he went even further, claiming without any evidence that there had been "a major fraud on our nation."

"We want the law to be used in a proper manner," he continued. "We'll be going to the U.S. Supreme Court. We want all voting to stop."

In response, the Biden campaign said the president's efforts "to shut down the counting of duly cast ballots was outrageous, unprecedented, and incorrect." As of Wednesday morning, ballots are still being counted in Michigan, Wisconsin, Pennsylvania and Georgia (among other states) — all of which will prove decisive for either candidate to win the White House.

Last week [we reported](#) that faith leaders across the country have been mobilizing to ensure that every vote is counted before a determination of the election outcome is made.

Given the president's reckless rhetoric, this morning I reached out to Chris Crawford, who has led faith outreach for the [National Task Force on Election Crises](#), a cross-partisan group of experts on election security and promoting free and fair elections.

"While the president's early and erroneous proclamation of victory was certainly alarming, we know this morning what we have expected all along: Thousands of Americans across the country are doing their part to make our system work," he told me. "The counting of legitimate votes is continuing in multiple states and will continue until every vote is counted. We should all focus on ensuring every eligible American's voice is heard and their vote counted."

"We are in the exact scenario that many of us have been preparing for, in which the results shift as our election workers count votes that were cast by mail or through early voting," Crawford continued.

"This is normal, it was expected, and I anticipate leaders across our country will affirm the vote counting process - especially the faith leaders who have been calling for every vote to be counted and for a peaceful transition or continuation of power."

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8:38 p.m. CST, Nov. 3, 2020

Two Catholic allies of Trump lead live events

By Christopher White

The nun who [offered a full throttled endorsement](#) of President Donald Trump at the Republican National Convention in August is stepping back into the spotlight on election night, this time sticking a bit closer to the spiritual realm rather than the political arena.

Sr. Deirdre Byrne, a member of the Little Workers of the Sacred Hearts, who said "Donald Trump is the most pro-life president this nation has ever had," [led a live](#)

[rosary](#) from Our Lady of Grace Parish in Indian Land, South Carolina.

Byrne's ally, Taylor Marshall, a Trump advisory board member, has been leading live updates throughout the day, [telling viewers](#) around 7 p.m. Central that "it's looking good people. It's looking really good," saying Florida and Pennsylvania are looking strong for Trump. Marshall had previously done a six-hour-straight marathon of live broadcasts on his YouTube page.

"Texas is red, don't let anyone tell you different," he said, adding that Georgia is also going for Trump.

Meanwhile, in a nonpartisan initiative, Archbishop Bernard Hebda of St. Paul and Minneapolis [is speaking](#) at the Braver Angels ecumenical gathering meant to bring together Republicans, Democrats and Independents alike in a spirit of reconciliation.

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8:20 p.m. CST, Nov. 3, 2020

Multi-faith, multiracial religious leaders gather, pray ahead of results

By Yunuen Trujillo

In preparation for what will likely be a long and tumultuous night waiting for election results, lay and ordained religious leaders gathered today via Zoom for a moment of prayer and centering.

Yolanda Brown, the [parish life director](#) at Blessed Sacrament Jesuit Parish in Hollywood, California, started the prayer service by asking attendees to center themselves around the needs of the community: "[God wants] genuine leadership that will give us the unity and peace that our people clamor for. ... [God] will give us all that our community requires, quality education, health care, affordable housing, just criminal systems, community services that are even beyond our dreams and desires, equity and dignity of one another ... there is no division but total unity."

As part of a multi-faith coalition, Brown's prayer was followed by a prayer lead by Hedab Tarifi, a Muslim leader and board member of the Islamic Center of Southern

California. "Islam stresses the responsibility and accountability of the individual, how we are individually responsible to our families, communities. ... But Islam also stresses the role of community and how we are each other's keepers."

The leaders gathered as part of a multi-faith, multiracial coalition of lay and ordained leaders working to create a community that reflects the dignity of all. The gathering was lead by [LA Voice](#) Executive Director Rev. Zach Hoover — LA Voice is a subsidiary of the national group [Faith in Action](#). Hoover reminded everyone of the reason for the gathering: "This is an opportunity to center down ... to lift up the cries of our own heart, our own communities, to pray for our county, our state, our country." The gathering was also an opportunity to prepare mentally, emotionally and spiritually for whatever the results of the election are.

Many of the leaders in attendance have been working to pass [Proposition 15](#) at the state level, making calls via virtual phone banks. Proposition 15 would close a long-standing tax loophole for commercial and industrial property, with a sizeable portion of the revenue slated to be distributed to school districts and community colleges.

In addition, with some of the leaders in attendance being undocumented immigrants themselves, and all other leaders having worked to pass immigration reform or to protect immigrants at the local level, they were all mindful of how the federal election results will affect immigration policies.

"[We have worked hard] now we come back to God and ask God to accept our deeds and grant us the change that we all have been working hard for," Hedab prayed. "Whatever the results, we should not think God almighty is not listening to our prayers, on the contrary, we should see it as a sign that the work continues until positive change happens."

[Yunuen Trujillo is an immigration attorney, a faith-based community organizer and a lay minister. She is the religious formation coordinator (Spanish) with the Catholic Ministry with Lesbian and Gay Persons of the Archdiocese of Los Angeles, and the founder of the Instagram [@LGBTCatholics](#).]

8:02 p.m. CST, Nov. 3, 2020

Catholic young adult voters hopeful on Election Day

By Jocelyn A. Sideco

Meet Rose, Aidan and Katie: three young adults trying to make sense of Election Day.

Rose Murphy is a senior theology/religious studies and public affairs major at Seattle University where she serves as the student body vice president for university affairs. "Everybody's holding their breath," Murphy told NCR. "There are a lot of spaces created for the next couple of days for various religious traditions to process what has happened or what is happening or what it means."

This election is personal for Aidan Miano, a senior business major at Marquette University who serves as the student director of the Marquette Action Program. Although he was baptized as an infant in the church, he didn't connect with his faith until he was introduced to Catholic social teaching at his Jesuit high school in Dallas, Texas.

"This election is not about whether or not I agree with certain tax plans or how much I think we need to invest in infrastructure," said Miano, who identifies as Latino. "This election is about my safety, security and access to constitutional rights as a U.S. citizen."

Katie Delaney lives in Silver Spring, Maryland, works in Tacoma Park, Maryland, and just began an online doctoral program in the School of Education at the University of San Francisco. Delaney is grateful for this community of scholars and leans on them for support and modeling.

"The School of Education invites all their students to practice a humanizing pedagogy while they offer many options for support," she said. "Our education and our work are about justice and healing in the world, so we practice it together now."

When I asked them what they found hope in today, they shared:

"Today I hope that people show up in the way they feel called, listening to what the community needs from them," said Delaney. "Since no one can do it all, I want to trust that we will each lean more into the roles we have to play."

Miano said: "I hope that young people can continue to be passionate about what they believe is right and just, even if I don't agree with them. It makes me feel safe when I see others passionately fight for what they believe is right."

According to Murphy: "There is potential for young folks to get discouraged by the result or not having an answer. It's important to lean into that and recognize the time and the space. And whatever the result, I hope people will stay engaged."

[Jocelyn A. Sideco, a Young Voices columnist for NCR, is a retreat leader, spiritual director and innovative minister who specializes in mission-centered ministry.]

7:39 p.m. CST, Nov. 3, 2020

Every single vote is sacred

By Sr. Simone Campbell

Last night I joined Oprah Winfrey and faith leaders from across the country on Zoom for a night of healing ahead of Election Day. For me, it was a sign of hope for our struggling democracy. In the face of immense odds during the pandemic, people across the nation have lived up to Pope Francis' "equally sacred" priorities, helping the most marginalized among us and making the world more just. Today, I am confident that work has continued in the ballot box.

In September and October, the Nuns on the Bus [virtually traveled the nation](#), bringing together hundreds of people across the country, who are doing the most holy work of helping the most marginalized people among us. Tamer Malone with Black Leaders Organizing for Communities in Wisconsin, warned that "Because of this pandemic, a lot of people are out of a job. Kids are not in school, so now [parents are] going to have to manage either working from home and schooling their children at the same time or trying to find another job while schooling their children from home. Mental health is a big, big thing right now." Carina Jackson, the chief operations officer at Mariners Inn, acknowledged that "COVID is going to impact every area of our lives — income, health, [and] housing."

And in Michigan, we heard from Joan Ebbitt, the director of mental health counseling services at Siena Heights University, who explained that "we have lost the middle class. Everything is being squeezed and the poor get poorer and the 1% gets richer, I think that's a huge problem that's not going to change until we make some changes."

People like Joan, Carina and Tamar are doing such important work on behalf of the marginalized people all across the country. They understand how deeply the unemployed, those worried about losing their health care, or people grieving the loss of a loved one from COVID-19 are all hurting, and are desperate to have their voice heard in this election.

That's why yesterday, we worked with Nuns and Nones to organize over 500 Catholic sisters and allies to send letters to secretaries of state in Ohio, Pennsylvania, Michigan and Wisconsin that stress the importance of counting all votes and encouraging them to ensure a fair election. It's also why 30 Catholic sisters have traveled to poll sites in the Milwaukee and Detroit metropolitan areas with election defenders, ensuring everyone eligible is able to vote. Sisters are engaged in every way to ensure that everyone's vote is counted.

The pandemic and the economic crisis that has come with it reminds us that there are people all across this country who have felt unheard for too long. Every single vote is sacred and must be cast and counted in this election, and I'm going to do everything I can to make sure that happens. And then, after the election, we are all going to stay engaged and continue to listen to our people. We will embody Pope Francis' call in [Fratelli Tutti](#) to "be ready to listen to other points of view and to make room for everyone."

[Social Service Sister Simone Campbell is the Executive Director of Network Lobby for Catholic Social Justice and leader of Nuns on the Bus. She has led six cross-country Nuns on the Bus tours focused on tax justice, health care, immigration reform, voter turnout, and mending the gaps in income and wealth inequality.]

7:08 p.m. CST, Nov. 3, 2020

Iowa has significant Catholic history, deep Democratic roots

By Michael Sean Winters

Iowa is a state with a distinct, historically significant Catholic area along the state's eastern border by the Mississippi River. The [Diocese of Dubuque](#) was created in 1837 and in 1893, it became an archdiocese and the city, with less than 60,000 people, is one of the [smallest cities in the country](#) to serve as home for an archdiocese. It is home to [Loras College](#), one of the best small Catholic liberal arts

colleges in the country.

Dubuque also anchors the state's 1st Congressional District which my colleague [reported from in 2018](#). That year, Democrat Abby Finkenauer defeated incumbent Republican Rod Blum [by 50% to 45%](#).

In 2016, Donald Trump [narrowly won Dubuque County](#), 47.2% to Hillary Clinton's 46%. In 2008, Barack Obama trounced John McCain by a margin of [56% to 39%](#). In 2012, the margin narrowed, but Obama beat Mitt Romney handily, [with 56.6% to 42.1%](#). That is why Trump's victory four years ago was so astounding.

Also along the eastern border, [Davenport has been a Catholic diocese since 1881](#). It is home to Scott County, another Democratic stronghold. Clinton held on to win the county four years ago, by the narrow margin of 46.9% to 45.4%. In 2008, Obama swamped McCain, 57% to 42% and registered essentially the same margin in 2012, beating Romney by 56.3% to 42.6%.

The largest county in the state is Polk, home to the capital city Des Moines. Clinton won the county handily four years ago, 51.7% to 40.4%. Obama had also won Polk County by large margins, 57% to 42% in both 2008 and 2012.

Of the three, Dubuque is the least populated, with 66,974 [registered voters](#). Scott County has 120,509 registered voters and Polk County has 313,447 registered voters. Given the enormously high turnout nationwide, we need to focus not only on the margins, but on the vote totals in these different counties.

In addition to the presidential contest, Iowa has a Senate race that has shifted all year between "lean Republican" and "toss-up." Incumbent Republican Sen. Joni Ernst is trying to hold on against a strong challenge from Theresa Greenfield and her [inability to name the price of soybeans in a debate](#) was one of the more embarrassing of the season. Greenfield knew the price of corn to the penny.

[Michael Sean Winters is NCR political columnist.]

6:52 p.m. CST, Nov. 3, 2020

Coffee stops give insights into Central Pennsylvania electorate

By Brian Roewe

It was a tale of two Central Pennsylvania coffee stops for Franciscan Friar Michael Lasky.

In the afternoon, he visited Bamse Coffee, a converted old Episcopalian church in Shamokin where a closed wooden door had a Luther-esque message taped to its front: "Today, Nov. 3, Bamse Coffee will be CLOSED to empower you, our valued customers, and our own employees to be able to go out and have your voices heard."

The get-out-the-vote message at Bamse stood in stark contrast to Lasky's encounter earlier at a gas station while getting a coffee, where a customer and a cashier each declared to all present that they did not intend to vote and questioned whether theirs would even matter.

The two scenes illustrated to Lasky the varying responses to the election in Northumberland County, situated in the state's anthracite coal region. When Lasky, pastor at Our Lady of Hope Catholic Church in Coal Township and St. Patrick Church in Trevorton, has preached about the election, he's received less response than when he addressed Pope Francis' comments in a recent documentary about same-sex civil unions.

"I find the vast majority here pretty quiet about it, to be quite honest. It's not talked about as much," Lasky told NCR.

Pennsylvania has emerged as a key battleground state. FiveThirtyEight has called it the [most likely tipping-point state](#) to determine the election.

While President Donald Trump has tried to make fracking a pivotal issue for Pennsylvania voters, Lasky said his sense is it's not a major concern for an economically depressed area still struggling to rebuild from the decline in coal.

"Here, people know coal is over," said Lasky, a member of the Faith Alliance for Revitalization working in the Shamokin area. "As far as oil or gas, at this point they're just trying to find a job."

Elsewhere in the state, faith leaders lent their voices to those calling for free and fair elections in the Keystone State amid a series of legal challenges regarding mail-in

ballots and voting. More than 1,100 faith leaders nationwide [signed onto a letter](#) calling on the heads of both major political parties as well as governors, secretaries of state, and mayors to ensure free and fair elections and to prevent efforts of voter suppression.

"All of the constitutional freedoms that we enjoy, including our religious freedom, depend on the integrity of our elections — the foundation of American democracy," the letter read.

On a media call Nov. 2, Rabbi Elyse Wechterman, executive director of the Reconstructionist Rabbinical Association in Wyncote, outside Philadelphia, called for every vote to be counted and steps taken to stop actions aimed at intimidating voters. She planned to be at the polls Tuesday helping to keep the peace and deescalate any problems.

"I think it makes a difference for people to see community leaders out and present and with them at this time," Wechterman said.

[Brian Roewe is NCR environment correspondent. His email address is broewe@ncronline.org. Follow him on Twitter: [@BrianRoewe](https://twitter.com/BrianRoewe).]

6:31 p.m. CST, Nov. 3, 2020

Campaign to engage young Latino voters turns to group prayer

By Soli Salgado

A campaign geared toward [engaging young Latinos](#) to turn out in this election, #Every30Seconds (#Cada30Segundos) has turned to group prayers in the waning days of the election, connecting with thousands via virtual platforms.

The campaign's name is based on the statistic that 800,000 Latinos turn 18 each year — or roughly one new eligible voter every 30 seconds, according to [Pew Research Center](#).

Leading the national campaign are a number of Hispanic Catholic organizations: La RED, the National Catholic Network de Pastoral Juvenil Hispana; the National Catholic Council for Hispanic Ministry; the National Catholic Partnership on Disabilities; the Office of Hispanic and Ethnic Ministry of the Diocese of Joliet, Illinois; and Instituto Fe

y Vida, as well as several other national faith-based organizations.

On Nov. 2, the group hosted a prayer service via Zoom and [Facebook Live](#) for peace in the elections, reaching more than 2,000 viewers thus far. They've also connected with thousands more as they've prayed the [Novena of the Elections](#) from the U.S. bishop's conference

Tonight, Nov. 3, the campaign is hosting another novena, beginning at 8:30 p.m. EST on its #Every30Seconds [Facebook page](#), with a diocesan leader from Orlando, Florida.

[Soli Salgado is a staff writer for [Global Sisters Report](#). Her email address is ssalgado@ncronline.org.]

6:10 p.m. CST, Nov. 3, 2020

Detroit nuns and 'nones' work to deter voter intimidation

By Christine Schenk



Jesuit Volunteer Salena Ibrahim inscribes thanks on a Sisters of Mercy automobile participating in defending Detroit election Nov. 3. (Courtesy of Sr. Erin McDonald,

CSJ)

Amid fears of [voter intimidation](#) in Detroit and the removal of [unruly poll challengers](#) at an early voting site, a group of Catholic sisters, priests and young adults came together today to support peace at the polls.

The effort is an outgrowth of the local "[nuns and nones](#)" community fostered by the Sisters of Mercy. One of the "nones" is active with the nonpartisan grassroots organization [Election Defenders](#).

"Election Defenders felt like it might be helpful to have mobile teams of local faith leaders visit polling sites and be a visible peaceful presence to people," said St. Joseph Sr. Erin McDonald, who helped organize today's outreach in the Detroit area. McDonald works in campus ministry at University of Detroit Mercy.

As of 3:30 p.m. election day, her group had visited several sites in urban Detroit, with its predominantly black population, and in Dearborn where there are large numbers of Muslim and Latinx citizens.

"Thankfully, so far it's been relatively quiet," she reported. "We've been greeting and talking to people, handing out bottles of water, snacks and [personal protective equipment] if they need it."

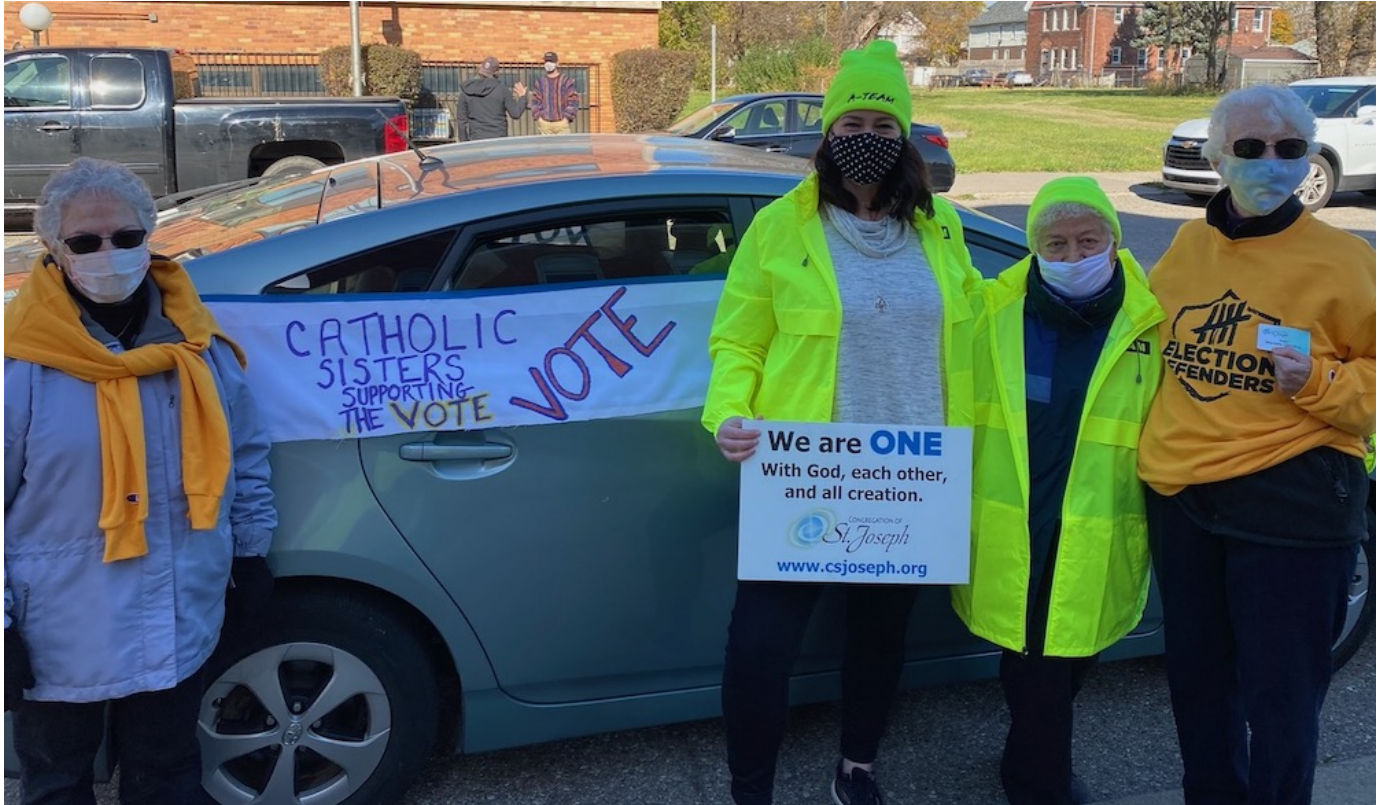
Faith leaders from the Detroit area included Sisters of Mercy, Sisters of St. Joseph, two Jesuit priests, and one diocesan priest. They were joined by Salina Ibrahim, a Jesuit volunteer, and Elizabeth Glasglow, one of the millennial "nones."

Similar initiatives organized by the "nuns and nones" with Election Defenders are also taking place today in Ohio and in Milwaukee where 27 faith leaders volunteered.

For McDonald, who has worked in a refugee camp in Rwanda and with asylum seekers in the United States, today's witness was especially meaningful:

This is an important day. Every American should have access to voting. I worked with people who were fighting for that basic right — to have a voice. ... Like everybody else I'm deeply affected by the divisions and the negativity. Our [St. Joseph] charism is to be a presence of unity. And so whatever I can do to help add to positivity and unity, that's important to

me.



From left: St. Joseph Srs. Cathy Desantis, Erin McDonald, Nina Rodriguez and Marcella Clancy support the vote in Detroit Nov. 3. (Courtesy of Sr. Erin McDonald, CSJ)

[St. Joseph Sr. Christine Schenk is an NCR board member and writes the [Simply Spirit](#) column.]

5:30 p.m. CST, Nov. 3, 2020

Key counties in Florida may have clues to the Catholic vote

By Michael Sean Winters

It will be next to impossible to know tonight how Catholics are affecting the race, but I will be looking in key counties for some clues. I'll start with Florida because the state's polls close early and report quickly.

[Miami-Dade County](#) is not only the largest county in the state, its population is 27% Latino. A Democratic stronghold, there have been reports that President Donald Trump is doing better this year than four years ago, in large part by warning the Democrats are in the control of socialists, and many of the Latinos in Miami-Dade are Cuban or Venezuelan, coming from countries where real socialism has been a disaster for people.

In 2008, Barack Obama [carried](#) Miami-Dade County with 58% of the vote to John McCain's 42%. In 2016, Hillary Clinton carried the county by an even wider margin, winning 63% of the vote to Donald Trump's 34%. It will be interesting to see if tonight's numbers are closer to 2008 or 2016.

Two counties in the center of the state will also tell us something about the Catholic vote. [Osceola County](#) is 54% Hispanic, and most of them are from Puerto Rico, the Dominican Republic and Central America. Puerto Ricans are already citizens, so they can register to vote as soon as they arrive. [Orange County](#) is 32% Hispanic, with similar nations of origin, and is far more populous, home to Orlando. The area's tourist industry has been devastated by COVID-19.

In 2008, Obama [won](#) Osceola County with 59% of the vote to John McCain's 40%. In 2016, Hillary Clinton captured 60% of the vote to Trump's 36%. Similarly, in Orange County, Clinton [beat](#) Obama's totals, winning 60% of the vote to Trump's 35% while Obama captured only 59% to McCain's 40%. The differences are marginal, but we are talking about Florida, and margins matter.

Puerto Ricans have always tended to lean Democratic, both on the island and in the diaspora. Trump's mishandling of the response to Hurricane Maria did nothing to endear him to the people there. Who can forget the leader of the free world [throwing paper towels](#) to a roomful of people who had lost their homes? It was demeaning beyond belief. Many of the more recent Puerto Rican arrivals in Florida came after the hurricane devastated the island's economy, which was shaky to begin with. That [failed response to Hurricane Maria](#) was a kind of premonition of the president's failed response to COVID-19.

Two other counties I will be keeping an eye on are Sumter and Pinellas. [Sumter](#) is home to The Villages, the nation's largest retirement community. You may recall the video of a golf cart parade in Sumter in which a Trump supporter [shouted](#) "White power" and the president — the "least racist person in the room," according to

himself — retweeted it. Trump won the county in a blowout four years ago, with 68% of the vote to Clinton's 29%. In 2008, McCain captured 63% of the county's voters to Obama's 36%. If Trump's numbers drop off significantly, that is the trend that could cost him the entire state — as well as indicate how Arizona, which is also home to many retirees, will go later in the night.

[Pinellas County](#), centered in St. Petersburg, is one of the Obama-Trump counties: Obama won it twice, and then Trump flipped it four years ago. In 2008, Obama's margin was significant, 53% to McCain's 45%. In 2012, the margin shrunk but was still significant, as Obama captured 52% to Mitt Romney's 46%. Trump narrowly beat Clinton 48% to 47%.

[Michael Sean Winters writes the [Distinctly Catholic](#) column, covering the nexus of religion and politics for NCR.]

5:07 p.m. CST, Nov. 3, 2020

Christians must stand up to 'national narcissism,' Chittister says

By Lucy Grindon

"Where do we go from here?" Former NCR executive editor [Tom Roberts](#) and [Benedictine Sr. Joan Chittister](#) tackled that question in an [NCR Facebook Live discussion](#) this afternoon.



Tom Roberts and Benedictine Sr. Joan Chittister during the NCR Facebook Live discussion Nov. 3 (NCR screenshot)

Roberts began by asking how the past four years have reshaped our national character, morality and faith in institutions, citing journalist David Brooks, who wondered, in a [recent op-ed column](#), whether the United States still has a "floor of decency."

Chittister responded that our national standards of decency have begun to break down. "Trump has made it very clear that you can walk into an established system of 400 years and make mincemeat of it simply by ignoring it," she said.

Asked how Christians can identify real prophets, when so many people claim faith as the motivation for their actions, Chittister said the answer is clear: "When your understanding of justice is genuinely justice and mercy for all, then you know you're on the right path."

When we equivocate on issues like equal rights, we turn away from the will of God, she said. The prophet Jesus says no to everything that is not of God, she said, but yes to whatever promotes the good life for a good world.

"Our hearts know that definition, and we know when we trespass it, but we have now accepted as substitutes for that yes and that no the self. It's a kind of a national narcissism," she said. "We're so mixed-up spiritually we can't possibly function well politically. All we can do is get into the arena."

[[Lucy Grindon](#) is an NCR Bertelsen intern based in Los Angeles. Her email address is lgrindon@ncronline.org.]

4:40 p.m. CST, Nov. 3, 2020

Catholic Trump supporters optimistic

By Christopher White

[Catholic Vote](#), the right-wing group backing Trump's reelection bid, has sent out an email blast to its base saying the swing states of Florida and Arizona look "tremendous."

"The needed Election Day Trump surge is well underway," wrote founder Brian Burch in an email Tuesday afternoon.

He also signaled hope that Trump is performing well among Republicans in the swing states of Michigan, Wisconsin and Pennsylvania. "Turnout among African Americans is higher than 2016, but lower than 2012 and 2008 when Barack Obama was on the ballot. This could be a big factor in Philadelphia and tip Pennsylvania."

"Turnout among young voters is abysmal," he added. "The Left has banked on a youth surge. Early signs suggest the numbers are nowhere near what they hoped for."

Despite Burch's optimism, young voter turnout [surged in early voting](#) in record numbers.

Among Trump's other major Catholic-led backers, Susan B. Anthony List, the pro-life lobbyist organization, [announced](#) that it had broken records, spending \$52 million in this election cycle toward Trump's reelection and key Senate races.

While Trump has taken an unusually long break from Twitter during the day, many of his Catholic surrogates have been hard at work.

"Those who advocate for killing the unborn, shouldn't be allowed to govern the living," Catharine O'Neill, head of Catholics for Trump, wrote [on Twitter](#).

"Just like in 2016, I'm bucking the consultants and predicting a Trump win. Polling is for dummies," wrote Catholics for Trump advisory board member Matt Schlapp [on Twitter](#).

EWTN, the Trump-friendly and predominantly anti-Pope Francis Catholic news conglomerate, also sent out a prayer to viewers and readers earlier today.

"Give our citizens the courage to choose leaders of our nation who respect the sanctity of unborn human life, the sanctity of marriage, the sanctity of marital relations, the sanctity of the family, and the sanctity of the aging," [it stated](#).

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4:06 p.m. CST, Nov. 3, 2020

Pax Christi director urges Catholics to stand up for justice

By Madeleine Davison

On a day when many people are feeling anxious about the future, [Johnny Zokovitch](#) kept his message simple.

In a message to Pax Christi's email subscribers, quoting [Micah 6:8](#), Zokovitch, executive director of Pax Christi USA, urged Catholics to "do justice and to love goodness, and to walk humbly with your God."

This election is "a chance for us to reject the extremism and polarization that arises when we elect leaders who both personally and in policy choose to demean and dehumanize other human beings," he said in an email to NCR.

Zokovitch said that he hopes the election results come out quickly and accurately, and added that he doesn't fear the future or expect there will be violence after the election.

Nevertheless, he said, President Donald Trump has emboldened groups that espouse xenophobic and racist violence, and he has used division and hatred to further his aims in an election cycle rife with disinformation.

"Sometimes we're called to put our faith into nonviolent action to resist injustice and stand up to threats to undermine our rights," he said. "If that's what we're called to, I trust that massive amounts of people will step up and do just that."

God calls Catholics to stand with the marginalized, the oppressed and the disenfranchised and to fight injustice and voter suppression and intimidation at the polls, Zokovitch said.

He added that Pax Christi USA is committed to making sure that every vote is counted in a free and fair election, and that the results are honored — through direct

action, if necessary.

Drawing on Pope Francis' words in [Fratelli Tutti](#), Zokovitch said Catholics should look to the example of St. Francis of Assisi, respecting creation and one another, and engaging in respectful dialogue with opponents.

Zokovitch hopes that after the election, Catholics can turn their energy toward healing, prioritizing care for others and for the environment. He cautioned against calls for reconciliation that don't address underlying injustices.

"Peace is the result of justice," he said. "Unity without respect and justice isn't unity at all. ... Any appeal for unity that doesn't encompass the necessity of justice is empty."

[Madeleine Davison is an NCR Bertelsen intern. Her email address is mdavison@ncronline.org.]

3:45 p.m. CST, Nov. 3, 2020

Sr. Simone Campbell finds calm amid the nerve-wracking wait

By Dan Stockman

Sr. Simone Campbell is happy when the phone rings with yet another reporter wanting her to answer questions, or when she needs to respond to an email — anything to keep her mind off the election.

A Sister of Social Service, the executive director of [Network](#) and fresh from a recent [Nuns on the Bus](#) virtual tour, Campbell voted at Major League Baseball stadium Nationals Park a week ago, so today there's no line to stand in or voting precinct to travel to.

"It was really exciting," she said of voting on the first day of early voting in Washington, D.C. "We took snacks and were prepared for a long wait, but we got there in the afternoon and by then the line had dissipated, so we got right in and out."

That's not to say Election Day has been uneventful.

Campbell said Network, a Catholic social justice lobby, received an email today from a man whose father is dying.

"He wrote to say his father's been struggling for life for three weeks, but when he regained consciousness [Monday], he said he wanted to vote," she said. "He couldn't manage much more than making his mark on the ballot and directing how it should be filled out, but he did it. Today his daughter-in-law is driving 250 miles round-trip to deliver his ballot."

Stories like that are a welcome respite from the nerve-wracking wait, Campbell said. So how does she keep calm in the meantime?

"Prayer. Engaging with people. I'm reading [*Fratelli Tutti*](#) again. I spent the morning making calls to turn out the vote," she said. "I've been doing everything I can to effect change."

[Dan Stockman is national correspondent for Global Sisters Report. His email address is dstockman@ncronline.org. Follow him [on Twitter](#) or [on Facebook](#).]

3:24 p.m. CST, Nov. 3, 2020

Will climate change motivate voters?

By Brian Roewe

Will climate change be a deciding issue in Tuesday's election? At least one former Obama official thinks so.

Samantha Power, the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations from 2013 to 2017 under former President Barack Obama, said on Twitter that "many independent and swing voters are voting on the basis of who will do more to tackle climate change." She added that "2020 is the first American Climate Election."

Power, who is Catholic and a [co-chair of Catholics for Biden](#), held the U.N. position when nearly 200 countries adopted the Paris Agreement on climate change in 2015. The U.S. on Wednesday is [set to officially withdraw from that accord](#), which established goals for reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Besides exiting the Paris Agreement, during his four years in office, President Donald Trump has rolled back more than 100 environmental regulations. Former Vice President Joe Biden has pledged to reenter the Paris accord and proposed a \$2 trillion plan to transition the nation to clean energy and reduce emissions.

Polls have shown climate change becoming an increasingly prominent issue for voters over time, though mostly along partisan lines. A [Pew Research Center survey](#) conducted in January — before the coronavirus outbreak spread in the U.S. — showed 78% of Democrats calling climate change a top priority for the president and Congress, up from 47% in 2008. Among Republicans, that increase was far more modest, up to 21% in January from 15% in 2008.

How big a factor will climate be in 2020? Polls are mixed.

Wide majorities of voters across faith denominations view comprehensive climate legislation as [an important priority](#) for the next president and Congress, with nearly 40% calling it a top priority.

Polls from The New York Times/Sienna College [released this week](#) showed majorities of likely voters in battleground states Arizona (57%) and Florida (54%) worried about how climate change is impacting their lives. In both cases, concern is much higher among likely Biden voters (90% Arizona; 84% Florida) than Trump supporters (12% Arizona; 21% Florida). Younger voters (ages 18-44) are also much more worried about climate impacts in those states.

A September [NPR/PBS NewsHour/Marist poll](#) showed climate change ranking behind only the economy and coronavirus as a top issue, largely from likely Democrat-supporting voters. Other surveys have shown climate to be important, but among all voters it still trails well behind issues like the economy and health care.

[Brian Roewe is NCR environment correspondent. His email address is broewe@ncronline.org. Follow him on Twitter: [@BrianRoewe](#).]

3 p.m. CST, Nov. 3, 2020

Sisters are on a prayer campaign for Election Day peace

By Dan Stockman

Amid national fears that rage over the election will turn violent, nearly 200 congregations of women religious are praying for peace today.

The prayers are coordinated, so sisters are praying throughout the entire 24 hours of Election Day.

The School Sisters of Notre Dame Central Pacific Province said in a written statement that the idea began with Sr. Mary Kay Brooks, who was meditating on a vision statement calling the sisters to respond "to urgent needs and living the Gospel call to justice and peace."

Brooks said she was overwhelmed by the call for peace, especially as Election Day approached.

"Could we not band together as women religious from around the country and pray for peace on Nov. 3?" she wondered. "There is a plethora of material for the days before the election and even after, but not much of anything for the day of the election."

Letters were sent to each member of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious, the statement said, inviting them to collaborate in praying for peace in our country, safety for poll workers and safety for those voting. More than 175 congregations signed on.

"We encourage Sisters, associates, family, friends and ministry partners to join the congregations in prayer throughout the day to continue building this community of peace and unity," Brooks said in the statement. "As women religious, we pray for urgent needs throughout the world; let us be a visible sign of that gift which has been entrusted to us."

Those wishing to join can use the [prayer](#) developed by School Sisters of Notre Dame General Superior Sr. Roxanne Schares, or use the [Online Prayer Room for Peace](#).

[Dan Stockman is national correspondent for Global Sisters Report. His email address is dstockman@ncronline.org. Follow him [on Twitter](#) or [on Facebook](#).]

2:40 p.m. CST, Nov. 3, 2020

Biden's Irish Catholic roots on display during final day of campaigning

By Christopher White

After starting the morning attending Mass, Biden headed to Scranton where [his Irish Catholic roots](#) again proved inescapable.

During a brief visit to his childhood home, Biden [signed the wall of the living room](#).

"From this house to the White House with the grace of God. Joe Biden 11-3-2020," he wrote. In 2008, [he visited the same home](#), signing his bedroom wall with the message: "I am home."

Also in Scranton, Biden spoke at Local Union 445. While there, he was approached by a man by the name of Joe Gilbooley who told Biden about his family friend Susan Corbett. Gilbooley told reporters that she is terminally ill with cancer and comes from a big Irish Catholic family like Biden. He added that she had already written her obituary urging folks to vote for Biden in case she died before Election Day.

After speaking with Gilbooley, Biden pledged that he would make a call to her.

[Christopher White is NCR national correspondent. His email address is cwhite@ncronline.org. Follow him on Twitter: [@CWWhite212](https://twitter.com/CWWhite212).]

2:15 p.m. CST, Nov. 3, 2020

How and where faith-oriented voters could swing the vote

By Jack Jenkins, Religion News Service

WASHINGTON — After more than a year of campaigning, the 2020 election is finally upon us, pitting Democrat Joe Biden against President Donald Trump.

It has been an unusually faith-focused campaign season, with [both candidates](#) repeatedly appealing to religion and religious voters over the past few months — albeit often in very different ways.

But as the final votes are counted, here are some religion-related trends to watch.

Shifts among white mainliners and Catholics in the Rust Belt

Trump's coalition won in all [three major categories](#) of white Christians in 2016 — white evangelicals, white Catholics and white mainline Protestants — and secured the largest level of support from white Catholics (60%) of any candidate in at least two decades.

But Trump's favorability ratings among white Catholics — which have sizable populations in Rust Belt swing states — has [fluctuated throughout his presidency](#). [More recent polls](#) have pegged Trump's support with the group below his 2016 numbers at around 52%, while Biden, a white Catholic who has repeatedly invoked his faith on the campaign trail, gained ground.

Trump's support with white mainliners is harder to assess, as different polling outfits use different categories. But [Pew Research](#) recently reported that "white non-evangelical Protestants" have become less approving of Trump's job performance over time, dropping from 60% in February 2017 to 53% in August 2020.

The shifts may seem small, but given Trump's narrow margins of victory in Michigan, Wisconsin and Pennsylvania in 2016, a small shift could make a big difference.

Small but important shifts among Hispanic and Latino religious voters

Trump has surprised many analysts by increasing his support among Hispanic and Latino voters, a trend that extends to Hispanic Catholics: Fewer than a quarter of Latino Catholics voted for Trump in 2016, but Pew reported in August that one-third may back him this year. The shift appears to be [at least partly](#) due to Trump's moves against abortion rights, particularly in the form of conservative judges appointed to the Supreme Court.

Meanwhile, Trump has made a point to reach out to a smaller but potentially impactful community: Hispanic evangelicals. The growing group is [more split politically](#) than Hispanics overall and has a presence in swing states such as Florida and Arizona. Trump [launched](#) his "Evangelicals for Trump" initiative earlier this year in a mostly Spanish-speaking Florida megachurch.

If Trump can hold on to his gains with Hispanic Latino Catholics and inspire turnout among Hispanic evangelicals, it may be enough to push him over the top in key states.

[Jack Jenkins is a national reporter for Religion News Service and author of *American Prophets* (HarperOne, 2021). Follow him on Twitter: [@jackmjenkins](https://twitter.com/jackmjenkins).]

1:49 p.m. CST, Nov. 3, 2020

Nuns and nones push voter integrity in battleground states

By Patrick Carolan

Catholic sisters and young "seekers" have combined forces to raise issues of voter integrity with officials in four key battleground states: Michigan, Ohio, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin.

The organization [Nuns and Nones](#) — which describes itself as an alliance of Catholic sisters and spiritually diverse seekers — delivered letters to those states' senators and secretaries of state. The [letter](#), signed by more than 500 Catholic sisters and their supporters, calls on all public officials and civic leaders to commit to a free, safe and fair election, and to respect the results.

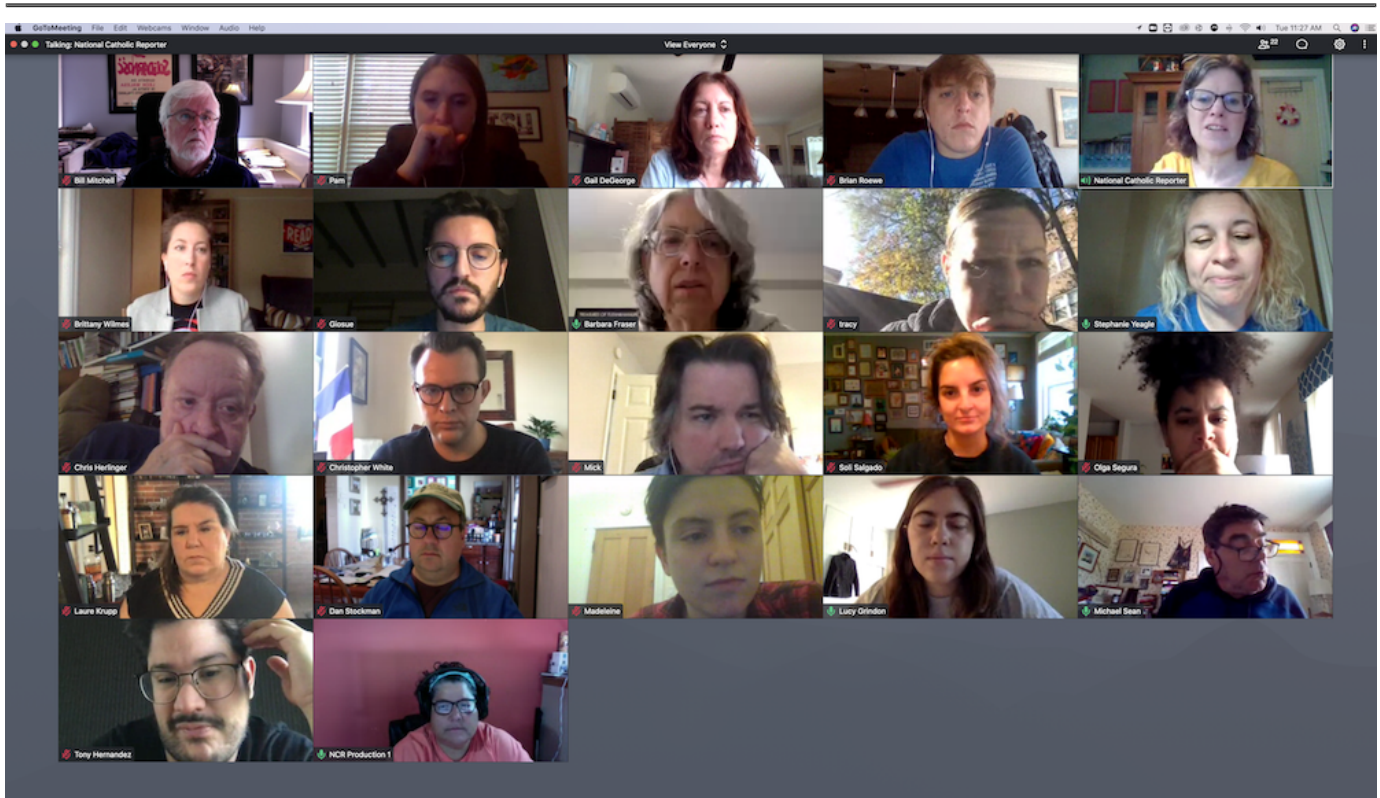
"As Catholic women religious, and our broader community, we join together to call for integrity in this election process, to protect our system of governance and our shared wellbeing," the letter says. "Every vote is sacred. Every vote must be counted. Protecting voters and ensuring that every vote is counted are matters of justice, human dignity, and the right to self-govern."

According to co-director Rachel Plattus, "Nuns and Nones is amplifying the voices of Catholic sisters and their allies to declare that #EveryVoteIsSacred, through letters to decision makers demanding a free, fair, and safe election, through action to get out the vote, and through gathering as a prayerful presence to protect our democracy."

"No system will save us — it's up to us to claim our sacred responsibility to fight for what's right, hold our leaders accountable, and build the world we want," Plattus said. "We are stronger when we join together across faith traditions and generations to do that work."

Founded in 2016, [Nuns and Nones](#) has grown from a series of dialogue events to a national spiritually-rooted movement.

[Patrick Carolan is the Catholic outreach director for Vote Common Good. He was executive director of the Franciscan Action Network since 2010 and is a co-founder of the Global Catholic Climate Movement.]



NCR, GSR and EarthBeat staff meet Nov. 3 to review election coverage. (NCR screenshot)

1:15 p.m. CST, Nov. 3, 2020

Here's a quick run-down of NCR's election day line-up

By Heidi Schlumpf

Election Day means all hands on deck or, you can see above, all faces in the Go to Meeting room.

Staff from NCR, Global Sisters Report and EarthBeat gathered this morning to review plans for the day and the rest of the week. If you're looking for the Catholic angle on the election and its aftermath, you've come to the right place. And if you're anxious or worried, you can find a community to engage with on our social media channels.

As noted in Stephanie Yeagle's post below (at 10:45 a.m. CST), we invite you [join us at 1:30 p.m. Central for a Facebook Live conversation](#) with former NCR editor Tom Roberts and Benedictine Sr. Joan Chittister about what our church and our country must do in the aftermath of the one of the most consequential elections in our history.

Later this evening, from 7 to 9 p.m. Central, I'll be joined by Miguel Diaz, a columnist for NCR's Theology en la Plaza, in [a Zoom video event](#) co-sponsored by Commonweal magazine and Catholic Theological Union.

Come back tomorrow for an 11 a.m. Central [day-after panel on Facebook](#) dissecting what we know by Wednesday morning with Pulitzer Prize finalist Melinda Henneberger and our own Michael Sean Winters, moderated by Olga Segura.

You can tune into a special election edition of the Francis Effect podcast [here](#).

We're also running a special series of columns that seek to make sense of where we, as a country and as a church, can go from here.

The daily line-up in our "[What now?: Our church and country after Election 2020](#)" series includes:

- Monday, Nov. 2: Bishop John Stowe
- Tuesday, Nov. 3: Joan Chittister
- Wednesday, Nov. 4: Dan Horan
- Thursday, Nov. 5: Olga Segura
- Friday, Nov. 6: Michael Sean Winters

All five of these essays will also be featured in our Nov. 13 print edition.

Watch for more updates to this blog throughout the evening and beyond. We're highlighting them on our social media channels with the hashtag, **@CatholicsVote2020**.

[Heidi Schlumpf is NCR executive editor. Her email address is hschlumpf@ncronline.org. Follow her on Twitter: [@HeidiSchlumpf](https://twitter.com/HeidiSchlumpf).]

12:45 p.m. CST, Nov. 3, 2020

First-time Florida voter has unusual election experience

By Brian Roewe

Mateo Gomez of Miami was looking forward to the full Election Day experience in casting his first vote — "Going to the polls, standing in line and all that."

But instead of voting in person, Gomez, 22, did so by mail a week and a half ago, a consequence of the coronavirus pandemic. He tracked his ballot, too: "It's there. It's counted."

Filling out his ballot — the first cast in his family, which immigrated from Colombia when he was 2 — was more ho-hum than he had hoped. But the weeks leading up to it were anything but ordinary for the young Catholic, a graduate student at Barry University.



mateogf98



Joe Biden addresses Gen Z at Florida town hall: "You're the best educated, you're the most open, you're the least prejudiced generation in American history. The future is yours and I'm counting on it." [#BidenTownHall](#)



99 likes

mateogf98 All I am saying is y'all have to vote. This was a powerful moment from last week. Analyze both, and choose the best one. It's not that hard. Less than three weeks away.

[View all 2 comments](#)

October 16

Mateo Gomez's Instagram post about speaking at the town hall with Vice President Joe Biden (NCR screenshot)

At the Oct. 5 NBC town hall with Democratic candidate Joe Biden, Gomez [asked the final question](#), about Biden's ability to represent his generation, given the 56-year age gap between them. Gomez said he appreciated Biden telling his generation that

"the future is yours, and I'm counting on you."

Since then, Gomez has been interviewed by half a dozen news organizations, including MSNBC, Telemundo, Univision, BBC and CBC. He also [spoke with EarthBeat](#) in September.

Gomez said he's proud to represent both Latino voters and Gen Z. Among both cohorts he's detected high levels of enthusiasm. All his friends planned to vote.

The Latino vote in battleground Florida has drawn close scrutiny, with polls indicating President Donald Trump improving on his 2016 performance. Gomez said the president's attempts to cast former Vice President Joe Biden as a socialist may have reassured Cubans and Venezuelans to continue voting Republican, but appear to have done little to win over Miami's other Latino communities, where Biden-Harris signs dominate.

Gomez said he tried to give both candidates a fair shot, but Trump's lack of plans on immigration, health care and climate change led him to vote for Biden. Plus, he added, it would be "pretty cool" to have a second Catholic president.

Despite his own flurry of media appearances, Gomez plans a low profile tonight: "I want to make sure that I'm off of social media by the time Florida has announced who won."

[Brian Roewe is NCR environment correspondent. His email address is broewe@ncronline.org. Follow him on Twitter: [@BrianRoewe](#).]

12:10 p.m. CST, Nov. 3, 2020

Racism drove suburban Catholic mom to the margins

By Don Clemmer

When a priest of the Diocese of Lafayette, Indiana, made headlines over the summer [for calling](#) Black Lives Matter protesters "maggots and parasites," the news hit Kristen Gater especially hard. The priest was set to move to her parish as her new pastor.

"If he comes to our parish, that's a dealbreaker," Gater, 35, recalls she and her husband saying to each other. Ultimately, the priest was suspended, a move that would actually hasten the departure of Gater's family from the parish and the school, where her three daughters, ages 10, 8 and 6, were enrolled.

"There were a lot of people who were upset about him not coming anymore, because they think he didn't do anything wrong," she says. The family plans to attend St. Thomas Aquinas in Indianapolis after the pandemic, a parish with an actual anti-racism initiative.



Kristen Gater of Westfield, Indiana, wears a homemade mask that is embroidered with "vote" as she prepares to work the polls on Election Day 2020. (Provided photo)

Gater is a daughter of the affluent northern suburbs of Indianapolis where, she notes, some families trick-or-treat in golf carts. She served as a nurse for over a decade before briefly working in the office at the parish school. Now she's a full-time stay-at-home mom. She sees the pandemic, privilege and racism going hand-in-hand, citing all of the people at her former parish who refused to mask.

"They're not the ones disproportionately affected by COVID," she says. That's the Black community. "And the absolute refusal to have consideration for other people was a huge issue for me. ... It's just so contradictory to the culture of life."

Her daughters are now in public school, where there's more racial and socioeconomic diversity. Gater recognizes it's been quite a journey for her, someone who grew up an ardent and faith-filled pro-life activist and even ran her college's pro-life club.

"I can't focus on one single issue when, once the babies are born, we refuse to help," she says. "I still can't believe I went from straight-ticket Republican to now working the polls as a Democrat for the marginalized."

Wearing a mask she made for today, she is working the polls as part of her conviction to get involved. She's one of the suburban women that Trump has [openly called upon for support](#). Gater says the gimmick doesn't work.

"I have girls that I am raising to be strong women," she says. "I don't want them to be dating a man who thinks Trump's OK, because he doesn't respect women, period. I mean, he doesn't respect people. ... And if you don't respect people, you don't respect women."

[Don Clemmer is a writer, communications professional and former staffer of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops. He writes from Indiana and edits Cross Roads magazine for the Catholic Diocese of Lexington. Follow him on Twitter: [@clemmer_don](#).]

11:50 a.m. CST, Nov. 3, 2020

Sisters offer care packages and prayerful presence at polls

By Soli Salgado

Those voting at polls today in the Milwaukee and Detroit metropolitan areas should keep an eye out for the "care-a-vans" that are transporting around 30 sisters to poll sites to offer snacks, a prayerful presence, and personal protective equipment for those waiting in long lines amid potential intimidation.

The cars are painted with the slogan "Every Vote is Sacred," while the sisters are wearing yellow "Election Defender" sweaters, according to a press release from the organization [Nuns and Nones](#).

These efforts are a part of [Election Defenders](#), a nonpartisan campaign that works to ensure that everyone has access to a safe polling location.

As the vast majority of sisters are in the demographic vulnerable to the coronavirus — the median age of Catholic sisters is around 80 — this action is one way for them to participate in civil causes after several months of [sitting out protests](#) due to health risks.

"It's been a challenging time for us," said Mary Kay Dobrovolny, a [Sister of Mercy](#) living in Detroit, in the press release. "Sisters can't show up in the world the way that we're used to. This caravan has given us a way to tell voters we're here for them."

[Nuns and Nones](#), a movement that unites Catholic sisters with diverse, spiritually curious young people, was a "driving force" behind the partnership with Election Defenders, according to the press release.

"Sisters continue to teach me what it means to take action from a place of deep love," said Brittany Koteles, the co-director of Nuns and Nones who also joined the caravan in Wisconsin. "I hope we can continue to inspire one another into more creative, courageous action as we move toward the future together."

[Soli Salgado is a GSR staff writer. Her email address is ssalgado@ncronline.org.]

11:30 a.m. CST, Nov. 3, 2020

Bishops urge civility, regardless of election results

By Christopher White

As both the Trump and Biden campaigns are relying on Catholic voters to carry them to victory, Catholic bishops across the country are beginning to weigh in online encouraging civility, regardless of the results.

Archbishop Paul Etienne of Seattle [posted a meditation](#) on his personal blog reflecting on Pope Francis' [recently released encyclical *Fratelli Tutti*](#), which calls for greater human fraternity and cooperation among people and nations.

"Regardless of the outcome of this election, tomorrow we have a choice to make," wrote Etienne. "I invite each one of us to defeat divisiveness with understanding, rancor with amicability, hatred with compassion, mistrust with greater willingness to listen. Let us counter the downward spiral with renewed efforts to respect the diversity and dignity of each of our neighbors."

"We need to break out of our silos and take the time to get to know one another. We must recognize the good in each other and see how we truly are all interconnected. This is how we unite and begin to shape the future we want to see," he continued.

Bishop Felipe Estévez of the Diocese of St. Augustine, Florida, [wrote on Twitter](#), "In totalitarian regimes, there is not real voting by the people. Today America the Beautiful rings true. Let us all welcome civility at all times."

"How blessed are we to enjoy the freedom that allows us to elect the leaders of our nation," [wrote Bishop Michael Burbidge of Arlington, Virginia, on Twitter](#). "May the Holy Spirit guide us and help all those elected to do what is right and just in accord with God's law. "Lord, you are our hope and strength and in you we trust."

Statements such as these are likely to continue throughout the day. We'll be keeping track of them all here, so check back often.

[Christopher White is NCR national correspondent. His email address is cwhite@ncronline.org. Follow him on Twitter: [@CWWhite212](https://twitter.com/CWWhite212).]



The Vote Common Good bus is pictured in Philadelphia Nov. 3. (Patrick Carolan)

11:15 a.m. CST, Nov. 3, 2020

Vote Common Good bus to hand out snacks, water for voters

By Patrick Carolan

[For the past nine months](#), Vote Common Good [has been reaching out](#) to Catholic and evangelical voters across the country. Their mission was to mobilize people of faith to consider the common good when choosing a candidate.

"We have a moral responsibility to hold our elected leaders accountable for attacks against the common good," said the Rev. Doug Pagitt, executive director of Vote Common Good. "Our goal was to raise awareness of this responsibility and to motivate voters to action."

"It is our sacred duty to vote and choose our leaders but in doing so we should remember the words of the Franciscan theologian, St. Bonaventure, who tells us that how we choose and what we choose makes a difference — first in what we become by our choices and second what the world becomes by our choices," added Rod Colburn, a Vote Common Good supporter and a board member of Franciscan Action Network.

Today, the Vote Common Good bus will start in Philadelphia at a polling place where there is expected to be a long wait to vote. Vote Common Good volunteers will hand out water, snacks and lunch, while also providing music and dancing to help pass the time. The goal today, according to Pagitt, is to work with groups around the country to ensure that everyone has the chance to vote but also to make the experience rewarding and enjoyable.

"For nine months we have done what we can do to raise awareness, today it is up to the voters," Pagitt said. "The least we can do is provide food and water and cheer them on."

In the evening, the Vote Common Good bus will be in Washington, D.C., gathering to pray for a safe and fair election, watch the results and prepare for peaceful action if necessary to ensure every vote is counted.

[Patrick Carolan is the Catholic outreach director for Vote Common Good. He was executive director of the Franciscan Action Network since 2010 and is a co-founder of the Global Catholic Climate Movement.]

10:45 a.m. CST, Nov. 3, 2020

Join Sr. Joan Chittister, Tom Roberts on Facebook Live today

By Stephanie Yeagle

[Join us today at 1:30 p.m. Central on Facebook Live](#) as former NCR editor Tom Roberts talks with Benedictine Sr. Joan Chittister about what our church and our country must do in the aftermath of the one of the most consequential elections in our history.

[In her column today](#), Chittister talks about this "era's debacle of a democracy" and how it has not yet come to an end, but rather an even more important beginning.

"We have questions to ask ourselves, questions to answer for the future," she writes. "And one thing of which I am certain: The time for it is now. We do not dare wait until we cannot get out of what we allowed to develop in the first place."

Chittister and Roberts will discuss how we can find hope and more at the event today. [Follow NCR on Facebook](#) to keep updated on all of our future events.

[Stephanie Yeagle is NCR production/online editor. Her email address is syeagle@ncronline.org.]

9:55 a.m. CST, Nov. 3, 2020

Biden begins Election Day with Mass; feast of St. Martín de Porres

By Christopher White

Joe Biden began his morning at St. Joseph on the Brandywine Catholic Church's 7 a.m. Mass, near his home in Delaware, where he was joined by his wife Jill and granddaughters Finnegan and Natalie.

True to form, according to pool reports, he arrived a bit late at 7:10a.m. When I profiled Biden's Catholic roots back in July, Msgr. Joseph Rebman, pastor of St. Joseph's, [told me](#) that the Bidens "arrive a little late and leave a bit early, just like a lot of Catholics."

After Mass, the Biden family [prayed at the grave](#) of his late son, Beau, who died in 2015. Prior to his early death at age 46, he had urged his dad to run for the presidency. Biden declined to run in 2016, citing his grief at the time.

Here, in New York, I popped into morning Mass at St. Patrick's Cathedral where across the street, Rockefeller Center was being boarded up out of concern for potential looting and violence.

Cardinal Timothy Dolan often celebrates the morning Mass when he's able, but today the cathedral rector, Msgr. Robert Ritchie, celebrated Mass. He told the small

crowd of an estimated 30 Massgoers, that he didn't care who you vote for, but to be sure to vote. The only other reference to Election Day was during the prayers of the faithful, when he offered general prayers for the day and for the nation.

Today's feast day is that of the Peruvian St. Martín de Porres. Fordham theologian Fr. Bryan Massingale reminded me this morning that de Porres is the patron saint of racial justice. "Seeking his intercession and prayers for our country today," he said. "Encourage others to join in prayer to him too."

[Christopher White is NCR national correspondent. His email address is cwhite@ncronline.org. Follow him on Twitter: [@CWWhite212](https://twitter.com/CWWhite212).]

9:15 a.m. CST, Nov. 3, 2020

Faith, politics intersect as Election Day kicks off

By Christopher White

The path to sainthood and the road to 270 electoral votes rarely intersect, but at Fordham University's "Prayer Vigil for America" on Monday evening, Jesuit seminarian Connor Smith turned to the words of St. Oscar Romero to offer consolation to anxious students on the eve of the presidential election.

"I can't. You must. I am yours. Show me the way" became the prayer of the El Salvadoran bishop who was martyred for fighting against the government on behalf of the poor and marginalized in his homeland.

Smith told students at Fordham's Rose Hill campus — where Donald Trump was [once a student](#) — not to put faith in politicians, platforms, science or technology alone but to turn to Christ and make Romero's prayer their own. "We can't. You must," he said. "Just as Jesus Christ overcame the bonds of death, he too will triumph in this moment," he said.

Fordham's prayer vigil, sponsored by its campus ministry, is just one example of scores of events taking place over the last 24 hours and over the next 24 hours by Catholics in response to this election.

And as both campaigns made their closing arguments on Monday, they specifically singled out people of faith in their pitches.

Joe Biden [released a video](#) on Monday morning saying that his faith reinforces the basic American values of decency and integrity.

"I have the great advantage of my faith, the Catholic social doctrine, and my political views coincide. It's about you are your brother's keeper. ... I was raised to make sure you look out for the other guy," he said.

On Monday afternoon, Trump [fired off a tweet](#) offering a nationalistic interpretation of the day's liturgical solemnity when Christians historically pray for and remember those who have died.

"As Christians throughout this great Country celebrate All Souls Day, let's remember those who went before us and built this great nation," he wrote. "May their legacy inspire us as we keep our nation what it has always been: blessed and great!"

[To quote from](#) Catholic radio host Lino Rulli: "Just to recap... Yesterday was All Saints: Heaven. Today was All Souls: Purgatory. Tomorrow is Election Day: Hell."

So, here we are. Thanks for joining us on the journey. We've got a long day ahead.

[Christopher White is NCR national correspondent. His email address is cwhite@ncronline.org. Follow him on Twitter: [@CWWhite212](https://twitter.com/CWWhite212).]

5:30 a.m. CST, Nov. 3, 2020

Facing death, priest urges getting 'back to Jesus' after election

By Don Clemmer

When Fr. Ed Ruetz looks back on Election Night 2016, he sees a collective failure to love. Now 95 years old, the retired Indiana priest can still recite the fractions of a percent by which Pennsylvania, Michigan and Wisconsin — three disproportionately Catholic states — went to Donald Trump.

"I waited till the votes came back," he recalls. "It was about 3 a.m."

He knows abortion factored into the decision of 60% of white U.S. Catholics to back Trump in 2016, as well as what he terms "a faulty idea of religious freedom" that seeks "to have their particular theology enthroned" by the federal government. He

marvels at the hypocrisy he sees in supporting Trump to achieve these ends.

"He doesn't have empathy for hardly anyone," says Ruetz. "He's an unscrupulous man. And I really think our democracy is in jeopardy, because he's so autocratic."



Fr. Ed Ruetz, a retired priest of the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend, Indiana, speaks with Cardinal Joseph Tobin prior to an address by Tobin at the University of Notre Dame in 2018. (Don Clemmer)

Like so much of this last year, Ruetz will spend Election Night 2020 in his room at a nursing facility near South Bend, where he's living with both terminal cancer and the isolation of the lockdowns brought on by the pandemic. He voted by mail as soon as he possibly could. And about 10 days ago, he informed his doctor that he would discontinue the semi-annual injection that has slowed his cancer but also jeopardizes his hospice certification.

"I made the decision. I'm ready to die," he says. He grasps how health care and the realness of one's mortality weight on so many voters this year. "They really are right-to-life issues."

A former social worker and hospital chaplain who spent the first decade of his priesthood — the Vatican II and civil rights eras — promoting justice and peace at the parish level, Ruetz sees a clear path forward for a world after Trump and the church's role in it.

"From a church point of view, you have a responsibility to walk with people, to listen to people ... and not to judge them" he says, explicitly citing Pope Francis' admonitions to pursue dialogue rather than polemics. "We've got to get back to the life of Jesus and how he lived his life."

And here, he says, it all comes down to love, something made real for him by extensively reading about the 15-billion-year scientific story of creation. "If you study that story, it's all about love and cooperation," he says. "We have a responsibility. We're part of that community of beings."

[Don Clemmer is a writer, communications professional and former staffer of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops. He writes from Indiana and edits Cross Roads magazine for the Catholic Diocese of Lexington. Follow him on Twitter:

[@clemmer_don](https://twitter.com/clemmer_don).]

5 a.m. CST, Nov. 3, 2020

Virtual vigil gathers sisters to pray for peace on Election Day

By Patrick Carolan

In early October the School Sisters of Notre Dame Central Pacific Province (SSNDPCP) began to discuss and reflect on what role they could play, not in trying to influence the outcome of the election, but rather how they can help promote a call for peace on Election Day. They went back to their original vision statement that encouraged "responding to urgent needs and living the Gospel call to justice and peace."

As a result of the discussions and reflections they decided to organize a 24-hour prayer vigil on Nov. 3, with more than 175 religious communities signed up to participate.

"The idea began to form," said Sr. Mary Kay Brooks, a member of the provincial council. "Could we not band together as women religious from around the country and pray for peace on Nov. 3? There is a plethora of material for the days before the election and even after, but not much of anything for the day of the election."

The virtual [prayer](#) room for peace is a place where sisters and friends from across the country can gather to pray for peace in the country, safety for poll workers and

safety for those voting. The webpage features a brief prayer by Sr. Roxanne Schares, general superior, then invites visitors to a video prayer room. When visitors leave, they are told "to be mindful of the power you hold to create peace and to be peace at this moment in time."

"We encourage sisters, associates, family, friends and ministry partners to join the congregations in prayer throughout the day to continue building this community of peace and unity," Brooks said. "As women religious, we pray for urgent needs throughout the world; let us be a visible sign of that gift which has been entrusted to us."

Franciscan Sr. Marie Lucey, associate director of the Franciscan Action Network, plans to join the vigil. "During this time of divisiveness and anger what a powerful and sacred message it sends for sisters of all different orders to join together in a day of prayer for peace and for a safe and fair election," she said.

[Patrick Carolan is the Catholic outreach director for Vote Common Good. He was executive director of the Franciscan Action Network since 2010 and is a co-founder of the Global Catholic Climate Movement.]

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[Brian Roewe is NCR environment correspondent. His email address is broewe@ncronline.org. Follow him on Twitter: [@BrianRoewe](https://twitter.com/BrianRoewe).]

4 a.m. CST, Nov. 3, 2020

IHM sisters discourage weapons at Michigan polling places

By Chris Herlinger

With worries about voter intimidation and voting irregularities overshadowing the last sprint of the U.S. presidential campaign, a congregation of women religious based in Monroe, Michigan, is calling for "free, fair and safe elections" and said it was "deeply concerned" about efforts to intimidate voters.

"We are deeply concerned about any actions in the days ahead that may intimidate voters, deny safe and equal access to voting, sow doubt in electoral outcomes or raise a threat of violence," said the [Oct. 30 statement](#) by the leadership council of the Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, or [IHM Sisters](#), a community of 250 vowed sisters and 118 associates.

"Such efforts to corrupt and undermine core electoral freedoms must be condemned in the strongest of terms across the political spectrum," the statement said.

A specific concern for the congregation's home state of Michigan is an Oct. 27 [ruling](#) by a Michigan judge that permits gun owners in the state "to openly carry weapons at or near polling places," the sisters said in their statement.

"The Second Amendment should never be used to justify impeding upon the electoral process or intimidating voters. This nation can only live up to its democratic ideals when all are confident that they can vote freely and without undue hardship for the candidates of their choosing," the statement said.

Saying that "multi-party commitment to election integrity is a primary factor in preventing election violence," the congregation called upon "elected leaders and elections officials to recommit to our core democratic principles and to consider what they themselves can do in this critical hour to uphold the best of our nation's values."

"Specifically, we urge our local leaders across the political spectrum to urge citizens to refrain from carrying weapons to polling places on Election Day and to refrain from violence or the threat of violence on Election Day and beyond."

The IHM statement concluded by urging prayer "that our leaders will demonstrate a robust commitment to our fundamental democratic principles with their words and actions at this pivotal time."

[Chris Herlinger is GSR international correspondent. His email address is cherlinger@ncronline.org.]

This story appears in the **Election 2020** feature series. [View the full series](#).