



# Diocese of Charleston Social Media Policy

## PREAMBLE

The Roman Catholic Diocese of Charleston places the highest value on the integrity of Church Personnel in our parishes, agencies, schools and organizations. All Church Personnel must uphold Christian values and work diligently to serve and enhance the mission of the Church. This Policy provides a set of standards for conduct in certain situations regarding an individual's public voice on social media.

## DEFINITIONS

*Church Personnel:* For the purposes of these guidelines, the following are included in the definition of "Church Personnel": bishops, priests, deacons, religious, lay employees, and lay volunteers involved in ministry for the Diocese, its parishes and schools.

*Social Media:* any form of electronic communication, including but not limited to websites or "apps" that are designed to turn communication into interactive dialogue, such as blogs/wikis, mobile phone, computer or tablet "apps", message boards/forums, Facebook, Vine, TikTok, Twitter, YouTube, Vimeo, LinkedIn, Instagram, Tumbler, Snapchat, GroupMe, etc.

## POLICY

In furtherance of the Church's mission, all Church Personnel (defined above), regardless of whether they are members of the Catholic Church, are by virtue of such employment actively engaged in pastoral ministry and the formation of God's people by personal witness. Therefore, Church Personnel must acknowledge and agree that they will, at all times, publicly speak and act in accordance with the mission and teachings of the Roman Catholic Church, as set forth in Sacred Scripture and the Catechism of the Catholic Church. This includes posts on one's personal Social Media pages.

This policy sets forth the Diocese of Charleston's expectations for Church Personnel regarding social media conduct.

Accordingly:

- Church Personnel will not post obscene, harassing, generally offensive, derogatory, defamatory, or otherwise scandalous, comments, links, or images, that discredit the Diocese of Charleston or its affiliates, employees, parishes, volunteers, schools, or others.



- Church Personnel will not publicly engage in behavior or promote messages that contradict Catholic teachings or (e.g., promote racism, abortion, same-sex relationships, hatred, etc.).
- Church Personnel will not share or post anything on any type of social media that contradicts doctrine, traditions, social teaching or sacred Scripture of the Roman Catholic, as set forth by the official Catechism of the Catholic Church and the Code of Canon Law.

The Secretariat of Communications and Public Affairs is the sole voice of the Diocese of Charleston. No one has the right to speak for the diocese without the written consent of the Secretary, the Vicar General with authority over the Secretariat or Bishop of Charleston.

## **ENFORCEMENT**

Church personnel are expected to abide by this policy. Failure to comply with any of the provisions of the Social Media Policy will be grounds for discipline, up to and including termination. Reports of alleged infractions or questions regarding content may be made to the Secretariat of Communications and Public Affairs or the Office of Human Resources at the Pastoral Center, 901 Orange Grove Road, Charleston, SC 29407.

The Roman Catholic Diocese of Charleston reserves the right to make changes at any time upon posting a new version to its website. This Social Media Policy supplements and is in addition to the applicable provisions of the 2022 diocesan Policy Concerning the Protection of Minors and Vulnerable Adults from Sexual Abuse by Church Personnel and the accompanying Code of Conduct for Church Personnel and Ministerial Standards and Guidelines for Dealing with Minors and Vulnerable Adults.

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENT** of *Social Media Policy for the Roman Catholic Diocese of Charleston*

I have read and understand this Social Media Policy.

- I affirm and understand my responsibilities to publicly uphold the standards within this policy.
- As a cleric, religious, employee or volunteer within the Roman Catholic Diocese of Charleston, I agree to publicly respect the teachings of the Catholic Church.
- I will not publicly share content or engage in conduct that openly opposes the Catholic faith.
- I will carry out the duties expected of me in my role with the highest integrity.

**SIGNATURE:** \_\_\_\_\_

**PRINT NAME:** \_\_\_\_\_

**DATE:** \_\_\_\_\_