



AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC BISHOPS CONFERENCE

Voice for the voiceless: A statement by the Catholic Bishops of Australia on the election

Media release

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Australia's Catholic bishops have called for the voices of the thrown-away people to be heard in the long federal election campaign. The bishops today issued a statement on the 2016 Federal Election, addressed to Catholics and all people of goodwill.

"During the long election campaign there will be much talk about the economy and the need for good economic management at a time of some uncertainty", the Bishops said. "Both sides of politics will state their economic credentials in a bid to win power.

"The economy of course is important and there does need to be sound management. But, as Pope Francis has pointed out, there is also a danger that the economy can become a kind of false god to which even human beings have to be sacrificed.

"This leads to what the Pope has called the throwaway culture - a culture of over-consumption where all kinds of things are thrown away, wasted, even human beings.

"That is why we bishops want to speak a word as part of this campaign - not in order to push an ideological line or simply to defend the Church's interests but to give a voice to the voiceless and make their faces seen, however briefly in a statement such as this.

"But it is not just individual people who are thrown away. The same can happen to the environment, both social and natural. At the heart of a healthy social environment there is marriage and the family.

"The fact is that economic decisions have been less and less favourable to families in recent years; and it may be that political decisions in the future will undermine further the dignity and uniqueness of marriage as a lifelong union of man and woman. Support for marriage and the family does not look like a big vote-winner, so that even the most basic human institution, upon which the health of a society depends, can become part of the throwaway culture or at best an optional extra.

"Pope Francis has said that the earth too cries out for justice at this time. The natural environment - the land we live on, the air we breathe, the water we drink - even this can become voiceless, so that the earth's cry for justice can go unheard. Now is the time to act, so that the natural environment is able to meet human needs rather than be sacrificed to the god of the economy."

You can find the full statement, including the bishops' list of some of the people discarded in our throwaway culture, at www.catholic.org.au/election

The bishops of Australia have traditionally published an election statement.

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