Diocesan Policy for the Responsible use of Technology and Possession of Pornographic Images of Children by Clerics

In order to ensure the proper use of technological resources, each cleric incardinated or residing within the Diocese of Steubenville shall comply with the Diocesan Policy for the Responsible use of Technology and Possession of Pornographic Images of Children by Clerics. This form shall be kept on file with the Chancellor of the Diocese of Steubenville. Signing this form indicates that the cleric accepts personal accountability for the morally illicit use of the internet and other technology resources as stated in this policy.

I. Clerics shall not intentionally use computers or other technology resources to transmit, retrieve, or store any type of communication, message, image, or material that: 1) is discriminatory, defamatory, or harassing; 2) contains derogatory or inflammatory remarks about an individual's race, age, disability, religion, national origin, or physical attributes, or any other condition or status protected by Federal, State, or local law; 3) is obscene or X-rated; 4) contains abusive, profane, or offensive language; or, 5) violates any policy of the Diocese of Steubenville, including, but not limited to, its policies regarding child abuse and harassment, or that is otherwise contrary to the religious mission and values of the Diocese of Steubenville.

II. In accordance with Sacramentorum Sanctitatis Tutela (and allowances made for the legislation of the country where a Catholic Conference is located), sexual abuse of a minor by a cleric includes the acquisition, possession, or distribution by a cleric of pornographic images of minors under the age of eighteen, for the purposes of sexual gratification, by whatever means or using whatever technology. The acquisition, possession, or distribution by a cleric of pornographic images of minors is among the more grave delicts against morals which are reserved to the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, AND it is a civil crime.

III. When a priest or deacon is accused of the acquisition, possession, or distribution of pornographic images of minors under the age of eighteen, the Diocese of Steubenville shall comply with procedures established within the Diocesan Decree on Child Protection (which includes reporting to civil authorities) and the USCCB Essential Norms for dealing with allegations of sexual abuse of minors by priests or deacons. The cleric is to be accorded the presumption of innocence during the investigation of the allegation and all appropriate steps are to be taken to protect his reputation. If the allegation is admitted or established, the offending priest or deacon is to be permanently removed from ministry and, if warranted, dismissed from the clerical state after an appropriate process in accord with canon law. An offending priest or deacon is to be offered therapeutic professional assistance both for the purpose of prevention and also for his own healing and well-being. (See Article 5, USCCB Revised Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People).

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Name of priest or deacon (print clearly)

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Signature of priest or deacon

Date signed