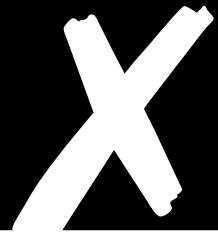




Counting on your vote!



Raising issues with candidates
in this election that affect
the most vulnerable



*“Look at what we say. Look at what we are engaged in.
The Catholic Church is at the forefront of social justice
issues... There has to be that immediate reaction. If someone is
hungry, we feed them. If someone is homeless, we house them...
But we also need to look at the roots of those sorts of things.
Are there policies of the society that could be changed?”*

*Archbishop Thomas Collins,
Archdiocese of Toronto
“Archbishop Vows Social Justice Fight,”
January 30, 2007, Toronto Star*

Just the facts

Child poverty in Canada has increased, not decreased despite a commitment by Parliament in 1989 to eliminate child poverty by 2000. One child in six is living in poverty in Canada today. That's a 20% increase in the number of poor children in the ninth richest country in the world.

LOW INCOME CUT-OFFS AND THE "POVERTY LINE"

There is no official "poverty line" or accepted definition of poverty in Canada – what is the minimum income needed for the "necessities" of life. The primary reference to illustrate poverty is a set of measures called low income cut-offs (LICO) set by Statistics Canada for the past 25 years. LICOs are income thresholds, determined by examining family expenses, below which a family would devote a larger share of its income toward basic necessities of food, shelter and clothing than the average family would. LICOs are defined according to community and family sizes.

POVERTY: A GAPING HOLE IN THE FABRIC OF SOCIETY

In Ontario, the gap between the richest 10% and the poorest 10% of families raising children has grown...considerably. In just the past ten year, Ontario's gap has outpaced the Canadian average and showing no signs of slowing down...in Ontario, the largest economy in the country which has posted five consecutive surpluses in just four years.

While the provincial economy expands, our poorest 40%, Ontario's working poor families raising children, find that what they earned isn't good enough. Working poor families raising children are poorer today than families just 25 years ago. (SEE, LICO and the "poverty line").

Ask any school secretary in any Catholic elementary school and they will tell you that every day in their school there are some children who come to class hungry because their parents cannot afford to give them breakfast after they pay the rent.

AFFORDABLE AND SUPPORTIVE HOUSING

The waiting time for some 187,000 low-income families across the province for decent, affordable housing is 8 to 10 years. – 67,000 households in Toronto alone. More than 120,000 people who are developmentally disabled still lack supportive housing.

An average of about 180 families face eviction every day as their meagre incomes cannot keep pace with rising rents. Higher rental prices have been devastating in the GTA where an average family of four needs over \$245 and over \$300 in Peel for rent.*

* The figures shown represent an average cost for rental per person in the GTA, based on a family of four. Average market rent in Toronto is approximately \$1,055.

LESS MONEY TO SUPPORT PROGRAMS

Human services programs kept alive by Catholic Charities' agencies have less money today to administer them, ensuring they meet the needs of the people they serve, than they did 20 years ago.

Programs meant to help new mothers, people developmentally disabled, those living with HIV/AIDS, the elderly and physically challenged are kept alive only because of the commitment of agencies' staff.

It comes with a cost: limited funds to administer program mean needed are postponed, staff "burn-out" rises as fewer staff try to do more with less and hiring more staff becomes impossible. And, remember, agencies are still feeling the effects of cuts to programs of 21.6% made by the Province in 1995.

Governments must *support life...*

Governments must support life. For this reason, the Catholic Bishops of Ontario*, have offered their reflections on the important matter of choosing people for political office. All human beings must be nourished, supported and cherished from the moment of conception until the moment of natural death. A government worthy of support will favour life rather than abortion and euthanasia, will be supportive of families, will make palliative care a priority, will fight against child poverty and will look for the rehabilitation of those who have become entangled in crime or drugs.



"Even a quick glance at the daily news reveals that we are far from experiencing life as it is meant to be. The symphony of God's creation has been disrupted by human pride. We do not yet share fully in the community of shalom where people live as they are meant to, in peace with God and one another. We will experience that in the New Jerusalem, the destination of our journey, but we clearly are not there yet.

As we disciples of Jesus confront this world of violence and of all too frequent disregard for the dignity of the human person, the New Jerusalem is not, however, simply a future goal.

To the degree that we love God and love neighbour, and act with integrity as disciples of Jesus, to that degree the New Jerusalem is already present, as it will be in its fullness at the end of time. Heaven begins on earth, in our daily lives, when we live in generous love, in the image of the Blessed Trinity, in the imitation of Christ."

*Archbishop Thomas Collins,
Archdiocese of Toronto
Homily - Installation Mass
January 30, 2007*

*The Ontario Conference of Catholic Bishops, "Choosing A Government" (1998); and "Taking Stock" (2007)

Federal and Provincial *budgets*

The most hopeful aspect of the new federal and provincial budgets announced in March was that for the first time in more than a decade **poverty was placed prominently on the agenda.**



**ELECTION
2007**



WHAT THE FEDERAL BUDGET PROPOSED.

The federal budget provided \$550 million a year for the poor and a \$2,000 child tax benefit saving these families \$310 a year for each child under 18. There is a working income tax benefit for low-income individuals or families with over \$3,000 of earned income – maximum benefit for individuals (no dependants) is \$500; for families (couples and single parents) is \$1,000.

For people living with developmental disabilities, a new federal registered disability savings plan – allows their families to set aside money in a tax shelter to provide lifelong care.

WHAT THE PROVINCIAL BUDGET PROPOSED.

The provincial budget increases the hourly minimum wage from \$8 to \$10.25 over three years starting in 2008 – 75 cents a year.

A new Ontario Child Benefit will affect about 600,000 families and 1.3 million children *over five years*. Under the \$2.1-billion plan, low-income families will get a modest annual payment of \$250 for each child under the age of 18 starting this year. The benefit will rise in stages to \$1,100 per child by 2011. There is \$200 million over four years for services for people living with developmental disabilities.

For **AFFORDABLE HOUSING**, the budget released \$392 million in federal fund transfers held since 2005; there were no new provincial funds for housing.

Municipalities get \$127 million to build new affordable housing or to rehabilitate existing housing – potentially creating or rehabilitating over 1,800 units of affordable rental housing. The City of Toronto, for example, receives \$26.69 million of the total, and there is \$80 million for up to 1,100 off-reserve housing units for Aboriginal families.

There is \$185 million for **HOUSING ALLOWANCES** for 27,000 low income working families – up to \$100 a month for up to five years for low-wage workers paying over 30% of their income toward rent. People receiving EI, Ontario Works or Ontario Disability Support (ODSP) are not eligible.

Why concern ourselves with these issues now?

The lead up to a general election, we need to press all parties and candidates – to act more vigourously on behalf of the poor.

An election year is the time to examine what political parties and individual candidates are saying about these issues. The situation still remains desperate for thousands of poor and marginalized people. People still lack sufficient shelter and children still go hungry to school.

THESE ISSUES AFFECT THE MOST VULNERABLE PEOPLE IN SOCIETY.

In an election year, these are not the only issues to consider. There are many other issues we must think about such as the environment, energy conservation, education, unemployment, or health care, education. We need make certain, however, that the government that we choose is one that is responsive to the needs of all of us, including those who are poor and marginalized.

VOTING: INFORMED, CONCERNED, COMMITTED

Voting is one of the most fundamental rights of people in a democratic society. It's also a great responsibility. We know that when we vote, we not only vote for a person or a party, but what that person and party is committed to do if elected.

The best voters are **first**, informed voters who have a good understanding of the issues; **second**, concerned voters who understand that their vote should reflect issues that positively affect everyone in their region not just their riding; and **third**, committed voters who want justice for everyone to be the ultimate goal of their vote is to ensure that any government elected will work toward economic security and a quality of life especially for those who are unemployed, homeless, living in poverty or living with developmental disabilities.



What do we mean by *Catholic Social Teaching?*

We're talking about a significant body of knowledge on major social issues of our time. Catholic social teaching is rooted in the prophetic books of the Old Testament and the Gospels (Matthew 25:31-46) and Letters of the New Testament as well as the early writers of the Church back to the 5th Century.

Spurred on by social conditions over the past century, Catholic social teaching has taken on an even greater vigour, beginning with Pope Leo XIII and his Encyclical, *Rerum Novarum* (1891) where he critiqued the deplorable conditions of workers then, championing their rights in society and continuing with all succeeding Popes. [SEE ONE HUNDRED YEARS OF CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING]

A focus of Catholic social teaching is its concern for the poorest members of society, the dignity of the human person, basic human rights and our responsibilities as Christians to protect and enhance this dignity. Another is its critique of modern social and political ideas, especially when they become an affront to fundamental human rights, freedom and dignity.

At its core the Church's social teaching is about striving to build a just society and that our concern as followers of Christ is to face the challenges posed by modern society and safeguard the dignity of the human person.

Through the Church's social teaching, we understand that God gave the earth to all and for all to share, so the common good always must take precedence. With modern society marred by divisions between rich and poor, Catholic social teaching recalls the Gospel account of Matthew 25:31-46, instructing us in what must be our response to the needs of the poor and marginalized.

The Church's social teaching underscores the dignity of work and the rights of workers. It tells us clearly that the market, the economy, must serve all people. Since work is a way of participating in God's creation, then the dignity of work is to be protected, as are the basic rights of workers.

Catholic Social Teaching undergirds the reasons behind our Election Guide because it spurs us on to be in solidarity with all people but especially the poor and vulnerable. And justice is at the core of this thinking.¹

As Pope Benedict XVI has written: "The just ordering of society and the State is a central responsibility of politics...Justice is both the aim and the intrinsic criterion of



WHAT'S THE PURPOSE OF THIS ELECTION GUIDE?

It's purpose is not to tell you how to vote, either a party or individual candidate. It is providing a tool to help you and others reflect on the issues raised by Catholic Charities, because they will affect all of us and so should be included in your thinking.

all politics.² Politics is more than a mere mechanism for defining the rules of public life: its origin and its goal are found in justice”.

The Ontario Catholic Bishops have told us that we have a responsibility to make sure that the government we elect shapes our lives and livelihoods in a way that benefits everyone. No one must be left wanting; no one should benefit to the exclusion of anyone else.

Our responsibility in this and in every election necessitate that the values and concerns of the social teachings of the Church be reflected in our vote and in the goals of the governments that we elect.

1 To gain a fuller understanding of Catholic Social Teaching, read papal, conciliar, and episcopal documents that make up this rich tradition. You can find more by going to the websites of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops (www.cccb.org) and the website of the Vatican (www.vatican.va).

2 “The just ordering of society and the State is a central responsibility of politics...Justice is both the aim and the intrinsic criterion of all politics. Politics is more than a mere mechanism for defining the rules of public life: its origin and its goal are found in justice...The Church’s social teaching argues on the basis of reason and natural law, namely, on the basis of what is in accord with the nature of every human being. It recognizes that it is not the Church’s responsibility to make this teaching prevail in political life. Rather, the Church wishes to help form consciences in political life and to stimulate greater insight into the authentic requirements of justice as well as greater readiness to act accordingly, even when this might involve conflict with situations of personal interest. Pope Benedict XVI, Encyclical, *Deus Caritas Est* (no. 28, a).



ONE HUNDRED YEARS OF CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING

Modern Catholic social teaching is generally considered to begin with Pope Leo XIII and the Encyclical, *Rerum Novarum*, *Of New Things* (1891) where he critiqued the often deplorable conditions of workers and championed their rights in society.

Forty years after Leo’s encyclical, Pius XI issued *Quadragesimo Anno*, *Forty Years* (1931) responding to the plight of so many in the Great Depression. Pope John XXIII wrote *Mater et Magistra*, *Mother and Teacher* (1961), addressing the economic disparity between nations and again in *Pacem in Terris*, *Peace on Earth* (1963), he said that resolving conflict especially those that threaten to engulf countries and peoples should be done through negotiation not force of arms, emphasizing respect for basic human rights.

From the Second Vatican Council came *Gaudium et Spes*, *Of Joy and Hope*, the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World (1965), that speaks of “the joys and the hopes, the grief and the anxieties” of all people but especially of those “who are poor or in any way afflicted” as being shared by all Christians; and the of dignity of the human person in *Dignitatis Humanae*, *On Human Dignity* (1965).

Pope Paul VI wrote *Populorum Progressio*, *On the Development of Peoples* (1967) speaking especially about the poor in Africa, Asia and Latin America and how the best way to have lasting peace and end conflict and strife is by helping people in their own full human development, asking those in nations “blessed with abundance” to hear “the cry of people in the hungry nations of the world” and “answer it lovingly”.

Pope John Paul II spoke in *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, *On Social Concerns* (1987) of the Church’s continued concern for authentic development of peoples where respect for all dimensions of the human person is paramount; and then, marking a hundred years since Rerum Novarum in *Centesimus Annus*, *A Hundred Years* (1991) he underscored the importance of Catholic Social Teaching for everyone.



USING THE ELECTION GUIDE

You can use the Election Guide yourself as a personal reflection tool. It's best used as the basis for small group discussions at an evening hosted by your parish or a community group. It's not a discussion about "politics". It's a tool to stimulate discussion during the period leading up to the election that highlights by catholic social teaching and the particular concerns of Catholic Charities.

What concerns us *most...*

The concerns of Catholic Charities are, of course, not the only issues that we will confront during this election period. Election Guide 2007 puts before you concerns raised by the 28 agencies that comprise Catholic Charities. They all relate to rising levels of poverty especially among children.

Despite strong economic growth in a rich and abundant country, families continue to fall below the poverty line. Statistics Canada has said that in the past quarter century the child poverty rate in Canada has *never* dropped below the 15% level...the same level it was at when the House of Commons resolved to end child poverty in 1989.

You don't need statistics, however, to see the grim reality faced by those children and their families right now. Just ask the agencies of Catholic Charities. They know how precarious the situation of these families and children are. That's why they're asking us to keep these vulnerable people and their uncertain situation in mind when we cast our vote.

This House seeks to achieve the goal of eliminating poverty among Canadian children by the year 2000.

Unanimous All Party Resolution,
House of Commons, November 24, 1989.

The joys and the hopes, the grief and the anxiety of the people of this age, especially those who are poor or in any way afflicted, these are the joys and hopes, the grief and anxiety of the followers of Christ. Indeed, nothing genuinely human fails to raise an echo in their hearts.

Second Vatican Council: Of Joy and Hope,
On the Church in the Modern World, 1965.

"Governments must protect those who are marginalized in society. Through our governments, we must provide economic security and an acceptable quality of life for those who are unemployed, displaced, impoverished or afflicted by a mental or physical disability. The complexity of modern society has created a situation in which voluntary efforts, though still needed, cannot begin to cope with the problems of the marginalized. Only government can do this adequately..."

Ontario Conference of Catholic Bishops
On Choosing a Government / Pentecost 1998.

HUMAN DIGNITY

In a world warped by materialism and declining respect for human life, the Catholic Church proclaims that human life is sacred and that the dignity of the person is the foundation of a moral vision for society. Our belief in the sanctity of human life and inherent dignity of the human person is the foundation of our social teaching.

COMMUNITY AND THE COMMON GOOD

In a global culture driven by excessive individualism, our tradition proclaims that the person is not only sacred but also social. How we organize our society in economics and politics, in law and policy directly affects human dignity and the capacity of individuals to grow in community. Our Church teaches that the role of government and other institutions is to protect human life and human dignity and promote the common good.

RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Catholic tradition teaches that human dignity can be protected and a healthy community can be achieved only if human rights are protected and responsibilities are met. Every person has a fundamental right to life and a right to those things required for human decency. Corresponding to these rights are duties and responsibilities to one another, to our families, and to the larger society.

OPTION FOR THE POOR AND VULNERABLE

Catholic teaching proclaims that a basic moral test is how our most vulnerable members are faring. In a society marred by deepening divisions between rich and poor, our tradition recalls the story of the Last Judgment (Matthew 25:31-46) and instructs us to put the needs of the poor and vulnerable first.

PARTICIPATION AND SUBSIDIARITY

All people have a right to participate in the economic, political, and cultural life of society. It is a fundamental demand of justice and a requirement for human dignity that all people be assured a minimum level of participation in the community. Conversely, it is wrong for a person or a group to be excluded unfairly or to be unable to participate in society.

DIGNITY OF WORK AND THE RIGHTS OF WORKERS

In a marketplace where too often the quarterly bottom line takes precedence over the rights of workers, we believe that the economy must serve people, not the other way around. If the dignity of work is to be protected, then the basic rights of workers must be respected – the right to productive work, to decent and fair wages, to organize and join unions, to private property and to economic initiative.

STEWARDSHIP OF CREATION

Catholic tradition insists that we show our respect for the Creator by our stewardship of creation. We are called to protect people and the planet, living our faith in relationship with all of God's creation. This environmental challenge has fundamental moral and ethical dimensions which cannot be ignored.

SOLIDARITY

Catholic social teaching proclaims that we are our brothers' and sisters' keepers, wherever they live. We are one human family, whatever our national, racial, ethnic, economic, and ideological differences. Solidarity means that "loving our neighbour" has global dimensions in an interdependent world.

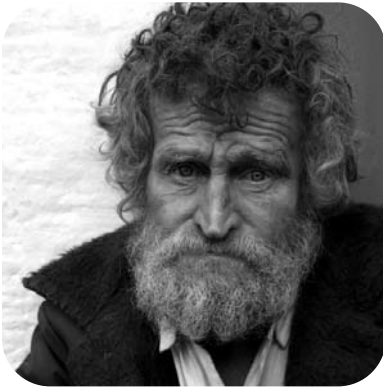
ROLE OF GOVERNMENT

The state has a positive moral function as an instrument to promote human dignity, protect human rights, and build the common good. Its purpose is to assist citizens in fulfilling their responsibility to others in society. In today's complex society these responsibilities cannot adequately be carried out on a one-to-one basis. Citizens need the help of government to fulfill these responsibilities and promote the common good.

PROMOTION OF PEACE

Catholic teaching promotes peace as a positive, action-oriented concept. "Peace is not just the absence of war," said Pope John Paul II, "it involves mutual respect and confidence between peoples and nations. It involves collaboration and binding agreements". Peace and justice are linked: Peace is the fruit of justice.

What are the three primary concerns of Catholic Charities that our agencies asked all of us to bear in mind when we go vote in this election?



1

INSUFFICIENT FUNDS FOR PROGRAMS

Catholic Charities is concerned about the mounting cost of the programs for seniors, families, women, developmentally disabled, those living with HIV and AIDS, and young parents.

Insufficient funding to administer crucial programs is straining the capacity of Catholic Charities' agencies to respond effectively, hampered their ability to hire more qualified personnel, led to staff burnout, and caused cutbacks to programs.

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY INSUFFICIENT FUNDING OF ADMINISTRATION?

A "hidden" cost of any program is administration. It's not an engaging topic, so it's often overlooked by the public. For member agencies of Catholic Charities, it's crucial to the success and growth of a program and to how well they can help those who turn to them. A member agency may have a program that provides critical homemaking services for people living with developmental disabilities, helping them develop a daily routine to learn to care for themselves requiring five hours of support per week.

If funding for hours of support are reduced, for example, from five hours to two per week, it limits the care and support that people with developmental disabilities need; people who need five hours of support will now get only two. And, it keeps the program from expanding to meet growing needs. On the "surface", the program looks the same, but it is, in fact, seriously weakened.

2

AFFORDABLE AND SUPPORTIVE HOUSING

Catholic Charities remains concerned about the need to provide affordable housing for low-income families and singles, and supportive housing for people who are developmentally challenged.

Low-income families, the working poor, and all those who need housing badly still face a long, long wait for decent, affordable housing or affordable rental housing. Without housing, we effectively place a barrier between the working poor and those on welfare to become full, active partners in society, hurling them back into poverty only to require more, and consequently costlier, social assistance later.

More than 122,000 low-income families and single persons in Ontario are waiting for affordable housing. As of March 2007, there were over 67,000 applications in Toronto alone.

Canada's percentage of social housing is 5%. Only New Zealand (4.5%) and the U. S. (2%) have a smaller proportion of social housing compared to the Netherlands (35%), Sweden and the UK (22%).

Affordable housing builds healthy communities and helps end the cycle of poverty that traps so many families and children. Without a stable place to live, the efforts of Catholic Charities and other social services are undercut. Children are usually the most affected, since they never have a community that they can call their own.

"When families don't have a stable place to live, it undermines all of the other work we do. Children go to school hungry. They're uprooted three or four times a year. They never feel part of any community. Next come the gangs and the dead-end jobs. And you get the whole perpetual poverty cycle."

Michael Fullan, Executive Director
of Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Toronto.
Toronto Star, Editorial Page, "Gilding abysmal housing record,"
Carol Goar, Feb. 14, 2007.



ONE IN SIX CHILDREN IN POVERTY IN ONTARIO

Using Statistics Canada data, there are 478,480 children – one in every six children – in Ontario are living in poverty. According to the 2006 Report Card on Child Poverty by Ontario Campaign 2000, the child poverty rate in the province has risen to 17.4% since 2001. The average low income family lives in greater poverty now than twelve years ago.

3

POVERTY, ESPECIALLY CHILD POVERTY

Catholic Charities continues to remain concerned about providing for low-income parents and their children. Despite years of economic growth in Ontario, one in every six children is living in poverty. An average low-income single parent family lives approximately \$9,500 below the poverty line.

The poor and marginalized, the most vulnerable in our society, especially children, are in crisis. Low income families live in deeper poverty now than 12 years ago. An average low income single parent family lives approximately \$9,500 below the poverty line. About thirty-eight percent of low income children live in families with a single parent who works all year, full time.

The poverty rates for Aboriginal children, visible minorities and new immigrants tend to be double the average. Provincial benefits to single parents on social assistance have declined in the past decade.

The Province introduced a new child benefit for low income families, the Ontario Child Benefit, that should provide more income support to thousands of poor youngsters to offset the clawback of the National Child Benefit supplement.

It should provide support for children in low-income families whether their parents are working or not. The plan calls for the province to provide an additional \$2.1 billion over the next five years for the province's children.

Catholic Charities advocated for an end to the clawback and suggested that something similar to the Ontario Child Benefit be applied. If fully implemented, it should benefit children and mean that parents would be able move off welfare without worrying about losing support for their kids.

HOUSING: AFFORDABLE, SUBSIDIZED, OR SUPPORTIVE

AFFORDABLE HOUSING and affordable rental housing means basic housing for families that are unable to afford shelter that meets the basic norms of adequacy, suitability, and affordability based on general housing expectations of Canadians. When speak about affordability we mean basic housing whose cost should not exceed 30% of household income. Housing which costs less than this is considered affordable.

SUBSIDIZED HOUSING is all types of housing provided either through subsidy or rent assistance by a housing provider, including public, non-profit and co-operative housing, as well as rent supplements for people living in private market housing.

SUPPORTIVE HOUSING is housing linked to the presence of on-site staff people who usually work in a residence to provide support to people who need on-going assistance such as people living with developmental disabilities. Supportive housing can be either group homes or low-support self-contained apartments.

Ask the candidates...

ELECTION
2007



SOCIAL JUSTICE ISSUES FACING OUR COMMUNITIES

Child poverty, homelessness, affordable housing, supportive housing for people living with mental or developmental disabilities, single young parents trying to raise their children...these are just some of the issues that should among the concerns we raise with candidates during this election.

There are many we have to consider, of course, from the environment to energy, from public transportation to taxes. These issues affect the most vulnerable among us, but get scant attention. The Social Teachings of the Church challenge us to ensure that these issues are not “lost” amid other concerns.

BEFORE YOU ASK ANY CANDIDATE ANY QUESTIONS... ASK:

What does their political party say about the issues? We’re talking here about the issues that Catholic Charities has raised in this Election Guide.

You can find the listing of all the political parties registered in the province at the WEBSITE of [Elections Ontario www.electionsontario.on.ca](http://www.electionsontario.on.ca) (IN UPPER LEFT COLUMN, CLICK ON [Candidates and Political Parties](#), AND THEN ON [Political Parties](#)).

What has the candidate been saying about the issues? You should be able to learn what issues are on their website or at their election headquarters.

CREATING A CANDIDATES’ “REPORT CARD”

An easy way to raise the issues in this Election Guide of any candidate is by using our “Report Card” identifying issues and questions related to that issue.

You can “grade” each candidate on their level of understanding and knowledge of an issue. We have suggested questions, and left space where you can write your own questions.

Candidate Report Card

ISSUE	QUESTION	GRADE	
		SCORE	QUESTION
		KNOWLEDGE	RESPONSE
POVERTY			
National	in an April 2007 edition of the <i>Toronto Star</i> reported that a national plan to end poverty that had divested the country for decades.		
Plan to end widespread poverty	-Are you aware of the plan? -Do you believe that the government should develop and implement a similar program-wide plan? -Should the province push the federal government for a national plan similar to Ontario's end poverty?		
Child poverty	Child poverty in Canada has risen by 20% since 1980. Has child poverty risen in our riding? By how much?		
Ontario	Are you familiar with the new Ontario Child Benefit? ... would you explain how it will help children born now living in poverty?		
Child care spending	What will you (your party) do to ensure the province spends child care federal dollars allocated for improved, subsidized child care spaces?		
Low Income Families	-Are there many low-income families living in our riding? What is being done to help them? -By 2011, low-income families would receive up to \$1,100 per child. What will you (your party) do to spend on the development of more quality, regulated and subsidized child care spaces in Canada? What is your position on adding new dollars to serve low income families?		

Candidate Report Card³

ISSUE	QUESTION	GRADE	
		ISSUE	QUESTION
		KNOWLEDGE	RESPONSE
POVERTY			
National Plan to end widespread poverty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – In an April 2007 edition of The Toronto Star, Ireland has developed a national plan to end poverty that had decimated the country for decades. – Are you aware of the story? – Do you believe that the government should develop and implement a similar province-wide plan? – Should the province push the federal government for a national plan similar to Ireland's to end poverty? 		
Child poverty	Child poverty in Canada has risen by 20% since 1989. Has child poverty risen in our riding? by how much?		
Ontario Child Benefit	Are you familiar with the new Ontario Child Benefit? ... would you explain how it will help children here now living in poverty?		
Child care spending	What will you (your party) do to ensure the province spends child care federal dollars transferred for regulated, subsidized child care spaces?		
Low Income Families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Are there many low-income families living in our riding? – What is being done to help them? 		
	In the By 2011, low-income families would receive up to \$1,100 per child. What will you (your party) do to speed up the development of more quality, regulated and subsidized child care spaces in Canada?		
	What is your position on adding new dollars to assist low-income families?		

³ The REPORT CARD focuses on **SOCIAL SERVICES**: Still reeling from cuts in 1990s of over 21%, despite recent increases by the province to cover inflation a working poor family of four in Toronto has only \$1,670 a month to get by including the cost of a three-bedroom apartment, averaging \$1,270; it leaves just \$400 for food and all other necessities. **AFFORDABLE HOUSING**: Across Ontario, 122,000 households are on waiting lists for homes. It's estimated we need 12,000 new rental apartments annually, three times the number coming on the market. **ENDING CHILD POVERTY**: In Ontario, 478,000 children live in poverty. If more parents had access to decent, affordable, licensed child care, they would be empowered to earn more.

ISSUE	QUESTION	GRADE	
		ISSUE	QUESTION
		KNOWLEDGE	RESPONSE
Rich-Poor Gap	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – A recent Environics poll that was in the news said 67% of Canadians believe the majority of people are not benefitting from the nation's hot economy. – Canada's gap between rich and poor is growing: average earnings of the richest 10% of families raising children was 82 times that earned by the poorest 10%. – Do you think a provincial and national plan to reduce this income gap is needed? – What will you (or your party) do to promote this idea, if elected? 		
	<p>What are your concerns about the fact that since 1998, the gap between Ontario's richest and poorest families raising children has widened at a faster pace than the rest of Canada?⁴</p>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The richest 10% of Canadian families are getting richer. They enjoyed a 30% increase in earnings compared to generation ago. The only group to experience such gains. – What is your reaction when you hear statistics like that? – What could be done to change that? 		
Minimum Wage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – After nine years, the government says it will raise the minimum wage by 75 cents a year for three years to \$10.25 on March 31, 2010. – Do you think there is a need to accelerate the process and increase the minimum wage sooner for the working poor? 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Will you work to ensure that after the election the minimum wage remains a priority of the government? – Will you fight any changes to it? 		

⁴ In the first two decades, the widening income gap between rich and poor in Ontario generally reflected a pattern across the country. In the past ten years, however, income figures showing the gap between the richest has increased and hit a record high in Canada with Ontario outpacing the national trend. The Ontario numbers show that the richest 10 per cent of families raising children – those with earnings of more than \$146,000 in 2004 (not including investments and other assets) – earned 75 times the amount of the poorest 10 per cent. In 1976, the richest earned 27 times as much.

As the richest break away from the pack, those households with incomes less than \$56,000 in 2004, earned less or stayed the same, in inflation-adjusted terms, compared to a generation ago, the report states.

ISSUE	QUESTION	GRADE	
		ISSUE	QUESTION
		KNOWLEDGE	RESPONSE
HOUSING			
Affordable housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – What is your position on increasing funding for affordable housing? – What affordable housing has been built in our riding? When? How much? 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – In the 2007 Ontario Budget, the government said it would use \$392 million from the federal government for low-income housing. They promised 27,000 low-income working families would receive \$100 a month in housing supplements, and that \$127 million would go to Ontario municipalities to build new affordable homes and rehabilitate existing ones. – How will you (or your party) ensure that these affordable homes are built and not delayed? 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – There are many young people in the GTA helped by member agencies of Catholic Charities. By 19, they must leave this care and support. Lacking skills or education, they can't find jobs to pay market rental costs. Many drop out and return again to care. They cannot find affordable housing. – What would you (or your party) be willing to do to ensure that we find ways to support these young people and ensure that they successfully move forward? 		
Supportive housing	What is your position on increasing funding for supportive housing for people living with developmental disabilities?		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The government said in its March 2007 budget that it proposes to invest an added \$200 million over four years to strengthen developmental services. – If you (or your party) is elected, what will you do to ensure that some of this money is used to provide supportive housing for people living with developmental disabilities? 		

ISSUE	QUESTION	GRADE	
		ISSUE	QUESTION
		KNOWLEDGE	RESPONSE
CATHOLIC CHARITIES / SOCIAL SERVICES			
Support for Catholic Charities agencies	Are you aware of the plight of social service agencies as regards the lack of sufficient funding for the administration of programs for Catholic Charities agencies and other agencies?		
Social Services lack adequate administrative funds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The social service sector is at a critical juncture – increased needs, low salaries, labour unrest. The most vulnerable in our communities suffer because social services lack sufficient administrative funding. – If you (or your party) is elected, how will you respond to the needs of social services in our region? 		
Social services: new approaches, funding formula	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Funding of social services has been historically based on population and other social indicators. – What will you do to ensure that a fairer formula is used to support social services? 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – I am very concerned about agencies in Ontario that work with the most vulnerable in our communities – I am a volunteer with (NAME OF ORGANIZATION HERE), we need adequate funding to cope with the increase to meet current needs. – Do you believe that more funding is needed to help people living with developmental disabilities? ...mental health disabilities? 		

ISSUE	QUESTION	GRADE	
		ISSUE	QUESTION
		KNOWLEDGE	RESPONSE
SPECIAL CONCERNS			
Developmental and mental health disabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – People struggling to overcome developmental disabilities or those of mental health are unable to get subsidies for very costly medication they must purchase. Are you aware of this problem? 		
On children who are deaf	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Deafness is an “invisible” disability. We must provide sufficient funding to support the teaching of the ASL sign language to all deaf children. – If elected, will you (or your party) support funding so that deaf children can be taught in ASL sign language? 		
Mental health disabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Young people struggling to overcome mental disabilities often go overlooked in our society. They need more support. – What is your plan to provide or improve mental health services for youth? 		
Aboriginal youth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – While the province proposes to build 1,000 off-reserve homes for aboriginal families, what will you (or your party) do to combat the high rates of poverty suffered by urban aboriginal people, particularly youth? – If elected, how will you (or your party) support efforts by urban poor aboriginal youth to improve their lives and their livelihood? 		
Subsidies for costly medication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – People struggling to overcome developmental disabilities or those of mental health are unable to get subsidies for very costly medication they must purchase. – Are you aware of this problem? – What would you propose to support these people’s efforts to get the medicines they need to live full and active lives? 		
Victims of Abuse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Many women and seniors have been victims of abuse. – What is your assessment of the current situation in Ontario? – What is your assessment of the current situation in our riding? – How do you plan to address this issue? 		

ISSUE	QUESTION	GRADE	
		ISSUE	QUESTION
		KNOWLEDGE	RESPONSE
HIV and AIDS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – There is a need for support for outreach community programs and treatment, and equally a need for more palliative care for those dying from the disease. – What more do you think needs to be done to support programs that help those living with HIV and AIDS? – Since 1985, Ontario has the highest number of HIV positive test reports in Canada, and the HIV infection rate among women has been steadily increasing. Do you think there is a need for a more community-based response to assist those living with HIV and AIDS? 		
Fundamental respect for life and human dignity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Governments must support life at all stages of development, respecting and supporting life from the moment of conception through youth and as adults until the moment of natural death. – How will you work to ensure that that life is respected at its first and last moments, rather than abortion and euthanasia? – Respect for life includes care for children. What do you see as ways to address child poverty in Ontario? – What ways do you propose to help and rehabilitate youth and adolescents whose lives are entangled in crime or drugs? – Respect for the lives of our elderly and infirm is an important priority of government. How will you make long-term palliative care for the elderly and infirm a priority? – How will you push for more affordable housing and residences for seniors? 		

**ELECTION
2007**



What *more* can *you* do?



We all have the ability to make candidates know that we are concerned about these issues by simply getting involved and demanding action from candidates and political parties on these issues:

Reach out to candidates and others.

After hearing the candidates, attend an all-candidates session and ask a question of those running in your riding.

If you did not like a candidate's explanation of the issues, or the answers to the questions that you posed, you need to contact the candidate and follow up.

Call (send an email or FAX) to a candidate's riding association, asking for a meeting with them to discuss the issues further.

Ask a candidate to come and hear your concerns about such issues as child poverty in Canada, affordable housing and the need for more funding to administer programs of member agencies of Catholic Charities.

Talk to others in your community. Plan a simple get-together at someone's house, the parish hall or community centre.

Check in with your friends and family.

Share this Election Guide with them and encourage others to use it!

FOR MORE INFORMATION, LOG ON TO WWW.CATHOLICCHARITIESTOR.ORG

CATHOLIC CHARITIES ARCHDIOCESE OF TORONTO

Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Toronto is comprised of 28 member agencies, reaching more than 227,000 people in Toronto, Dufferin, Durham, Peel, York and Simcoe County... and the numbers are growing.

We draw our strength from the support of the Archdiocese of Toronto, the largest in Canada with 1.7 million Catholics in 225 parishes and 4 missions. Their support for Catholic Charities has never wavered, and in fact, is stronger than ever.

Catholic Charities knows the positive effects our agencies have, and how their programs' success contributes to the economic and social well-being of Ontario.



**Catholic
Charities**
of the Archdiocese of Toronto

CONTACT US

TELEPHONE 416-934-3401

E-MAIL info@catholiccharitiestor.org

WEBSITE www.catholiccharitiestor.org