



Pastoral statement on the 2019 Australian federal election

Dear friends,

The 2019 Australian federal election will be held on Saturday 18 May 2019 to elect members to the Parliament of Australia.

Voting is a privilege, a right and a responsibility of all Australians who wish to contribute to the ongoing health and prosperity of the Commonwealth of Australia.

Voting allows us to exercise “a primary and fundamental response to desire, seek and protect the good of others” as outlined by Pope Francis in his apostolic exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*.

As followers of our Lord, Jesus Christ, we are encouraged to ensure that our consciences are informed on all the issues that impact on our lives and the communities in which we live.

When informing their consciences, Catholics in the Diocese of Parramatta are encouraged to keep in mind Catholic teachings and principles which include:

- Care for the poor and the marginalised which is at the centre of Catholic social policy. This includes a taxation for justice so that the burdens of the community are shared and relief is given to those in greatest need;
- Vigorous defence of the dignity of the human person. This includes the protection of life from conception to natural death. The Church maintains all have an inviolable right to life and we give witness to the inestimable worth of each human person;
- Providing compassion, care and justice to the most marginalised and vulnerable groups in our society. This includes the Indigenous Australians, the aged, children, and those with disability. We are also called to support all those who have been hurt, damaged or alienated, be they abuse victims, survivors, divorcees, gays, lesbians or disaffected members;
- A deep commitment to safeguarding creation and the natural environment, especially as outlined in the encyclical *Laudato Si* by Pope Francis. This includes a greater commitment to renewable and cost-effective energy;

- A willingness to accept the gifts and care of immigrants, refugees and those seeking asylum, especially those who have escaped distressing, traumatising and difficult situations like war, famine and political hostilities. This includes ending indefinite mandatory detention of asylum seekers on Nauru and Manus Island;
- A commitment to the family as the central building block of the common good and society;
- Just and equitable funding for Catholic education which contributes so much to our Australian society;
- The development of a sustainable economy that recognises the right to work and the necessity of a just economy as outlined in the ACBC 2017-2018 statement *Everyone's Business - Developing an inclusive and sustainable economy*;
- Active engagement and promotion of peace within and between societies. The use of non-violence as an essential mechanism to solve disputes and as the agent of social change.
- Ensuring that no one is discriminated on the basis of race, gender, religion and that proper freedoms are legislated to guarantee that people are free to speak, teach and act according to their own religious beliefs, in line with the encyclicals of Pope Saint John XXIII *Pacem in terris* and *Mater et magistra* and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Article 18);
- A commitment to supporting the disadvantaged, the dispossessed, the oppressed beyond our borders, especially those in our region. This includes increasing overseas aid and helping West Papuan refugees.

I encourage all Catholics across Western Sydney and the Blue Mountains to contribute to the common good by exercising their rights as citizens of Australia and engaging in the democratic process by voting in this election.

May the Holy Spirit guide us as we all work towards building a loving society where the poor and the suffering are our first priority.

Yours sincerely in Christ,



Most Reverend Vincent Long Van Nguyen OFM Conv
Bishop of Parramatta

Given at Parramatta on 29 April 2019
Memorial of St Catherine of Siena

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 Bishop of Parramatta