



Justice for Women

Tapestry Thread

Devotion for Week 5 - October 30, 2022

By The Rev. Monica Weber

This week, Lutherans commemorate the Protestant Reformation. Martin Luther wrote much about how to live in the secular world as a Christian, drawing on Jesus' wisdom in Mark 12:17. When asked by some Pharisees whether it was godly to pay taxes, Jesus responded that the faithful should give to the government those things which belong to the government, and give to God the things that belong to God (NRSV).

Martin Luther believed that Christians should not withdraw from the world, but be fully involved in their civic communities, sharing their God-given talents to improve society through public education, social ministry, civil service and by modeling the inclusive love of Christ Jesus through their vocations. Christians should hold themselves and civic leaders accountable, so that humanity may thrive and flourish as God desires.

On November 8, American citizens have the opportunity to exercise their right to vote in the mid-term elections. All 435 seats in the US House of Representatives and 34 of the 100 seats in the US Senate will be contested. Thirty-nine state and territorial gubernatorial elections will be conducted, plus many state and local elections, as we vote our consciences to elect leaders and enact legislation that impacts life in this country.

The right to vote is a privilege of American citizenship, but it is also a weighty responsibility: our democracy affords each eligible voter the opportunity to learn about issues, listen to varying opinions on those issues, and elect candidates whom we entrust with effective governance and the visioning of our future. We give thanks to God for the blessing of democracy, for the right to vote, and for those who strive to honorably and faithfully serve all people as they work to relieve human suffering. This month, the Tapestry focus has highlighted the evils of human trafficking; your vote can help strengthen communities to provide resources for the most vulnerable, desperate populations that are targeted by human traffickers.

The Deliver Fund, a non-profit organization dedicated to ending human





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trafficking worldwide, estimated in a 2020 report that between 15,000-50,000 American women and children are forced into sexual slavery annually, but the report notes that these statistics are difficult to research: the US Department of Health & Human Services estimates the annual number of American sex trafficking victims between 240,000-325,000.

Human trafficking imprisons individuals in a horrific, invisible existence with little chance of escape. Victims of trafficking not only lose their dignity, they lose basic human rights, including the right to make their voices heard through voting. It is important that as Christians, we vote for leaders and legislation that will strengthen our social systems to reduce the threat of human trafficking.

We pray for the courage, conviction and resources to eradicate this unspeakable sin; we pray for victims and their families; and we pray that God's Holy Spirit will stir us to action, to speak for the voiceless. We pray that all Americans will exercise their precious right to vote this November 8, giving thanks to God for the gift of civic freedom we enjoy, and for the gift of freedom from death and sin that we have been given by our baptism into Christ.

Most Holy God, our hearts break as we contemplate the unimaginable tragedy of human trafficking. Protect all victims and fill them with hope; increase their faith to believe that you will never abandon them; make your holy presence known to them in their darkest hour, and lead them to safety. Comfort their families; bless all who work to rescue victims, and bring their captors to justice. By the fire of your Holy Spirit who makes all things new, lead the rescued into healing; inspire us to advocate and speak for the voiceless; extinguish the unchecked greed and desire that fuel this tragedy, that all human beings may be respected, cherished and loved as you intend. We ask these things in the name of Jesus Christ, our Risen Lord, Amen.

Source:

- Deliver Fund: <https://deliverfund.org/>

