

## ST. MARY'S VISITATION PARISH SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

### PURPOSE

To develop policies, procedures, and guidelines to allow parish clergy, employees, parishioners, volunteers, and students to use new communication technologies to provide visibility, community, and accountability to St. Mary's Visitation Parish (SMV) and St. Mary's Visitation School (SMVS).

### DEFINITIONS

1. **Social media** represents a broad group of digital technologies whose content is driven entirely by its members. Individuals are allowed flexibility in privacy settings, in posting text, texting, photos, video, links and other information, and in level of interaction with other members. Examples include Blogging, Wikis, Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Myspace, YouTube, Instagram, and applications for mobile devices ("Apps").
2. **Site**—Website or social network profiling pages (also called accounts, fan pages, or group pages) are the centerpiece of any social media activity.
3. **Authorized Site** – a parish-approved site which is associated with the parish through the use of the SMV or SMVS name, logo, or likeness in order to inform the public about parish and/or school activities.
4. **Unauthorized Site** – a site which holds itself out to be associated with the parish through the use of the SMV or SMVS name, logo, or likeness but does not have parish approval to operate.

### PROCEDURE

1. Establishing a Site
  - a. Persons wishing to establish and run a site associated with SMV or SMVS through the use of the parish or school name, logo, or likeness must receive prior written approval from the parish pastor.
  - b. Approval for any authorized site rests in the sole discretion of the pastor. The pastor has the discretion to place terms or conditions on any such approval. The pastor has the discretion to revoke authorization for a site, at any time, in his discretion.
  - c. Each approved site must have at least two, adult site administrators. The names and contact information of all site administrators must be registered with the parish office. All site administrators must read and abide by this policy.
  - d. Personal sites shall not be used for parish programs (e.g., a personal Facebook profile). Separate sites or profiles shall be created and used.
  - e. Passwords and log-in information for each site associated with SMV or SMVS must be registered with the parish office.
  - f. Site administrators must inform the parish office of changes to the administrators, contact information, and passwords. Site administrators must also inform the parish office when a site is deactivated or otherwise removed from a social media platform.
  - g. The parish shall review information contained on pages annually.
2. Appropriate Boundaries for Communication

- a. Information and content posted on authorized sites reflects on the parish. Practice what you preach.
  - b. Do not claim to represent the official position of the organization or the teachings of the Church, unless authorized to do so.
  - c. Information, photos, videos, and links posted onto authorized sites should respect the dignity and worth of the human person and will avoid the sharing of words and images that are degrading of human beings, that promote hatred and intolerance, that debase the goodness and intimacy of human sexuality or that exploit the weak and vulnerable. (Benedict, 43<sup>rd</sup> WCD, 2009)
  - d. Communications should open the way for dialogue between people of different countries, cultures, and religions through attentive and respectful listening. (Benedict, 43<sup>rd</sup> WCD, 2009)
  - e. Practice Christian charity.
  - f. For further guidance, site administrators are encouraged to read:
    - i. Social Media Guidelines, Diocese of Kalamazoo
    - ii. Social Media Guidelines, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, June 2014<sup>1</sup>
    - iii. World Communication Day (WCD) Messages ,2009-2016, from Pope Francis<sup>2</sup> and Pope Benedict XVI.<sup>3</sup>
3. Codes of Conduct
- a. Site administrators are required to:
    - i. Follow all diocesan and parish guidelines.
    - ii. Abide by all federal and state law, including copyright, fair use, and IRS financial disclosure regulations. Do not cite others, post photos of them, link to their material, without their approval.
    - iii. Have permission from a minor’s parent or guardian before contacting a minor via social media or before posting pictures, videos, or information that may identify that minor.
    - iv. Refrain from divulging confidential information.
    - v. Monitor the site to ensure content posted on the site—by administrators and the public—is consistent with Catholic values, the appropriate boundaries for communication, and diocesan / parish policies, procedures, and guidelines.
    - vi. Familiarize themselves with how the social media platform operates so that they are able to effectively utilize the technology, monitor the site, and delete or block inappropriate activity when necessary.
  - b. Administrators are authorized to:
    - i. Interact with the public on the site in accordance with this policy.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.usccb.org/about/communications/social-media-guidelines.cfm>

<sup>2</sup> <https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/messages/communications.index.html>

<sup>3</sup> <http://w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/messages/communications.index.html>

- ii. Link their authorized site to the official parish websites, diocesan websites, or other authorized sites.
  - iii. Delete posts which violate this policy.
  - iv. Block users whose posts violate this policy.
- c. No Unauthorized Sites
  - i. Unauthorized Sites are prohibited. An unauthorized site may become an authorized site by completing the procedure for establishing a site, above.
  - ii. Upon notice of the operation of an unauthorized site, the parish office shall take such steps as are necessary, based on the facts and circumstances, either to assist the administrators in making the site compliant with this policy or causing the site to be removed from the social media platform.
- d. Violation of this policy - Anyone who abuses the privilege of their access to and use of social media sites associated with the parish will be subject to corrective action, including but not limited to, loss of administrative or posting privileges.