

LETTER TO THE PEOPLE ABOUT OUR POLITICAL MOMENT

*Of David Psalm. I will sing of faithful love and judgement; to you,
Yahweh, will I make music.
I will go forward in the path of the blameless; when will you come to
me? I will live in purity of heart, in my house,
I will not set before my eyes anything sordid. I hate those who act
crookedly; this has no attraction for me.
Let the perverse of heart keep away from me (Ps. 101:1-4 NJB)*

Popular wisdom teaches us that we must be very careful with fishbones. If they get stuck in our throat, we need to remove them, or we will have serious problems. This is us at this election moment! Are we going to pull out the fishbone in the first round or are we going to suffer and let it ruin our already bruised democracy? NO! Let's change Brazil and pull out, once and for all, the spines that have lodged themselves in our throats.

Just around the corner is October 2 and the opportunity to exercise our full right to choose our candidates for the Presidency and for the State governments to represent us in the Federal Senate and in the federal and state House of Representatives. This is such an important moment that our choices must be guided by the path of ethics and justice. This requires of each citizen a commitment to the truth, to build an equal society and to stand up against all injustice and corruption; and fidelity to the principles that underpin our practices in defence of the life of each person, especially the most vulnerable and excluded by economic, political, social, religious, cultural, and ideological powers.

We are following with great apprehension the increasing political polarisation in our country: on the one hand, the powerful, ultra-conservative elite and the centre-right politicians, militarism, and fascist forces; on the other hand, the popular forces—social movements that raise the flag against the barbarism and the dismantling of democracy that was evidenced in recent years after the coup that removed Dilma Rousseff from the Presidency.

This political moment demands from each one of us a commitment to justice, democracy, and citizenship; each one of us who struggles for life and is driven by respect, dignity, solidarity, and love. The beautiful letter from the Christian Communities reminds us that showing love is a political act: "*God is love, and whoever remains in love remains in God and God in him. In love there is no room for fear, but perfect love drives out fear.*" (1Jn 4:16.18). Today, we are faced with two political postures: one, based on love, solidarity, and justice; the other, extremely violent, filled with hate speeches that intend to silence the desperate cries for change in a scenario of crises, hunger, unemployment, corruption, embezzlement of funds supposedly destined for health and education to cover the so-called "secret budgets" of thieving and unscrupulous politicians.

This is the moment for **DISCERNMENT**—the moment to journey the paths of justice and solidarity, of the Gospel and freedom, the paths in defence of life. The Johannine communities in their writings (John's Gospel, John's Letters, and the book of Revelation) helped their communities in the periphery of the world to discern and choose the side of life and fight against all forms of oppression and condemnation. In our country It is

urgent that we **discern** to cast out all fear, oppression, repression, exploitation, theft, corruption, and all lies and shamefulness of a false moralism.

We are called to **discern** each party's program and its candidates; to **discern** if the life of the peoples is pulsating there and if there is an honest, concrete proposal to confront the situations of hunger, misery, unemployment, disease, homelessness, violence, and social inequality. We must ask ourselves if a candidate already held office, "What did he or she do?" We must analyse each project and the results. Ah! We will most certainly find many candidates who have done nothing and do nothing, and their only determination is the votes for the proposals to fill their pockets. Is the candidate a cabinet politician? Does the candidate have proposals that fulfil our struggles and needs? It is not enough to vote for a president speaking on social struggles; we need a legislature **committed** to projects and who **acts** in favour of the vulnerable strata of society.

We are called to **discern** the practices, conduct, history, speeches, and the candidates' proposals for the Presidency of the Republic. At first it may seem it is not an easy task because of the number of candidates. However, once we have sieved discernment, it should be clearly evident that we cannot and must not vote for those who have destroyed our rights (health, education, housing, transportation, work, among others) and conducted attacks on institutions; those who destroyed control mechanisms of deforestation and allowed it and invasions of indigenous lands, those who denied the pandemic and imposed treatment using chloroquine, those who ridiculed the victims and did not express any solidarity with the families, and those who did not confront the pandemic as they should have and tried to buy an unproven, overpriced vaccine with a deceitful manoeuvre. The report by the National Commission of Inquiry on COVID-19, conducted by the House of Representatives, was shelved; however, it demonstrated crimes conducted by the government and its ministers of health (i.e., sometimes military in lab coats and sometimes doctors in uniforms). It is fundamental that we cannot vote for those who have gone against life, for those who hide theft with secrets, for those who are misogynist, racist, prejudiced, sexist, xenophobic, transphobic, and homophobic. Too many adjectives for those who attempt against other people's lives!! We **must not** vote for fascism nor for those who attempt against life.

So, for whom do we vote?

It is crucial that we decide based on the urgent needs of the people and against any proposals allied with the interests of the elite and those who profit from the crises and the dismantling of rights. Discernment is imperative: Do we want the wear and tear of a second round? Do we vote in the first round for Lula's ticket to the Presidency of the Republic? We do not deny those candidates not part of the "project of destruction" of the country, and we believe that the vote for Lula to win in the first round must be accompanied by political militancy by monitoring, evaluating, and participating in a process of change.

We embrace you all in this journey of rebuilding our rights and our country.

CEBI - National Council