

From the desk of

MONSIGNOR ZENZ



OCTOBER 16, 2020

My brothers and sisters in the Lord,

This weekend we hear the enigmatic words of Jesus: “*Render to Caesar what belongs to Caesar and to God what belongs to God.*” These words present a very compelling challenge as we stand on the threshold of a national election; they invite us to consider the perspective and priorities which govern our daily choices as individuals and as a culture. Ultimately, “Caesar” is going to get whatever Caesar can legally demand. Our relationship with God is based on love rather than external compliance and with God we deal with someone who is full of mercy. We give back to Caesar through taxes and the fulfillment of our public responsibilities in a reasonable way.

Our relationship with God is much more complex. It is at once, something very intimate and personal yet also having public and external expression. While we sometimes speak of “loving” our country, patriotism can never be on a par with the love we owe God who created us and all the universe with its mysteries and beauty. Our God even took human flesh to show us His abiding concern for our well-being. We are called to *love* God as Father and Saviour whereas we tolerate the weaknesses and imperfections of human leaders. No matter who holds the reins of power, we know very well our own faults and foibles and those of all our fellow human beings, especially in this age when we are all subject to microscopic scrutiny.

When it comes to making decisions about voting, people often ask for advice. I always make the point that the Church does not tell us for whom we must vote. The Church wants to form our consciences according to values that are consistent with the Gospel and with Church teachings; the Church speaks to issues and concerns. Based on our own life-circumstances and our well-formed consciences, each of us has to make a particular determination about what we think is the best choice given all the factors as we see them.

In this year as always, “life issues” matter very much. It is important to remember that “life issues” cover a wide spectrum of concerns. The beginning of life is obviously a most critical matter and deserves the highest focus. We also need to remember other “life issues” which all our recent Popes have spoken about including care for prison inmates, refugees, the poor and homeless. All people need a safe living environment, access to health care, education and just wages. As we weigh the scale, obviously there is no perfect person or party. We make a decision based on our conscience before God.

This weekend the Flu Shot Clinic is available in the parking lot. The clinic will be here for all the Masses this weekend. We hope that you will take advantage of this opportunity. Most insurance plans will cover the cost of the shot.

I remind you that the CSA continues. At this moment we are still quite a way from reaching our target of \$184,000. I realize times are difficult and uncertain; understandably, people are hesitant to make a commitment. The work of the Church in Detroit happens not only at the level of each parish but also on an Archdiocesan level. The Seminary, for instance, is funded in large part through the CSA; it is from the Seminary that we receive future priests, deacons and pastoral ministers for all aspects of parish life including Faith Formation, Christian Service and Youth Ministry. The work of the Archdiocese also includes communication efforts and working with technology; both of these areas are extremely expensive and complex in today's society. Given the pandemic, a strong presence on the internet is essential. Also there is the continual need to support financially certain parishes and schools in various parts of the Archdiocese. The CSA is a wonderful tool for supporting the many people and programs that have special needs. I myself have made a significant contribution and I hope that you will take seriously our call to give active and generous support to the work of the Church.

With all best wishes I remain

Your brother in the Lord,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Msgr. John P. Zeng". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "M" and "J".