Bishop Coyne's statement on the recent elections

[Statement originally published on Bishop Coyne's blog, Nov. 16, 2016: bishopcoyne.org/statement-on-the-recent-elections.]

It has been over a week now since the recent national, state, and municipal elections, a week which has allowed me, and I hope you, an opportunity for prayer and reflection on the outcomes. Out of this, I now write to the Catholic community of the Diocese of Burlington words of encouragement and challenge.

First, allow me to commend the citizens and candidates of the state of Vermont for the positive manner in which the state and local campaigns and elections were carried out. While there was some negative campaigning at times, the general overall tenor of the campaigns was respectful and civil.

However, as we all know, such was not the case nationally. This past presidential election was brutal, nasty, and angry. It has left our country divided and a lot less civil. Last Wednesday morning, I found myself thinking, “What just happened? How did we ever get to this point as fellow citizens of this great country?” Please know that I am not talking about the results of the election. I found both candidates to be an appalling choice. I am talking about the process and its aftermath.

We are now faced with a president entering office with a high “unfavorable” rating. This would have been the case for either candidate. Consider this statistic: 61% of those who voted for Mr. Trump did so because they didn’t like Mrs. Clinton while 61% of those who voted for Mrs. Clinton did so because they didn’t like Mr. Trump. That has never happened before. How does one govern and lead with that kind of a handicap going into office? And what does that do to our national psyche and our trust in government? There is more division, more anger, and more angst in our country then ever before.

That was where I found myself early last Wednesday. But later in the day I found a place of encouragement and solace in the first reading of the Mass of the day – Feast of the Dedication of the Lateran Basilica – in a vision of the prophet Ezekiel. An angel has brought Ezekiel to the temple in Jerusalem where he stands and sees water flowing from the gates of the temple, in all directions, bringing life, healing, and freshness to whatever the waters touch. This vision has been seen within the Church’s tradition as a vision of the Church herself from which the waters of baptism and the gift of salvation flow to all of creation.

I thought of how necessary this vision is now, both communally and personally. We as a Church, the Catholic community in Vermont, need to see ourselves as baptized people who seek to bring life and healing to all of creation. I thought of how I need to see myself as someone who brings “good news” to everyone I meet. I thought of the words from a well-known song, “Let there be peace on earth and let it begin with me” and how that needs to be my mantra.

Can we be a people who bring peace, not anger? Can we be a people who stand up for what is right while lifting up what is good? Can we be a people who talk “policies” and not “persons?” Can we be the salt, the leaven, the seeds of goodness in our culture? Can we be “living water” that flows out in words and gestures of healing and charity? Yes, if we do so united in our faith, supporting each other in prayer and worship, and with the grace of God, God bless America.

“Let there be peace on earth and let it begin with me”

Yours in Christ,

The Most Reverend Christopher J. Coyne
Bishop of Burlington

Taking the Time for Advent

Quite naturally, when we think of Advent — Christmas isn’t far behind in our minds. I’d like to propose another way of thinking about Advent, and it is simply this: at the center of Advent is the theme of time.

Advent is indeed a time of preparation for Christmas, giving us an opportunity to look back in time — at the coming of God in the flesh into the world. Much of Advent, however, gives us the opportunity to look forward in time — to the glorious coming of Christ at the end of time. And all of Advent gives us the opportunity to look at the present moment in time — how God is at work in the world today.

Through all this, Advent calls us to take the time to look at the past…the present…and the future. Do we take the time to thank God for the gift of Himself in the child Jesus? Do we take the time to continually acknowledge the presence of God in our lives today? Do we take the time to prepare ourselves for the second coming or, more personally, do we take the time to prepare to meet Christ at the end of our own earthly existence? If we do so united in our faith, supporting each other in prayer and worship, and with the grace of God, God bless America.

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Yours in Christ,

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— By Josh Perry, Director of the Office of Worship for the Diocese of Burlington. Please see the calendar on the reverse for an event hosted by Josh called “Why Advent?”
UPCOMING EVENTS

11|27  
First Day of Advent  
This Advent, follow #JesseTreeVT on Instagram to learn about the custom of the Jesse tree, and prepare for the birth of Jesus. #JesseTreeVT

11|29  
Why Advent?  
Holy Family Parish Center, Essex Junction  
7:30 pm  
“Why Advent? How can we prepare for the coming of the Lord?” a presentation by Josh Perry, the new Director of the Office of Worship for the Diocese of Burlington. Come join us for coffee, dessert and this wonderful presentation, please RSVP. FOR MORE INFO: (802) 670-5331

12|01  
Our Gift to You,  
From Vermont Catholic  
Be on the look out in your mailbox for the inaugural quarterly issue of the newly redesigned Vermont Catholic magazine. The Diocese of Burlington wants to share with you the ‘good news’ of our diocese along with other informative and thought provoking perspectives on practicing and applying your Catholic faith in everyday life. Our goal is to evangelize and share a practical Catholic perspective for you and your family. To keep up with more timely news of people living the Catholic faith go to vermontcatholic.org/vcm to see what’s going on in our diocese. FOR MORE INFO: vermontcatholic.org/vcm

12|03  
Marriage Enrichment Retreat  
Holy Family Parish Center, Essex Junction  
7 pm to 8:30 pm  
Six sessions for couples of all ages. There is a purposeful need and desire that can only be fulfilled in your marriage. Explore the mystery, wonder, joy, and the meaning of this beautiful sacrament with your spouse. This retreat is based on the video series BELOVED from the Augustine Institute. FOR MORE INFO: Judy Kanya, (802) 878-6152, kanyaJ@comcast.net

12|09  
St. Michael’s College Choral  
Chapel of St. Michael the Archangel, Colchester - 7 pm  
A holiday tradition! This year, the St. Michael’s College Chorale, accompanied by a professional string ensemble, rings in the Christmas season with a suite of traditional carols arranged by the great English composer, Ralph Vaughan Williams, and members of the College Community read traditional lessons foreshadowing and recounting the Birth of Christ. Come join in the cheer and sing along to “God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen,” “The First Nowell,” and other favorites. Free admission.

12|11  
Advent Lessons and Carols  
St. Bridget Church, West Rutland  
1 pm  
Presented by the parish of St. Bridget, St. Stanislaus Kostka and St. Dominic this program of readings and hymns recalls the birth of Jesus. The presentation will include the singing of well known Christmas carols. Admission is free. FOR MORE INFO: Christy Bahrenburg (802) 438-2490

12|12  
VT Cursillo Day of Reflection  
UVM Catholic Center, Burlington  
10 am - 2 pm  
Calling all Cursillistas & guests to a day of reflection. Fr. Dwight Baker will give 2 reflections. There will be time for sharing. Lunch will be pot luck, please bring a dish to share. FOR MORE INFO: Bonnie Day (802) 556-2803

12|13  
Christmas Sale:  
St. Ambrose Parish Hall, Bristol, 9 am to 5 pm. INFO: (802) 453-2488

12|14  
Advent Rosary with the WAF-Our Lady’s Blue Army  
Saint John Vianney, So Burlington - 5 pm  
Pray the Rosary for Peace, Faith and Hope during the Advent Season, through the intercession of our Lady of Fatima. Starting with Mass, then Rosary and Meditation of the Glorious Mystery, followed by a gathering at Saint John Vianney’s Parish Center, with a talk “Saint Padre Pio, his Rosary Devotion, and the love to Our Lady of Fatima.” Light refreshments will be served. FOR MORE INFO: Yorini, yoandmic@yahoo.com or (802) 864-0561

12|18  
Nativity Play and Carol Sing  
Immaculate Heart of Mary, Williston  
1 to 3 pm  
The Nativity play will be told with scripture and song. There will be a carol sing after the play. This will be followed by cookies, cocoa and cider. FOR MORE INFO: (802) 318-2422

12|25  
Christmas Day!  
The liturgical season of Christmas begins with the vigil Masses on Christmas Eve and concludes on the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord, this year, on Jan. 10. During this season, we celebrate the birth of Christ into our world and into our hearts, and reflect on the gift of salvation that is born with him. FOR MORE ON THE SEASON OF CHRISTMAS: goo.gl/vQCeks

CRAFT FAIR & MARKET DIRECTORY

12|02  
Candy Cane Marketplace:  
St. Ambrose Parish Hall, Bristol, 9 am to 5 pm. INFO: (802) 453-2488

12|03  
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St. Ambrose Parish Hall, Bristol, 9 am to 5 pm. INFO: (802) 453-2488

Christmas Bazaar: All Saints Parish, Dorion Hall, Richford, 9 am to 2 pm. INFO: (802) 848-7741

Christmas Bazaar: St. Ann Church, Milton, 9 am to 2 pm. INFO: (802) 893-4012

Christmas Bazaar: St. Patrick Church, Fairlee, 9 am to 3 pm. INFO: stpats@myfairpoint.net

Christmas Bazaars: St. Rose of Lima So. Hero & St. Joseph Grand Isle, 9 am to 3 pm

Christmas Fair: St. Alphonsus Parish Hall, Pittsford, 9 am to 2 pm. INFO: cowcraft@together.net

Christmas Sale: St. Anthony Church, Bethel, 9 am to 2 pm. INFO: (802) 234-5605

St. Anthony-St. George Christmas Bazaar: Fairfield Community Center, East Fairfield, 9 am to 3 pm. INFO: stpats@myfairpoint.net

12|10  
Christmas Sale:  
St. Bridget Parish, West Rutland, 9 am to 2:30 pm. INFO: (802) 438-5584

Cookie Walk: Sacred Heart/St. Charles Social Center, Bellows Falls, 9 am. INFO: (802) 463-3128