INTRODUCTION: The Church is to address issues, avoiding partisan politics and the endorsement of or opposition to individual candidates for public office or political parties.

IMPLEMENTATION OF POLICY:

*Mandated:*

1. Public endorsement of or opposition to specific political parties or candidates for public office must be avoided.

2. Clergy should not go to the Capitol during legislative sessions without first checking with the Executive Director of the Louisiana Catholic Conference.

3. Parish, school, and other Church facilities, as well as those belonging to other Catholic groups, are not to be used for any activity related to the support of or opposition to any candidate for political office, nor as places for partisan debate or as scenes for political advertisements. The pulpit especially is never to be used by office holders or office seekers to advance their views or their political positions, nor as a forum for any individual, even a priest or deacon, to support or oppose a candidate or public official. *(Revised February 13, 2009)*

4. Parish bulletins and newspapers are never to be used to support or oppose a candidate for public office or to endorse or oppose a specific political party. Neither must parish or school “letterhead” stationery be used in this way.

5. The *Acadiana Catholic*, our diocesan newspaper, and all other Catholic bulletins and publications are not to accept political advertising in support of or opposition to any candidate for public office or in support of or opposition to any political party.

6. The distribution of marked sample ballots or the posting of political signs or billboards for any candidate or political party are not permitted on Church property.

7. No funds or “in kind” donations from any parish, school, or Catholic group are to be contributed to any political action committee, political candidate, political campaign, or party.

8. “Political education” communications that suggest, even indirectly, that a particular candidate or party is endorsed or opposed are not to be signed, supported, or financed by any parish, school, or diocesan entity, nor may such materials be distributed on Church property by anyone.
9. Church parishes, Catholic schools, and other Catholic institutions of the Diocese of Lafayette will not honor those who act in defiance of our fundamental moral principles. They will not be given awards, honors, or platforms which suggest support for their actions (c.f. Catholics in Political Life, U.S.C.C.B., June, 2004).

10. Because serious legal and constitutional issues maybe involved, any request for legislative funding of a Catholic entity must first be approved by the local bishop. This includes offers of legislative appropriations by a legislator to the Catholic entity.

Recommended:
1. Educational efforts about issues and in support of or opposition to legislation, mindful of the whole of Catholic teaching, are encouraged.

2. Letter writing campaigns and other contacts with legislators designed to educate them and to develop their support of or opposition to legislation are encouraged.

3. Distribution of printed materials containing a statement about an issue before Congress or state legislature, containing names and addresses of all senators and representatives, is encouraged.

4. Religious and moral instruction regarding particular issues, especially those affecting human life at all of its stages, should take place.

5. If a legislator is one of your parishioners, an open relationship should be developed, one where you can talk comfortably about political issues. Threats to a legislator in any form or fashion must be avoided, even if he/she is leading the opposition against the Church, as this severely hurts our cause in the legislature. The focus should be kept totally positive; we are trying to win them over to our side through moral suasion.

6. Non-partisan voter registration campaigns are proper and recommended for parishes and other Catholic groups.

7. For fuller discussions of these issues, please see Political Guidelines for Catholic Organizations, www.usccb.org/ogc/guidelines.shtml.

Approved [Signature] Date February 27, 2009

Revised February 23, 2009