

## St John Vianney Parish

A year of encounter – engaging with political candidates  
in advance of the General Election.

**‘Our faith is personal, but not private’.** ~ We have a responsibility as Catholics to make sure political parties commit to taking action to tackle poverty and injustice, both within the UK and around the world. Raising our voices and contacting parliamentary candidates as a parish community will send a strong signal to those standing for election in our local constituencies.

**CAFOD** and the **SVP** have joined forces and are encouraging members of parishes all around the UK to actively contact candidates prior to the election, to tell them what we care about and to get their views on these issues. They have prepared briefing notes and suggested questions for candidates in 8 areas:

1. **The cost of living** - The cost of living crisis is pushing increasing numbers of people into poverty. We need better support for the growing numbers of people living in poverty in the UK
2. **Tackling regional inequalities and building resilient communities** - The UK has some of the highest regional inequalities in Europe. Government needs to commit to tackling regional inequalities and help improve social and economic outcomes for left behind areas
3. **Migration and asylum** - The past year has seen more people lose their lives as they try to cross the Channel to seek sanctuary. We want to see an asylum system based on principles of compassion, humanity and dignity.
4. **Food systems and seed sovereignty** - 2.4 billion people do not have regular access to food, including many of those who produce it. As a member of the World Bank’s Board of Governors, the UK has significant influence over World Bank policies. It is vital that the next government uses this influence to ensure the Bank adopts a more sustainable agricultural strategy, including supporting farmer-managed seed systems.
5. **Climate change** - The climate crisis is the biggest challenge facing humanity. The UK has influence in international climate negotiations. We have an opportunity to influence the next government to act to e.g. end the use of fossil fuels at home and abroad.

6. **Business and human rights** - Many of the goods we consume in the UK are provided by multinational companies who cross many countries, and often involve some of the world's poorest communities. CAFOD is calling for a new law to prevent abuses of people's human rights and their environment, and ensure the victims have access to justice.
7. **Aid and international development** - We need candidates up and down the country to hear the calls for the UK to restore the UK aid budget to 0.7%, and commit to spending all aid money in ways that tackle the root causes of global poverty, injustice and climate change
8. **Debt cancellation** - Many of the world's poorest countries have been plunged into a new debt crisis. The UK should champion debt cancellation for those low-income countries who need it so that they can properly fund their essential public services.

### **What can we do?**

We can make our views known to candidates by emailing or writing to them, by attending a hustings, or by being ready to tackle them when they knock on our doors.

You can learn more about the issues above and how we as a parish can engage with our political candidates by going to the CAFOD website: <https://cafod.org.uk/campaign/uk-general-election-2024-a-guide-for-catholic-voters>

Alternatively. If you want us as a parish to tackle any particular issues or have any other comments, please leave a note at the parish office or drop it into the box we will put at the back of church.

There is a hustings for the mid-Cheshire constituency in Hartford at St. John's, on the 19th June, Wednesday 7.30. We hope that a number of us will attend and be able to raise our questions for candidates then. If you would like to join us please let us know (contact Nicola [nicola@tratalos.co.uk](mailto:nicola@tratalos.co.uk) or leave a message at the parish office)