

San Antonio archbishop unhappy with Clinton rally

SAN ANTONIO - San Antonio Archbishop Jose H. Gomez said he was “neither advised nor consulted” by St. Mary’s University officials when the school agreed to host a Feb. 13 evening rally for Democratic presidential candidate U.S. Sen. Hillary Clinton sponsored by the group “Texas for Hillary.”

“I was surprised to learn of Sen. Hillary Clinton’s appearance at St. Mary’s University,” the archbishop said in a Feb. 12 statement.

“Catholic institutions are obliged to teach and promote Catholic values in all instances. This is especially important when people look to our Catholic universities and colleges to provide leadership and clarity to the often complicated and conflicting political discourse,” he added.

The archbishop said the records of the New York senator and some other presidential candidates “on important life issues are not consistent with the teaching of the Catholic Church.”

St. Mary’s University, which is operated by the Marianists, released a statement saying it “does not endorse political candidates or their positions on issues and acknowledges the fundamental differences between those of the presidential candidates and the Catholic Church.”

With regard to abortion, Clinton’s campaign Web site says she “has stood firm as an advocate for a woman’s right to choose.”

On other issues, she supports embryonic stem-cell research and has been a longtime

advocate of the death penalty. Clinton co-sponsored the Innocence Protection Act of 2003, which among other things established a DNA testing process for individuals sentenced to the death penalty under federal law.

In his statement, Archbishop Gomez said it was not his intention to tell people how to vote but to encourage Catholics to “understand the teachings of the church on the broad spectrum of public issues that are of great concern today.”

He said the U.S. bishops in their 2004 document, “Catholics in Political Life,” affirmed that Catholic institutions “should not honor those who act in defiance of our fundamental moral principles. They should not be given awards, honors or platforms which would suggest support for their actions.”

Patrick Reilly, president of the Cardinal Newman Society, an organization that promotes Catholic identity at Catholic colleges, urged Charles Cotrell, president of St. Mary’s University, to cancel the rally.

He also praised the archbishop for his reaction to the campus event, telling him in a letter that “Catholic institutions are obliged to teach and promote Catholic values in all instances. This is especially important when people look to our Catholic universities and colleges to provide leadership and clarity to the often complicated and conflicting political discourse.”