

From: **Archbishop Paul Etienne**

Date: Thu, Sep 10, 2020 at 1:04 PM

Subject: Presidential Election Season - Prudential Judgement

To: Priests and Deacons

Brothers:

Good afternoon. I imagine now that we are dealing with wildfires, and others are in the midst of a very active hurricane season, one may begin to feel at this point in the Year 2020 that we are taking a stroll through the Book of Revelation! And, for good measure, these next few months will take us through a very contentious presidential election season.

With that in mind, I write to make a strong appeal – in fact – to give episcopal directive. I'm sure we are all aware of a current outcry about a priest who has told his parishioners something like "You will go to hell if you are a member of the Democratic Party." Sadly, a bishop other than his own endorsed his statement.

Brothers, I'm writing today to remind all of us: **We are not to endorse publicly or even privately any political party or candidate.**

I know even among ourselves, some hold strong political opinions. However, we must be judicious and prudent when we are approached by parishioners asking for advice about how to vote. Even more so, we are to be extremely cautious about what we say in public, either on social media or from any pulpit. Our role is to inform consciences, not dictate conscience. We are at the service of the Gospel and the Kingdom of Heaven, not any one political party or candidate.

Please be careful in this matter in the coming weeks and months.

Let us continue to hold one another in prayer, along with all those who are entrusted to our care.

In Christ,

Archbishop Etienne