

Peace Pastoral reflect its desire to encourage personal and group reflection, concern and action on these issues, and to incorporate themes of peacemaking as an integral part of parish, school and community life.

VOTER REGISTRATION/EDUCATION AND POLITICAL RESPONSIBILITY

With 1984 being a Presidential election year, the Commission had chosen a program emphasis on political responsibility. This became a two-tiered approach in 1984: contact with members of the Maryland Congressional delegation or their aides, and a Voter's Guide on Church positions and candidate campaign positions as to selected issue areas. Both were intended to emphasize the importance of political responsibility.

The Commission formed a Political Concerns committee, which decided that an important component of political responsibility would be to utilize the Peace Pastoral as a means to contact the Maryland Congressional delegation. Political responsibility involves not only voter participation at election time, but also making concerns known to appropriate legislative representatives on essential issues. The Political Concerns committee, in choosing a particular issue for its contact project, reviewed weapons systems being considered in Congress which would be subject of special attention in light of the criteria set forth by the Peace Pastoral.

A primary weapons system in this consideration is the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI or "Star Wars" systems) and the related development of ASAT (Anti-SATellite) weapons. The Commission studied these issues and obtained a wide variety of information about them, and then set about meeting with Congressional aides to voice concern over the development of these systems. These meetings were held in the first part of 1984, and included meetings with aides to both Senators as well as Maryland Congresspersons. Communication with these aides continues. The Commission's position is that these systems will not provide additional security, are extremely costly, will abrogate one or more existing arms control treaties, and cannot hope to render the spectre of nuclear weapons obsolete. The Commission position was guided by the Peace Pastoral criteria as to weapons, especially the statement that any addition or change in weapons system or policy should be viewed as to whether it will render "progressive disarmament" more or less likely.