

It is our time to Hope

Judgment on Kenya's Upcoming Elections

The August 8th presidential elections are slowly but surely coming. For several months now, Kenya has been in an 'elective mood' and it's yet to intensify as the Election Day arrives. The primaries were seen to have been largely shambolic, unprofessionally run and with accusations of voter bribery marring the exercise. The result? A general public apathy towards the looming elections and politics.

With this backdrop, why should we still be interested in politics with all its appearances of drama, chaos and divisiveness? On the 11th of June 2017, members of the CL Movement in Kenya together with some political candidates met to discuss, reflect and share their experiences as to why politics has any meaning.

Fr. Giussani's on three level judgement on politics was quite helpful as a criteria:

1st level of political effect of a lively Christian community is its very existence; if they are authentic, then Christian communities are guarantors and promoters of substantial democracy; the Christian experience thus becomes one of the protagonists of civic life, in constant dialogue and comparison with all of the other forces.

2nd level: An authentic Christian community lives in a constant relationship with the rest of humanity, sharing completely in its needs and feeling its problems- Because of the profound fraternal experience that develops in it, the Christian community cannot but tend to have its own idea and its own method of approaching common problems, both practical and theoretical, to offer as its specific collaboration with the rest of the society in which it is situated.

3rd level: direct political involvement on the part of some- outright political activism by individuals who by their own responsibility though formed by the concrete life of the community get involved in search of additional instruments of political effect.

Recently Pope Francis said: "Continue to feel a great sense of responsibility for sowing the good seed of the Gospel in the life of the world, through your charitable work, through your involvement in political life – but please, politics in the noblest sense of the world, politics with a capital P! But also through your strong commitment to education and your engagement in the cultural sphere" (Pope Francis, 30 april 2017).

We welcome the opportunity to vote as an educational one that will allow us to witness to what we hold most dear. We do not hope for salvation from politics or politicians. Yet we understand the critically important role that politics plays in our lives.

For this reason some concerns emerged that matter most to us and we hope that with the education we have received, we will vote according to which candidates and parties demonstrate an authentic care for these concerns.

- **Subsidiarity-** That the state and the politicians should recognize the efforts and works already done by the local community and not substitute them.

- **Freedom of association**- the freedom to build structures, places, and institutions where people can live, gather, and be educated.
- **Freedom of Education**- Parents need to be free and be supported to choose the education that they prefer for their children. The primary role of a parent is to educate his/her children, this primary role should not be taken over by the government.
- **The common good**- Those who hold political power must do so as a service to the common good of the entire nation.

Fr. Giussani taught us that in front of life's real problems and challenges, what we hold most dear surfaces. Thus, within the privacy of the voting booth we will see "whether faith is really in the foreground, whether faith truly comes first, whether we really expect everything from the fact of Christ or whether we expect what we decide to expect from the fact of Christ."