

**YOUR GUIDE
TO CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING
AND THE
FEDERAL
ELECTION**

**For
Heaven's
Sake,
Vote!**

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH
**CATHOLIC
CHARITIES**
OF THE ARCHDIOCESE
OF TORONTO



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction.....	4
Human Dignity.....	8
Poverty	12
Homelessness	16
Health Care.....	19
Indigenous Issues.....	23
Newcomers	26
The Environment	29

INTRODUCTION

Why vote?

Our actions matter, and so does our vote, because it can turn our country's government towards greater justice. Our vote can lead to greater economic security and opportunity, or marginalization and hopelessness – for the peoples of Canada and for our brothers and sisters in need around the world. That is what's at stake every time we vote – or fail to vote.

Economic security and opportunity are not automatic in any democracy. We must take seriously our commitments as citizens. Voting is one of the most basic rights in a free and democratic society.

What role does our faith play in society?

The fundamental message of the Gospels and Catholic Social Teaching is this: *We are responsible for one another, especially for the most vulnerable and the poor.*

As Canada's Catholic Bishops noted in "A Church Seeking Justice," Pope Francis has put special emphasis on "human dignity and labour, war and peace, and the economics of exclusion and isolation and the need to act for justice." He has reminded us of God's undying concern "for those trapped in poverty, prisoners, refugees, the unemployed, and for many others on the margins and peripheries of society" (#1).

What is Catholic Social Teaching and how does it affect me?

Catholic Social Teaching is an essential part of Catholic faith. This teaching is rooted in statements by Popes, ecumenical Church councils such as Vatican II, the world's Catholic Bishops and the Tradition of the Church. Through Catholic Social Teaching, we find the strength to stay true to what the Gospel and the Church's social mission call us to do.

When we are preparing to vote, Catholic Social Teaching prompts us to be responsible citizens and ensure that the government we elect

- ▶ works for social justice and human dignity
- ▶ is committed to community and the common good
- ▶ protects human rights
- ▶ puts the needs of the poor and vulnerable first
- ▶ recognizes its stewardship in the care of creation
- ▶ assures everyone's participation in civic life
- ▶ respects the basic rights of workers
- ▶ helps citizens carry out their societal responsibilities, and
- ▶ promotes peace through mutual respect of peoples and nations.

How can voting help us build a more just society?

Every election campaign involves issues that we need to address if we hope to build a more just society for everyone. For

most of us, the issues that are top of mind are those that affect us personally. These are important, but they are not the only issues that matter.

There are some issues we might overlook: they don't affect us or the people we know directly. Instead, they affect the most vulnerable among us. But because we are one body, one community, these issues are ours as well. When we vote, we can express our hope for a government that will play a positive moral role:

- ▶ promoting human dignity
- ▶ protecting human rights, and
- ▶ building the common good.

In this booklet, you will find reflections on seven key issues – issues that will have an impact on creating the type of just society we hope to build:

1. human dignity
2. poverty
3. homelessness
4. health care
5. Indigenous issues
6. newcomers
7. the environment

For each one, we introduce the issue and share brief excerpts from Scripture, Popes, Church councils, Canadian Bishops and Catholic Social Teaching. Our aim is to help guide you as you figure out what questions to ask candidates and ultimately decide how you will vote.

Our social teaching tells us...

Then the king will say to those at his right hand, “Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.” — **Matthew 25:34-36**

[Solidarity] ... is not a feeling of vague compassion or shallow distress at the misfortunes of so many people, both near and far. On the contrary, it is a firm and persevering determination to commit oneself to the common good; that is to say to the good of all and of each individual, because we are all really responsible for all.—**Pope John Paul II, *Sollicitudo rei socialis* (On Social Concerns)**

I ask God to give us more politicians capable of sincere and effective dialogue aimed at healing the deepest roots – and not simply the appearances – of the evils in our world! Politics, though often denigrated, remains a lofty vocation and one of the highest forms of charity, inasmuch as it seeks the common good.—**Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium* (The Joy of the Gospel), #205**

[The common good is] the sum of those conditions of social life which allow social groups and their individual members relatively thorough and ready access to their own fulfillment.... —***Gaudium et spes* (The Church in the Modern World), #26**

HUMAN DIGNITY

From the Beginning to the End of Life



As Catholics, we believe that the life and dignity of every person must be respected and protected at every stage and in every condition. Life itself is the first and most basic human right. We want to elect governments that actively work to shape a world where human life receives full respect at all stages and that show their commitment to justice and peace.

That means electing governments that will abide by the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, the very first of which is freedom of conscience and religion. The Charter is intended to protect all of us as citizens from being coerced or intimidated into taking action that goes against our conscience and our faith.

Critical life issues are intimately linked with issues affecting the poor, marginalized and vulnerable in our communities:

• **From conception to natural death:** Just as children are to be protected from the moment of conception, as they develop and throughout their lives, those who are at the end of their lives also deserve this care, so that their passing from this world to the next is marked by dignity and respect. The Supreme Court of Canada's decision to strike down the laws against assisted suicide continues to challenge us. The conscience rights of physicians and health professionals who choose not to participate in the intentional killing of a patient need defending. Responding in a positive and caring way to soothe the fear and anguish people may experience at the end of their lives – such as feeling pressured to accept death sooner to avoid a presumed financial burden on their family and others – is one way to support life.

• **The poor and marginalized:** In “A Church Seeking Justice,” Canada's Catholic Bishops stated that as Catholics, we must be committed to work in service and solidarity with the poor and marginalized. Electing governments that respect and safeguard human dignity is part of that call.

• **Palliative care, long-term care and home care:** Canada's Bishops have advocated for making high-quality palliative care, long-term care and home care easily accessible to all Canadians. The energies and resources of our elected representatives are to be directed towards this goal.

A consistent ethic of life is needed. A respect for life issues includes not only critical life issues such as abortion and assisted suicide, but also a genuine commitment to life. It is up to us to gauge the various political parties' responses when it comes to

- › improving health care
- › reducing poverty
- › providing quality education
- › creating adequate, accessible, affordable housing, and
- › offering other social supports.

Our social teaching tells us...

The dignity of each human person and the pursuit of the common good are concerns which ought to shape all economic policies.—**Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, #203**

Every human life, from the moment of conception until death, is sacred because the human person has been willed for its own sake in the image and likeness of the living and holy God.—**Catechism of the Catholic Church, #2319**

Any human society, if it is to be well-ordered and productive, must lay down as a foundation this principle, namely, that every human being is a person, that is, [their] nature is endowed with intelligence and free will.—**Pope John XXIII, *Pacem in Terris* (Peace on Earth), #9**

Facts

- ▶ Only 15% of Canadians who died in 2016–17 received palliative care at home; research shows that 89% could benefit from palliative care in the final year of their life.
- ▶ 94,030 abortions were performed in Canada in 2017. Almost 15% of them occurred at 13 weeks of pregnancy or later.
- ▶ At least 2,614 medically assisted suicides occurred in Canada between June 2016 and October 2018.

Sources: www.cihi.ca/; www.canada.ca/

Before you vote, take time to reflect on what you have just read in light of our social teaching.

- ▶ The Catechism of the Church speaks of human life “from the moment of conception until death.” Think of someone close to you who has lived a fairly long life (such as a grandparent). Recall (or ask that person) how she/he was treated at every stage of life: in the womb, as a baby needing health care, as a child going to school, as a young adult working to support her/his family, as an elder requiring more frequent health care, and finally (if deceased now) at her/his time of death. Was this person treated as a sacred being with intelligence and free will? What could a government do to promote the dignity of life from the beginning to the end of life?

POVERTY

Income Insecurity, Food Insecurity and Precarious Employment



Poverty levels remain high in many communities across Canada despite modest increases in income (3.3%), according to the Statistics Canada Canadian Income Survey 2017. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) reports that the poverty rate for the working-age sector in Canada is well above the OECD average for the world's wealthiest industrialized countries.

The human cost of poverty is staggering: broken families, children underachieving or failing in school, chronic homelessness, poorer health and more. There is also a financial cost for all of us. The total costs (both private and public) of poverty in Ontario, for instance, are equivalent to 5.5 to 6.6 percent of Ontario's gross domestic product.

In 1989, an all-party resolution that received unanimous support in the House of Commons committed the government to eradicate child poverty in Canada by the year 2000. That was 30 years ago – and there were still 622,000 children (9%) under age 18 living below the poverty line in 2017. This rate has declined over the years, but it is still too high.

Poverty is also linked to other social ills:

- **Precarious employment.** Workers may find one or more part-time jobs, but are paid only minimum wage. Such workers receive few social benefits and are discouraged from forming a union.

- **Food insecurity.** Millions of Canadians, including children, still struggle to eat enough food every day. For low-income families and their children, frequent trips to a food bank, community centre or parish to get the food they need to survive are common. Studies have shown that 1 in 8 households in Canada are food insecure: that means they do not have enough money to buy the food they need. Food insecurity also affects the small family farmers who produce much of our food. As large agri-businesses drive up the cost of food, farm families can find their livelihoods threatened by legislation that makes it more expensive to produce the food we all need.

Poverty, precarious employment and food insecurity also acutely affect our brothers and sisters living in the global South: Africa, Asia and the Americas. By speaking up for them, we encourage our government to create policies that remedy this difficult situation.

Our social teaching tells us...

It is necessary to reaffirm that employment is necessary for society, for families and for individuals. Its primary value is the good of the human person ... And if there is no work, this dignity is wounded! Indeed, the unemployed and underemployed risk being relegated to the margins of society, becoming victims of social exclusion.—**Pope Francis, to Employees and Managers of Italian Steelworks, 2014**

A new branch of law, wholly unknown to the earlier time, has arisen from this continuous and unwearied labour to protect vigorously the sacred rights of the workers ... These laws undertake the protection of life, health, strength, family, homes, workshops, wages and labour hazards, in fine, everything which pertains to the condition of wage workers, with special concern for women and children.—**Pope Pius XI, *Quadragesimo Anno* (On Reconstruction of the Social Order), #28**

Governments must protect those who are marginalized in society ... must provide economic security and an acceptable quality of life for those who are unemployed, displaced, impoverished or afflicted by a mental or physical disability ... Voluntary efforts, though still needed, cannot begin to cope with the problems of the marginalized. Only government can do this adequately. The gospel clearly indicates that our final option must always be for the poor.—**Assembly of Catholic Bishops of Ontario, “On Choosing a Government,” 1998**

Facts

- ▶ Poverty levels are declining, but in 2017, 3.4 million Canadians (9.5% of the population) lived below the poverty line (down from 10.6% in 2016).
- ▶ Of that number, 9% of children under 18 years lived below the poverty line (down from 11% in 2016).

Source: www150.statcan.gc.ca/

Before you vote, take time to reflect on what you have just read in light of our social teaching.

- ▶ The Ontario bishops state, “Governments must protect those who are marginalized in society,” adding, “The Gospel clearly indicates that our final option must always be for the poor.” In light of the still-alarming statistics of child poverty in Canada, what concrete actions might our government undertake now?

HOMELESSNESS

Housing for Individuals and Families



Across Canada, chronic homelessness is an urgent problem. Yet having a place to call home is the key to ending poverty. A home provides the stability families and individuals need to build meaningful lives. For children, it means a place to call their own. Where there are homes, we have communities that work. Where people are simply housed, we have communities that are fractured and often crime ridden.

That's why creating housing that provides homes for families and individuals is so important, and why it is key to ending endemic poverty. A home is a place that allows people to pursue those things that improve their social and economic conditions.

Creating new housing that is inclusive and culturally sensitive strengthens a community. With the Church's social teaching

in mind, we can find out whether candidates are committed to ending homelessness and see government's role as providing funding to create adequate, accessible, affordable housing.

Homelessness is often hidden. People who live on the street do not represent the majority of those who are homeless: others can be found in shelters, constantly moving from one family member or friend's home to another, or living in their car. This problem affects those in large cities especially, but touches those in rural areas, too. Most people who are homeless are often young, such as mothers with small children.

Across Canada, communities are paying the price for the lack of affordable housing. This crisis has led to an increase in homelessness. Because of high housing prices, some seniors, refugees, youth aging out of care, young people, and families are experiencing homelessness for the first time.

Our social teaching tells us...

Each of us is aware of the suffering caused to many of our parishioners by the economic downturn of recent years. We often hear it said that Canada has not been impacted as seriously as other countries. Although that may be true, nevertheless it is of cold comfort to the unemployed or those struggling to find affordable housing.—**Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2012 President's Report**

We can find no social or moral justification, no justification whatsoever, for lack of housing. The Son of God came into this world as a homeless person. The Son of God knew what it was

to start life without a roof over his head.—**Pope Francis, 2015 papal visit to North America**

Lack of housing is a grave problem in many parts of the world ... Not only the poor, but many other members of society as well, find it difficult to own a home. Having a home has much to do with a sense of personal dignity and the growth of families. This is a major issue for human ecology.—**Pope Francis, *Laudato Si' (On Care for Our Common Home)*, #152**

Facts

The 2016 Canadian Census counted 22,190 people living in 995 shelters. Of those people,

- ▶ almost 25% resided in shelters for abused women and children
- ▶ 41% had some employment income
- ▶ 13.7% were children aged 0 to 14

Source: www150.statcan.gc.ca/

Before you vote, take time to reflect on what you have just read in light of our social teaching.

- ▶ Pope Francis says, “Having a home has much to do with a sense of personal dignity and the growth of families.” Consider all the aspects of having a house or apartment that enables individuals or families to live with dignity. If you know a person who is homeless, what might she/he say about Pope Francis’ statement?

HEALTH CARE

Access for All



We all see health as extremely important: not only our own health, but also that of our children, grandchildren, parents, grandparents, friends, neighbours and co-workers. That's why most voters tend to be concerned about health care.

At the same time, health care is one of the most costly government activities. Political parties know that voters expect the government to be concerned and proactive about Canadians' well-being.

Caring for the sick and those who have a disability is at the core of Christian outreach. Healing was at the heart of Jesus' ministry (see Matthew 8:1-4; 9:27-31; Luke 5:17-26). The Gospels describe Jesus' compassion and healing of people

with disabilities: the blind, the lame, lepers, and others. As the United States Catholic Bishops put it in a 2017 letter to Congress, these encounters are among the foundation stones upon which Catholic Social Teaching is built.

In addition to caring for our own well-being, we must show concern for the most vulnerable people in our communities – especially those experiencing severe poverty. Health and health care are fundamental rights. They emphasize the sanctity of human life and the dignity of the human person.

Governments know that ensuring the good health of all makes good economic sense. When everyone is healthy, health care costs go down and workers are more productive, which benefits everyone.

These are some key issues related to health care:

- **Access to medication:** For most people living on fixed or low incomes who do not have prescription drug insurance, the cost of medication is out of reach. That's why every major Canadian report on health care has cited the need for a comprehensive pharmacare program. When people don't take the medication they need because they can't afford it, they are likely to need more medical care, which costs the government more.

- **People living with disabilities:** Canada's laws support full accessibility for people living with developmental or physical disabilities, with the aim of creating a barrier-free society. The government is responsible for providing health care to those living on the margins of society, increasing accessibility for them,

and adapting health care to meet their individual aspirations for social and economic inclusion, says the AODA Alliance.

- **Seniors:** Older adults often live in isolation and poverty. They need proper nutrition, housing, accessibility, medication and medical care.

Our social teaching tells us...

[Every person] has the right to bodily integrity and to the means necessary for the proper development of life, particularly food, clothing, shelter, medical care, rest, and, finally, the necessary social services.—**Pope John XXIII, *Pacem in Terris*, #11**

The moral imperative to respond to the needs of our neighbors – basic needs such as food, shelter, health care, education, and meaningful work – is universally binding on our consciences and may be legitimately fulfilled by a variety of means. Catholics must seek the best ways to respond to these needs.—**United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship*, 2015**

Life and physical health are precious gifts entrusted to us by God. We must take reasonable care of them, taking into account the needs of others and the common good. Concern for the health of its citizens requires that society help in the attainment of living-conditions that allow them to grow and reach maturity: food and clothing, housing, health care, basic education, employment, and social assistance.—**Catechism of the Catholic Church, #2288**

Facts

- ▶ Canadians spent more than \$33.7 billion on prescription drugs in 2018: 42.7% was paid for by governments, 36.6% by private insurers, and 20.7% by individuals.
- ▶ 81.2% of seniors receive some public drug benefits; 18.4% of people living in Canada's lowest-income neighbourhoods had at least one prescription paid for by the government in 2017.

Source: www.cihi.ca/

Before you vote, take time to reflect on what you have just read in light of our social teaching.

- ▶ The Catechism of the Catholic Church speaks of the common good (see the bottom of page 7 for a definition). Consider how a comprehensive healthcare program – one that provides for those with physical or mental disabilities, one that ensures seniors are not isolated, going hungry or without care – fits into our understanding of the common good. What role might our government play to make that happen?

INDIGENOUS ISSUES

Working Towards Reconciliation



Many Canadians see reconciliation with Indigenous peoples – First Nations, Métis and Inuit – as a priority. As a country, we can restore positive relationships and move forward together. Voting responsibly means standing in solidarity and engaging in dialogue with Indigenous communities to reduce poverty and ensure adequate funding for education, health care, clean water and housing. This solidarity is fundamental to what it means to be Canadian.

To continue this work, governments are asked to look to the 94 Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, and to adopt and comply with the United Nations Declaration

on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as a framework for reconciliation.

All levels of government, but especially the federal government, can work to strengthen employment and income security to support commitments made towards reconciliation with Indigenous peoples.

Our social teaching tells us...

[The central themes of the UN Declaration resonate strongly with statements already made by the Church. These include] “the rights of Indigenous Peoples to self-determination, self-government, and to their own distinct institutions, the right to their traditional territories, the right to a fair process to adjudicate land claims, the right to their cultural traditions and customs, the right to practise and manifest their spiritual traditions and customs, the right to maintain their languages, the right to their own educational institutions, the right to improvement of their economic and social conditions, the right to guide their own development, and the right to the recognition and enforcement of treaties”.—**Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, “A Catholic Response to Call to Action 48 of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission,” 1**

In recent years, we have seen many examples of healing and reconciliation and we are committed to building on these efforts, working in close partnership with one another and learning to walk together ... We look forward to a future where systemic injustices are meaningfully addressed, where we all discover new

ways of living together through which the First Peoples of this land are honoured and respected.—**Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2018 President’s Letter to the Indigenous Peoples of Canada**

Facts

- ▶ Many First Nations reserves continue to be under drinking-water advisories because the water is or may be unsafe for people to consume.
- ▶ Indigenous males are seven times more likely to be homicide victims than non-Indigenous males. Indigenous females are almost three times more likely to be victims of violent crime than non-Indigenous females.

Sources: www.sac-isc.gc.ca/; www150.statcan.gc.ca/

Before you vote, take time to reflect on what you have just read in light of our social teaching.

- ▶ The quote above from our bishops is their response to Action 48 of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada Calls to Action, which specifically addresses faith groups in Canada. Read Call to Action 48 (http://nctr.ca/assets/reports/Calls_to_Action_English2.pdf). Consider the different ways that we, as a nation, can implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

NEWCOMERS

Immigrants, Migrants and Refugees



Canada has been enriched by successive waves of immigrants, migrants and refugees. They have come here to start a new and better life, bringing with them skills and other gifts that improve everyone's quality of life. Yet many of them live a precarious existence.

- Many **immigrants** find that the cost of living is higher than they expected. Most must take jobs that offer no long-term security. They experience the same problems that all people face as they try to survive on very low incomes.
- **Migrant workers** are particularly vulnerable, because legislation favours employers and those who arranged the workers' travel and their stay in Canada. Migrant workers are here on

a temporary basis: they have fewer rights than other workers, limited access to services, and no access to federally funded settlement services. They are economically exploited and dependent on employers for housing and health care.

- Unlike immigrants who choose to settle in Canada, **refugees** are forced to flee their country because of conflict, natural disasters or other crises, and cannot return home. Many parishes and communities have reached out to help through Canada's Refugee and Humanitarian Resettlement Program. When support from these communities ends, refugees face many obstacles. The 2016 Senate of Canada report "Finding Refuge in Canada" listed some of these: mental health issues arising from trauma, especially for women and girls; language barriers that prevent even qualified people from getting jobs; and lack of child care, keeping women from attending language classes. Some refugees who received a federal travel loan to get to Canada must pay the loan back with interest.

In his 2013 "Homily at Lampedusa," Pope Francis warned us not to be too complacent about the plight of people on the move. Newcomers to Canada – immigrants, migrants and refugees – are now part of our community. Our vote can help ensure that the government considers their needs so they are less vulnerable.

Our social teaching tells us...

Biblical revelation urges us to welcome the stranger ... in so doing, we open our doors to God, and ... in the faces of others

we see the face of Christ himself. —**Pope Francis, Message for the World Day of Migrants and Refugees, 2016**

I was a stranger and you welcomed me, naked and you clothed me.—**Matthew 25:35-36**

Today, the context of the economic crisis unfortunately fosters the emergence of attitudes of closure and not of welcome. In some parts of the world walls and barriers are going up. ... The only way to a solution is that of solidarity. Solidarity with the migrant, solidarity with the foreigner.—**Pope Francis, General Audience, October 26, 2016**

Facts

- ▶ In 2018, of the over 25 million refugees around the world, 1.4 million needed resettlement; only 92,400 were resettled. Canada resettled 28,100 – more than any other country.
- ▶ Police-reported incidents of human trafficking in Canada are rising: 1,220 incidents from 2009 to 2016.

Sources: www.unhcr.org/; <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/>

Before you vote, take time to reflect on what you have just read in light of our social teaching.

- ▶ Pope Francis is asking us to be in solidarity with the migrant, the foreigner. Read how solidarity is defined on page 7. List five things the Canadian government can do to ensure solidarity with newcomers.

THE ENVIRONMENT

Caring for Our Common Home



When it comes to the environment, Pope Francis calls us to have a personal change of heart and a collective transformation that responds to “both the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor.” In his encyclical *Laudato Si’, On Care for Our Common Home*, he issues an urgent challenge to all of us “to protect our common home ... to bring the whole human family together to seek a sustainable and integral development, for we know that things can change.”

While Earth is our common home, we continue to act in a way that damages our relationship with it by harming the environment. This also damages our relationship with those around us, especially the most vulnerable in our society.

To bring about positive change, individuals, families and communities can make a difference in small yet significant ways.

This includes making sustainable choices, reducing waste and changing our lifestyle when needed. In this way we take steps towards a deeper spiritual ecological conversion.

Voting for a candidate who wants to build on our commitment as a country to protect our environment today and for future generations is one way we can care for God's creation.

Our social teaching tells us...

Protecting the environment means, among other things:

- Implementing responsible stewardship practices for the environment;
- Honouring international agreements to reduce greenhouse gas emissions;
- Reducing our dependence on fossil fuels;
- Taking steps to control urban pollution;
- Introducing forms of transportation that are less harmful to the health of citizens and the environment;
- Encouraging companies to invest in renewable energy and energy efficiency;
- Developing natural resources without harming the quality of life in communities;
- Protecting water as an essential resource;
- Bequeathing a sustainable and healthy environment to future generations.

—Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, “2015 Federal Election Guide: Making Our Voices Heard”

Preservation of the environment, promotion of sustainable development and particular attention to climate change are matters of grave concern for the entire human family. No nation or business sector can ignore the ethical implications present in all economic and social development.—**Pope Benedict XVI, “Message to the Director General of the Food and Agriculture Organization for the Celebration of World Food Day,” October 16, 2006**

Humanity is called to recognize the need for changes of lifestyle, production and consumption, in order to combat this warming or at least the human causes which produce or aggravate it ... The problem is aggravated by a model of development based on the intensive use of fossil fuels, which is at the heart of the worldwide energy system. Another determining factor has been an increase in changed uses of the soil, principally deforestation for agricultural purposes.—**Pope Francis, *Laudato Si'*, #23**

The human environment and the natural environment deteriorate together; we cannot adequately combat environmental degradation unless we attend to causes related to human and social degradation. In fact, the deterioration of the environment and of society affects the most vulnerable people on the planet: Both everyday experience and scientific research show that the gravest effects of all attacks on the environment are suffered by the poorest.—**Pope Francis, *Laudato Si'*, #48**

Facts

- ▶ Canada's climate has warmed and will continue to warm because of human influence. This will lead to extreme weather events becoming more common.
- ▶ Northern Canada's rate of warming is about twice the global rate.

Source: <https://changingclimate.ca/>

Before you vote, take time to reflect on what you have just read in light of our social teaching.

- ▶ Pope Benedict XVI stated that “particular attention to climate change” is a matter of “grave concern for the entire human family.” Taking into account what Pope Francis also says above, what actions might a government enact now to demonstrate that it is treating climate change as a “grave concern”?

To learn more about these issues and to see the full list of references used in making this booklet,
visit <https://www.catholiccharitiestor.org/>

Our actions matter, and so does our vote, because it can turn our country's government towards greater justice. Our vote can lead to greater economic security and opportunity, or marginalization and hopelessness – for the peoples of Canada and for our brothers and sisters in need around the world.

In this booklet, learn more about what the Catholic Church teaches about seven key topics: human dignity • poverty • homelessness • health care • Indigenous issues • newcomers • the environment.

As you prepare to cast your vote in the federal election, find out how the various parties plan to address these issues. Your voice matters – so for heaven's sake, vote!

Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Toronto provides social services, leadership and advocacy for its member agencies and the people they serve. At its core is Catholic Social Teaching that urges all of us to build a just society and safeguard human dignity.

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