

SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

INTRODUCTION: The Diocese of Lafayette and its affiliates recognize that, with the increasing prevalence of the Internet in the world today, clergy, employees, and volunteers will use the Internet to conduct ministry, educate, and communicate with the faithful, associates and friends. Social media in particular, provides various ways for individuals to interact and has changed the way we communicate and share information. The Diocese encourages pastors, principals, and administrators to support the use of social media and give clergy, employees, and volunteers the necessary training and tools to interact safely and responsibly online. Those using social media must be aware that certain comments and information can misrepresent the positions and activities of the Church, Diocese of Lafayette, and its affiliates. Clergy, employees, and volunteers are required to adhere to the following policy regarding social media for evangelization, education, and personal use, including but not limited to:

social networks, text/instant messaging, websites and blogs.

Social Media- Diocese of Lafayette and Affiliates

1. The Diocese supports the use of social media tools as a means to conduct ministry and education. Social media is a powerful tool; therefore, sites affiliated with diocesan institutions (parishes, schools, offices, etc.) may not be used for: 1) conducting outside business 2) defaming the character of any individual or institution 3) misrepresenting the positions or activities of the Diocese of Lafayette or its affiliates 4) divulging any personal information, particularly about minors that would jeopardize their safety or well-being in any way. Supervisors who approve individuals to create a website are responsible for monitoring the website.

Social Media-Personal Use

2. The Diocese of Lafayette and its affiliates recognize clergy, employees, and volunteers may create personal websites, blogs and social media identities (pseudonym, alias or handle i.e. @thegospeltruth) as a medium of self-expression, i.e. not a direct extension of church ministry or work. However, clergy, employees, and volunteers must recognize that anything published on a personal website is effectively available to the public. Any information that misrepresents the positions and activities of the Church, the Diocese of Lafayette and its affiliates is prohibited. Personal sites used for diocesan work, ministry, or education are subject to monitoring by their supervisor or designees. Reference should be made to pertinent canon law (see especially canons 220, 666, 747, 761, 779, 804, 822, 1063, and 1369), state and federal law, the professional code of conduct, employee policies, and contracts. Clergy, employees, and volunteers who are identifiable as affiliated with the Diocese of Lafayette are required to put the following notice in a reasonably prominent place on their personal website:

“The opinions expressed here are those of [name of person] alone. This site operates independently and is not associated with the Diocese of Lafayette or [name of parish/school].”

Protection of Minors

3. Clergy, employees, and volunteers are prohibited from posting or distributing personal, identifiable information, including photos and/or videos, of any minor without verifiable consent of a parent or guardian. Personal identifiable information includes full name, photos, home address, email address, telephone number or any information that would allow someone to identify or contact a minor. Verifiable consent will take the form of a signed release/permission form from a parent/guardian. Ministry, educational, and personal websites may involve the use of a username and password to access all or portions of the site. In the event that clergy, employees, or volunteers, subject to approval by the Diocese of Lafayette or its affiliates, gives a minor access to a website that is not otherwise openly accessible to the public, that same access must also be provided to the minor's parent/legal guardian. Social media at times involves the interaction between adults and minors, therefore, two (2) Safe Environment certified adults must have unrestricted access to monitor these types of communication, and at least one (1) of the two (2) adults must be employed by the institution (diocesan office, parish, school etc.).

Confidential and Proprietary Information

4. Clergy, employees, and volunteers are prohibited from disclosing information that is understood to be private property or privileged according to the norms of canon law, state and federal law, diocesan policy, the professional code of conduct and contractual obligations.

Trademarks and Logos

5. Personal use of trademarks and logos that are protected intellectual property of the Diocese of Lafayette and its affiliates is prohibited.

Inappropriate Material

6. It is prohibited to post immoral and otherwise inappropriate material via social media. Inappropriate material includes but is not limited to: obscene, harassing, offensive, derogatory, defamatory, or sexually explicit comments, links, or images/video. Reference should be made to pertinent canon law (see especially canons 220, 666, 747, 761, 779, 804, 822, 1063, and 1369), state and federal law, the professional code of conduct, employee policies, and contracts.

Enforcement

7. Failure to comply with any of the provisions of the Social Media Policy will be grounds for discipline, up to and including termination or removal from position. The Diocese of Lafayette and its affiliates reserve the right to make changes to this policy at any time, at its sole discretion, and interpret and administer the policy in light of changing circumstances and events. The Diocese of Lafayette gratefully acknowledges the generosity of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, the Archdiocese of Cincinnati and the Diocese of Dallas, in granting the use of its social media policies and guidelines as a resource in the development of this policy.

Approved + Michael J. Janelle Date February 22, 2013