



Sisters of Saint Joseph

U.S. FEDERATION

United in Mission – Loving God and Neighbor

CORPORATE VOICE
STATEMENT

OCTOBER 2018

The U.S. Federation of the Sisters of St. Joseph's Resolution to Action During This Election Season

As mid-term elections draw near, one thing Americans can agree on is that we are a deeply divided country. Frustration, bewilderment, and distrust abounds and manifests in everything from cynical resignation to turning on one another. Madeline Albright once described the experiment of democracy as paradoxical: equally characterized by fragility and resilience. These challenging times have exposed the delicate nature of our body politic, and will test our nation's spirit of resilience as never before.

As a nation, political vitriol, vastly compounded by the echo-chambers and bad behavior of social media, threaten the very institutions on which we're founded. The news cycle is dizzying — making the upcoming election feel like we are nearing a panicky crescendo. In some ways it seems like the most consequential midterm election in American history—and those paying attention, regardless of political affiliation, are full of anxiety about its outcome and implications. But those who strive to keep the faith count on the hope that it is never too late for real, meaningful change that can lead us into a positive future.

We, the U.S. Federation of the Sisters of St. Joseph join with NETWORK Catholic Social Justice Lobby, the Leadership Conference of Women Religious (LCWR), and other faith-based advocates in seeking federal policies that reflect gospel principles. Our mission of unity calls us to the realization that an economy and a society of inclusion depends on good policy.

And it is up to “We The People” to make our voices heard and vote our conscience. Partisan in-fighting and conflict between factions of Americans will not end unless a common understanding of values emerges. Until we can mend relationships among “We the People,” there will be no repairing the fabric of our nation. What's required is a civic transformation that shifts our nation's collective consciousness and public discourse.

For Christian Americans, this is where our gospel values are put to the test, and we have a responsibility to test ourselves. We look to the scriptures for guidance and profess belonging to the body of Christ, and so the Gospels provide us with our template. Individually and collectively, Christians are called to engage with our fellow Americans — particularly those we view as sinful — in a seeking, loving, forgiving manner and with the intention of reconciliation.

How can I seek out those with different political leanings and find a space to connect with them? How can I facilitate authentic and respectful dialogue? How might I put my fellow citizen who is fearful and suspicious at ease? How have I failed to acknowledge my own sinful contribution to our divided nation?

As we near election day, perhaps Rumi's timeless wisdom could provide our mantra: “Raise your words not your voice. It is rain that grows flowers, not thunder.”

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The U.S. Federation of the Sisters of Saint Joseph is a dynamic union of all the Sisters of Saint Joseph of the United States who claim a common origin in the foundation at LePuy, France in 1650. Today there are approximately 4,203 vowed members as well as 3,032 associates and 25 agrégées in the United States. Worldwide there are over 10,749 Sisters of Saint Joseph and 4,399 associates in over 50 countries.