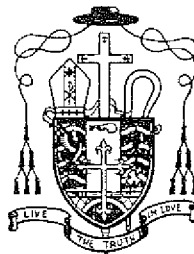


HAMILTON



DIOCESE

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POLICY STATEMENT RE SIGNING OF PETITIONS IN PARISHES

The Diocesan Policy will be as follows:

1. Parishioners may be invited to freely sign a petition, providing prior written consent is given by the Bishop to those sponsoring the petition.
2. In the event of signatures for a petition being sought, there will be a need for an explanation by the sponsors of the petition at the end of Mass before the congregation retires. Permission for such an explanation will be given at the discretion of the parish priest.
3. At no time is the freedom of the congregation to worship and come and go to the parish church to be impeded by harassment on the part of those seeking signatures.

There always needs to be a balance between the freedom that parishioners have a right to and the opportunity for the Catholic community at large to voice their combined opinion about justice and morality in our current secular society.

✠ Denis Browne
BISHOP OF HAMILTON

August 2006

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POLICY STATEMENT RE SIGNING OF PETITIONS IN PARISHES

There seems to be some confusion as to the policy of Bishop Gaines concerning the matter of parishioners being asked to sign petitions for various causes on retiring from Sunday liturgies.

I am led to believe that Bishop Edward imposed a ban on all petitions at Parish churches, although there does not appear to be any written statement of this policy.

To clear the confusion, the diocesan policy for the present will be as follows:

1. Parishioners may be asked to freely sign a petition, providing prior written consent is given by the Bishop to those sponsoring the petition.
2. In the event of signatures for a petition being sought, there will be a need for a full explanation by the sponsors of the petition at the end of Mass before the congregation retires.
3. At no time is the freedom of the congregation to worship and come and go to the parish church without harrassment to be impeded by those seeking signatures.

There always needs to be a balance between the freedom that parishioners have a right to and the opportunity for the Catholic community at large to voice their combined opinion about justice and morality in our current secular society.

This policy may well change at a later date. It is promulgated to overcome a confusion that seems to be present at the moment.

† Denis Browne

Dated: 25 November 1997

To: All parish Priests and Parish Councils