The Catholic Bishops of Alberta
Les évêques catholiques de l'Alberta

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October 1, 2026

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Re: Pastoral Letter on the Alberta Referendum

As Albertans prepare to participate in the referendum on October 19th, we invite the Catholic faithful to approach this civic responsibility with prayer, an informed conscience, and sincere concern for their neighbours. As your bishops, we offer these reflections to assist your discernment in the light of the Gospel and the social teaching of the Church.

Our pastoral responsibility is to proclaim the Gospel and guide the formation of conscience. The Church remains independent of political parties and systems, while addressing the moral questions that arise in public life. The lay faithful have a particular responsibility to bring Christian wisdom and sound judgement to these matters (Gaudium et Spes, nos. 43, 76).

Loving our neighbour and respecting human dignity

Jesus commands us to love God with our whole heart and our neighbour as ourselves (Matthew 22:37–39). Through the parable of the Good Samaritan, He teaches us to extend compassion beyond familiar boundaries and respond to those in need (Luke 10:25–37). This love must guide our decisions and our conduct towards those whose views differ from our own.

Every person is created in the image of God and possesses an inherent dignity. Human life is sacred from conception to natural death. A person's worth does not depend on citizenship, income, ability, or contribution to society. We ask you to consider particularly

how the proposals may affect children, people living in poverty, the sick, and those who are isolated.

Committing to the common good

The common good concerns the conditions that enable individuals, families, and communities to flourish. It requires respect for fundamental rights, access to the necessities of life, and peace grounded in justice (Catechism of the Catholic Church, nos. 1906–1909). Decisions concerning health care, education, and public resources should promote equitable access and responsible stewardship, with due regard for future generations.

Recognizing the dignity of migrants and newcomers

The Church teaches that more prosperous nations are obliged, to the extent they are able, to welcome those seeking safety and the means of livelihood. Public authorities also have a responsibility to regulate immigration for the common good. Newcomers, in turn, have duties towards the society that receives them (Catechism, no. 2241).

Legitimate concerns about resources and access to public services merit careful consideration. They must be addressed in ways that respect human dignity and avoid making any segment of our population the object of resentment or blame. Within our parishes, those who feel uncertain about their place in society should find welcome and pastoral care.

Being responsible to one another

The principles of solidarity and subsidiarity can guide our reflection on Alberta's relationship with the wider Canadian community. Solidarity calls us to accept responsibility for one another, including those beyond our own region. Subsidiarity respects the responsibilities that families and local communities can fulfil themselves, with support from larger bodies when needed. It also respects the proper roles of different levels of government (Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church, nos. 185–188, 192–196).

These principles encourage cooperation and accountability. Our discernment must also include attentive listening to Indigenous peoples, respect for their rights, and a continuing commitment to reconciliation.

Forming our conscience

The formation of conscience requires a sincere search for truth through prayer, Scripture, reason, and the teaching of the Church (Catechism, nos. 1783–1785). We encourage you to study each question carefully, seek reliable information, and consider the likely consequences of your decision. The following questions may assist your reflection:

- How will this decision affect others, particularly those who are most vulnerable?
- Have I considered the good of others alongside my own interests?
- To what extent might fear, anger, or resentment be influencing my judgement?
- What kind of society or community are we building for future generations through this choice?

Catholics may reach different judgements about the practical means of advancing the common good. Such differences do not diminish our shared obligation to uphold human dignity and remain faithful to the moral teaching of the Church.

Promoting dialogue and prayerful participation

Our public witness requires patient listening, truthful speech, and respect for others. Differences of judgement must not become occasions to demean another person or call their faith into question. Our families and parishes should be places where difficult questions can be discussed with charity. Whatever the outcome, our responsibilities to one another will endure.

We encourage all eligible Catholics to participate in the referendum with a prayerful commitment to the common good. We ask our communities to pray for voters, public

officials, and all whose lives may be affected. May our participation bear witness to our hope in Christ and His call to be peacemakers (Matthew 5:9).

Lord Jesus Christ, guide our minds in truth and our hearts in charity. Grant us wisdom to discern what is just, courage to care for the vulnerable, and humility to listen to one another. Help us to serve the common good and to live in Your peace. Amen.

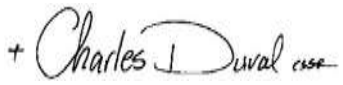
Yours sincerely in Christ,

The Catholic Bishops of Alberta

Most Reverend Stephen A. Hero
Archbishop of Edmonton

Most Reverend William McGrattan
Bishop of Calgary

Most Reverend David Motiuk
Bishop of the Ukrainian Eparchy
of Edmonton



Most Reverend Charles Duval, CSsR
Archbishop of Grouard-McLennan

Most Reverend Gary Franken
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