

**Companions on the Journey**

**November 8, 2020**

Dear Friends,

Well the election is over. Or is it? I am writing this on Wednesday morning and there is no official winner of our most recent presidential election. The numbers of those voting has set a new record and the percentage of eligible voters who cast a ballot is the highest in one hundred and twenty years, since the election of 1900. I have no idea `who will be declared the winner but I would not be surprised that when you read this on Sunday the 8<sup>th</sup> we may not have a declared winner even then.

It would not surprise me and I doubt it will surprise you that we are now entering the Time of the Lawyers and Judges. That is most likely how this will be resolved. That this happened twenty years ago too and there is lingering resentment over the Supreme Court decision in Bush v. Gore, and all the hanging chads, tells us all how deeply the politics runs in the American psyche and flows in our veins.

You know, all of us suffer from various kinds of memory loss, things we can't remember or lose track of. But not when it comes to political slights. No, we will hold on to those and there is often that in us which desires to pay back. (Paybacks are sweet, we even say.) You got me last time. Well I haven't forgotten. And I am going to get you this time. It does sound a little bit like the "Eye for an eye and tooth for a tooth" approach to human living.

But that comes from the Old Testament and is almost always misquoted. It is called the Lex Talionis. It was a principle in Jewish law designed to limit the amount of retaliation and pay back because humanly speaking we like to pay back and then add a little bit extra to drive home the point. Instead we use the Lex Talionis as a protocol almost directing us to gouge out an eye or pull out a tooth—at the very least. That kind of escalation only guarantees ongoing hatred, resentment and retaliation. It will never end because the enemy is always stirring the pot and adding heat to make the fire burn hotter.

But we are disciples of Jesus Christ who lived under the Roman Emperor and his minions in Israel. Jesus knows what political leaders can do and how corrupt they can easily become. They put him to death on very manufactured charges of treason. Really? Yes. "Hang him on the cross. Let them see how we deal with such people." And so they did. But that way of the Lex Talionis did not last. The Roman Empire collapsed under its own moral decay. We the People of this country and Catholics, we the People of the Roman Catholic Church with the Spirit of Jesus Christ living in us can set a different course. It is a choice we have to make. And there will be a price to pay.

I have been praised and criticized for the display of crosses on the corner of parish property. The purpose of the crosses is simple. To give those who have no voice (the unborn) a voice in a world and culture that does not always see the unborn child with the eyes of love. We have been aborting babies at the rate of over one million a year for almost half a century. If we do not provide a voice for these little ones who will. I drove around Ambler a lot these past weeks and saw many lawn signs. But none damaged or vandalized except ours. Four times at least, the last being the night of the election. But we have to stand up. We will not be silenced. The bullies who act under the cover of darkness shall not have the final word. Let us pray for them and for the unborn and women who chose to do what they often did not want to do and for the men who used and then discarded with such callousness. There is much need for prayer.

Peace,

Msgr. McHenry