



St. Francis of Assisi

CATHOLIC CHURCH

Policy Statement

Preach the Gospel at All Times Social Media / Digital Communications

With reference to the Order of Franciscan Minor English-Speaking Conference Communications Committee Guidelines for Evangelizing through Social Media (October 2013) and the Catholic Diocese of Arlington Office of Communications Social Media Guidelines (June 2013), St. Francis of Assisi has adopted definitive social media guidelines specific to our parish community.

Social media is defined as any form of electronic communication through which a user creates, utilizes, accesses, retrieves, and/or visits online communities or systems to share information, ideas, personal messages, and other content.

Social media (including Facebook and Twitter) posted on the Internet provides those who serve the Gospel with a creative opportunity to share the Word and the uniqueness of our Franciscan way of life in imaginative, immediate and engaging ways.

St. Francis of Assisi recognizes fully both the opportunities and challenges to those who utilize these social media platforms. Because of the ability to disseminate information worldwide so quickly and easily, it is extremely essential that these tools always be utilized in a professional, mature, and responsible manner. All content should be characterized by charity, respect for the truth, and mirror the Catholic Church and the Order of Franciscan Minor. These social media tools serve as an effective way to spread the Gospel and our Franciscan spirituality, as well as to make visible the good works we provide in the community.

Specific Guidelines / Social Media (Facebook and Twitter)

1. Mindful of the public nature of social media, all content must be characterized by charity, remain consistent with the Arlington Diocese Code of Conduct, and may not contradict the vision and mission of St. Francis of Assisi.
2. Oversight of the official parish use of social media is the responsibility of the Digital Communications Committee, with final authority resting with the Pastor (Committee Chair). The administration of the official parish social media platforms (Facebook and Twitter) is the responsibility of the Administrator.
3. St. Francis of Assisi retains the right, in its sole discretion, to review all information or communications sent, received, stored, or posted using parish communication assets.
4. It is the intent of St. Francis of Assisi to engage viewers and encourage redirection to the parish website (www.stfrncis.org) in order to view news/current events and learn more about our ministries.
5. Digital Communications Committee members are responsible for reviewing the social media platforms on a frequent basis and providing appropriate updates to the Administrator.
6. St. Francis of Assisi complies with copyright laws and requirements.

7. Images (photos, videos and graphics) are powerful. Caution must be taken in the selection of the images posted assuring that all photos, videos, and graphics are appropriate and respectful. Specifically, the following must never be posted:
 - a. Images containing nudity or provocative/suggestive content.
 - b. Photos of underage children/young people when a parent/guardian has provided a signed opt-out statement.
 - c. Images that contain a child alone or children by themselves (with no adult in the photo) unless specifically ministry related and the permission of the parent/guardian has been obtained.
 - d. Images that contain personal or identifying information (names, addresses, phone numbers, license plates).
 - e. Images depicting an illegal act or activity.
 - f. Images likely to be offensive to a reasonable person.
8. Ministries, organizations, and/or its participants (to include minors or adults) have the ability to opt-out of any photo(s), press, audio and electronic media releases by signing an opt-out statement. All ministries, organizations, etc. must inform its members/participants of such an option.

9. Interaction with minors through social media platforms requires caution. Because the safety of children is always our priority in ministry, parents will be made aware if social media platforms are being utilized by their minor children in relation to a specific ministry.
10. Names of individuals completing/receiving Holy Sacraments are not posted on social media platforms (Facebook, Twitter) including Baptism, First Reconciliation, First Communion, Confirmation and Marriage.
11. Ministry leaders review social media sites on a frequent basis to ensure relevancy as well as accuracy.
12. Though the style of social media text can be informal, the text must communicate maturity and professionalism.
13. A clear Code of Conduct for visitors is posted on parish social media platforms (Facebook, Twitter) when possible. The statement conveys that external sources of information in all platforms of social media do not necessarily reflect the image and mission of St. Francis of Assisi.
14. Caution must be exercised regarding online associations with external people and organizations (pages and groups).

*Digital Communications Committee St. Francis of Assisi
September 2014*