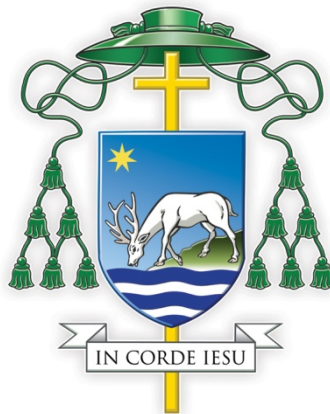


BISHOP OF PORTSMOUTH

Rt. Rev. Philip A. Egan BA, STL, PhD



MESSAGE FROM BISHOP PHILIP

to the Clergy and People of the Diocese of Portsmouth
about the European Elections on 22nd May 2014

On Thursday 22nd May 2014, elections for the European Parliament will be held. We might be tempted for one reason or another to ignore these elections or to yield to cynicism. Yet, I ask you, please take part in these elections! As members of Christ's Church, we have a civic duty to be engaged in the democratic process and to exercise our right to vote responsibly (cf. *Catechism* 1913-17 and 2238-43). Catholics are called to unity of life and this involves ensuring that our public actions are as consistent as possible with our stated beliefs. Otherwise, we would run the risk of being exposed as hypocrites, a group for whom Jesus, as we know, had harsh words in the Gospels (cf. Mt 23: 13-35).

By asking you to participate in these elections, I also wish to ask you, prior to casting your vote, to research carefully the positions of candidates as well as their parties with regard to their vision and understanding of the human person and human society (their "anthropology"). We need to ascertain whether the views, values and policies a party promotes or an individual candidate espouses do not in any way impugn the transcendent dignity and value of human life from conception to natural death (for instance, on abortion, euthanasia and assisted suicide) or threaten to undermine the holy institution of matrimony and the well-being of family life. Rather than falling back onto our customary party affiliations, finding out the views of our politicians on the human person should help us to weigh up whom to vote for.

Let us pray for a happy outcome, one that will result in a European Parliament passionate about authentic human flourishing through the pursuit of justice, peace and social responsibility.

With my prayers and best wishes,
In Corde Iesu,

+Philip

4th May 2014, Third Sunday of Easter