NATIONAL CATHOLIC REPORTER
Published on *National Catholic Reporter* (http://ncronline.org)

Why won't Mitt Romney provide full tax files?

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What is Mitt Romney hiding?

There is arrogance in Romney's stonewalling on providing his full tax files. It reveals his disdain for democratic scrutiny of our politicians. If he were so big on economic success, why would he be ashamed, for example, of revealing that he probably is a billionaire? That may be part of the cover-up.

The other explanation is that his tax records will reveal he was, in fact, involved to one degree or another in the operation of Bain Capital after ostensibly he took a leave of absence from his firm in 1999. SEC records continue to reveal that he was the sole stockholder, CEO and president of the company at least until 2012. This issue goes to the character of the man. Either he is lying or he is telling the truth, but in any case, only by producing his tax files will we know.

At the same time, the Romney people are criticizing President Barack Obama for a remark he made last week in a speech in which he said people who built their businesses didn't do it alone. This has been taken out of context. In effect, he was stating a common-sense truth. To start a business, you need help. You have to get financing from a bank or other sources. Perhaps your family helped you or you got a loan from the Small Business Administration. Your college degree in perhaps business was accomplished by the education you received from probably a public university.

What the president was challenging was the myth of the self-made businessman. Most of the history of business in one form or another has come through assistance from government in the form of tax breaks; tariffs; favorable land policies, such as the building of the railroads or federal irrigation programs for agribusiness; government subsidies; foreign aid programs where the federal government purchases American products for distribution to other countries; etc. I was just lecturing to my class the other day about one of the biggest federal government "welfare" programs for agribusiness in the form of the Bracero Program between 1942 and 1964, when Washington negotiated a labor contract system with Mexico to provide immigrant workers -- Braceros -- for American agricultural interests. In effect, the federal government underwrote a cheap labor subsidy for big agricultural farms that led to huge profits for these companies. So much for the self-made American farmer.

The fact is, as the president was suggesting, we live, for better or worse, in an interdependent society, but one in which the government needs to assure that all receive their fair share of public support and not just the very wealthy, such as Mitt Romney, who won't tell us how rich he is or how he was involved in outsourcing jobs from Americans.

Source URL (retrieved on *07/24/2014 - 08:21*): http://ncronline.org/blogs/ncr-today/why-wont-mitt-romney-provide-full-tax-files