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From: [Cleveland Right to Life](#)

Sent: Tuesday, October 28, 2008 9:01 PM

Subject: News from Cleveland Right to Life

SPECIAL DIOCESAN INVESTIGATION October 28, 2008

Cleveland Right to Life Newsletter

Guiding Catholic Voters: Who Speaks for the Diocese of Cleveland?

*While the Bishop stays silent, others under his charge work to
undermine Catholic teaching throughout the Diocese.*

In the midst of the most important election in decades, with more at stake in the paramount issues of Life than at any other time in our nation's history, the USCCB issued its document "*Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship*" in an attempt to help U.S. Catholics make morally sound decisions, based on solid Catholic principles, in the voting booth this November. Unfortunately, the document only seemed to create more confusion among the faithful. As a result, over [50 U.S. bishops](#) have issued statements in an effort to clarify the document's directives and emphasize the pre-eminent position that Life issues (abortion, euthanasia, embryonic stem cell research) hold in the teachings of the Church.

Cleveland Bishop Richard Lennon, however, has remained silent.

The duty of informing Cleveland-area Catholics about their moral obligations as voters has thus been exclusively in the hands of the Diocese's Social Action Office, headed by Executive Director Tom Allio. This office, which supposedly houses (somewhere deep within) the Pro-Life department of the Diocese, has issued the only diocesan voter's guide (limited as it is); is in charge of making "*Faithful Citizenship*" accessible and clear to parishioners; and is the sponsor of the very few talks being given on the topic (Allio himself will speak on "*Faithful Citizenship in a Presidential Election Year*" on Oct. 30 at [John Carroll University](#)).

But who is Tom Allio? And where do his priorities lie - with promoting the authentic truths of the Catholic Faith, or with promoting a particular political party in the swing state of Ohio in a hotly contested presidential election?

Along with his duties at the Diocese of Cleveland, Tom Allio serves on the [Advisory Council](#) of an organization called [Catholics in Alliance for the Common Good](#). Although it professes to be a "nonpartisan, lay Catholic organization that promotes awareness of Catholic social teaching," a close examination of its actions and affiliations proves it is neither authentically Catholic nor bi-partisan.

In fact, Catholics in Alliance for the Common Good (CACD) exists in order to create and spread false interpretations of Catholic doctrine to convince Catholics that it is not only possible but preferable to vote for Barack Obama and other pro-choice politicians. It is (according to IRS documents) a partner organization to [Catholics United](#), which openly endorses pro-choice, Democratic candidates for office, including Obama.

Both "Catholic" organizations, while claiming to oppose abortion, refuse to endorse any legal remedies to the abortion genocide, such as overturning *Roe v. Wade*, passing parental notification laws, or even banning late-term abortions. And both organizations have come under fire recently for their tactics: [Denver Archbishop Charles Chaput](#) claims "the work of Democratic-friendly groups like Catholics United and Catholics in Alliance for the Common Good, have done a disservice to the Church, confused the natural priorities of Catholic social teaching, undermined the progress pro-lifers have made, and provided an excuse for some Catholics to abandon the abortion issue instead of fighting within their parties and at the ballot box to protect the unborn." And [Francis Cardinal George](#) of Chicago decries the groups' claim that they "promote the common good," stating, "Laws that place unborn children outside the protection of law *destroy* both the children killed and the common good, which is the controlling principle of Catholic social teaching. *One cannot favor the legal status quo on abortion and also be working for the common good.*" Cardinal George has banned both groups' voting materials from distribution in his parishes, calling them "deceptive."

As a member of CACD's Advisory Council, the Diocese's Allio works with a who's-who of Democratic activists:

- The Chair of the CACD's Board of Directors is [Elizabeth Bagley](#), a former member of Bill Clinton's State Department and wife of former Democratic National Committee Finance Chair Smith Bagley. She has personally given thousands of dollars to a host of pro-abortion Democrats, including Barack Obama.

- Smith Bagley, in turn, is the President of the [ARCA Foundation](#), which donates millions of dollars every year to a host of far-left organizations such as Planned Parenthood, ACORN, and the ACLU, as well as numerous pro-Cuba, pro-Sandinista, and anti-corporate groups. In the Spring of 2008 alone, ARCA gave \$75,000 to CACD.
- Executive Director and Co-Founder of CACD, [Alexia Kelley](#), was the Religious Outreach Coordinator for Democrat John Kerry's 2004 presidential campaign.
- CACD Co-Founder [James Salt](#), who now acts as Director of Organizing for Catholics United, previously worked in the Kansas Democratic Party's Faith Outreach office; as such, he worked closely with ardently pro-abortion Kansas Governor Katherine Sebelius, who has been accused of protecting and even throwing parties for notorious late-term abortionist George Tiller ("Tiller the Killer"). Kansas Archbishop Joseph Naumann has publicly told Sebelius, a Catholic, not to present herself for Communion.
- CACD Co-Founder [Tom Perriello](#) is currently running for office as a pro-abortion Democrat in Virginia. He founded a second organization that is closely aligned with radical leftist George Soros' MoveOn.org.
- [George Soros](#), the pro-abortion Democratic activist and billionaire, is a major contributor to CACD, providing \$100,000 in 2006 and \$50,000 in 2005. Soros also funds the abortionist front-group Catholics For Choice.

In July of 2008, Tom Allio participated in a convention sponsored by CACD, Catholics United, and the "Catholic" lobbying group NETWORK to draft the "[Platform for the Common Good](#)," a document which condemns "racism, sexism and classism" but never mentions abortion, euthanasia, or embryonic stem cell research. The Platform pleads for "green space", "ecological responsibility", "clean energy", "stewardship of the earth", and "nutritious food", but not for the recognition of the sanctity of human life from conception until natural death nor for its legal protection. Even the convention's "Breakout Session Statements" completely ignore Catholic teaching on Life issues, in favor of such issues as immigration and ecology.

It is this Platform's principles that Allio emphasizes in his diocesan voter's guides, in his "*Faithful Citizenship*" materials, and in his contributions as a member of the [Board of Directors](#) for [Sojourner Magazine](#). *Sojourner's* Executive Director Jim Wallis was the moderator for several panel discussions at the [2008 Democratic National Convention](#), including one entitled "How an Obama Administration Will Engage People of Faith." And among its Contributing Editors, *Sojourner* lists notorious dissenters Joan Chittister and Rosemary Radford Ruether, both of whom have been censured by the Vatican.

Allio's CACD and [NETWORK](#) are, in fact, close and consistent partner organizations. NETWORK, in turn, is a supporting organization of [Call to Action](#), the largest group of Catholic dissidents in America. Its members were officially

excommunicated by Bishop Bruskewitz of Nebraska, a decision affirmed by the Vatican in November of 2006 with this [statement](#): "The judgment of the Holy See is that the activities of Call to Action in the course of these years are in contrast with the Catholic faith due to views and positions held which are unacceptable from a doctrinal and disciplinary standpoint. Thus to be a member of this association or *to support it is irreconcilable with a coherent living of the Catholic faith*" (emphasis added). Coincidentally, Allio's Associate Director at the Diocesan Social Justice Office, Karen Leith, is a past board member of [FutureChurch](#), the Cleveland branch of Chicago-based Call to Action.

This November, as in years past, NETWORK will be represented at Call to Action's National Conference by [Jean Sammon](#). Sammon, who has worked for NETWORK since 1998, is a former Board Member of Allio's Social Justice Office for the Diocese of Cleveland. She is scheduled to speak at [Gesu](#) parish on "*Faithful Citizenship: Platform for the Common Good*" on Oct. 29, and at [JCU](#) on Oct. 29 & 30.

Also scheduled to speak Oct. 29-30 at JCU, on the topics of "*Faithful Citizenship*," and "*Catholic Social Teaching*," is [Catherine Pinkerton](#), CSJ, who gave the benediction at this year's Democratic National Convention. Pinkerton is quoted in the [Cleveland Plain Dealer](#) as admiring Barack Obama's "vision of where we stand as a nation."

Remember who else is speaking at John Carroll University on Oct. 30 on the topic of "*Faithful Citizenship*?" The Executive Director of the Diocesan Social Action Office, Tom Allio himself. Is it too much to assume that his talk, like those of his associates Pinkerton and Sammon, and like the materials he has made available to the Cleveland faithful, will push the partisan-Democrat, pro-Obama agenda of his CACD organization, while twisting true Catholic doctrine to suit his "Platform" and virtually ignoring the fundamental life issues at stake?

And why does our bishop sit silently by and allow the sole teaching on Catholic social principles in his diocese to come from an office run by a clearly biased, active dissenter?

Allio's Social Action office has influence in many other areas of our diocese as well - including our schools, universities and health care. Is the bishop aware of Allio's "extracurricular" activities and associations? Have Allio's travels on behalf of his dissident organization been funded by the Cleveland Diocese? And are other diocesan staff members involved in such organizations as well?

Further investigation seems warranted, but one thing is clear: Bishop Lennon cannot continue to allow people whose beliefs and activities put them outside of the Catholic Faith continue to dictate the policies of the Cleveland Catholic Diocese.

Concerned? Alarmed? Want to help? Consider one or several of the following proactive measures:

- Contact Bishop Lennon at evonalt@dioceseofcleveland.org; Phone: 216-696-6525 ext. 2030; Fax: 216-696-6547; or Chancery Building - 1027 Superior Ave. - Cleveland, OH 44114-2503.
- Contact John Carroll University President Robert L. Niehoff at president@jcu.edu; Phone: 216-397-1886; or John Carroll University - 20700 North Park Blvd. - University Heights, Ohio 44118.
- Contact the pastor of Gesu Parish, Rev. Lorn J. Snow, S.J.; Phone: (216) 932-0617 Fax: (216) 932-0731; or Church of the Gesu - 2490 Miramar Blvd. - University Heights, OH 44118.
- Attend one or more of the above lectures and inform the audience of the speaker's bias and non-conformity with true Catholic teaching.
- Forward this article extensively to faithful Catholics, pro-lifers and the media.
- Volunteer to hand out faithful Catholic voting information in church parking lots this Sunday by calling Lifeworks Ohio at 216-661-3000 or e-mailing contact@lifeworksohio.org.
- Contact Cleveland Right to Life if you have any information you would like to share related to the Diocese of Cleveland (see contact information below).

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