

Anxiety – Election Season can heighten it!

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I suppose anxiety is a part of most of our lives. Maybe there is a spike in anxiety during a particular time as we accompany a loved one in illness or the dying process. Perhaps anxiety rises when a person loses a job or a sibling experiences difficulty with a partner or child. You could be feeling anxiety right now due to any myriad of conditions within our world connected to racism, war, climate destruction, immigration, suffering, or effects of sexism.

Studies have shown that there has been an [increase of people](#) in the U.S. experiencing anxiety, stress, nervousness, and anger, emotions brought on during the election season. . According to the American Psychological Association, “[research now shows](#) the distress we feel around politics can harm our physical and mental health—and it’s only getting worse”. This increase is borne out in my own experience with folks in my various bubbles. Some insist they don’t engage in politics, while others feel upset and express fear at the thoughts of election day approaching and its aftermath.

Lots of folks are talking hold of the situation and offering suggestions. I will pose only a few:

- NPR: [Stressed about politics? Here are 5 ways to take care of your mental health](#)
- [Six Ways to Ease Election Anxiety from Gonzaga University](#) (and it’s not just for students)
- Local morning news shows may offer [Ask the Doc segments](#)
- If you have an account, you can view the resources from [Education for Justice](#) related to the election. It includes a prayer after election
- Participate in the [2024 Mercy Election Novena](#)

Responses from our sisters on how they handle anxiety at election time and maintain a peaceful heart:

- I pray daily for the grace of a peaceful heart
- Trying to pay more attention to simple, everyday things like a smile, a handshake
- Savoring being in a community praying for peace
- Being judicious about my consumption of news, realizing news organizations are trying to pull me into the discourse, which is often unsettling
- Cultivating my experience of grounding, especially outdoors
- Touching a tree’s trunk, admiring a flower or plant
- Become aware of my feelings. When I sense disturbance rising up, I remind myself that the disturbance is not of God
- Breathing in and out. This little practice is similar to the practice of centering prayer; applied it to everyday situations
- I pray for the individuals who irk me, by placing them in God's tender Mercy
- Maintain my regular prayer time with the intention of always letting God’s love, not mine, be the focus
- I’m learning that sometimes when I get upset, I need to verbalize what comes up in me so that I can hear myself and the other in a very respectful way

- Very simple practice: respond to any petitions that indicate ending the wars going on, not sending arms, etc., then I pray daily and often use breath prayer for a peaceful mode
- I do not read every email or text message... I just delete and let them go

Let us pray for each other!

*Triune God, wondrous community of infinite love, teach us to contemplate you in the beauty of the universe for all things speak of you. Awaken our praise and thankfulness for every being that you have made. Give us the grace to feel profoundly joined to everything that is.
~Laudato Si` Prayer*