



The Ontario Provincial Election *and* the Catholic Church

Election Date: Thursday, June 2, 2022

RESPECTFUL POLITICAL DISCOURSE

The Issue from a Catholic Perspective

Jesus clearly commanded us to “love one another” (*John 13:34*) and show proper “respect” to each other (*1 Peter 2:17*). Yet love and respect are often missing in politics and in our general public discourse.

A 2019 study found that one in four Canadians “hate” those who have different political views than themselves (*Abacus Data*). This level of polarization is not good for a democracy, whose health depends on people having respectful discussions, especially amongst those who disagree with each other.

Sadly, it’s not uncommon to watch debate in our Legislative Assembly where members of opposing political parties interrupt and yell at each other across the assembly floor. Similarly, the parties’ platforms can seem like just another opportunity to attack their opponents, rather than a way to propose policies that could make the world better. Such lack of decorum and constructive dialogue would seem in contrast to Catholic social teaching.

St. John Henry Newman agreed that vigorous debate was necessary to discover truth, but he stressed the importance of never having any “personal unkindness” toward anyone we disagree with (*Apologia Pro Vita Sua*).

Our faith teaches us that we need to be respectful in our dialogue. We should hold our elected officials to this same standard.

FACTS

- 63% of people would like to see the elimination of heckling in the legislature (*Research Co., 2021*)
- 37% of Canadians feel that in the current political climate there is no room for political compromise in our country (*Angus Reid Institute, 2022*)
- Only 31% of Canadians say they have a lot of respect for political institutions in this country. (*EnviroNics Institute, 2021*)
- One in four Canadians say they “hate” their political opponents (*Abacus, 2019*)

A POINT OF REFLECTION BEFORE YOU VOTE JUNE 2, 2022

What political party or candidate shows the most openness to changing politics to better reflect Christ’s command to love and respect each other?

The Catechism of the Catholic Church teaches us that we are all called to promote the common good (#1913). One way of doing that is to vote. Informing ourselves about the issues as they pertain to Catholic social teaching will help guide us in electing leaders that will reflect values consistent with our faith.

CATHOLIC TEACHING ON RESPECTFUL POLITICAL DISCOURSE

“We need to have people engage in rational discourse with one another in a courteous way. They can still disagree. They can still feel passionately about what they say and they may passionately disagree with the positions taken by others, but they should be able to discuss and continue the conversation.”

(Cardinal Thomas Collins, Archbishop of Toronto)

“The Christian religion and other religions can offer their contribution to development only if God has a place in the public realm. Denying the right to ... bring the truths of faith to bear upon public life has negative consequences for true development. The exclusion of religion from the public square ... hinders an encounter between persons and their collaboration for the progress of humanity.”

(Pope Benedict XVI, Caritas in Veritate)

“Political charity is expressed in a spirit of openness to everyone. Government leaders should be the first to make the sacrifices that foster encounter.”

(Pope Francis, Fratelli Tutti, #190)

“For the whole law is summed up in a single commandment, ‘You shall love your neighbour as yourself.’”

(Galatians 5:14)

“Whoever loves a brother or sister lives in the light, and in such a person there is no cause for stumbling. But whoever hates another believer is in the darkness.”

(1 John 2:10-11)

“Those who do not love a brother or sister whom they have seen, cannot love God whom they have not seen.”

(1 John 4:20)

We have a duty to be well-informed and to vote.

Learn more about the major political parties' positions on issues of importance to Catholics.

For more details, visit:
www.archtoronto.org/election



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