



Mr. Justin Trudeau, MP  
Leader of the Liberal Party of Canada  
House of Commons, Ottawa

May 14, 2014

Dear Mr. Trudeau,

I am deeply concerned about your decision that citizens who, in conscience, seek to assure the protection of the most vulnerable among us are not acceptable as candidates in your party.

Just last week Pope Francis sent a message of support for thousands of your fellow citizens who gathered on Parliament Hill to peacefully affirm the right to life, and the need to protect the vulnerable. He assured them of his spiritual closeness “as they give witness to the God-given dignity, beauty, and value of human life.” It is worth noting that if Pope Francis, as a young man, instead of seeking to serve in the priesthood in Argentina, had moved to Canada and sought to serve in the noble vocation of politics, he would have been ineligible to be a candidate for your party, if your policy were in effect.

Among the 2 million Catholics of my archdiocese, there are members of all political parties, including your own. I encourage all of them, of whatever party, to serve the community not only by voting but by active engagement in political life as candidates. It is not right that they be excluded by any party for being faithful to their conscience.

Political leaders surely have the right to insist on party unity and discipline in political matters which are within the legitimate scope of their authority. But that political authority is not limitless: it does not extend to matters of conscience and religious faith. It does not govern all aspects of life.

The patron saint of politicians is Saint Thomas More. He came into conflict with the political authority of his day on a matter of conscience. The king claimed control over his conscience, but Thomas was “the king’s good servant, but God’s first.” Political leaders in our day should not exclude such people of integrity, no matter how challenging they find their views.

I urge you to reconsider your position.

Sincerely yours,

*† Thomas Card. Collins*

Thomas Cardinal Collins  
Archbishop of Toronto