

GUIDELINES FOR DIGITAL COMMUNICATION

Promulgated by Bishop Gerald Dino on September 24, 2010.

Guiding Principles (adapted from the USCCB Social Media Guidelines June 2010)

The world of digital communication, with its almost limitless expressive capacity, makes us appreciate all the more Saint Paul's exclamation: "*Woe to me if I do not preach the Gospel*" (1 Cor 9:16) – Pope Benedict XVI, 2010 World Communication Day message

Social media is the fastest growing form of communication in the United States, especially among youth and young adults. Our Church cannot ignore it, but at the same time we must engage social media in a manner that is safe, responsible and civil.

Eparchy of Phoenix Guidelines

I. Introduction

These guidelines are intended to guide and enable appropriate use of digital media. Adherence to boundary issues as posed in the Policy and Procedures of Eparchy of Phoenix are applicable, whether face-to-face or via the digital media.

The following are the **minimal** guidelines to protect Church Personnel, youth and children. Leadership may expand upon these guidelines.

II. Legal Aspects of Digital Communication

1. Use of computers and internet connectivity should be consistent with the mission of the Church. In the use of computers, equipment and other related resources, church personnel must respect the privacy of other users, respect copyright and license agreements, protect data from unauthorized use or disclosure, and safeguard their accounts and passwords.
2. Church equipment is the property of the Eparchy, therefore must be used only for professional communications. Church personnel must not use computers for any illegal or immoral purpose. They must not transmit threatening, obscene or harassing materials or correspondence.

3. Church personnel must not engage in unauthorized distribution of data and information. They must refrain from revealing or publicizing proprietary or confidential information.
4. Church personnel must not communicate or advocate religious beliefs or practices contrary to the Catholic Church's teaching. Users must refrain from inappropriately representing opinions as those of the Eparchy of Phoenix, their Parish, or any of their official sub-entities.
5. Church personnel may not use the computers for private advertizing of products or services, or for any activity meant to foster personal gain. They must refrain from uploading or downloading commercial software in violation of its copyright.

III. Guidelines for Eparchial / Parish Communication

All Eparchial or Parish digital communications must involve clear visibility, accountability, and responsibility at all times. These are not appropriate mechanisms for confidentiality and should never involve secrecy.

1. For a Parish Social network site, permission of the Pastor must be given prior to establishing a social networking site.
 - A separate Parish account is to be established; do not use a personal account for a social network site. There must be absolutely no "unofficial," "unauthorized," or "personal" Parish sites of any kind that use the Parish name, logo, parish information, parish membership network, or recognition either in fact (de facto) or in law (de juris).
 - There should be at least two site administrators (preferably more) appointed by the pastor for each site, to allow rapid response and continuous monitoring of the site.
 - Passwords and names of sites must be registered with the Pastor as well as in a central location and more than one adult should have access to this information.
 - All Parish social networking, blogs, chat rooms, instant messaging, texting, and web sites must be moderated at all times. No one may post anything to the public via these sites except with the review and approval of an official Parish site administrator for each message each time.

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- All Parish moderators/site administrators will receive instruction and guidelines from their Pastor, who is ultimately responsible, or his designee(s). All subsequent questions not covered clearly by their pastoral instruction and guidelines will be referred back to the Pastor or his designee(s) for additional guidelines and instruction.
 - All users of Parish social networking must be approved in advance by the Pastor or his designee(s).
 - The Pastor will be informed of and keep record of all Parish social networking site users, as well as all guidance and instruction given to Parish social networking site administrators.
 - Conversations are to be brief and in line with the Policy and Procedures of the Eparchy.
 - All Parish social networking site users except ordained clergy and professed religious shall only write in the first person and never claim to represent the official position of the Parish, Eparchy, or the Catholic Church unless specifically authorized by the Pastor. Ordained clergy and professed religious will consult with and receive authorization from the Pastor before posting official positions on Parish social networking sites.
 - It is highly recommended to save copies of the correspondence with minors or vulnerable adults to avoid any negative implications. Chat or instant messaging should be discouraged.
2. All list serve or "blast" text messages etc. to all parishioners must originate with or be approved in advance by the Pastor.
 3. Written permission must be received from parents/guardians if there are photo/video of minors or vulnerable adults in any newsletter, website, blog, brochures or other promotional materials, etc. For the safety of the individual, use only the first name and set a reasonable length of time in the use of photo/video.

In addition, parents/guardians must have access to everything provided by Parish social networking to their minor children or vulnerable adults, including the opportunity to be copied on all such communications to or from their minor children or vulnerable adults. Parental access and copies may be by means of parallel technology that is more accessible to them.

Parish social networking moderators/site administrators and all users should not communicate privately with minor children or vulnerable adults. All such

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communications must be public and open to both the parents/guardians and the Pastor.

4. It is acceptable to use photos/videos in which people are unidentifiable, such as group photos. Permission or release forms are not necessary.