



U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops



Prayer for Civility

Make Me an Instrument of Your Peace

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace.
Where uncivil words prevail, show me how to model love.
Help me remember the God-given dignity of all and invite others to do the same.

Show me how to build bridges and not walls
and see first what unites us rather than how we diverge.

Let me seek to understand before asking to be understood.
Give me a listening heart filled with empathy and compassion.

May I be clear in sharing my own position
and respectful and civil in describing those of others.

Let me never tolerate hateful ideas.
May I invite all to charity and love.
Lord, help me to imitate your compassion and mercy.
Make me an instrument of your peace.

Amen.

(USCCB, “A Better Kind of Politics” online at: www.usccb.org/civilizeit)

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“A Better Kind of Politics” Examination of Conscience

Loving Our Neighbors in the Public Square

Through prayer and reflection, formed consciences and honest dialogue, we can bring the convictions of our faith to our participation in civic life, and in our communities. With this reflection, consider where God is calling you to be “salt and light” in your family and community, and in your engagement online. Where can you better engage in encounter and bridge-building?

Begin with Scripture and Prayer

Begin by reading Matthew 5:13-16 on the call to be salt and light.

As “salt and light” we are called to speak truth with love and bear witness to God’s love in our world. Our presence, like salt to food, strengthens our communities, especially when we serve as witnesses of love and civility.

Then pray asking God to be present with you during this time of reflection.

The Prayer for Life and Dignity of the Human Person is a good option.

Now spend some time in prayerful reflection using the prompts below.

- *How have I engaged, or not, in efforts to address issues I care about, including through engagement in political advocacy as a faithful citizen?*
- *What has drawn me towards or away from engagement?*
- *What perspectives on issues impacting our local and global communities elicit strong negative reactions in me? What is at the root of that feeling?*
- *When have I allowed that strong feeling to cause me to say or think something unkind about another person? Specifically: on social media? in conversations? in my day-to-day perceptions and attitudes?*

How is Christ calling me to strive to recognize the human dignity of someone with whom I disagree—even passionately?

Close with Prayer

*Close with prayer and conversation with God about how you might be called to be “salt and light” in: family, parish, school, workplace, or other (in-person, online). We exist in a culture of incivility and inaction. As followers of Christ we must work to transform that culture. **We can be models of loving and respectful civil discourse. We can build community by engaging in dialogue across differences.** In working to transform our culture, we can choose to be strong in our convictions while also open to learning more from others’ experiences.*

How are you called to share your faith and civility with your community?

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