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Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

Every five years we are given the opportunity to make our voices heard in how we wish Wales to be governed. This will happen on 6 May when we shall elect members to the new Senedd. Even though the Church correctly stays out of party politics, Catholic Social Teaching is very clear of the moral duty of each person to participate in the democratic process for the Common Good of all.

A significant number of important issues are devolved to the Government of Wales. Amongst them are Economic Development, Tourism, Forestry, Fishing, Transport and Welfare Services. In addition, there are other devolved powers which have a direct impact on the Catholic community in particular.

The Catholic community is one of the largest religious denominations in Wales. It is essential that those elected and exercising devolved powers should know our views on how devolved policy matters affect us. Hence the importance of knowing where candidates stand on a variety of issues so that, as Catholic voters, we can make an informed decision when casting our vote.

Our recent campaign to protect Catholic Religious Education and the rights of parents has shown the real need for a greater dialogue between the Welsh Government and the Catholic community in Wales. Our contribution to the proposed curriculum legislation has proved the impact we can make when we speak with one voice regarding matters of concern.

To help you in this process, the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales has produced an election document which has been sent to each candidate standing for election to the Senedd. The document outlines the work of the Catholic Church in Wales in five main areas: Education; Life Issues; Historic Churches; Health Care; The Environment. It also contains six main policy requests we are asking of those seeking election. We ask that each Catholic voter keeps these priorities in mind when casting your vote.

Finally, it is important to pray for all those seeking election and the heavy responsibilities those elected will have to bear.

We pray that, through the power of the Holy Spirit, God imparts His wisdom upon those seeking positions of authority in our governance.

We pray for all those members who will comprise the next Senedd and Government of Wales. May he guide their decisions so that they may act for the Common Good and work on the basis of human dignity and justice for all.

With every blessing,

The Most Rev. George Stack
Archbishop of Cardiff and Apostolic Administrator for the Diocese of Menevia