

September 2020

Dear Pastors, Administrators, Employees and Volunteer Leaders,

Bishop Wall has asked me to send this up, just as we do during each election year. As a new election cycle approaches, it is necessary to remind everyone who represents the Catholic Church in any official capacity that we must refrain from activities which could be interpreted as interference in the partisan political process. This does not mean that individuals associated with the Church lose their right to express their opinion and to exercise personal political activity. However, any personal activity - including speech, written words, social media use and participation in political events - must not be construed as an official act or position of the Church.

It is certainly permissible to encourage others to participate in the election process as part of good citizenship. It is also permissible to encourage members of the Church to carefully consider the stance of all the candidates on moral and civil issues.

Any official gathering of the church, including Mass and educational activities, must remain free of undue political influence, either for or against a particular party or candidate. This includes what we allow on church property to include presentations by partisan political advocates and publications. Church publications must follow these same guidelines to include websites and social media activity.

For further information and clarification please refer to the USCCB guidelines found here:

<http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/faithful-citizenship/dos-and-donts-guidelines-during-election-season.cfm>

The following lists provide good general guidance:

**DO:**

- Address the moral and human dimensions of public issues.
- Share church teaching on human life, human rights, and justice and peace.
- Apply Catholic values to legislation and public issues.
- Conduct a non-partisan voter registration drive on church property.
- Distribute unbiased candidate questionnaires covering issues of human life, justice, and peace that have been reviewed and approved by your diocesan attorney.
- Check with your diocesan attorney if you have any questions about what is appropriate.
- Monitor any official social media of the parish or entity to make certain that it remains free of any partisan political rhetoric

**DON'T:**

- Endorse or oppose candidates for political office.
- Distribute partisan campaign literature under church auspices.
- Arrange for groups to work for a candidate for public office.
- Invite only selected candidates to address your church-sponsored group.

- Conduct voter registration slanted toward one party.

The USCCB Website proposes the following bulletin statement to clarify the position of the Church:

***We strongly urge all parishioners to register, to become informed on key issues, and to vote. The Church does not support or oppose any candidate but seeks to focus attention on the moral and human dimensions of issues. We do not authorize the distribution of partisan political materials on parish property.***

Thank you for your attention to this information. The leadership of the Diocese requests that everyone exercise due diligence to avoid infractions of these policies. Violations have the potential to cause hurtful scandal among the faithful and to bring legal and financial harm to our Church. Questions may be addressed to the Chancellor's Office.

Respectfully,

Dcn Randolph Copeland  
Chancellor  
Diocese of Gallup  
Chancellor, Diocese of Gallup