Diocesan Social Action Office

March 2008

Dear Pastoral Leaders:

Welcome to Phase 2 of our program of materials providing awareness, education and reflection for the USCCB document, ***Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship: A Call to Political Responsibility.*** This resource is divided into three major components: the basic parish program, discussion and prayer guides, and some background resources. In the appendix, we have included some of the more important pieces from Phase 1 as well as links to important voter registration and absentee ballot materials. All these materials are available for download from our web site, www.catholic-action.org.

The staff of the Diocesan Social Action Office hopes that every parish will participate in the **Basic Parish Program**. This program consists of a Faithful Citizenship Corner in your bulletin in which you offer a quote from the document every week and a once a month bulletin insert on related topics. These are based on the themes of the document in a progressive order and reflect the Catholic Catechism as well as the document. All materials are supplied. Inserts can be downloaded and printed from our web site or copied from this booklet. Topics include:

April: conscience and conscience formation
May: Catholic Social Teaching and Gospel values
June: the common good
July: political responsibility
August: prudence in voting
September: using the pastoral circle with issues
October: faithful citizenship and the issues from a Catholic perspective

Both inserts and related weekly quotes are found in Tab 1. We hope that you might make reference to the materials and content in your homily the week that they are used. It is your choice in which week you highlight the guidance the bishop's offer through this document.

In Tabs 2 and 3, we offer you resources for prayer and discussion. Tab 2 contains resources we have developed and gathered, while Tab 3 contains resources from the USCCB. More can be found at www.faithfulcitizenship.org. The leaders' guide in Tab 2 offers many suggestions and formats for the use of the materials provided. Also included are guidelines for good discussions. We hope that you will promote discussions around issues and the search for the common good in August, September and October. There are interactive prayer formats that can be used at the beginning of most parish meetings.

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Thomas J. Allio, Senior Director

The USCCB discussion materials in Tab 3 are organized around themes of Catholic Social Teaching. There are corresponding lesson plans for elementary and high school groups on the web site. Again, these are additional materials that foster discussion in the search for the common good.

Part Three, found in Tab 4, offers additional resources that can be made available to parishioners and other interested persons. These materials can be duplicated for literature racks or other informational settings. They can also be used as background for discussion groups.

The appendix, Tab 5, contains the Call for and Pledge for Civil Dialogue – in both English and Spanish. We hope that all your parishioners are aware of it and have signed the pledge by now. It is good to start each discussion group with a reminder of this need to listen to one another with respect. The reflection on being Catholic in an election year is also included in both English and Spanish.

The appendix also contains information for voter education drives and where to find materials for absentee voting. These are ways parishes can help in getting out the vote.

We hope you will encourage your parishioners to visit the Ohio Catholic Conference web site, www.ohiocathconf.org, and the USCCB web site, www.faithfulcitizenship.org, often. They are constantly being updated. The USCCB site has wonderful materials and lesson plans for all ages as well as suggestions for discussion in families. As the bishops point out, conscience formation is essential if we are to vote with prudence and in the interest of the common good.

If you would like more programming or speakers, please call our offices:

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