

## AS A NATION WE ARE DEEPLY DIVIDED

It is very clear as a nation we are deeply divided. Within an hour of Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg's death, with a quick word about what a great woman she was and prayers for her family, the debate became strongly political on when and who should replace the Justice. Certainly such realities are very important to our nation, but perhaps, a few days of reflection on her life might have been more appropriate. However, in today's climate, almost everything is seen through the lens of politics. Many pundits are saying this may be the most divided time in our nation since the Civil War.

Can we strongly disagree with another person or group, listen carefully to what they have to say, and still respect them? The words attributed to Voltaire are often quoted: 'I may disapprove of what you say, but I will defend to the death your right to say it.' Free speech is a key of being an American, but in many ways, it seems to be dismissed by many. If you do not agree with me, you are not only wrong, but you as a person need to be condemned. I am not advocating that in any way we compromise or weaken our values or beliefs. They should be defended vigorously. Still, in our passion to stand up for what we believe and deeply value does not call us to speak or act in a disrespectful way toward others. No doubt, intolerable words and actions should be condemned, but we must be careful not to casually condemn those people whose ideas are different from ours. We can reject a person's ideas without rejecting the person. Shouting and yelling rather than debate and civility seem to be very present in our current culture.

In the movie *When Harry met Sally*, the question is asked can a woman and men be friends? I might ask can a conservative and a liberal be friends? Can a Biden supported be friends with

a Trump supporter? I know some families have sadly become seriously wounded by such divisions and important relationships have ended.

One of the great sessions that I take from the amazing life of Ruth Bader Ginsburg is that of her friendship with Justice Antonin Scalia. They almost never agreed on how cases before the Supreme Court should be decided. He was a devout Catholic man and she was a Jewish woman. Yet, they had a deep and lasting friendship.

Bottom line may seek to follow the command of our Lord Jesus Christ to love one another, may we continue to learn that there are some things more important than votes.