



YOUR VOICE MATTERS:

CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING
AND
THE 2021 FEDERAL ELECTION



Author: Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Toronto

Published 2021

Preface

The Scripture quotations contained herein are from the New Revised Standard Version of the Bible, copyrighted 1989 by the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America and are used by permission. All rights reserved.

Some materials, for this guide, draw from “For Heaven’s Sake, Vote!”, published in 2019, by Novalis, in partnership with Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Toronto.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form, or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, without the written permission of the publisher.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	3
Human Dignity	5
Poverty	8
Homelessness	10
Health Care	12
Human Rights	14
-Systemic Racism	
-Residential Schools	
-Indigenous Issues	
Newcomers	19
Environment	21

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.

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

Pope Francis places special emphasis on human dignity and labour, 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, those lacking basic health care and the many others on the margins of society. The disproportionality of those infected with, or killed by, COVID-19 is a recent and stark reminder of the dramatic impacts of social injustice.

What is Catholic Social Teaching?

Catholic Social Teaching is an essential part of Catholic faith, rooted in the words of Jesus and further clarified in Church documents. In 1891, Pope Leo XIII wrote *Rerum Novarum*, a reminder to Catholics that people—and not money—are the focus of God's creation. Since then, Popes, ecumenical Church councils such as Vatican II, the world's Catholic Bishops and the Tradition of the Church have reinforced the need to strive toward justice.

The values espoused in *Rerum Novarum* and reinforced by the Catholic Church since then can be summarized as follows:

- To strive for social justice and human dignity
- To be committed to community and the common good
- To protect human rights
- To be aware that we must put the needs of the poor and vulnerable first
- To recognize our responsibility in the stewardship of creation
- To assure that everyone participates in civic life
- To respect the basic rights of workers
- To help citizens carry out their societal responsibilities
- To promote peace through mutual respect of peoples and nations.

How can voting help us build a more just society?

Every election campaign involves issues we need to address if we hope to build a more just society. When we vote, we express our hope for a government that will play a positive moral role.

In this e-booklet, you will find reflections and questions on seven key issues—electoral topics 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. Human Rights
6. Newcomers
7. Environment



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**

“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**

HUMAN DIGNITY

As Catholics, we believe that the life and dignity of each person must be respected and protected at every stage and in every condition, from the unborn to those at the end of life. We want to elect governments that actively work to shape a world where human life receives full respect at all stages.

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 go against our conscience and our faith.

Life itself is the first and most basic human right.

In *Amoris Laetitia* (The Joy of Love) Pope Francis restates the Church's strong condemnation of abortion, while holding up support of struggling parents and adoption as acts of love which provide an alternative.

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 and protecting.

Palliative care, long-term care, and home care:

Responding in a positive and caring way to soothe the fears 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.

Pope Francis describes euthanasia as a "false compassion." As he explains, "we cannot give in to the functionalist temptation to apply quick and drastic solutions stirred by false compassion or by efficiency and economic saving."

Seniors

On October 9, 2019, the study Closing the Gap Healthcare revealed that social isolation and loneliness are linked to increased mortality. One quarter of Canadians aged 65 and older now live alone with no family or friends and, on average, are expected to live another 20 years. That is a long time to spend alone.

In August 2021 the Canadian government shared that 87.4% of Canadians who died from COVID-19 were 70 or older. This is partially explained by the nature of the disease, but social and economic factors played a huge role as well.

Long-Term Care

While the Constitution places the responsibility for delivering health care with the provincial and territorial governments, our public health care system is funded by the federal government.

In 2021, the Canadian Institute for Health Care revealed that outbreaks in long-term care homes represented 10% of all COVID-19 cases in Canada and more than two-thirds of COVID-19 deaths in Canada.

On August 16, 2021, Unifor, Canada's largest private-sector union, and the Canadian Union of Public Employees reported that the long-term care homes most effected by COVID-19 cases and deaths were mostly run by big, for-profit organizers. For-profit facilities have on average 17% fewer staff than non-profit homes and have more transfers to hospitals and more bed ulcers.

On December 26, 2020 the Toronto Star reported that during the first nine months of the COVID-19 pandemic in Ontario, the three largest for-profit long-term care operators in the province paid nearly \$171 million in dividends to shareholders while also receiving \$138.5 million in taxpayer dollars through the Canada Emergency Wage subsidy (CEWS) program and other pandemic relief funding.

Palliative Care

On April 30, 2021 the Ontario Long Term Care COVID-19 Commission reported that, despite the fact that people admitted to long-term care homes are in the last stage of their life, only 6% of those who died in Ontario's long-term care homes in 2016 and 2017 received any form of palliative care.



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**

Any human society, if it is to be well-ordered and productive, must lay down as a foundation of 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

1) Abortion

- 83,576 abortions were performed in Canada in 2019.
- The direct cost for these abortions was \$80 million.
- Taxpayers also cover the cost of common medical complications caused by abortions.
- Abortion rights advocates have called for the reduction of funding for crisis pregnancy centres, which support vulnerable parents as an alternative to abortion. These centres are already poorly funded.

2) End-of-Life Issues

- 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.
- 7,595 medically assisted suicides occurred in Canada in 2020.
- In 2020/2021 the Federal Government allocated \$3,192,628 to palliative care projects vs. \$23,000,000 spent on euthanasia.

Questions for Federal Candidates

1. How will your government offer support to young couples and single mothers who want to carry a pregnancy to term?
2. What will your government do to support young parents?
3. By how much will your government increase funding for organizations providing palliative care?
4. Will your government fund pilot projects aimed at creating new and better models of palliative care?
5. Will your Party work with the Provinces and Territories to create minimum standards for the care of Seniors in Long-Term Care? What would your government insist be included?
6. What will your Party do to increase research into alternatives to Long-Term Care Facilities for the care of vulnerable Seniors?
7. What will your party implement to prevent long- term care facilities from becoming high risk institutions for the spread of infectious diseases?
8. What steps is your party willing to take to protect conscience rights for medical professionals?

POVERTY

In “*A Church Seeking Justice*”, Canada’s Catholic Bishops state 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.

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.

Many workers can find only precarious employment, working one or more part-time jobs, while paid only minimum wage. Such workers receive few social benefits and are discouraged from forming a union. Many workers in Canada do not have paid sick leave benefits. COVID-19 revealed that many personal care workers make minimum wage and must work for two different long-term care facilities to pay the rent and provide food for their families.

Millions of Canadians, including children, suffer food insecurity, struggling to receive 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.

Disabilities

Many Canadians tend to ignore, neglect, or patronize fellow Canadians who suffer from a mental or physical disability. Not only does this create obstacles and hardships for the disabled it produces economic waste and harm for the larger Canadian society.



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.” — **Pope Francis, to Employees and Managers of Italian Steelworks, 2014**

“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

- As of March 2021, 10.1% of Canadians still live below the poverty line. This compares with 5.6% in Europe and 10.5 % in the United States. Our poverty rate is much worse than Europe and almost as bad as in the U.S.
- Statistics Canada reported in 2021 that almost one in five children under 18 years live below the poverty line.
- On June 3, 2020, the University of British Columbia highlighted that 58% of Canadian workers do not receive paid sick days.
- The Government of Canada (June 4, 2021) stated that at least 22% of the Canadian population (more than six million people) has a disability. While 80% of Canadians aged 25 to 64 without disabilities are employed, only 59% of those with disabilities are employed.

Questions for Federal Candidates

1. What will your party do to create decent, safe jobs?
2. What will your party do to address the rising costs of living and affordability of decent shelter, food, and transportation?
3. What is your party's policy regarding a Guaranteed Income Pilot Study?
4. Does your party believe that the Child Tax Credit should be increased? If so, by how much?
5. What is your party willing to do to eliminate food insecurity amongst all Canadians?
6. What will your government do to further decrease the barriers to employment for Canadians with physical or mental disabilities?

HOMELESSNESS

Housing for Individuals and Families

Across Canada, chronic homelessness is an urgent problem. 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.

Across Canada, communities are paying the price for the lack of affordable housing. Because of high housing prices, some seniors, refugees, youth aging out of care, young people, and families are experiencing homelessness for the first time. Creating new housing that is inclusive and culturally sensitive strengthens a community.

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's or friend's home to another or living in their car. This problem especially affects those in large cities but touches those in rural areas, too.



Our social teaching tells us...

“We can find no social or moral justification, no justification whatsoever, for lack of housing...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**

FACTS

- In 2021, Statistics Canada stated that 235,000 Canadians experience homelessness in a given year.
- In 2016, almost 14% of the homeless were children aged 0 to 14.
- 2019 figures from Statistics Canada indicate that 46.9% of those in shelters have employment income.
- 2019 Statistics Canada data illustrates that almost 25% of those using shelter beds are abused women and their children.
- Twenty per cent of Canada's homeless population consists of young people between the ages of 13 to 24, and at least 6,000 young people experience homelessness every night.

Questions for Federal Candidates

1. How does your party plan to significantly reduce homelessness in Canada?
2. What is your party's position on creating affordable housing for workers whose income is inadequate?
3. What plan does your party have in place to address underlying causes of homelessness?

HEALTH CARE

Access for All

The government is responsible for providing health care to all. Good health is important to all of us, and thus health care is one of the costliest government activities. Political parties know that voters expect the government to be concerned and proactive about Canadians' well-being, especially for those living on the margins.

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 living with physical and mental disabilities.

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

Key Health Care Issues

For people living on fixed or low incomes who do not have prescription drug insurance, the cost of access to medication can be out of reach. Canadian reports on health care cite the need for a comprehensive pharmacare program. When people don't take the medication they need because they can't afford it, they are more likely to need future medical care, which costs the government more. The same is true for dental care and mental health 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**

FACTS

- The Government of Canada testified that as of August 6, 2021, 26,654 Canadian had died from COVID-19. Of this number, 87% were over the age of 70.
- On March 10, 2021, CBC reported that the COVID-19 mortality rate was more than twice as high in racially diverse neighbourhoods as in predominantly white neighbourhoods.
- In June 2019 Health Canada said that 8.2% of Canadians (almost 3 million Canadians) failed to purchase their prescribed medications due to cost or lack of income.
- The Canadian Federation of Nurses (CFN) stated in May 2018 that citizens not taking their prescribed medications due to financial obstacles causes hundreds of premature deaths in Canada each year.
- The CFN estimated in 2018 that the lack of a universal coverage of medications makes the Canadian health care system inefficient and wastes \$7 billion of taxpayer's money annually.
- In September 2014, the CBC reported that 21.8% of Canadian children 6 to 19 lack adequate dental care because their parents do not have dental insurance.

Questions for Federal Candidates

1. What will your party do to ensure that Canadians of racialized communities are no more prone to pandemic infections than the general Canadian population?
2. What will your government do to ensure that all Canadians have the ability to access the medications that their doctors have prescribed for them?
3. What actions will your party take to make affordable dental care available to all Canadian children and adults?

HUMAN RIGHTS

Systemic Racism

Systemic racism effects all of us, whether we are on the receiving end of hate speech or because we live in a closed-off manner that keeps us from knowing our neighbours because they are "other."

Sometimes, racism makes front-page news, such as the four members of a Muslim family killed in London, ON, earlier this year, or the rise in attacks against the Asian community since the COVID pandemic began. And then there are ongoing issues. For example, although many men and women from the Black communities of Canada have done well in terms of education and employment, many others have been left behind because of systemic racism.

Our social teaching tells us...

"Instances of racism continue to shame us, for they show that our supposed social progress is not real or definitive as we think," – **Pope Francis, Twitter (@Pontifex) March 21, 2021**

"We look forward to a future where systemic injustices are meaningfully addressed, where we all discover new ways of living together." — **Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2018**

FACTS

- In July 2020, Black Canadians had an unemployment rate of 16.8%, compared to 10.9% in the general public. Admittedly, COVID-19 inflated these percentages but that is true for the non-Black Canadians as well. Systemic racism is a major factor and COVID-19 only made it worse.
- In 2019, Statistics Canada illustrated that despite Black Canadians making up only 3.5% of Canada's population, they comprise 7.2 % of those incarcerated. In comparison, White Canadians represent 72.9% of the general population but only 54.2% of the prisoners.
- In July 2020, CBC reported that COVID-19 exposed other racial inequalities. In Toronto, for example, Black people make up only 9% of the general population but Black citizens accounted for 21% of reported cases of COVID-19.
- The CBC reported in June 2021 that an Angus Reid Institute survey indicated that more than half of Asian Canadians had suffered discrimination during the preceding 12 months, with 28% saying that these situations happen "all the time" or "often."

FACTS (cont'd)

- In a 2021 report, Statistics Canada reported that, in 2019, hate crimes motivated by hatred of a race or ethnicity represented 46% of all hate crimes, followed by those targeting religion.
- A 2021 Statistics Canada report reveals that, between 2018 and 2019, the number of police-reported crimes motivated by hatred of a race or ethnicity increased 10%, from 793 to 876. Much of this increase was a result of more hate crimes targeting the Black (+40 incidents) and Arab or West Asian populations (+35 incidents).
- An October 2020 article in *Policy Options* shows that, in 2016, "software company Cision documented a 600 % rise in the amount of intolerant hate speech in social media postings. Their study focused on the usage of hashtags such as #banmuslims."
- In 2019, Leger Marketing reported that 60 per cent of Canadians report having seen hate speech on social media.

Questions for Federal Candidates

1. What plan does your party have to address systemic racism?
2. What would your government do to address the disparities in employment, education, incarceration rates and social participation of Black people and other racialized groups?
3. In what ways does your party platform reflect the concept of Official Multiculturalism, adopted by the Canadian government in 1971?
4. In what ways does your party suggest shining a light on the contributions made to Canada by various communities to help instill a greater appreciation for our diverse community?
5. In what ways can we provide ongoing support and encouragement to new Canadians, including migrants and refugees?

Residential Schools

The reprehensible mistreatment of Indigenous children in residential schools by the Canadian government and Catholic and Protestant churches has been well documented in recent years, and especially in 2021. We as Church members, recognize we have much work to do as part of the reconciliation process, but we may also have questions for how politicians will proceed with this critical issue.

Indigenous Issues

Many Canadians see reconciliation with Indigenous peoples—First Nations, Métis, and Inuit—as a priority. This is particularly true after the recent discoveries of unmarked graves at former residential schools across the country. To continue this work, the government must implement all 94 Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission as a framework for reconciliation and respect its commitment to honour the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which Canada has ratified.

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

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.



Our social teaching tells us...

The central themes of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples 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, 2016 “A Catholic Response to Call to Action 48 of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission,”**

FACTS

- In December 2015, academic Dr. Amelie Ross et al confirmed a correlation between residential school survivors and addiction issues.
- The CBC reported in 2021 that the negative impacts of residential schools are still being felt by the descendants of those who were forced to attend the schools. For example, 2020 Statistics Canada data showed that only 54% of Indigenous people reported very good or excellent mental health versus 68% for non-Indigenous people in Canada.
- In 2021, Statistics Canada data indicated that 61% of Indigenous women were survivors of domestic violence compared to 44% of the non-Indigenous population in Canada.
- In June 2021 the Government of Canada stated that 52% of the children in foster care in Canada are Indigenous, although they only represent 7.7% of the Canadian child population.
- In August of 2019, the *Journal of Adolescent Health* reported that descendants of residential school survivors were more likely than other Indigenous children to end up in foster care.
- In June 2019 Statistics Canada data showed the suicide rate for Métis people is twice that of the non-Indigenous population, the suicide rate for First Nations people is three times that of non-Indigenous, and that the suicide rate of Inuit people is nine times higher than that of non-Indigenous.
- In August 2021, the Council of Canadians assessed that 73% of First Nations water systems were at medium to high risk of contamination.
- In 2017, Statistics Canada reported that almost 20% of Indigenous people in Canada live in houses in need of major repair.
- On November 3, 2020, the Government of Canada reported that the employment rate of Indigenous people in Canada between the ages of 26 to 65 was 60.2%, whereas the employment rate for non-Indigenous people of the same age was 76%.
- According to the 2021 Census the high school graduation rate for Status First Nations students is 41% for those living on reserve and 68% for those living off reserve. The graduation rate for non-Indigenous students is 88%.
- In 2017, Statistics Canada reported that birth outcomes among Indigenous peoples are consistently reported to be less favourable. Among the risks for new mothers and their babies: reduced access to prenatal care, pre-existing medical conditions, maternal youth, low income, and maternal smoking.
- In 2018, the Nutatsiaq News reported that, in 2016, the infant mortality rate in Nunavut rose to 17.7 deaths per 1,000 births, up from 12.8 deaths per 1,000 births in 2015. During the same period, the national average was about 4.5 for every 1,000, a figure which had remained constant since 2006.

Questions for the Federal Candidates

1. Most of the 94 Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission have not yet been implemented. Which of the remaining Calls to Action would your party implement in the next four years?
2. What will your party do to make Health Services and Mental Health Services more accessible for the Indigenous communities?
3. What steps will your party implement to educate the Canadian public about the history of colonialism in Canada and its impact on the relationship with Indigenous communities in Canada?
4. What will your party implement to provide Indigenous people with the same quality of water as the rest of Canadians?
5. What will your party's position be regarding adequate and affordable housing for Indigenous people in Canada?
6. What plans does your party have to significantly increase employment amongst Indigenous adults in Canada?
7. What will your party do to dramatically increase the high school graduation rate of Indigenous youth?

NEWCOMERS

Immigrants, Migrants and Refugees

Canada has been enriched by successive waves of immigrants, migrants, and refugees. They have come to start a 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 the cost of living higher than expected. Most must take jobs that offer no long-term security.
- Migrants 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 more apt to be 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 countries 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, though, many refugees face obstacles. The 2016 Senate of Canada report, "Finding Refuge in Canada", listed some: mental health issues arising from trauma, especially for women and girls; language barriers that prevent even qualified people from getting jobs; and lack of childcare, keeping women from attending language classes.



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**

"We need to communicate with each other, to discover the gifts of each person, to promote that which unites us, and to regard our differences as an opportunity to grow in mutual respect." — **Pope Francis, Fratelli Tutti 133.**

FACTS

- In June 2021 Statistics Canada reported that the mortality rate for COVID-19 for the general Canadian population was 22 per 100,000. The mortality rate for Canadian immigrants was 26 per 100,000. This is a significant difference of 18%. The likely explanation is that recent immigrants are poorer and are often forced to live in crowded conditions. Affordable, adequate housing is often not available.
- A June 18, 2020 Toronto Star article revealed that Canada's Temporary Foreign Worker Program allows Canadian business owners to hire foreign labourers for lower wages than native workers are willing to accept. It is not fair for native or migrant workers.
- Migrant workers do not have the same legal rights, nor the access to services that landed immigrants do.
- "The government's decision to maintain employer-specific work permits will undoubtedly mean that caregivers will continue to struggle to have their right to decent work conditions and fair wages respected."

Questions for the Federal Candidates

1. What will your party do to guarantee that migrants are housed in adequate accommodations that do not endanger their health?
2. What will your party do to ensure that migrants are not exploited by employers and others?
3. What will your party do to ensure that migrant workers can access services such as healthcare while working in Canada?
4. Does your party have any ideas on how to better ensure decent working conditions and wages for those working under the Live-in Caregiver Program? What supports would you offer to an employee in an exploitative or abusive situation?
5. How do you propose speeding up the process to apply for permanent residency for people working under this program? Do you have any proposals to shorten the period of separation from their families that workers must endure?

ENVIRONMENT

Stewardship in the Care of Creation

In his encyclical '*Laudato Si'* (On Care for Our Common Home) Pope Francis issued an urgent challenge to us "to listen to the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor ... to bring the whole human family together to seek a sustainable and integral development, for we know that things can change."

This year's heat waves, droughts, floods, and devastating fires indicate that climate change is real, the rate of change is accelerating, and that the human impact is significant. Government needs to set a clear course for the future. Voting for a candidate who commits to protect our environment today is one way we can care for God's creation.

Our social teaching tells us...

"The earth will not continue to offer its harvest, except with faithful stewardship. We cannot say we love the land and then take steps to destroy it for use by future generations." – **Pope John Paul II**

FACTS

- Environment and Climate Change Canada 2020 warned that temperatures in Canada have increased by an average of 1.7 degrees Celsius between 1948 and 2019.
- In 2019, the government of Canada reported the following losses of glaciers: 1) Central and Southern Rocky Mountains from 1919 to 2006 -40% 2) Columbia Ice Fields from 1919 to 2009- 22.5%
- Extreme weather (increases in floods, fires, droughts, high temperatures) has become the norm across the planet, including Canada.

Questions for Federal Candidates

1. What will your party legislate to reduce our dependence upon fossil fuels, in partnerships with the provinces & territories?
2. How will your government honour international agreements to reduce greenhouse emissions, in partnerships with provinces & territories?
3. What incentives will your party give to encourage companies and citizens to invest in renewable energy and energy efficiency?

CONCLUSION

It can be easy to feel overwhelmed at election time, or to think that your vote alone doesn't matter. Nothing could be farther from the truth! Your vote will join millions of thinking Canadians' contributions at the ballot box, helping to shape this beautiful country of ours, a country with great challenges but even greater promise.

Canadians have the right to vote and thus a responsibility to educate ourselves regarding the topics that matter most. Your voice matters – so for heaven's sake, vote!



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