



ROMAN CATHOLIC ARCHDIOCESE OF REGINA OFFICE OF THE ARCHBISHOP

445 Broad Street N., Regina, SK, CANADA S4R 2X8
Tel: (306) 352-1651 Fax: (306) 352-6313 E-mail: [chancery @archregina.sk.ca](mailto:chancery@archregina.sk.ca)



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Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

As we approach the upcoming federal election, we are again called to consider how best to build up the kingdom of God and serve the common good through our role as citizens. In an election, we have the opportunity to make a difference in our community through informed and conscientious voting, but also through honest, forthright, and charitable conversations with friends and neighbours, as well as with the political candidates seeking our votes.

How we choose to vote is important, but so too is our conduct when dealing with difficult or controversial public issues. One of the most important gifts the Church can give to our polarized world is modeling healthy engagement between people who, sometimes profoundly, disagree. This does not, however, require marginalizing our faith commitments. A pluralistic democracy like Canada should be a place where people of various commitments bring those commitments into vigorous dialogue in the public square, not a place where certain voices and perspectives are dismissed on the arbitrary grounds that they are ‘religious.’

A Catholic’s vote should be boldly and unapologetically informed by our faith, the faith of the Church. That said, discerning which party or candidate to vote for can be difficult. Some issues – including a range of issues that involve respect for and the dignity of human life from conception to natural death – carry greater weight than others. In any election, and especially in one where no major party aligns closely with Catholic values and vision of the common good, any vote will involve some level of compromise. We do well to consider many factors, including the positions and integrity of local candidates on issues of life and death, the possibility of effective legislation, the pursuit of a just society which attends to the needs of those on the margins, the future of the planet, and the relative weight of other important issues.

In this regard I would draw your attention to *Voting as Catholics*, the 2019 Federal Election Guide of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops. If this pamphlet is not available at the back of your church, ask your Pastor’s assistance to find a copy, or look for it on our website.

I would also recommend to you a series on “Voting Like a Catholic” prepared by our Archdiocesan theologian Dr. Brett Salkeld, which is available on our Archdiocesan webpage and social media. Brett will also be speaking on this topic at Christ the King parish on Tuesday Oct. 1 after the 7 pm evening Mass.

Lastly, while it is easy to be frustrated when no party platform adequately represents Catholic Social Teaching, I want to encourage you to do more than simply vote for the least bad option. If Catholics want better options on a range of issues in the next federal election, we need to begin that work now. Talk or write to your local candidates of all parties about issues that matter to you as a Catholic. Raise public awareness. Find allies across party lines. Work within the parties themselves to influence election platforms. There is much more to responsible citizenship than voting. The world needs the Gospel and its values. It is a responsibility of the laity to bring the Gospel to bear on questions of public policy. May the Spirit of God give you wisdom and strength as you do so.

Yours in the Risen Lord,

✠ Donald Bolen
Archbishop of Regina