

The Catholic case for Brian Carroll of the American Solidarity Party

Polarization. Division. Friends and family turning on one another. A pandemic. Widespread protests against injustice. Riots. The death of a liberal Supreme Court justice, and the nomination of a conservative woman to take her place.

And, in a few short weeks, Election Day will be upon us.

In our editorials this summer and fall, we have addressed this discord. But political division, in and of itself, is not the problem. A healthy society can and will engage in healthy debate. We are not a healthy society. But we can be one – and, as Catholics, we can lead the way.

In this special issue, we are presenting four points of view on the 2020 U.S. presidential election. The authors disagree with one another. As an editorial board and as individuals, we disagree with some of what each author has to say. But we and they are united in one purpose: to provide a model for charitable discussion of the four major options that we as Catholic citizens must consider as we approach the ballot box.

[Read the full editorial here.](#)

In this essay, Charles Camosy, associate professor of theological and social ethics at Fordham University, makes the Catholic case for Brian Carroll and the American Solidarity Party.

Additional articles in this series:

[The Catholic case for President Donald Trump](#)

[The Catholic case for Joe Biden](#)

[The Catholic case for the importance of local elections](#)

Anyone who reads the actual teaching of the U.S. bishops related to political participation, "Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship," already knows that there is no "Catholic" candidate for whom to vote this November. Catholic teaching does not endorse or prohibit voting for the major candidates. It offers guidance about the principles to be used – and prohibits voting for candidates only if one is voting for them because they stand for something the Church has rightly named a grave evil.

For instance, despite his administration's gravely sinful policies with respect to refugees and immigrants, a faithful Catholic may still vote for President Donald Trump "for other morally grave reasons" – say, his defense of religious liberty or his stance on abortion. However, voting for Trump because of his gravely evil rejection of refugees is ruled out for Catholics who take the Church's teaching on such matters seriously.

On the other hand, despite Joe Biden and Kamala Harris' horrific proposed policies on abortion and infanticide, a faithful Catholic may still vote for this ticket for other morally grave reasons – say, because of his views on climate change or immigration. But voting for Biden/Harris because of their gravely evil position on abortion is ruled out for Catholics who take the Church's teaching on such matters seriously.

This is the closest thing we have to a party that is remotely consistent with Catholic teaching. It is deadly serious in protecting both the prenatal child and her mother. It is deadly serious about ecological protection of God's creation. It is deadly serious about upholding religious liberty.

When not voting in direct, intentional support of these evils, Catholic teaching offers voters a tremendous amount of freedom to use their prudential judgment in deciding for whom (or even

whether) to vote. One very important warning, however, should be heeded particularly at this moment in time: the warning against idolatry of party loyalty over loyalty to the fullness of the Church's teaching. "Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship" states:

"As citizens, we should be guided more by our moral convictions than by our attachment to a political party or interest group. When necessary, our participation should help transform the party to which we belong; we should not let the party transform us in such a way that we neglect or deny fundamental moral truths or approve intrinsically evil acts. We are called to bring together our principles and our political choices, our values and our votes, to help build a civilization of truth and love."

If Catholic voters are honest with themselves, I believe most would say that a vote for Biden or Trump this November is not a vote to help build a civilization of truth and love. It is instead a vote to try to minimize damage over the next four years. It is very often not voting for something, but rather a vote against something – or even a vote against someone.

This has been going on for some time now. Our two dominant political parties are much more comfortable playing the politics of destroying "the other side" than they are offering us a particular vision of the good. "Vote for us and we will attack them!" is the general message they have for us. Cycle in, cycle out. Many of us have become intoxicated by a politics of defining ourselves by opposition to others – not motivated by our beliefs about what a civilization of truth and love looks like.

We are now seeing the results of the toxicity of this kind of politics. We have become a hyper-anxious, frothy, highly irritable electorate. We let politics ruin our friendships, sometimes even our familial relationships. No common ground is sought; no compromises are brokered. Everything is a fight to

the death against the enemy – or at least about “triggering the libs” or “punching Nazis.”

For Catholics who want to step off this merry-go-round of despair and horribleness, I fully understand the desire to opt out of race-to-the-bottom politics of attacking the lesser of two evils. I get the desire to sit out this election and focus on other ways to build a civilization of truth in love. Especially in some states, one’s vote for president is among the least consequential decisions one will make with respect to that goal. In 2016, I wrote in my father-in-law for president with the hope that my vote produced at least a tiny bit of good.

But this time around, I believe, things are different. There is a real opportunity to make significant moves toward substantial political change. Even fundamental political change.

Brian Carroll and the American Solidarity Party will not win the presidency this November. They will very likely not win 2024, either. But we are seeing this exciting new party come into its own, getting on the ballot in many states and even showing up with significant numbers in some polls.

This is the closest thing we have to a party that is remotely consistent with Catholic teaching. It is deadly serious in protecting both the prenatal child and her mother. It is deadly serious about ecological protection of God’s creation. It is deadly serious about upholding religious liberty. It is deadly serious about welcoming immigrants and refugees. And it is deadly serious about protecting the rights and freedoms of workers in the economy.

I could go on here, but do check out [their platform](#) and see for yourself.

Voting for the American Solidarity Party in November is not “throwing your vote away.” Even if you live in a competitive

state, I would argue that propping up our toxic, dead-end politics is actually a worse use of your vote than one looking to affect genuine change eight, 12, 16 years down the road.

Indeed, given the major political realignment currently underway in the United States, voting for the Democratic or Republican Party may be closer to doing a political version of "Weekend at Bernie's" than keeping fading parties on life support. With the Trumpification of the party now complete, we officially have no idea what a Republican is at this point. And we should also stop pretending that we know what it means to be a Democrat if both Gov. John Bel Edwards and Rep. Alexandria Ocasio Cortez can claim to be members of that party.

After an extended period in which Catholics have had to sacrifice our core values and risk idolatry in order to stay "relevant" to the political process, in 2020 we find ourselves fortunate to have an exciting new party rising at the very time our country's political assumptions over the past four decades are being fundamentally disrupted. We have the opportunity to start the process of creating a genuine and authentic option for Catholic voters. Let us begin the creation of a new social force for truth and love by voting for the American Solidarity Party this November.

Charles Camosy is associate professor of theological and social ethics at Fordham University and author of "Resisting Throwaway Culture" (New City Press, \$19.95).