

DIOCESE OF SALFORD

Wardley Hall, Wardley Hall Road, Worsley, M28 2ND



A letter from Bishop John Arnold to the parishes in Greater Manchester

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

Greater Manchester Mayoral Election – 30 July 2026

On 30 July, those who are eligible to vote across Greater Manchester will have the opportunity to elect a new Mayor. I encourage all Catholics living within Greater Manchester to prepare prayerfully for this important election and, if you are able, to make use of your vote.

As followers of Christ, we are called not only to care for our families, parishes and local communities, but also to seek the common good of the whole society. The prophet Jeremiah encouraged God's people to "*seek the welfare of the city*" (Jeremiah 29:7), reminding us that our own flourishing is bound up with the flourishing of the communities in which we live.

Participation in public life is therefore an important part of Christian discipleship. Voting is one practical way in which we can exercise our responsibility as citizens and contribute to building a society marked by justice, peace and human dignity.

The Church has long taught that political life, when exercised with integrity and in genuine service of others, is a noble vocation (cf. Pope Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*). It is at its best when it seeks the common good and gives particular attention to those who are poor, vulnerable or whose voices are too often unheard.

Across our Diocese, including through the work of our clergy, parishes, schools and Caritas, we encounter daily the realities faced by many people experiencing poverty, homelessness, loneliness, displacement and other forms of disadvantage. Decisions taken by local and regional leaders can shape access to housing, transport, education, employment, community safety and healthcare. Their language and behaviour also influence the character of our public life, fostering either division or cooperation, hope or despair.

For these reasons, this election matters.

The Church never endorses political parties or candidates. Instead, she invites each of us to form our conscience in the light of the Gospel and the rich tradition of Catholic Social Teaching.

As you prepare to vote, you may wish to reflect prayerfully on questions such as:

- Which candidates demonstrate integrity, wisdom and a genuine commitment to public service?

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- Who is most committed to promoting the common good?
- How will they uphold the dignity of every human person?
- How will they support those experiencing poverty, exclusion or vulnerability?
- How will they help build communities that are just, safe, compassionate and hopeful?

Jesus reminds us that *"whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me"* (Matthew 25:40). Those words remain an important guide whenever we consider the decisions that shape our common life.

As this election falls during the summer holiday period, I also encourage anyone who expects to be away to make arrangements in good time for a postal vote if needed.

Above all, I ask you to pray: for all those standing for election, for those who will vote and for all who will be entrusted with leadership.

The recent Jubilee Year has reminded us that we are called to be 'Pilgrims of Hope'. May we approach this election in that same spirit: with prayerful discernment, with respect for one another and with a sincere desire to build a society where every person can live with dignity and where the common good is placed before individual interest.

"Stay with us, Lord, on our Journey"

With my best wishes,

John.

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