



Dear Friends,

“This is the most important election since....” We’ve heard this over and over. “This election can set a course for our country that can last throughout this decade.” There’s more to these statements than Trump and Biden, Pelosi and McConnell. Another event is occurring this election — the arrival of the Millennial generation at the voting booth.

For many years the Baby Boomer generation has ruled the political roost. We have been the largest generation of any other since, well, since we were born back in the late 40’ and 50’s. But the Millennials are now bigger than we are and they have come of age.

This new generation joins the voting public from a background of one crisis after the other. They experienced the sex scandal in the Church and 9/11. Then came the Recession. They graduated college with a huge debt which will take most of them many years to repay. And when they graduated, the job market shrank leaving most of them without the job they had studied for. Now the Coronavirus.

This series of events has molded and shaped their thinking. Collectively, they have lost confidence in the current group of politicians whether Democrat or Republican. They’ve lost faith in the “system.” (Just look at the #METOO, #TIMESUP and Black Lives Matter movements.) I am reminded of the Boomer cry of long ago: “don’t trust anyone over 30!” If we elders remember, we had lost faith in the “system” then. And the 60’ and 70” changed the national culture forever.

We may be in for a taste of our own past. As the Millennials gain the power of numbers, they will begin to dictate to our culture the way they would like to see things. Time will probably temper the enthusiasm of the Millennial generation just as it did ours. The 80’s and 90’s cooled our generation down. But for 15 to 20 years we rocked the world. Now it’s another generation’s turn. And the Millennials are the generation that has left the Church. In the immortal words of Betty Davis, “Fasten your seat belts. It’s gonna be a bumpy ride!” (You’ll have to excuse me; as a Boomer I remember Betty Davis.)

Aside from the changing of the guard, there are other things that make this election year something to be concerned about. In particular, the outcome.

A political columnist for the “New York Times” and commentator on PBS Newshour, David Brooks, has suggested that Trump’s base supporters are not prepared for losing this election and if it turns out that way, there’s no telling how they will react. Democrats have had the shocked experience of 2016 which would prepare them should Biden lose. But Trump has told his people he will not lose and many, if not most, believe that’s what going to happen. What will they do if he loses?

That question has been raised about the President himself. Given the huge number of mail-in ballots and the President’s ongoing questioning of the validity of many of those ballots, what will happen should Biden be declared the winner? Some note the final counting may not be available for days so November 3rd may not solve anything, but open a new can of worms. Many suggest there will be lots of litigation winding up at the now conservative Supreme Court. That could be explosive.

It’s an understatement to say that 2020 has been a horrible year and that year is not yet over. Most of us are upset with what’s been going with the pandemic and the protests that have filled our cities streets. Our lives seem beyond our control. How do we deal with all this?

I wish there was a simple solution. I wish I could just say “Trust in God,” but that platitude just won’t help. It *is* true that we need to trust in God, but that doesn’t mean God will sweep away the pandemic or end the hatred and discord that rule our nation right now. “God helps those who help themselves” is an old adage, but an apt one. I heard on the radio this morning someone say “If you want to change the world, live the way you want the world to be.” That’s one of the best summations of the Gospel I’ve heard in a long while.

The prophet Malachi ripped into the people of Israel with scathing language because they had turned away from God and turned on each other. “*Have we not all one Father?*” he screamed at them. “*Has not the one God created us? Why then do we break faith with one another....?*” And Jesus says in St. Matthew’s Gospel, “*The greatest among you must be your servant.*” [my emphases] If we yearn for a peaceful society, if we wish to be treated fairly, then we need to listen to the prophet, Jesus and the radio person and live the way we [and God] wants the world to be. That’s exactly what Jesus calls us to do. And God will be there to help us do just that. How much do we *want* a kinder, more genteel nation? Enough to change how we treat and talk about each other? Enough to keep faith with one another? Perhaps the Millennials will lead the way.

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