



Broadcast Transcript

Broadcast: What's at Stake on Election Day

Guest(s): Father Ed Meeks

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Dr. Dobson: Hello, ladies and gentlemen, this is Family Talk, and I'm your host Dr. James Dobson. Today is October 30th, 2020, three days before the most important election in America in 156 years, when the nation teetered on the brink of disaster. To prepare us for this election on November 3rd, I want to let you hear two things. The first is a portion, just a portion, of a great homily given recently by a Catholic priest, Father Ed Meeks. He's the Monsignor at Christ the King Church in Towson, Maryland. More than 1.8 million people have viewed this recording on YouTube, and I found it to be stunningly effective, I think you will too. Now I'm an Evangelical Christian, I think most of you know that, but I've thought you might want to hear a Catholic perspective from this Monsignor. With that let's listen to a portion of his message, and then I'll introduce the second half of the program.

Father Ed Meeks: This will be for me personally, the 14th presidential election I will have voted in since reaching the age of majority, and this one is unlike anything I have ever seen. I actually said the same thing about the last election in 2016, but the events of the last four years, and in fact of the past six or seven months have cast this upcoming election in a whole new and ever more dire light. I believe that at this moment in time in history, you and I find ourselves as part of a society that is staring into the abyss, and that how our nation votes on November the third will determine whether we collectively step off the cliff into that abyss, or step back from it, if only temporarily.

Now let me preface my remarks by saying that it is not my place to tell you how you must vote, we do after all still live in a free country with free elections, at least for the time being. But it is my place as your priest and pastor to help you see how your vote may or may not line up with the teachings of the church. So, I will tell you emphatically that what I'm about to say to you should not be taken as an implicit endorsement of any candidate by Christ the King Church or by the personal Ordinariate of the Chair of Saint Peter. I'm taking this opportunity to speak to you personally, to share with you my own personal opinion. But it's an opinion, both formed and informed by the word of God and by the crystal clear teaching of the church for the purpose of helping you think through the choices.

Because again, there are certain realities about the candidates and their parties that directly impact our Catholic faith, and so we must be aware of these realities before we cast our vote. And my first allegiance is not to any political candidate or party, but to the truth of God and his church. So, what I'm going to say is not politically motivated because the stakes involved far transcend politics. But what I'm going to say, I believe, has to be said. Now, let me begin by telling you that I have struggled mightily with this message, not because I'm afraid of the truth, I think you know me better than that. To the contrary, the truth is what motivates me every day of my life. I resonate completely with Saint Paul who said, "Woe is me if I do not preach the truth of the gospel." Frankly, if I were not sold out to the truth, I wouldn't even be standing in front of you today because I would not be a Catholic priest.

No, the reason for my struggle has to do with the vitriol and with the vicious animosity that are evident in our society today. Animosity that has played out tens of millions of times daily on social media and in the violence that has overtaken so many of America's cities and was even on full display in the recent presidential debate. Brothers and sisters, we live in a nation that is sadly, tragically, divided. A nation at odds with itself. Jesus' words in the gospel of this past Friday we're never more true, a house divided against itself cannot stand. I grieve for what has become of America. And so the last thing I want to do is to have this message contribute to that division in our country and least of all, to have it cause division in our parish. You and I are children of the same Heavenly Father. You and I are servants of the same Lord and Master. We are first, Christians, Catholics. We are second, Americans. And then somewhere down the line from there we are Republicans or Democrats or independents or whatever; never forget that order.

And so, it has almost become a cliché to declare that we have reached a tipping point in our nation, but it is also true, and it is time for faithful Catholics and other Christians to stand up courageously and forthrightly to confront the evil that has overtaken our culture and say enough is enough. Because whether you are aware of it or not, there are powerful forces in government at every level, as well as in the mainstream media and in the Silicon Valley technocracy that are working aggressively to silence the church through legislation, lies, intimidation and censorship.

So, for us faithful Catholics, the starting point of our choice of whom to vote for needs to be that we intentionally think with the Church. Think with the Church. Something that too many Catholics have failed to do for far too long, a fact, that has largely contributed to the dire condition of our culture today. The Church has clearly and consistently based her teaching on the sacred scriptures and on the living tradition embodied in 2000 years of her magisterium. That teaching has led to an array of foundational principles when it comes to us as Catholics and our moral and civic responsibilities.

It's not always easy to sift through the myriad of issues at play in presidential politics, so it becomes crucial then that we properly prioritize those issues,

because some are clearly more important than others. We can respectfully disagree and we can have differences of prudential judgment and opinion around issues like the economy, taxation, immigration, national defense, trade, healthcare, climate change, and so on. But don't get sidetracked by the spurious, seamless garment theory espoused by many in the church that asserts that issues like immigration and the environment are of equal weight with abortion, because there is a set of issues upon which Catholics must not disagree.

Pope Benedict the 16th specified those issues in his 2012 apostolic constitution entitled *Sacramentum Caritatis*, in which Benedict defined what he called our non-negotiable values, a concept which he repeated countless times during his pontificate. Among the list of non-negotiable values which he identified, chief among them are: the sanctity of life from conception to natural death; the sanctity of marriage as a lifelong sacramental union of a man and a woman; and the preservation of religious liberty. They are non-negotiable because they are of paramount importance in Catholic moral theology, they are the moral principles where the church draws a clear line in the sand. And all of the fog and the confusion and spin that surrounds every political season, we must as faithful Catholics, conscientiously vote in such a way that best upholds and protects these non-negotiable values. Again, the sanctity of life, the sanctity of marriage, and religious liberty.

Not that other issues are unimportant, but these three are foundational to who we are as human beings and to what kind of society we are constructing. As Pope Benedict wrote regarding these values "In the face of fundamental and inalienable ethical demands, Christians must recognize that what is at stake is the essence of the moral law, which concerns the integral good of the human person."

Dr. Dobson: I hate to interrupt this powerful message from Father Ed Meeks, but you can hear the balance of his words on YouTube. I want to transition now to the text of my own letter, to our constituency, which originally appeared in my October newsletter, it has also gone viral with more than a million views. In the letter I offer some thoughts about how you might consider the November 3rd election. Let's roll that tape.

Dr. Dobson: The letter I will read in a moment was distributed to our constituents a few days before President Trump contracted the coronavirus. That was on October the 2nd. He appears to be recovering and his name will be on the ballot, opposed to that of Vice President Joe Biden. I would not suggest how you should vote in that election, but my friend Ray Comfort invited me to offer some perspectives about how this decision might be made, this is what I wrote:

Dear friends, this will be my final letter to 800,000 people before Americans cast their ballots on November 3rd. It is a breathtaking moment in the history of the United States. Many political commentators have stated that this election is the most significant since 1864, when Abraham Lincoln vied for a second term

against democratic nominee, George McClellan. The future of our beloved nation hung in the balance that year. If Lincoln had lost, the Civil War would have ended precipitously and the wretched evils of slavery would have remained legal in the Confederate States and perhaps even in the North. Had Lincoln been defeated, the union would have been torn asunder, thank God Mr. Lincoln won, even though it cost him his life.

Now we're approaching another presidential election that carries enormous implications for the stability of our democratic system of government. Indeed, Newt Gingrich said that what we are now facing might bring an end to civilization as we have known it, he may have been referring to a possible revolution. Regardless, I believe his grave concern for our nation is valid. For centuries America has stood as a shining light for liberty and freedom in our nation and around the globe. If we abandon our core values, the world will suffer for it, the binary choice before us is that stark.

Now here is the critical question: how will Americans, and how will you decide how to vote for our chief executive officer? I've heard from dozens of friends and acquaintances in recent weeks who have told me they will base their decisions solely on the candidate's rhetoric, tone, style or likability. Does that describe your thinking process?

Just now, as I was about to react to that idea, my wife, Shirley brought in an email that she had received a few minutes before from a friend. It quoted an anonymous statement that gets to the heart of the issue, as follows, and I'm quoting, "This is not a junior high or high school popularity contest. I'm not voting for the person. I'm voting for the platform. I am voting for the second amendment, I'm voting for the next Supreme Court justice. I'm voting for the electoral college. I'm voting for the republic in which we live. I'm voting for the police and law and order. I'm voting for the military and the veterans who fought and died for this country. I'm voting for the flag that is often missing from public events. I'm voting for the right to speak my opinion and not be censored for it. I'm voting for secure borders. I'm voting for the right to praise God without fear. I'm voting for every unborn soul that is at risk of being aborted. I'm voting for freedom and the American dream. I'm folding for good against evil. I am not just voting for one person, I'm voting for the future of my country."

I couldn't have said it better, although I want to add to the writer's list: I'm also voting for candidates who will exercise sound judgment internationally. I'm voting for those who will support Israel. I'm voting for those who will protect children from leftist curricula. I'm voting for the nation's fiscal integrity. I'm voting for parental rights. I'm voting for school choice and for home education. I'm voting for freedom in the suburbs. I'm voting for Little Sisters of the Poor and other Christian organizations. I'm voting for racial unity. I'm voting to support "In God We Trust," and school prayer. I'm voting for freedom of conscience for physicians and other professionals. I'm voting for marriage. I'm voting for life in all its dimensions. I'm voting for wisdom in handling the

pandemic. I'm voting for protection for the church and oppressive politicians. I'm voting against euthanasia and physician assisted suicide. And yes, I'm voting against socialism.

One final thought, and this comes from my heart: with all respect, this election isn't about you. It certainly is not about me. It's about our kids and grandkids, it's about those who are yet to come if they're allowed to live. This vote has awesome implications for future generations, and the nation we love. It is about our constitution and the immutable God given rights that it protects. It is about values and truth and greatness and hope. That is why the notion of choosing a president based on frivolous personality characteristics is so unfortunate. In summary, this election is for all the marbles: the presidency, the House of Representatives, the Senate and the Supreme Court. Together, they set the agenda for our country. If you love America and don't want it to be fundamentally transformed, it is time to do three things.

Number one, pray like never before that God will spare this great nation from tyranny and oppression of religious liberty. Two, volunteer to help your candidates. Three, vote for the candidates who will best uphold your values and convictions. And God bless America.

Dr. Dobson:

Well, let me bring this program to a close. If you joined us late, you may not understand what we have done with this broadcast. We've presented two related messages, and I think we have time left to let you hear how Father Ed Meeks ended his homily that we heard in the first half of the program. These again are the words of Father Ed Meeks, who is Monsignor at Christ the King Church in Towson, Maryland.

Father Ed Meeks:

In conclusion, we are as a nation, as I stated earlier, I believe, staring into the abyss, stemming from our culture's wholesale rejection of God and his law. A rejection manifested most tangibly in five decades of legalized abortion. Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen once wrote these words almost 60 years ago, "A nation always gets the kind of politicians it deserves. If a time ever comes when the religious Jews, Protestants and Catholics ever have to suffer under a totalitarian state, which would deny to them the right to worship God according to the light of their conscience, it will be because for years they thought it made no difference what kind of people represented them, and because they abandoned the spiritual in the realm of the temporal."

And so, the bottom line, brothers and sisters, is: vote. And when you do think with the Church, while also understanding this, that no one running for public is ultimately the solution for what ails America. Only God is. That's not a statement of resignation to the inevitable, it is rather a statement of hope. The late Father Richard John Neuhaus once wrote, "Christians have not the right to despair, for despair is a sin. And we have not reason to despair." He said. "Quite simply, because Christ is risen." You and I are called to be salt and light in a dark and dying world. And you and I, as faithful American Catholics, are engaged in a battle for the soul of our beloved nation. Let's take that call seriously.

I'd like to conclude this homily with a quote from the Old Testament that you are no doubt familiar with. It's one of my very favorite scripture quotes and one which is most pertinent and most compelling for today. 2 Chronicles 7:14, "Almighty God declares this: if my people who are called by my name will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then, then will I hear from heaven and forgive their sin and heal their land." God bless you, and may God continue to bless America.

Announcer: This has been a presentation of the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute.

Roger Marsh: The battle lines for decision 2020 have been clearly drawn. Dr. Dobson believes that there are several essentials every Christian needs to understand, and then take that wisdom to the polls as we take a stand for Biblical values in our culture in this year's election. He's writing about the most urgent issues in his publication called Faith Votes, and you can get a free copy when you go to dr.jamesdobson.org/faithvotes. That's dr.jamesdobson.org/faithvotes.

Dr. Dobson: Mark Twain once said, all you need in life is ignorance and confidence, and then success is sure. Well, that's not altogether true, but his premise is on track. Whether we fail or succeed can sometimes depend on our own tenacity and on the confidence with which we approach a task. We've all heard stories of people who beat the odds and achieved where others tried and failed, but we seldom stop to think about the many times those same people fell flat on their faces before realizing their goals. Thomas Edison reportedly built and tested more than a thousand different light bulbs before finally getting one to work. How many of us, I wonder, would have continued the quest after so many disappointments? The late Colonel Sanders took his chicken recipe to more than a thousand different restaurants before finally convincing one that it was "finger-lickin' good."

And consider Abraham Lincoln. For 28 years he couldn't seem to do anything right. He lost several jobs. He failed in business. He endured numerous losses while running for public office, and eventually suffered a nervous breakdown, but he refused to give up. Finally, he won the election that made him one of the greatest presidents in the history of the United States. Time and again, we look into the lives of people who succeed and we find a string of failures and disappointments. That's a vitally important understanding for us all, but especially for young people just starting out in life.

Roger Marsh: To find out how you can partner with Family Talk, go to dr.jamesdobson.org.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Hi, I'm Dr. Tim Clinton for the James Dobson Family Institute. Who inspires you on matters of faith, family, and culture? If you don't already get it, sign up for Dr. Dobson's monthly newsletter at drjamesdobson.O-R-G. Each month you're going to receive insight and news that impacts your family, and solid advice that you can trust. Whether it's wisdom for parents, tips for building a lasting marriage, or discernment on issues your family may be facing, visit

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Roger Marsh:

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