

Ninth Sunday of the Holy Cross – Elections and Politics

*Delivered by Rev. Fr. Ghevond Ajamian
St. Sarkis Armenian Church. Carrollton, TX
November 6, 2016
Gospel Reading: Luke 8:49-56*

In the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

This week, the Armenian Church commemorates the seventeenth anniversary of our Catholicos's election and enthronement, His Holiness Karekin II. This is also the fourth anniversary of the election of the Coptic Church's pope, Pope Tawadros II. This Tuesday, Americans will go to the polls to elect the new president of the United States through the Electoral College. Naturally, with every election, there are winners and losers and in two days, there will be many happy people and many sad people.

However, as Christians, we must pray for our elected officials, especially our new president, whoever it may be. St. Paul writes,

“First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all men, for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life, godly and respectful in every way. This is good, and it is acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.” (1 Timothy 2:1-4)

Whoever wins, whether it be Donald Trump, or any of the other candidate who are on the ballot, and whether or not we agree with their opinions, stances and politics, they need our support and prayers as Christians.

There was once a young boy and in his town there was a mayoral election. He really wants his candidate to win, but unfortunately his candidate loses. Very upset and disappointed, he goes to church the following Sunday and listened to the priest's sermon, which encouraged the people to pray for their new mayor, so the little boy begins to pray for the new mayor. A year passes by and the mayor falls into many different scandals. He was accused of embezzlement, taking bribes and even being photographed with different women. Yet, during every scandal and misfortune, the little boy prayed harder and harder.

After another year, the little boy came running home, yelling and excited, exclaiming, “God really does answer prayers!”

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His mother asked, “What do you mean?” and the little boy says, “The mayor is being removed from office!”

His mother says, “But you have been praying for him for a year?”

The boy answers, “I prayed every day that the mayor fail and now he is being removed. See, God really does answer prayers.”

We must not follow the example of the little boy, praying for the next president’s failures, but we must pray for his or her success and that he or she may receive wisdom, guidance and strength to fulfill God’s plan and will.

As Christians, we sometimes think we need to remove ourselves from the world and the politics of this world, but we cannot. We love in this world and are part of this world. Christ never said, run away from this world and hide, but go into the world and preach the Gospel to the world, making the world heaven.

The word “politics” comes from the Greek word, “πολις / polis”, which means “city-state”. This is where we get the words, “police, polite and metropolitan”. One who is political or believes in certain politics means that that person’s specific politics should be in agreement with the interests of the city, in order that the city grow and succeed.

The question is, as Christians, to what city do we belong? Which city’s politics do we follow and make a reality? The answer is found in one of the hymns of the Requiem Service. The answer is the “supernal city of Jerusalem”. Not the Jerusalem in the Middle East, but the city in the world to come, which is in heaven now. This city’s politics are the politics we must follow, preach and make a reality in this world. Those politics include love, faith, hope, forgiveness, humility, prayer, fasting, almsgiving, caring for the sick and the lonely, loving the poor and welcoming the stranger. These are the politics that we must preach and have the strength and courage to go out and make a reality in this world.

It does not matter so much whom we vote for, but whom we pray for. Whoever is elected must be prayed for by each of us, this community and our country as a whole. Let us pray that the next president’s politics be in line with the politics of the supernal Jerusalem and let us pray that God grant him or her the strength to bring our nation, and the world, to peace, love and hope.

Amen.