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To be read at all Masses 9/10 April 2016

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ

1. It is the duty of every Catholic to try to influence society for the better. The bishops urge you, therefore, to exercise your democratic right and responsibility to vote in the forthcoming Scottish Parliamentary elections.
2. Keep in mind that the Scottish Parliament now has more powers than before and has a greater say, therefore, in determining the welfare of society. As well as existing powers over education and health, the parliament has been given more control of the economy, with greater ability to raise and lower taxes. It will also have responsibility for legislation regarding abortion in Scotland.
3. Please make your views known to the candidates and the parties. You have two votes in the election. One is for a constituency MSP, where your vote allows you to have a direct say in who is elected. So scrutinise the candidates so as to vote for the person most compatible with your views. The second vote is for a political party. The party controls who is on their list and who is at the top of that list. You have, therefore, less control over determining which individual is elected. This is a concern when it comes to matters of conscience, where parliament may give a free vote to MSPs. It is important, therefore, that you seek to influence political parties by making your views known to them.
4. Please bring to this election the benefits of the insight that your Christian faith gives: insight into the dignity of each person, particularly the weakest and most vulnerable; insight into the value of all human life from conception to natural death; insight into the family as the fundamental unit of our society; insight into social and economic justice for all; insight into the care of the common home we inhabit.
5. To further these values, you might well consider it worthwhile to join a political party. Do not leave it to others to determine the future of Scotland. Only if you use your vote can you make a difference and influence our political leaders. Catholics in Scotland should not simply be passive spectators but should be active participants in shaping a better society and in ensuring that we have a parliament that appreciates, understands and respects a Christian vision for Scotland.

Yours devotedly in Christ

+ Philip Tartaglia, *President*, Archbishop of Glasgow
+ Joseph Toal, *Vice-President*, Bishop of Motherwell
+ Hugh Gilbert, *Episcopal Secretary*, Bishop of Aberdeen
+ Leo Cushley, Archbishop of St Andrews and Edinburgh
+ Stephen Robson, Bishop of Dunkeld
+ John Keenan, Bishop of Paisley
+ William Nolan, Bishop of Galloway
+ Brian McGee, Bishop of Argyll and The Isles