

District Board Elections

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

The first full scale District Board elections will be held on 18 September. The successful candidates in this election will elect ten Councillors in next year's Legislative Council elections. Since Legislative Councillors have a vital influence on government policy, at a central level, the coming elections are very important.

Over the past ten years I have issued several pastoral letters in regard to the importance of democratic elections and the Christian's right and obligation to vote. Here, I would like to remind you again of the teaching of the Second Vatican Council's Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, which emphasizes that "every citizen ought to be mindful of his / her right and duty to promote the common good by using his / her vote." (No. 75) Please exercise your right and fulfil your responsibility as a citizen by voting on 18 September and so help to build up our community.

The faithful should vote in accordance with the social teaching of the church. In March this year, the

diocese published “Guidelines for Participation by Parishes and Church Organizations in Election Activities”, in the Sunday Examiner. Since May, the Justice and Peace Commission has published a monthly bulletin, “Voice of Justice,” reflecting the social teaching of the church. The August issue, with the theme of “The Responsibilities of Christians to Vote in Elections,” aims at helping readers understand the principles of the church regarding social issues and to assist them in deciding whether the platform of the candidates is in line with social justice and people’s livelihood.

In his Encyclical Letter, “Centesimus Annus”, Pope John Paul II has stressed that a democratic system “ensures the participation of citizens in making political choice, guarantees to the governed the possibility both of electing and holding accountable those who govern them.” (No. 46) So, you can see that the church values the democratic system. Even though the reform of the political system has created disputes, you should not be politically apathetic. Rather, you should be actively involved in the elections and exercise your right to elect your District Board member, so as to work together to build a highly autonomous society in Hong Kong during the transitional period. This can be regarded as our first step in actualizing democracy and in demanding

government accountability to all its citizens.

Let us pray earnestly to God Our Father for the success of the elections and ask Him to give each one of us the wisdom and the courage to vote according to our conscience and to work together to build up a democratic society in Hong Kong.

+ John Baptist Cardinal Wu
The Bishop of Hong Kong
1 September 1994