



Archdiocese
of Toronto

Catholic Pastoral Centre
1155 Yonge Street
Toronto, Ontario M4T 1W2
T 416.934.0606
www.archtoronto.org

MEMO

TO: All Parishes

FROM: Marcel Goulet, Director of Human Resources

DATE: October 9, 2015 Pouch Mailing

RE: Social Media Policy – Archdiocese of Toronto

In the last several years, we have seen a significant increase in the use of online tools like Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram and other applications for both personal and professional purposes.

As part of our overarching efforts to foster a safe environment, we are promulgating a new Social Media Policy for the Archdiocese of Toronto. This document is an addendum to the 2013 Policy and Procedures Manual and is effective immediately. You will find a copy attached along with a document providing an overview of the most common social media tools.

We have also included a sample media release template that can be adapted for future events or used at the beginning of a ministry program. Schools use a similar form, usually shared with families in September, which provides blanket consent for photos/video taken throughout the school year.

It is the responsibility of the local pastor to ensure the Social Media Policy is circulated and signed by all clergy, staff and any volunteers using websites or social media for their ministry. Please keep copies of the signed policy in your personnel/volunteer files.

Do not hesitate to reach out if you have any questions regarding this document. Thank you for your continued cooperation.



Social Media Policy: Introduction to Social Media

OVERVIEW

The term “social media” refers to the services or tools that allow people to participate in online conversations and exchanges with their online social networks. An online social network is similar to one’s real-life social network. It is made up of a person’s friends, family, work colleagues and acquaintances. It is a way of staying in touch and making new connections. Once you add people to your online social network, it is very easy to share news, updates, images and videos, send messages, participate in discussions, and organize events. One advantage of using social media is that it allows an individual or a group to reach a large number of people instantaneously. Also, social media tools are typically free.

Some examples of popular social media tools include:

1. **Blogs:** Short for a “web log,” a blog is an online journal in which pages are usually displayed in reverse chronological order, showing the newest entry first.
 - **Official blog:** You can find the official Archdiocese of Toronto blog on the front page of our website: www.archtoronto.org - this is where we post news updates, reflections and information on Catholic events and initiatives in the community.
2. **Wikis:** A wiki is a collective website where a participant can modify or create a new page. An example is Wikipedia, a free online encyclopedia that can be reviewed and revised/updated by users. Anyone can contribute to a wiki entry and there may be little or no moderation. They should not be used as a sole source in any research.
3. **Social network sites:** A social network site is any website that allows individuals or groups to create a public (or semi-public) profile, connect with users they know or have shared interests, and interact with that network. Popular social networking sites today include Facebook, LinkedIn and Google+.
 - **Official Facebook:** <http://www.facebook.com/archtoronto>
On Facebook, we share the latest news, photos, videos and reminders for special events in our archdiocese and from the Vatican on a daily basis. We also post links to the Sunday Mass and Daily Mass videos, readings, images and other relevant faith resources.
 - **Official Google+:** <https://plus.google.com/+archtoronto>
Most content posted on Facebook is cross-posted on our Google+ page. Cross-posting is important because we have followers on Google+ who are not on Facebook, and vice-versa.

- **Official LinkedIn:** <https://www.linkedin.com/company/archdiocese-of-toronto>
LinkedIn is a more business-oriented social networking service that connects people on a professional level. Employees of the Archdiocese of Toronto may choose to “follow” our company profile page and get updates on career opportunities and other relevant news.
4. **Status-update service or microblogs:** A status-update service or microblog is a service that allows people or groups to share short updates or announcements about themselves or an organization they represent. They are able to follow other people’s or groups’ updates as well. A popular microblogging site is Twitter.
- **Official Twitter:** <http://www.twitter.com/archtoronto>
The content we post here is very similar to what we share on Facebook, but in a format that is shorter and usually links to a webpage with more detailed information. During larger archdiocesan events or other occasions attended by our Cardinal Collins, we try to “live tweet” to keep our followers updated on events as they happen.
5. **Media-sharing sites:** Media-sharing sites allow people or groups to post videos or photographs to share with others, like YouTube (for videos), Pinterest or Instagram (for pictures), and Tumblr (for videos, pictures, audio files, etc.).
- **Official YouTube:** <http://www.youtube.com/archdioceseoftoronto>
Our YouTube channel is where we post our Sunday Mass videos. Our channel also features various playlists that feature Cardinal Collins’ Lectio Divina series (produced by Salt + Light Catholic Media Foundation), introduction videos to courses/workshops presented by the Office of Formation for Discipleship, clips of special Masses, homilies, interviews and other videos relevant to our archdiocese.
 - **Official Pinterest:** <http://www.pinterest.com/archtoronto>
Pinterest is an online bulletin board. On our Pinterest account, we share various images that feature some of the following: Faith-related events and initiatives; prayers and quotes from various saints for feast days and other celebrations or events; Catholic churches around Toronto; various upcoming events in our diocese; logos of our official partners (faith, charitable, media, etc.) that link to their websites.
 - **Official Tumblr:** <http://archtoronto.tumblr.com>
We cross-post similar content on Tumblr and Facebook. This is important because we have a different audience on Tumblr that doesn’t necessarily follow us on Facebook or other platforms.
 - **Official Instagram:** <http://www.instagram.com/archtoronto>
Instagram is an online mobile photo- and video-sharing service. We share prayer graphics and other images here, similar to images we would share on our Tumblr account.

(All categories overlap to some degree. For example, you can share photos and videos on Facebook, and link to them from Twitter, etc. We tend to cross-post our content across various channels to reach the maximum number of people.)

HISTORY

As Internet technology improved and became more popular and easily accessible to the general public, websites that allow users to create content began to appear. The first social network site appeared in 1997 (SixDegrees.com) and just a few years later, more social networking sites were developed.

By 2009, Facebook had 350 million users worldwide – 12 million in Canada. At that time, four out of five Canadians who used the Internet were also using social media.

Factors that contributed to the rapid growth and popularity of social media include easier access to Internet connection, the development of better software and tools, and more affordable computers and mobile devices.

CHARACTERISTICS OF SOCIAL MEDIA

- **Persistence:** Content posted on social media sites may remain there permanently.
- **Replicability:** Content can be easily copied and shared.
- **Searchability:** Content can be found easily through search engines.
- **Accessibility:** Social media can be used anywhere, at any time, wherever an Internet connection is available (i.e., computers, tablets, mobile phones, etc.)

IMPACT

Social media has become a valuable tool to connect – to foster participation within a community and to enhance relationships, to share information with a large number of people instantly. **If used improperly, it can damage a corporation or individual's reputation, spread misinformation and change the impact of an organization's message and perception in minutes.**



Social Media Policy

(issued October 2015)

OVERVIEW

“The great digital continent does not only involve technology, but is made up of real men and women who bring with them what they carry inside, their hopes, their suffering, their concerns, their pursuit of truth, beauty, and good. We need to show and bring Christ to others, sharing these joys and hopes, like Mary, who brought Christ to the hearts of men and women...”

**– Pope Francis’ address to Pontifical Council for Social Communications –
Sept. 21, 2013**

“Social media” refers to forms of electronic communication, like websites for social networking and microblogging, through which users create online communities to share information, ideas, personal messages and other content (like photos and videos)¹. Its popularity has grown rapidly within the past few years and continues to expand. Today, nearly four in five active Internet users visit social networks and blogs.²

The Archdiocese of Toronto recognizes the increasing influence and relevance of social media. As part of our pastoral plan, we aim to use modern technology to participate in the dialogue, embracing social media and other tools that will lift up the Gospel and provide powerful instruments of evangelization throughout our archdiocese. Clergy, staff and volunteers (Church personnel) will use social media to conduct work and to communicate with professional and personal associates. It is our goal for Church personnel to use social media responsibly, and to recognize that it is both a powerful educational and evangelization tool that can support the Archdiocese of Toronto’s mission and vision, proclaiming the Good News to the world.

When using these instruments of evangelization, it is important to recognize:

- 1) Social media does not replace meaningful and engaging dialogue that is best encountered through face-to-face communication.
- 2) Anything published on social media feeds/pages should be considered as public as a homily from the pulpit, press release issued by the archdiocese, notice in the parish bulletin or interview with a radio, television or newspaper reporter.

¹ <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/social%20media>

² <http://blog.nielsen.com/nielsenwire/social/>

To help Church personnel interact safely and responsibly online, all are required to comply with the following policy regarding the use of social media.

PARISH/MINISTRY/ARCHDIOCESAN OFFICE WEBSITES, BLOGS AND SOCIAL NETWORKING ACCOUNTS

The Archdiocese of Toronto encourages individual parishes, ministries and offices to produce web content, blogs and social networking accounts as educational, informational and evangelization tools. A supervisor who provides permission for an individual to create web content, blogs or social networking accounts on behalf of a parish, ministry or archdiocesan office is responsible for monitoring that specific account's activity and content. The supervisor must be given the username and password to access, update and make edits to the web content, blog or social networking account, if applicable.

Parish/ministry/archdiocesan office web pages, blogs or social networking accounts should not be used for:

1. conducting outside/personal business;
2. defaming the character of any individual or institution;
3. discrediting the Archdiocese of Toronto or our partners; or
4. disclosing any confidential information related to the Archdiocese of Toronto.

PERSONAL WEBSITES, BLOGS AND SOCIAL NETWORKING ACCOUNTS

The Archdiocese of Toronto recognizes that clergy, staff and volunteers (Church personnel) will create personal websites, blogs or social networking accounts, to be used mainly for communicating personal information with friends and associates, unrelated to the Archdiocese of Toronto. Church personnel must recognize that anything published on a personal website, blog or social networking account is visible to the general public. Owners of these personal websites, blogs and social networking accounts should provide truthful information and be accountable for mistakes. Archdiocese of Toronto Church personnel must avoid sharing any information that causes or has the potential to cause embarrassment to the Archdiocese of Toronto or harm our reputation.

If Church personnel use their personal website, blog or social networking account to conduct parish or diocesan work, the use of that personal website must be approved by their supervisor. That website, blog or social networking account is then subject to monitoring by the supervisor.

Personal websites owned by Church personnel of the Archdiocese of Toronto should not be used for:

1. defaming the character of any individual or institution;

2. discrediting the Archdiocese of Toronto or its partners; or
3. disclosing any confidential information related to the Archdiocese of Toronto.

In the event that Church personnel identify themselves, or is evidently understood to be, associated with the Archdiocese of Toronto, they are asked to place the following notice prominently on their website, blog or social networking account:

"The views expressed on this website are mine alone and do not necessarily reflect the views of my employer."

LOGOS/TRADEMARKS

Clergy, staff and volunteers (Church personnel) may use archdiocesan or related logos and official photographs on websites/blogs/social media tools that have an official affiliation with the Archdiocese of Toronto and are subject to review by a supervisor. Church personnel may not use archdiocesan or affiliate trademarks or logos on their personal websites in any way that suggests or implies approval, endorsement or oversight by the Archdiocese of Toronto.

DOMAIN REGISTRATION

In late 2014, the Archdiocese of Toronto launched a new content management system (CMS). When fully implemented this tool will provide a common website template and navigation system for chancery departments and parish websites. For legal and security purposes, the Archdiocese of Toronto will retain ownership of parish websites and make necessary payments for domain registration and hosting, as required.

For parishes not yet utilizing the CMS and maintaining their own independent websites, the following procedures should be followed. When registering a domain name, there are four fields that must be completed. Any Internet domain registered on behalf of a parish, should follow the criteria below:

Owner: R.C.E.C. for the Diocese of Toronto, in Canada
1155 Yonge St.,
Toronto ON M4T 1W2
Phone: 416-934-0606
Fax: 416-934-3421
E-mail: communications@archtoronto.org

Billing Contact: List your parish contact.

Administrative Contact: List the contact of your web hosting provider.

Technical Contact: List the contact of your web hosting provider.

INAPPROPRIATE LANGUAGE AND IMAGES

The Archdiocese of Toronto will not tolerate clergy, staff or volunteers posting obscene, harassing, offensive, derogatory, defamatory or otherwise potentially harmful comments, links or images, including sexually explicit and material deemed inappropriate, which discredits or harms the reputation of the Archdiocese of Toronto.

RIGHT TO REVIEW

If there are reasonable grounds for believing that the social media policy is being violated, the Archdiocese of Toronto reserves the right to review the personal website, blog or social networking account of any clergy, staff or volunteer.

PROTECTION OF CHILDREN

Clergy, staff and volunteers (church personnel) of the Archdiocese of Toronto and its partners will comply with all aspects of our Safe Environment Policy, accessible at www.archtoronto.org. The policy also outlines the archdiocesan procedure to report/investigate incidents of abuse or misconduct.

It is generally accepted that attendance at publicly held Church events (Mass, other parish celebrations) may result in photographs/video recorded that may be broadcast or shared in any number of media, including local parish websites or other communications tools. Wherever possible, Church personnel should make every attempt to obtain verifiable consent from participants.

Church personnel are forbidden from posting or distributing any personal identifiable information, including photos and/or videos, of any child (under 16) or youth (under 18), without verifiable consent of a parent or guardian. Personal identifiable information includes full name, photos, home address, telephone number, email address or any detail that would allow someone to identify or contact a child or youth. Verifiable consent can be a release/permission form, an email from a parent or guardian, or spoken permission by a parent or guardian with another adult present.

It is recommended that, for any event/ministry requiring a registration/permission form, a clause seeking permission to post photos/videos from such activities on a parish website or social media channels be included. (A statement with a simple check box should suffice.) A sample release/consent form is available from the Office of Public Relations & Communications. The Archdiocese of Toronto will review any alleged violations on a case-by-case basis.

WHEN COMMUNICATING WITH CHILDREN AND YOUTH USING SOCIAL MEDIA OR OTHER ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION:

- For official ministry communication, there must be at least two adults with administrative rights for each social media account. Personal social media accounts must not be used for ministry communication.

- The primary purpose of such communication shall be for providing information related to a ministry or event and not for socialization or other personal interaction. Counseling of children through electronic methods, such as social media, is not permitted.
- Adults must not be in electronic communication with children or youth unless a parent/guardian has authorized such communication. Parents must be notified of the methods of communication which are used in each particular ministry and must be granted access to such communication if requested at any time. Parent authorization must identify the type of communication (e.g., email), the youth's specific contact information (email address) and contact information for parents/guardians.
- When using a ministry social media account, adults must not initiate "friend" requests with children, but may accept "friend" requests from children who are involved in the particular ministry.
- When children or youth form their own social media groups, adults should not join these groups.
- As a general rule, neither personal nor ministry social media accounts should be used to contact children individually. If children contact particular adults engaged in ministry (other than a "friend" request), the ministry account should be used to reply by sending a group message (e.g., when the personal contact was for information relevant to all in the group). When the contact is such that a group response is not appropriate, the adult is to avoid using a personal, social media account to respond. In those unusual cases where social media is used to respond, adults should maintain copies of all such messages.
- Acceptable hours for communication with children or youth via other electronic communications shall be between 8 a.m. and 9 p.m. Communication outside of the acceptable hours may be used only in emergency situations or to communicate time-sensitive information related to the ministry or ministry-related event.
- Online "chatting" with children or youth is not permitted.
- It is strongly recommended that minors not be "tagged" in photos posted to social media accounts.

ENFORCEMENT

The Archdiocese of Toronto intends to enforce the policy set forth here and expects all clergy, staff and volunteers to comply. Failure to adhere to the policy will be grounds for disciplinary action.

The Archdiocese of Toronto reserves the right to make changes to this policy at any time and at its sole discretion, interpret and administer the policy in light of changing circumstances, technologies and events.

CONTACT INFORMATION

For questions or more information on this policy, or to notify the Archdiocese of Toronto about social media or website-related issues, please contact the Office of Public Relations & Communications by email at: communications@archtoronto.org or by phone (416) 934-0606.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Archdiocese of Toronto gratefully acknowledges the generosity of the Diocese of Dallas and the Archdiocese of Cincinnati for sharing their social media policies as resources for the development of this document.

AGREEMENT STATEMENT

Please return signed form to supervisor.

I, _____ verify that I have read and understood this policy. I agree to abide by this policy and also understand that the Archdiocese of Toronto may change this policy at its discretion without notice.

Signature: _____

Date: _____



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Media Release Form

(this form must be signed by parent/guardian if participant is under 18 years of age)

I, the undersigned, do hereby consent to have photographs/video taken of me for use in any publicity material produced electronically or in print for the Archdiocese of Toronto or any of its agencies and/or partners.

The undersigned authorizes the photographer/production company to make reproductions of the photograph(s) to be used at the full discretion of the Archdiocese of Toronto or any of its agencies and/or partners.

The undersigned releases and forever discharges the Archdiocese of Toronto, any of its agencies, and the photographer/production company against all actions and claims.

PARTICIPANT'S NAME (PLEASE PRINT)

PARTICIPANT/GUARDIAN SIGNATURE

DATE