



ROMAN CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF BURLINGTON

Roman Catholic Diocese of Burlington General Social Communication Guidelines com@vermontcatholic.org

May 24, 2016
[amended Feb. 10, 2017]

Launching a Social Media Account

Diocesan social media profiles are not to be set up by individuals outside of the communication office. This ensures authorization and compliance with USCCB and diocesan social media best practices. If you would like to launch a social media account, please submit a ticket to com@vermontcatholic.org to begin discussion.

There is always to be at least two administrators of a social presence and/or at least two people with log-in information.

In addition to reading the Roman Catholic Diocese of Burlington General Social Communication Guidelines, please review the USCCB Social Media Guidelines:
<http://www.usccb.org/about/communications/social-media-guidelines.cfm>.

Diocesan Social Media Behavioral Guidelines

Voice:

- Speak charitably and assume good will from all parties.
- Only express official Church teaching when authorized to do so. You may offer links to USCCB or Vatican resources when appropriate.
- Know that every personal communication by church personnel reflects the Church.
- Be aware that personal social accounts can reflect the diocesan voice by association, regardless of off work hours (and topical) use.

Privacy:

- Do not divulge confidential information. Nothing posted on the Internet is private, even if posted via “private” message.
- Do not cite others, post photos or videos of others, link to others’ material, etc., without their approval and never from a personal account (except charitably from reputable news sources or professional pages also coextensively posted).

Confrontation:

There are to be notices on social media presences that state the community is not a place of apologetics, and communicate consequences.

Example: All posts and comments should be marked by charity and respect for the truth. This page is not intended as a place of apologetics, but rather as a source of information and prayerful support. All comments and posts to this page should be on topic and presume the good will of other posters. Discussion should take place primarily from a faith perspective and be focused toward topics related to the mission of the Church. No ads, political endorsements, defamation, or vulgarity will be allowed. It will be deleted without warning, along with comments that are explicitly subversive to this mission.

- Off topic comments should be hidden immediately.
- Mean spirited comments should be deleted immediately.
- Vulgar comments should be deleted immediately and the posting individual should be blocked.
- Sincere objections expressed in a charitable way should be responded to with a link to diocesan, USCCB, or Vatican resources for clarification. Speak with the relevant diocesan office for link suggestions if needed.
- Defamatory comments about the Church/Bishop/others should be deleted and the posting individual should be blocked, unless there are any allegations. Then, report to other admins, the Office of Safe Environment Programs, or to com@vermontcatholic.org.

Engagement:

Do:

- engage the community
- provide information
- give thanks
- speak professionally (as the “voice” of the diocese)

Do not:

- show favoritism or bias
- speak personally
- use divisive language (us/them, we/you)

Instant Messages:

Only address instant messages if they are compliant with the confrontation guidelines above. If messages are pastoral in nature, and you are not sure how to respond, please contact the appropriate diocesan office or com@vermontcatholic.org, where we may seek pastoral counsel. Please see the “Child Safety” section for more direction on communication with minors.

Theological Ambiguity:

If your posts take on a technical, theological approach, fully adhere to the teachings of the Catholic Church and speak in a manner of ambiguity on technical matters, leaving different positions and interpretations room to engage and feel welcomed.

Child Safety:

- You should never contact a minor via social media.
- Be sure to have permission from a minor's parent or guardian before posting pictures, video, and other information that may identify that minor.
- Parents must have access to everything provided to their children. For example, parents should be made aware of how social media are being used and be told how to access the sites. Messaging through the social communication should never take place "privately." Messaging should always be posted on the page so that children and parents may all view it.
 - If a minor "private" messages you, handle the matter in the same way that you would an e-mail, text, phone call, or letter from a minor. Church personnel are encouraged to save copies of conversations whenever possible, especially those that concern the personal sharing of a teen or young adult.
- Please review:
 - Diocese of Burlington Policies on Ethics and Integrity in Ministry, which outlines appropriate behavior for face-to-face and/or digital interactions with minors: <https://www.vermontcatholic.org/files/252/policies%20-%20ethics%20and%20integrity%20-%202015.pdf>.
 - Children's Online Privacy Protection Act, which is federal legislation that oversees how websites interact with children under age 13: <https://www.ftc.gov/tips-advice/business-center/privacy-and-security/children%27s-privacy>.

Diocesan Branding

Do not use the diocesan brand (logo) in materials or otherwise communicate diocesan affiliation without permission. If image creation is needed (for an event or topic) or if you wish to be trained in diocesan brand guidelines for use, email com@vermontcatholic.org with the request. Allow 3 days response time and a minimum of 2 weeks for completion.

Social Media Content/Association

Make sure all posts are from reputable news sources, are in accordance with Catholic teaching, and do not offer/relay scandal or sensation of any kind. On breaking news associated with the Church, its teaching, or its mission, consult the USCCB news release page for comment before posting—preferably offering its voice solely or before others. Remain vigilant about all entities connected with each story and post, to avoid scandals of associations. Refrain from expressing approval/disapproval of political or public figures.

News sources that are always safe from which to share:

- Vatican News
- Vatican Radio
- Catholic New Service (E-mail com@Vermontcatholic.org to have article placed on Vermont Catholic Online News before sharing.)
- Catholic News Agency
- United States Conference of Catholic Bishops
- Any accounts of USCCB initiatives, such as For Your Marriage, Catholic Campaign for Human Development, Justice for Immigrants, etc.

There may be other sources that are appropriate from which to share, but it is up to the person managing the social media account to properly and thoroughly vet any posts before sharing as any diocesan social media page.

You may also wish to place a disclaimer in the “About” or “Description” section of a social media page, especially if you tend to post from sources other than those listed in this manual.

Example: Links provided on this page are provided solely for the user’s convenience. By providing these links, the Roman Catholic Diocese of Burlington assumes no responsibility for, nor does it necessarily endorse, the organization, its mission, content, or sponsoring/ associated organizations.

Do not post solicitations for any campaigns outside of diocesan fundraising, unless preapproved via com@vermontcatholic.org.

Copyright

Copyright infringement is a serious matter, carrying possible fines ranging from \$200 to \$150,000. It is becoming more common for automated scans to search the internet for copyright violations, which are then followed by communications from copyright lawyers in an attempt to collect settlement fees for the infringed use. The diocese, being a large corporation of means, is a target of particular interest for these investigations. For this reason, and for maintaining the integrity of Church communication, below are some resources to educate in copyright basics for a variety of formats.

Copyright Education:

Copyright Overview Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Uiq42O6rhW4>

Copyright Overview Text: <https://www.lib.purdue.edu/uco/CopyrightBasics/index.html>

About Creative-Commons Licenses: <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/>

Copyright Guidelines:

Images:

All images should preferably come from a public domain source. (See “Copyright Education” materials for definition.)

Several good resources are:

<https://pixabay.com/>

<https://www.pexels.com/>

<http://morguefile.com/>

You may find resources within Creative-Commons Licensed work. (See “Copyright Education” materials for definition). If you choose to use Creative-Commons Licensed work, follow all requirements of use expressed in the particular license (typically, proper attribution).

Any other images are not to be used, unless you have expressed permission from the copyright holder. If an image is not labeled as licensed, its use is assumed copyrighted with all rights reserved (by law in most cases) and you may not use.

Obtain model releases for any people that are featured in images that you take yourself, or that are found online (with permission). This is especially pertinent for minors, but is also applicable for adults that are not in a public setting (ex. court, church, park). Model release forms can be obtained by e-mailing com@vermontcatholic.org.

Video & Music:

See this short and comprehensive YouTube video for creating video content and discerning the sharability of content that is hosted on streaming services (e.x. YouTube, Vimeo):
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=InzDjH1-9Ns>

Text:

If the publication is digital, then links to READABLE formats that the publisher makes available online are acceptable. Please review the “Fair Use” doctrine outlined in the “Copyright Education” materials above. Do not consider "fair use" to mean it is fair to use the work, but rather fair in light of the 4-tandemed principles described in the doctrine. Always cite the author.

Quotes from news and other publishers that are posted with the quote, are fine to quote from charitably.

Office of Communication
Roman Catholic Diocese of Burlington

Email com@vermontcatholic.org with questions or concerns regarding these policies.