



NEWS RELEASE

ROMAN CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF SAN DIEGO

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Statement by San Diego Catholic Bishop Concerning the Distribution of Political Material at Area Parish

SAN DIEGO – The Most Rev. Robert McElroy, bishop of the Roman Catholic Diocese of San Diego, released the following statement today concerning the distribution of certain politically-oriented materials at a Catholic parish in San Diego:

Catholic teaching points to the importance of several major issues in this presidential election year: abortion, poverty and economic justice, the environment, euthanasia, immigration, religious liberty and solidarity within society. This final issue of solidarity has a particular importance at this moment because the very democratic impulse which is the foundation for our national unity is being eroded by partisan venom and personal attack.

In this environment, it is vital that all institutions in our nation participate in discussions about the election with civility and balance. It is particularly vital that religious communities do so.

This duty has been violated by one of our parishes, and thus it is essential to make clear:

- It is contrary to Catholic teaching to state that voting for a Democrat or Republican automatically condemns the voter to hell;
- It is contrary to Catholic faith to state that gun control legislation is a form of slavery;
- It is contrary to Catholic faith to fan the flames of hatred against Muslims or any religious group.

As a matter of policy and practice, the Catholic Church does not endorse specific candidates, use parish media or bulletins to favor candidates or parties or engage in partisan political activity of any kind. Moreover, the only politically related materials that may be distributed in parishes must be approved by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), the California Catholic Conference (CCC) or the diocese's Office of Social Ministry.

The USCCB has issued a comprehensive statement on the substantive implications of Catholic faith for the current election. It can be accessed at <http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/faithful-citizenship/index.cfm>. I urge all Catholics to consult these teachings, pray about the vote that you are going to make, and then in conscience select the candidates whom you are going to vote for in this very difficult year.

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