

**[Statement of Bishop Rhoades](#) on the Inauguration of President Joseph Biden – January 20, 2021**

I strongly support the **[statement of Archbishop Jose Gomez](#)**, the President of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, on this day of the inauguration of Joseph R. Biden, Jr. as 46<sup>th</sup> President of the United States. I encourage all to read this statement. I am grateful for the Archbishop's clear articulation of our position as non-partisan pastors in relation to our newly elected president, the second Catholic president in our nation's history.

Our nation needs unity and peace, healing and reconciliation. Let us pray for this intention. At the same time, we are called as Christians to work for these ends. We are called to love our neighbor as ourselves, including those with whom we disagree. We reject all violence and hatred. Even when there are profound disagreements in politics, we must respect one another and engage in discussions with civility, rejecting hateful rhetoric and personal attacks. As President Biden stated in his inaugural address: "We can see each other, not as adversaries, but as neighbors."

During the election season, I spoke and wrote about our political responsibility as Catholics. I called on the faithful to hold fast to the teachings of the Church and not to adopt positions of either political party that are inimical to the truths of our faith, and not to be blinded by political ideology. In his statement, Archbishop Gomez states: "We work with every President and every Congress. On some issues we find ourselves more on the side of Democrats, while on others we find ourselves standing with Republicans. Our priorities are never partisan. We are Catholics first, seeking only to follow Christ faithfully and to advance his vision for human fraternity and community."

Catholics in our country were pretty evenly divided in the recent election, with half voting for Joseph Biden and half for Donald Trump. No matter how one voted, we should not be divided by political allegiances or by ideologies. We must be united in our common faith and in charity, united with the Pope and Bishops in fidelity to the Church's moral and social teaching and to the obligations of justice and charity that we have in society.

**There are issues and policies of President Biden and the Democratic Party with which the Church agrees. I look forward to progress in working together for comprehensive immigration reform, eradicating racism, abolishing the death penalty, protecting the environment, etc. At the same time, there are issues and policies of President Biden and the Democratic Party with which the Church profoundly disagrees because they “would advance moral evils and threaten human life and dignity, most seriously in the areas of abortion, contraception, marriage, and gender” (Archbishop Gomez statement). Our religious liberty is another deep concern. We will engage with the new Administration and with Congress, as we always have done, to protect human life, to support marriage and family life, and to guard religious freedom.**

**We must never tire in our efforts to build a culture of love, solidarity, peace, and justice, based on our belief in the fundamental dignity of every human person. In fidelity to the Gospel of Jesus, we have a preferential love for the poor, the weak, the outcast, and the marginalized. I believe that the Church’s social doctrine not only positively contributes to our nation’s political discussions, but also addresses underlying problems, including our culture’s increasing moral relativism and distorted notions of freedom (on the “right” or on the “left”), which hurt the common good of our nation.**

**Let us pray for President Biden and his Administration as well as for our Congress. I pray also that the Church may truly be a leaven in society for greater unity and harmony.**