



Українська Католицька Єпархія Торонта The Ukrainian Catholic Eparchy of Toronto

EPARCHIAL POLICY: Risk Management RM-03-13

Social Media

The Eparchy of Toronto and Eastern Canada recognizes that in today's world the internet is a very important tool of communication and dissemination of information. Whether through websites, Facebook, Twitter, blogs, etc. it is possible to reach people farther and faster than ever before. The Eparchy of Toronto and Eastern Canada encourages the use of the internet in evangelizing our faith to the world. This is part of the New Evangelization. This permits both parishioners and outside individuals to quickly gain information regarding the parish (such as service times, events, etc.).

However, with the privilege and convenience of using the internet comes a grave responsibility and a potential of serious repercussions and liability if the medium is not used properly.

It is important to remember that the content is visible to anyone in the world. Material posted on the internet is not of a temporary nature.

The following policy is intended to provide an framework for the correct use of the internet as a tool for evangelization. It is by no means exhaustive and users should be careful that messages placed on any cyberspace medium be done responsibly.

Parish/Organizational Websites (including pages on sites such as Facebook)

Parish Websites must first and foremost be representative of the values of our Catholic faith and reflect the teachings of the Catholic Church. As a result, all material placed on a parish website shall be supervised by the pastor/administrator. The website is to be used exclusively for promoting the Church, our faith and the parish.

The Parish website is to be protected by a password known only to the pastor/administrator and the person(s) appointed to be the webmaster. The webmaster must be an adult (i.e. at least 18).

One of the greatest responsibilities adults ever face is the protection of children under their care. That is a duty that falls heavily upon those who minister in the name of the Church because children are entrusted to us. This protection extends to the use of social media. Photos of individuals, (especially children) are not to be identified by name. The pastor/administrator must have the expressed **written** consent from parents before posting identifiable pictures of children. Minors should **never** be identified by name (and thus "tagging" should be disabled).

Photographs must be protected by “water-marking”

If any minors are appropriately contacted (ex., the EOYM Facebook page) this should be public, such as on the “wall”, not in a chat, so that all users are able to see it for transparency.

Personal information or information that is understood to be held in confidence shall not be posted on the parish website.

Lists of parishioners and their donations is not to be posted on the website. If the parish bulletin contains such information, the information is to be deleted before the bulletin is placed on the website.

Material of a political nature such as supporting or opposing a candidate or political party in Canada or abroad shall not be placed on the parish website.

The website shall not contain obscene, harassing, offensive, derogatory, defamatory or otherwise potentially scandalous comments, links and/or images which reflect discredit or cause embarrassment to the Church and/or the Eparchy.

The purposes of these official sites on social media pages should be for dissemination of information and for evangelization, not socializing (which is the function of personal sites).

Comments should be regularly monitored to ensure they reflect Catholic values. Material contrary to Catholic values is to be promptly deleted.

If individuals are being photographed or videotaped at services for the purpose of posting the photos and/or videos, they should at least be informed of such so they make arrangements not to be photographed (filmed) if they so desire.

Personal Websites, Emails, Facebook, Twitter, Blogs etc.

Clerics, parish employees, volunteers shall not post any material in any form on their personal social media that in any way negatively reflects upon the parish, and/or Church and/or Eparchy.

Clerics, parish employees and volunteers shall not communicate directly with children (minors) via social media. Any communication involving children (minors) shall be communicated through the parents.

Personal sites shall not be linked to Parish websites. The dynamic of personal relationships must be kept separately from professional relationships.

At no time should a cleric, parish employee, or volunteer post any material as a representative of the parish, the Church or the Eparchy unless he/she has written permission to do so.

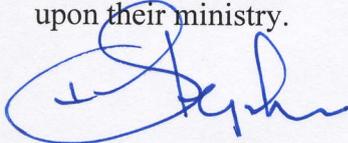
Reply comments to material being sent out to groups shall be made to the sender only. Email addresses should not be released without permission, and thus the bcc function should be used when possible.

Before forwarding material to other people, all e-addresses from the previous addressees shall be removed.

Under **NO** circumstances are any individuals, associated with the parish office, to engage in private (i.e. chat, private messages, etc.) online conversations with minors.

It is recommended that clergy not accept "friend" requests, on their personal accounts, from people they do not know. They also should never initiate a "friend" request with a minor, as they may feel unable to decline this request given the authority individuals possess.

Individuals should be vigilant that pictures posted of them online are appropriate and reflect well upon their ministry.



+Stephen Chmilar
Eparch

Effective: March 1, 2013