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Memorandum

To : Clergy & Lay Associates & Religious Houses
From : Most Rev. Gabriel Malzaire
Re : Bishop's Pre-Election Message (to be read in Church)
Date : Sunday, November 10, 2019

Reverend Fathers, Deacons, brothers and sisters in Christ, I greet you in the name of Jesus Christ the universal King.

We have all learnt from the Honourable Prime Minister that Polling Day for the upcoming General Elections will be on Friday, December 6, 2019. It is the day when all eligible voters in the Commonwealth of Dominica will have the privilege to exercise their franchise by electing the leaders who will govern for the next five years. It is indeed a sacred duty and a noble responsibility entrusted to all.

Past experience has taught us that in such a period of intense competition between contending parties, the desired levels of civility among citizens can be compromised. In that regard, therefore, I wish to reiterate my advice and challenge to the Clergy and to all the faithful as regards our role in the pre-Election period. Quoting again the *Election Code* of the Dominica Christian Council, I wish to remind you that:

As citizens we are:

1. To recognize that every adult citizen has the privilege to vote according to his or her conscience, and therefore the duty, not to neglect to exercise this precious right;

2. To make an effort to know the parties, their aims, objectives and policies in order to make a reasonable choice;
3. To vote as free persons and not to debase ourselves by selling our votes for money or any personal favour;
4. To oppose and reject any candidate who use bribery, intimidation or threats of violence to win votes;
5. To reject any invitation to join in the harassment of those whose political views are different from ours;
6. To consider that integrity, impartiality, good character and sound judgment are qualities required of those to be chosen;
7. To remember that no political or economic system is perfect; and
8. To accept the verdict of the majority, even if this differs from how one has voted in accordance with one's conscience.

As Clergy, we are:

1. To recognize that our basic obligation is to promote unity in our communities, and therefore to refrain from saying or doing anything likely to be interpreted as partisan politics; and
2. To recognize our responsibility to give, at all times and especially during the period before and up to election time, moral and spiritual guidance to our flocks.

I invite all Catholic, all other Christians and all peoples of good will, to join me in making this pre-election period one of intense prayer and fasting for ourselves and for the nation. I invite all Catholics to pray the rosary daily and when in attendance offer the Sacrifice of the Mass so that justice, love and peace will reign in our land.

And may the peace of Christ which is far beyond all understanding, reign in the heart of each one of us.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Most Rev. Gabriel Malzairé
Bishop of Roseau