

Political Activities Protocol in Parishes

No. 1106

Policy Statement: Partisan political activities and/or campaigning are not permitted in parishes.

Parishes may host voter education forums during federal, provincial or municipal election campaigns providing all candidates are invited and a minimum of two are participating.

Intent of Policy: To guide parish priests and personnel to determine political activities in which they can and cannot be engaged.

Guiding Principles:

1. Catholic parishes and institutions are prohibited from participating in partisan political activities.
2. The Catholic community has a responsibility to participate in the democratic process of an election.
3. While Catholics strive to be informed and educated about campaign issues and political candidates, equal treatment and representation of candidates must be respected.
4. The sanctity of worship and church space is to be honoured and safeguarded during every election campaign.
5. Catholics are strongly encouraged to exercise their citizenship right to vote.

Procedure:

a) Nominations
Those intending to run in an upcoming election campaign are not to present themselves as possible candidates or seek support for their nomination in the context of the parish Masses or parish activities.

Pastors are not to sign nomination application forms for prospective candidates.

b) Candidates & Political Parties

1. Once the nomination process is completed prior to the election date, the parish priest and parishioners may host an all-candidates forum on parish property to allow voters to meet and discuss issues with candidates.
2. The forum should not demonstrate a preference or bias toward a particular candidate, political party or voting position.
3. No candidate is to initiate campaigning in parishes.
4. Endorsing, donating and offering facility usage or other resources to a candidate or a political party is strictly prohibited.

- c) Distribution of Electoral Campaign Materials
 1. Political candidates or their representatives may not distribute campaign literature to parishioners.
 2. No candidate literature is to be placed on the car windshield of parishioners.
 3. No candidate election signage is to be placed on church property.