

*The Catholic Bishops' of England and Wales  
have issued a statement on the forthcoming  
General Election;  
having returned from their November 2019  
Plenary Meeting in Leeds.*

The statement concentrates on the key issues – not parties or manifestos – offering a series of points that can be put to candidates prior to voting.

The Bishops highlight the duty of all citizens – not just Catholics – to help shape politics that are “rooted in the service of human rights and peace.” The innate human dignity of all – particularly the vulnerable and those on the margins – lies at the heart of the statement as the Bishops encourage everyone to “engage with the election and vote.”

In making judgments about how to vote, the Bishops ask that the following are carefully considered and, indeed candidates can be asked how they will uphold:

- The innate dignity of every human being; defending both the child in the womb, the good of the mother and an understanding of the immeasurable good of a child not yet born?
- The dignified care for those who are terminally ill and dying while resisting the false compassion of assisted suicide or euthanasia?
- The needs of those who are frequently neglected or discarded by society such as people with disabilities, Travellers, older people, those who are homeless, those in prison and those trapped in modern slavery?
- The process of integration of migrants and refugees who have made their homes here [1], challenging the global rise of xenophobia and racism that is so radically incompatible with our faith [2]
- The rights of those in our own communities and overseas who “can see no end to the tunnel of extreme poverty,” [3] providing them with assistance and confronting the structural injustices that compound their suffering?
- Care for our common home and tackle the climate emergency which threatens the future of our entire human family and is already having a profound impact upon the world’s poorest people [4]

- Freedom of religion and belief, ensuring that everyone has the right to exercise their conscience and practise their creed freely without fear?
- The cherishing of marriage, recognising the essential place of the family in the service of life and of society?
- The right of parents to educate their children in accordance with their faith and support the work of Catholic schools in their contribution to society and their promotion of the common good?

[1] Pope Francis: Message for the 104<sup>th</sup> World Day of Migrants and Refugees (14/1/18)

[2] World Council of Churches and Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development: Message from the conference on Xenophobia, Racism and Populist Nationalism in the Context of Global Migration (20/9/18)

[3] Pope Francis: Message for the 3<sup>rd</sup> World Day of the Poor (17/11/19)

[4] Pope Francis: Address to meeting on the energy transition and care of our common home (14/6/19)

### **Other Resolutions**

As well as the General Election statement, the Bishops of England and Wales issued a number of other short statements and Plenary Resolutions covering:

- Launch of the God Who Speaks scripture initiative in partnership with the Bible Society
- Rededication of England as the Dowry of Mary
- Care for the vulnerable elderly
- Texts for the Feast of St John Henry Newman
- Fabric Surveys of Catholic Cathedra
- National Framework for the inspection of Catholic schools
- Justice and peace in the Holy Land

### **Downloads**

1. You can download the full General Election statement and the shorter statements and resolutions from the November 2019 Plenary Meeting in Leeds by following the link: <https://www.cbcew.org.uk/2019-general-election-statement-and-bishops-plenary/>
2. In addition, I enclose for your information the statement offered by Bishop Marcus Stock, Bishop of Leeds, and Chairman of the Catholic Education Service in regards to:

**‘Why Catholic Schools matter at this General Election’**