

We are not party bosses, archbishop says

Tom Roberts | Sep. 18, 2008



Archbishop John C. Favalora of Miami in a Sept. 12 statement informed his flock of an attempt by the Alliance Defense Fund, a consortium of conservative Christian ministries, to encourage pastors "to join their Pulpit Freedom Initiative by preaching a sermon that addresses the candidates for government office in light of the truth of Scripture." The statement is titled [Why we don't take sides on candidates](#) [1].

He said the group, which advocates for what it terms "Christian legal issues," is attempting in this initiative

to challenge the Internal Revenue Service's rules restricting non-profit organizations from advocating for particular political parties or candidates.

Favalora said he opposed the initiative because the church "can do a lot for our communities with the money we save by being tax exempt."

He also opposed it because he said scriptural truth "is not that easy to attain. Which is more "true" in terms of scripture: The Old Testament passage that says "an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth" or Jesus' admonition to "turn the other cheek?"

He added that the Catholic church not only values Scripture but also "2,000 years of oral and written tradition."

He said the church cannot be compared to a "party boss" and will not tell people how to vote.

"When church leaders speak on issues such as immigration, poverty, health care, abortion, war or embryonic stem cell research, we are not telling people

how to vote. We are reminding them of the moral teachings that should inform their lives, and as a result, their votes," he wrote.

He said the church "will speak in support of legislation that we consider to be morally sound and beneficial to the whole community" regardless of party or candidate.

"That is our duty as teachers and successors of the apostles," he said.

"Your duty as Catholics is to listen to those teachings before making rational, informed, conscientious decisions regarding whom or what to vote for."

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