



June 2024

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

The next UK general election is set for Thursday 4th July.

It is a privilege to vote, and I encourage each one of us to actively participate in the process. Not just on polling day but in engaging with the key issues that matter to us as individuals and as Catholics, focussing on how we want our society to operate.

The Fathers of the Second Vatican Council reminded us of the importance and purpose of voting. They went so far as to call it a duty, and not just for Catholics. “All citizens, therefore, should be mindful of the right and also the duty to use their free vote to further the common good” (Gaudium et Spes, 75).”

We should be looking beyond the superficial soundbite and to the heart of matters. As Catholics we can use this as an opportunity to put our faith into action, prioritising issues, policies, and politicians that reflect and share our values. We must avoid the politics of polarisation and division and seek to find a narrative that is for the common good.

There are many issues that will speak to you, but the Bishops’ Conference have chosen to highlight a number:

- Respect for The Dignity of Every Human Being
- Education
- Promotion of Peace and Reconciliation
- Upholding The Sanctity of Life
- Eradication of Poverty (through promoting a just economic system and promoting the dignity of work)
- Criminal Justice
- Care For Our Common Home - this Planet.
- International relations and Human Rights
- Migration and Refugees

With the right to vote comes the responsibility and I encourage everyone to get to know the individual candidates standing in their constituency - and to learn what they stand for.

Along with my fellow faith leaders in Greater Manchester and Lancashire I also urge you to vote for people who will promote positive relationships and cohesion between all our communities, and who oppose anything that causes racial or religious hatred or prejudice on grounds of race, nationality, disability, gender, sexual orientation, age or religion – especially Antisemitism or Islamophobia in the current international climate.

We must never take this democratic freedom for granted. I urge everyone who can vote to do so. Please remember that Photo ID is now necessary in order to be permitted to vote.

You may also, individually and in your parishes, wish to pray for the General Election. A suggested prayer is provided by the Columban Missionaries:

A Prayer for Elections

Eternal God, Lord of creation,
As we look towards the upcoming election
We ask that your Spirit of Truth be upon us.
Let us, your people, be guided by Gospel values,
Of Love of neighbour, truth, justice
And compassion towards all.
Particularly the 'least' of our sisters and brothers.
Help us to choose political parties and candidates willing
To place the needs of the many before the profits of the few.
To put the wellbeing of the majority above the wellbeing of the markets,
And the conserving of our common home ahead of the
cossetting of corporations that harm creation.
Amen

Stay with us Lord, on our journey.



Further Resources

If you are interested in learning more, there are several resources for Catholic voters including:

- Caritas, Diocese of Salford <https://www.caritassalford.org.uk/general-election-action/>
- The Bishops Conference of England and Wales General Election Resource - <https://www.cbcew.org.uk/election24/>
- Centre for Catholic Social Thought and Practice General Election Resources – <https://ccstp.org.uk/articles/general-election-resources>
- CSAN (Caritas Social Action Network) General Election Guidance - <https://www.csan.org.uk/guidance/general-election-resources/>
- CAFOD – A Guide for Catholic Voters - <https://cafod.org.uk/campaign/uk-general-election-2024-a-guide-for-catholic-voters>