



## Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales

### Consultation on a Catholic Bishops' social teaching document

We live in a moment of vigorous debate about many different aspects of our social, political and economic life. Behind these discussions we can often detect a search for a deeper understanding about what it means to be a person, what might a society that is genuinely concerned with human flourishing look like, what do we need to change or put in place to bring this about.

Over the years the Church has addressed these questions. The Compendium of the Church's Social Teaching, published in 2006, gives a very good sense of the depth and breadth of the Church's teaching and reflection, and this is likely to be further set out in a papal encyclical later this year. It is also part of the work of the Bishops' Conference to apply this teaching to the contemporary issues and debates that take place within British society.

As you will see from the attached paper, the Bishops' Conference has embarked on a project to produce a document which will address some of the more urgent questions. However, as part of this process of reflection and composition the bishops on the working group thought it of central importance to consult with people, agencies and groups who because of their expertise and experience have a valuable contribution to make to our thinking.

The attached Consultation sets a possible framework for a document. It deliberately presents headings for themes and topics rather than worked out positions. This is because we wanted to leave you as free as possible at this point to make your contribution. May I invite you consider this framework, comment upon it and make any suggestions about what might be included or developed? You'll see that paragraph 12 sets out some questions which may help, but if you want to submit something more substantial than these questions allow please do so. It will be a great help if we are able to receive responses to this invitation by the end of April 2009.

I think the document which we are preparing will be an important one, not only in helping to set out in a creative and constructive way the Church's contribution to the debate about the sort of society we want to make, but also to give our own people confidence in their generous work for the common good which is part of the Kingdom of Christ.

With best wishes,

**+Peter Smith**

*Archbishop of Cardiff*

Chairman, social teaching document working group

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