

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 anywhere on parish property, including parking lots and sidewalks leading to church property.
 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.
 4. Campaign materials may not appear on parish websites or associated websites or social media accounts, nor may parish digital media provide links to candidate websites, etc.
 5. For the purposes of providing information only, it is permissible on digital media to list the names of *all* the candidates running for election using the following guidelines:
 - a. The names of all the candidates must appear, not only some of them. This will only be possible once the nomination deadline has passed.
 - b. The names of all the candidates may appear on a page or screen that is entirely white (or at least a solid background), and the names are to be printed using the same font.
 - c. Parish logos and CAEDM logos may not appear on the screen, page or other form of digital display.