



Dear friends of the Center,

As the final weeks of summer wind down, the election season continues to ramp up. I can call to mind going to the polling site with my grandparents when I was a child. They explained to me the importance of exercising the right to vote. Certainly, the lesson would be affirmed later in school, but going with my grandparents as they participated in that year's election is an indelible memory.

And the lesson was affirmed, when I had the opportunity to participate in a high school program called Close Up, which included a weeklong immersion experience in Washington DC to learn how the U.S.

government works. We toured government buildings, met with our representatives, and learned how to lobby on political issues.

Two key issues at the time were military spending and abortion; two issues that US Catholic Bishops were writing and speaking about. In my junior year, I was invited by the bishop of Grand Rapids to be part of a listening session with other students in the diocese. He wanted to hear our thoughts and concerns about these issues and to offer the guidance of the Church to us.

All these experiences were formative for me as a young Catholic, shaping my understanding of the importance of participating in the political life and processes of our country. From my family members, my bishop, teachers, and fellow students, I learned how to engage in civil dialogue and to pursue mutual understanding even if I still disagreed with someone based on my faith and values.

Navigating the complexities of the election this fall is no less challenging than when I was in high school. (Yes, that was an era ago.) With the current political climate marked by polarization and misinformation, discerning the right choices requires the Spirit's gifts of prudential judgement and wisdom. Here at the Center, the following programs are designed to be a help for you this season:

**Faithful Citizenship (Sept. 10, 10 - 11:30 a.m.)** will explore the intersection of faith and civic responsibility. We will delve into the topic of "Faithful Citizenship" and discuss how our Catholic values inform our engagement in the upcoming elections.

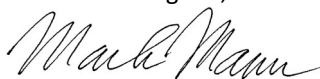
**The Catholic Vote** will examine the role of Catholic Social Teaching in shaping political discourse and decision-making. **Thursday, Sept. 12, 7 - 8:30 p.m.** is the first in a 4-part series.

**The Way of Francis: Let Us Sow Hope (Oct. 3, 7:00 pm - 8:30 pm)** While this event takes place in October, we wanted to give you a sneak peek! Explore ways to seek peace and justice for all creation as we follow in the footsteps of St. Francis of Assisi.

We invite you to participate in these thought-provoking programs, whether in person or virtually. Your presence and engagement contribute to the vibrant community we foster at the CIC. For more details and to register, visit our website.

Your continued support and engagement make these initiatives possible, and we are grateful for your partnership in our mission. Thank you for being an integral part of equipping and strengthening Catholics and spiritual seekers in this way of life.

Peace and all good,



Mark Mann,  
Director of programs and institutes

## Pray for:

Savannah Arizola  
Laurie Bossenbroek  
Ron Rainey  
Mary Ann Schuur  
Larry Szczepanski  
Thora Wease

**September Mass for  
CIC Intentions:  
Sunday, September 8  
5:30 p.m. at the  
Cathedral**

*Please include your prayer intentions with your green envelope or email them to [cicoffice@catholicinformationcenter.org](mailto:cicoffice@catholicinformationcenter.org)*

# Upcoming Programs

## Faithful Citizenship

Tuesday, Sept. 10

10 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. ET

Navigating the complexities of the 2024 election will be a challenge. This presentation will equip you with the knowledge and confidence to make informed choices. **Paul Stankewitz**, policy advocate for the Michigan Catholic Conference will offer advice on staying informed, engaging in respectful dialogue, making your voice heard, and praying before you cast a vote.



## The Way of Francis:

### Let Us Sow Hope

Thursday, Oct. 3

7 – 8:30 p.m. ET

In the prayer of St. Francis, we pray “Let Us Sow Hope.” At a time of political polarization and high climate anxiety, it reminds us that feeling hopeful about the future is not only possible but also an essential part of our faith. With St. Francis of Assisi as our guide, explore the ways we can seek peace and justice for all creation. Presented by **Nancy D’Amico**, a Paulist Associate.



## The Catholic Vote

Thursdays, Sept. 12 & 26,

Oct. 10 & 24

7 – 8:30 p.m. ET

Media pundits and political analysts often talk about the “Catholic vote” during election years. Yet with changing social norms, the challenges of Catholic public witness have become increasingly more difficult. This series will offer the space to explore the four pillars of Catholic moral life as they apply to the political and legal issues around this year’s election. Facilitated by **Mark Mann**, director of programs and institutes.



## A Busy Person's Retreat: Creating Space to Meet God in Everyday Life

Onsite: Sundays, Nov. 3 & 17,

2 – 4 p.m. ET

Online: Mondays, Nov. 4 & 18,

7:30 – 9 p.m. ET

Are you feeling fragmented, pulled in many directions and wish to center yourself in God's love and care for you? This unique retreat experience offers you personalized guidance to meet God within the fullness of your busy life. In this space, we will practice reflective listening so that we can hear the whispers of God within our lives.



**For more information or to register call 616-459-7267  
or visit [catholicinformationcenter.org](http://catholicinformationcenter.org)**

**Institute programs are co-sponsored with the Diocese of Grand Rapids.**

Your generous and regular contributions help ensure a vibrant and enduring future for the Paulist ministry at the CIC. All donations, no matter the size, make a significant impact.

Become a monthly contributor through online giving by scanning the QR code below or by visiting our website.



Follow us on Social Media for the latest updates and news.

## Friendship Corner

**Luis Anleu**  
Leadership Formation Institute for  
Hispanic Ministries



Knowing that you have the option to participate in the Leadership Formation Institute for Hispanic Ministry by zoom as well as in-person, tell us about your experience. Participating online when I needed to was a great experience because we had the opportunity to be present without being there in person. I really liked the breakout sessions where we were able to still have discussions with other people from all over the diocese who were also in the Zoom.

**How did participating in the Leadership Formation Institute for Hispanic Ministry impacted your spiritual journey?**

Knowing about Jesus is the best way to have him in my life. All the knowledge we received through the institute has helped me to be closer to him. The institute taught me to find different ways to find Jesus, especially in the Bible.

**Share a personal memory that reflects why the Leadership Formation Institute for Hispanic Ministry is important to you.**

With the knowledge I received from the institute I have tools and the opportunity to guide others to Christ. Because of the institute I now can be Coordinator of the Faith Formation in my Parish and able better prepared to teach the Catechumens.