

DIOCESE OF DAVENPORT
Political Responsibility Do's and Do Not's
For Catholic Parishes, Schools and Other Entities of the Diocese

Introduction: Our world is increasingly focused on public policy and the people who make it. This is understandable due to the enormous impact state and national public policy can have on issues that directly affect the lives of people in our diocese. This focus is particularly evident during the political processes of campaigning and preparing for the November elections.

The following is a quick reminder of the activities that are encouraged (**Do's**) and those that are prohibited (**Do Not's**). It is essential that our Church is fair and that we follow the laws established for non-profit organizations. Our guidelines are based on guidance contained in *Faithful Citizenship* by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) and state level guidance from the Iowa Catholic Conference (ICC). Direct questions to Kent Ferris, Director of Social Action for the Diocese of Davenport at 563-324-1912, ext. 269 or ferris@davenportdiocese.org.

Do's:

- Address the moral and human dimensions of public policy based on the Church's teaching.
- Share Catholic Social Teaching on topics such as human life, rural life, social justice and peace.
- Apply Catholic values to legislation and public issues, recognizing the limits that Catholic values and law impose on lobbying and advocacy and preserving our non-profit status.
- Register and vote after conscience formation on the issues and candidates.
- Arrange programs for parishioners to learn about moral issues affected by our public policy.
- Strictly observe Church guidelines and IRS rules (see below) about political responsibility.
- Distribute only candidate questionnaires/information that have been approved by the Bishop.
- Refer any questions on what is allowed to the diocesan Director of Social Action.
- Promote the USCCB materials on *Faithful Citizenship: A Catholic Call to Political Responsibility*.

Do Not's:

- Do not engage in partisan politics at any level.
- Do not endorse, support or oppose any specific candidates or parties (directly or indirectly).
- Do not allow church facilities to be used for any electoral forums limited to just one candidate or political party, including Iowa party caucuses.
- Do not distribute or authorize the distribution of partisan campaign material on church property or under church auspices (this includes the grounds surrounding the church).
- Do not permit use of church property (including parking lots) for fundraisers, campaign events or the distribution of partisan materials.
- Do not allow only selected candidates to address your church-sponsored group.
- Do not conduct voter registration associated with one political party or candidate.
- Do not distribute any electoral materials not authorized by the Bishop.

References:

- For more information on this topic please visit our website at <http://www.davenportdiocese.org/>
- For USCCB information on *Faithful Citizenship* see <http://www.usccb.org/faithfulcitizenship/>
- For IRS guidelines visit www.irs.gov/newsroom/article/0,,id=122887,00.html

Hoefling, Laurie

From: Frick, Mary on behalf of Bishop
Sent: Thursday, September 23, 2010 1:05 PM
To: Bishop
Subject: Faithful Citizenship for This Electon Year
Attachments: Bulletin Announcements for Faithful Citizenship 2010.docx; Faithful Citizenship 2010 bw.pdf; Faithful Citizenship 2010 color.pdf; Homily Suggestions USCCB Faithful Citizenship 2010.pdf; Political Responsibility Do's and Dont's Diocese of Davenport REV 0910.docx

Importance: High

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

[This email is being sent to priests, deacons, seminarians, parishes and chancery staff.]

Attachments:

- Faithful Citizenship for Iowa Catholics color
- Faithful Citizenship for Iowa Catholics bw (black and white)
- Political Responsibility Do's and Dont's Diocese of Davenport REV 0910
- Bulletin Announcements for Faithful Citizenship 2010
- Homily Suggests USCCB Faithful Citizenship 2010

The 2010 election season is well underway. It brings an excellent opportunity to teach our people about the importance of acting in the political arena with a properly-formed conscience.

In the bishops' document, *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship*, we said, "In the Catholic tradition, responsible citizenship is a virtue; and participation in political life is a moral obligation." Whether or not Catholics vote in the upcoming elections could depend in large part on the encouragement they receive in their parish. We can help parishioners learn and take to heart the moral and social teachings of the Church.

I am asking you to distribute the **attached** "Faithful Citizenship for Iowa Catholics" insert from the Iowa Catholic Conference in the parish bulletin at a convenient time during the next few weeks. I encourage you to distribute it in other ways as well. Bulletin announcements for coming weekends and background for a *Faithful Citizenship* homily are also **attached**.

The Church does not endorse nor oppose candidates or a particular political party. "Faithful Citizenship" is in compliance with IRS regulations on political activity by churches. Also **attached** is a copy of our updated diocesan "Political Responsibility Do's and Don'ts." This document was first published in 2004 and is meant to serve as a quick reminder of our policies on political activity for diocesan entities.

If you have any questions, please contact Kent Ferris, Diocesan Director of Social Action, at (563-324-1911) or ferris@davenportdiocese.org, or Tom Chapman, Executive Director of the Iowa Catholic Conference, at (515) 243-6256 or tom@iowacatholicconference.org.

Thank you for your help with this opportunity to address Catholic social teaching.

Sincerely in Christ,

Bishop Martin Amos

