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Love is civic and political, and it makes itself felt in every action that seeks to build a better world.  
Pope Francis, *Laudato Si'* #231  
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## Why should we get involved in the 2019 general election?

As Catholics, Pope Francis reminds us that we have a shared responsibility for our neighbours and the world and calls us to join a new dialogue about the future.

With election news dominated by Brexit, there is a danger that other critical issues fall off the agenda. People and planet reduced to an afterthought.

But together we can make sure our brothers and sisters aren't forgotten. To say we can't help people at home if we help them abroad is to present a false choice.

Together we can fight the climate crisis and restore our common home. We can create a world of cleaner water, fresher air and welcoming homes for all of us to share and enjoy.

And together we can stand up for an outward looking, interconnected society. At a time when many Parliamentarians fear for their safety, we can encourage a kinder politics.

We must do all this, we must vote for all this: it is who we are and what we stand for.

## What can I do?

During this election campaign, you can help make sure that the cry of the Earth and the cry of the poor are heard.

You can raise questions with the candidates standing in your local area about:

- > global poverty and aid
- > the climate crisis
- > Britain's role in the world
- > poverty in England and Wales

You don't have to be an expert! Simply by letting candidates know that constituents expect them to stand up for the common good, you can ensure they know you care.

**Please remember to be polite and respectful when you talk to your candidates**

## ? Questions to ask candidates

### 1. Global poverty and aid

For more than a decade, there has been cross-party support for spending 0.7% of national income on aid. UK aid saves lives every day and must always be focused on the needs of the most vulnerable.

*What will you, and your party, do to continue to tackle poverty overseas and to protect the quality of UK aid?*

### 3. Britain in the world

We need a more generous approach. Whether it is in agreeing new trade deals or addressing the needs of refugees worldwide, Britain must recognise the needs of the poorest and most vulnerable.

*How will you, and your party, ensure that Britain is an outward-looking, tolerant and welcoming nation in the years ahead?*

### 2. The climate crisis

Concern about the climate crisis has reached record levels. It is already impacting lives, pushing people further into poverty.

*The government has set a net zero emissions target of 2050. Do you support this target and how will you, and your party, make tackling the climate crisis a priority and prevent more people being pushed into poverty?*

### 4. Poverty in England and Wales

Increasing numbers of people here at home, across all generations, are in insecure and inadequate housing. There are disparities in housing costs and access to employment between the regions.

*How will you and your party contribute to the availability of housing and jobs that reduce poverty and build up local community ties?*

## 1. Global poverty and aid

Although there have been huge advances in tackling poverty, billions of people are still denied a life of dignity. Compassion rooted in love drives us to respond to their immediate needs. CAFOD believes international aid is a vital component in our response. There is support across political parties to spend 0.7 per cent of our national income on overseas aid. But it is important that the focus of the aid budget is on the needs of the poorest people.



*Aid has helped communities in Sierra Leone respond to Ebola, and provides clean water, healthcare and emergency relief throughout the world.*

## 2. The climate crisis

Climate change drives the floods, fires, droughts and storms that ruin the work we do to fight poverty overseas. Many of our global neighbours on the frontlines of climate change are already living in poverty. We need concrete, ambitious policies put in place urgently to make sure we get to net zero emissions. This means only putting into the atmosphere the same amount of emissions we take out and ending Britain's contribution to the climate crisis.



*CAFOD campaigner Rita McManus at a march in Poland ahead of the UN climate talks.*

## 3. Britain in the world

Pope Francis has warned against the 'globalisation of indifference'. In difficult or uncertain times we can turn inwards and forget our role in working for the common good. CAFOD believes that the UK should have an interest in and influence over what happens beyond our borders. We must also hold our elected representatives to account, encouraging, praying for and challenging them to continue to work for the common good.



*The Catholic community in England and Wales has a long tradition of welcoming the stranger and seeing all people as brothers and sisters.*

## 4. Poverty in England and Wales

Many people in our society are sleeping rough or living in insecure or overcrowded housing. Many people find housing difficult to adapt to changes in family or health. CSAN wants neighbourhoods better designed to leave no-one behind. We want policies to provide an adequate local safety net when households are struggling. And we also want to promote participation in community life and the local economy.



*CSAN member charity, Father Hudson's Care, supports community activities that bring people together socially and increase understanding across generations.*

## How can I contact my candidates?

**In person:** When candidates or canvassers phone you up or come knocking on your door, have the questions ready to ask them.

**By email or letter:** Your local elections office will publish a list of the candidates standing for election. To find your local office, visit [electoralcommission.org.uk](http://electoralcommission.org.uk)

**At a hustings meeting:** This is where candidates debate policies and answer questions from the audience. Find information about hustings in your local papers, on notice boards or through your local Churches Together network. For guidance on organising your own, visit [electoralcommission.org.uk](http://electoralcommission.org.uk)

**Through the media:** Write an open letter to the candidates and send it to your local paper or call your local radio station. They often hold call-ins around election time and ask for questions from the listeners. We have a template you can use at [cafod.org.uk/election](http://cafod.org.uk/election)

**On social media:** Tweet candidates with your questions.

## What next?

Join CAFOD's network of MP Correspondents. Write to your MP three or four times a year when we think you can really make a difference. Find out more and sign up: [cafod.org.uk/mpc](http://cafod.org.uk/mpc)

**Please let us know how you contacted your candidates and what they said. Email [mpc@cafod.org.uk](mailto:mpc@cafod.org.uk)**

As registered charities, CAFOD and CSAN fully support and comply with charity law and regulations covering elections in the UK. Addressing the causes of poverty through advocacy in the UK and abroad is part of our charitable purpose(s). This resource is to assist supporters should they wish to engage local parliamentary candidates ahead of the 2019 General Election, not to influence voters for or against a particular political party, candidate or category of candidates.

CAFOD registered charity no. 1160384 and a company limited by guarantee no 09387398. CSAN registered charity no. 1101431 and a company limited by guarantee no 4505111.

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**Our common future**

A briefing for CAFOD and CSAN supporters on the UK general election, December 2019.