



SEEK THE LORD

ARCHBISHOP DENNIS M. SCHNURR

The Archdiocese of Cincinnati, with great joy and gratitude, will celebrate the elevation of St. Peter in Chains Cathedral to the rank of minor basilica with a special Mass on Sat., Nov. 7, the 175th anniversary of its dedication. As we approach the bicentennial of our archdiocese next year, this designation is a fitting tribute to the vital role St. Peter in Chains has played in Midwestern Catholic life for seven generations. You will learn much more about the cathedral's history and what it means to be a basilica in this edition of *The Catholic Telegraph*.

That same week, Americans will take part in Election Day on Nov. 3. Across the street from St. Peter in Chains is Cincinnati's City Hall, built in 1893. The proximity of these two impressive structures is a reminder that church and state, though separate and distinct, are each important in their spheres. The prophet Jeremiah quotes the Lord as saying, "Promote the welfare of the city to which I have exiled you" (Jer. 29:7). We are all in exile until we reach the Heavenly City. Meanwhile, we are called to radiate Christ and help build the Kingdom of God in our city, state and nation by applying Christian principles to the society in which we live.

An essential element of faithful citizenship is not only voting but, as the U.S. bishops said, voting "in the light of a properly formed conscience." To help that conscience formation, the Pastoral Center of the archdiocese has created iVoteCatholic, an initiative providing educational resources to introduce you, or reintroduce you, to the seven themes of Catholic social teaching. A different theme will be highlighted each Sunday through Oct. 25. The aim is not to tell you for whom or what to vote, but to help you decide on how to vote in conformity with Catholic doctrine.

Social justice is a not a new concept in the Church. The first great papal encyclical on that topic, Pope Leo XIII's *Rerum Novarum* in 1891, drew heavily on Holy Scripture and the 13th Century writings of St. Thomas Aquinas. Subsequent popes have added to our treasury of social doctrine in response to the circumstances of their times. The one enduring, pervasive tenet of this teaching throughout the centuries has been concern for the common good. The Church cares not only for its members, but for everyone – because God has bestowed dignity on every person. The seven themes explored in the iVoteCatholic initiative reflect that fundamental premise.

As the iVoteCatholic website notes, "The right to life is the first and most fundamental principle of human rights and leads Catholics to actively work for a world of greater respect for human life and greater commitment to justice and peace." Life and Dignity of the Human Person is the iVoteCatholic theme for Oct. 4. That is quite appropriate, because the U.S. bishops have for several years observed October as Respect Life Month. In addition to the tragedy of abortion, other urgent respect life issues to consider include racism, war and terrorism, the death penalty and assisted suicide.

To learn more about all seven key issues of Catholic social teaching, I invite you to visit iVoteCatholic.org.

The Church has a vital role in the public square as she guides her members to build up the kingdom of God on earth. I urge you to vote on Nov. 3, and to do so in the light of a properly formed conscience. And, whatever the outcome, please pray for all our civic leaders as they struggle with the extraordinary challenges of these difficult times.