

## JUDGE FOR YOURSELVES WHAT IS RIGHT

The Gospel passage from Luke on the last Friday of October struck a chord with me in relation to the upcoming election day. In the midst of an instruction – not just to his disciples but “to the crowds” – Jesus asks: “Why do you not know how to interpret the present time? Why do you not judge for yourselves what is right?” As I said in my homily that morning, it might seem as if Jesus is contradicting himself, since elsewhere in the Gospels he cautions his disciples about judging others lest they themselves be judged. But in fact, there’s no contradiction.

It’s one thing to judge a **person**: he/she is either good or bad. Only God can judge persons, only God can look into the heart. Jesus himself leaves “all judgment to the Father.” But it’s quite another thing to “interpret the present time” and to “judge what is right” as long as our interpretations and our judgments are based on the Gospel. In fact, we have a duty to make a judgment about actions that are wrong or even evil, about words that are cruel or clearly designed to deceive, with political ads on TV being the poster children for deception.

As Christians, we have a responsibility to “interpret the present time” and to “judge what is right” which means ignoring the ads and the empty words of politicians and trying as best we can to align our voting choices with Gospel values. Sadly, there has never been and probably never will be a candidate who stands firmly on the side of the unchangeable moral values and eternal truths our faith demands that we embrace. Some will champion the care of the poor while promoting the murder of the unborn. Others will decry abortion on demand while ignoring the plight of immigrants fleeing persecution or death. Most will promote “religious freedom” as long as that freedom doesn’t get in the way of their political agendas or upset their “base.”

No candidate in any election is perfect, though some are certainly less perfect than others. No candidate is flawless, though some are so obviously corrupt it boggles my mind to see them elected by gullible, one-party voters, over and over again. It’s up to us – not as Democrats or Republicans, left-wing or right-wing inclined, but as Catholic Christians – to judge for ourselves what is right and to interpret the signs of the times, not by the siren song of TV ads, but by the light of the Gospel. In no way is it easy, but it is ever so necessary. So by all means, vote on Tuesday. But pray first, and then do your best to judge for yourself what is right!

Fr. Bob