

Diocesan Shrine and Parish of Nuestra Señora de Aranzazu
San Mateo, Rizal, Philippines

Parish Council Communication Policy and Guidelines

Code of Conduct for Online Posting and Social Media

(Presented by: DPSNSDA Parish Pastoral Council thru Media and Public Information Ministry)

Introduction

The aim of this Policy is to set out a Code of Practice and Code of Conduct to provide guidance and to establish clear, easy to use channels of communication of the Parish Pastoral Council (PPC).

In this document, this is applicable to anyone – priest, deacon, religious, laymen, office staff or just a parish volunteer – who provides ministry or service or is part of parish office by an entity associated with the Diocesan Shrine and Parish of Nuestra Señora de Aranzazu (DPSNSDA). All suggestions and comments are outmost welcome; email us at information@aranzazushrine.ph.

Guiding Principles

Prior to the internet age, church communication referred to the transfer of information within the walls of the church via faith sharing and witness, preaching, sacramental celebrations, education and formation programs. In the current milieu of mass media, a broader net can be cast to express the message of the Gospel over multiple channels including newspapers, magazines, books, video, telecommunications, direct mail, radio, television, film, e-mail, the internet, social networking sites and the like.

The world of digital communication, with its almost limitless expressive capacity, makes us appreciate all the more Saint Paul's exclamation: "If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am noisy gong or a clanging cymbal" (1 Cor 13:1)- Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI, 2013 World Communication Day message.

Social media is one of the fastest growing forms of mass media in the Philippines, especially among the youth and young adults. **The Roman Catholic Church cannot ignore it, but at the same time we must engage social media in a manner that is safe, responsible and civil.**

As Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI noted in his message for the 47th World Day of Communication, this new form of media "can be Portals of Truth and Faith; a new spaces for Evangelization."

The Church can use mass media to encourage respect, dialogue and honest relationships – in other words, "true friendship" (43rd World Day of Communication). To do so requires us to approach new media as a powerful means of evangelization and to consider the Church's role in providing a Christian perspective to digital literacy.

In a world of connected social communications, "an authentic and interactive engagement with the questions and the doubts of those who are distant from the faith should make us feel the need to nourish, by prayer and reflection, our faith in the presence of God as well as our practical charity."

Let us go into all the world and preach the good news to the whole creation. (Mk 16:15)

Purpose of the Policy

To establish clear, easy to use channels of communication between the PPC Members, Parish Workers/Volunteers, the Parishioners, and vice versa.

To provide information on important matters in an appropriate manner so as to facilitate and keep the community well informed.

Definitions

1. **Communications** - is defined as any means of conveying church related information to parishioners and others in the larger community.
2. **External communications** - includes any public representation of DSPNSDA to parishioners as well as the greater community via news releases, interviews with news media on behalf of the church, parish memorandums/circulars, the DSPNSDA's website, Short Messaging System and E-mail announcements, social networking (i.e. Facebook, blogs), print advertising, written communication on DSPNSDA letterhead, email, banners, and posters or displays using NSDA name and logo.
3. **Content** provides accurate information about PPC ministries, organizations and activities, consistent with Catholic values, the Parish Mission-Vision statements, goals and objectives.

Exceptional Situations

Due to the evolving nature of modern communications, DSPNSDA PPC will annually review this policy and where situations arise that are not covered by the current policy, the MPIM will use the Social Media Policy of Roman Catholic Diocese of Antipolo Social Communications Policy as a reference for suitable response recommendations for the DSPNSDA PPC.

Version Tracking

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CODE OF CONDUCT ON ONLINE POSTING AND SOCIAL MEDIA

The Diocese of Antipolo and its districts, vicariates and parishes recognizes that in today's environment, with the increasing prevalence of the Internet, its staffs, clerics and volunteers will use the internet to conduct ministry work and to communicate with thousands of the faithful, parishioners and friends.

The Diocesan Shrine and Parish of Nuestra Señora de Aranzazu (DSPNSDA) also share that kind of sentiment; it views the Internet as an important educational and evangelizing tool to promote ministerial programs and activities. DSPNSDA encourages the faithful, and the Parish Pastoral Council (PPC) to support Internet use and to give the community the necessary tools and training to interact safely and responsibly online.

However, those using the Internet should bear in mind that certain comments and information may have a harmful effect on the DSPNSDA Community, its reputation and its staff. In light of this possibility, staffs, clerics, volunteers (collectively, Parish Workers) are required to adhere the following policy regarding the use of personal and ministry websites including social networks and blogs.

1. General Guidelines. In areas where this policy does not provide a direct answer for how members of our community should answer social-media questions, Members should use their best judgment and take the most thoughtful and prudent action possible, bearing in mind DSPNSDA need to preserve accountability for the use of its name in all social media and the core values of this policy:

- **Be responsible** – social media are individual interactions. Members of the DSPNSDA-PPC are personally responsible for the content they publish. Official statements of the Parish may only be made by the Parish Priest or his designee (thru Parish Media Ministry) and may exclusively publish in its official social media accounts.
- **Be smart** – a blog or community post is often visible to the entire world, and can be shared by others in ways that you cannot control. Remember that what you write is public, and will remain public for a very long time (perhaps permanently). Be respectful to our community.
- **Be identified** – authenticity and transparency are driving forces behind social media. Use real identities to the greatest extent possible rather than anonymous posts and comments.
- **Respect the privacy of others** – do not publish the personal information of others in the community without their permission or, in the case of children or youths under 13, written permission of their parents. This is particularly important in the Youth community, in which some parents do not wish their children's personal information and images to be shared online.
- **Be respectful** – DSPNSDA PPC is a community that encourages free expression and values civil debate. If you disagree with others, do so with civility. Respect your audience, express your views with appropriate language, and be respectful of the Church and its teachings.
- **Be trustworthy** – respect the confidentiality of matters that are shared with you in confidence, or that are meant to be kept confidential by the nature of your assigned duty, ministry or volunteer mission.

2. Use of Official Name and Logo/s.

- Any use of the DSPNSDA or Ministry/Organization's name or logo for branding or titling pages, blogs, or other similar elements of social media must be approved in writing prior to use.
- Requests for prior consent to use such names or logos should be made to the Head of the Organization and/or MPIM. Permission to use the name or logo of the parish may be revoked at any time in the sole discretion of DSPNSDA Parish Office and PPC Officers.
- This policy, however, should fully preserve free expression. It should not, for example, be interpreted to limit the ability of members of the PPC from using the name of the Parish to identify themselves in profiles, discuss matters relating to the Parish, or other similar uses.

3. Duties of Owners, Editors and Moderators.

- Editors, Moderators/Content Creators of official DSPNSDA social media sites are responsible for ensuring compliance with this policy. All comment and response areas should be moderated if possible and consistent with the positive goal of the forum.
- Organization/Ministry Heads are responsible for such areas should review and approve comments prior to posting, and should not post any comments that do not meet our standards for civility, misrepresent the position of the parish or the Church, or that include profanity, defamatory language or speech that is otherwise inappropriate or off-topic.
- In an unmoderated forum, ministry or organization heads should delete any comments or content that does not meet the standards of this policy as expeditiously as possible.
- Anonymous comments should be avoided except in circumstances where anonymous or pseudonymous speech is essential to the protection of the identities of the vulnerable.
- Moderators who permit users to post materials such as documents or photographs should make clear to users that the site will not archive those materials or be responsible for preserving them.

4. Individual Judgment.

- Even when engaging in social media for personal use, the comments of a member of the DSPNSDA PPC may be viewed as a reflection of the Parish. Users should use their best judgment when engaging in social media activities and should be on guard against actions and discussions that could harm the interests of our DSPNSDA and PPC.

5. Transparency.

- Users' social media communications are made in their personal capacity and not on behalf of the Parish.
- Statements made by members of the DSPNSDA PPC should not be taken as expressing the formal position of the parish unless the speaker is specifically authorized to do so by the Parish Priest or his assignee.

6. Copyright Laws.

- Users must comply fully with copyright law when posting and uploading materials. Any posting of materials to official DSPNSDA social media must be limited to materials in which the copyright is owned by the party seeking to post the information, or in which the owner has consented to the sharing of the materials.
- Images and other materials from the parish websites shall not be copied and uploaded to other forums without the prior written consent of the MPIM.
- This policy should not be construed to limit discussion of matters using the DSPNSDA name, and it should not be interpreted to limit users' ability to link to DSPNSDA sites.

7. Children.

- Any site moderated by DSPNSDA that is directed toward youth between the ages of 13 and 17 should be designed to limit access to authorized members, and heads of such sites should take steps to ensure that unauthorized users will not have access to the site (by use of password protection or similar methods, if available).
- Users of such a site may not post images of children under 13 without the prior consent of a parent or legal guardian of any minor depicted.

8. If You See It, Say It.

- Any use of social media that does not comply with this policy should be brought to the attention of the MPIM immediately at mediaministry@aranzazushrine.ph

10. Questions and Updates.

- This policy was designed by the MPIM in collaboration with the PPC, and approved by the Parish Priest. Questions concerning the policy should be directed to the DSPNSDA Parish Priest. This policy may be updated and modified at any time. Users will be apprised of changes in this policy by our posting this policy on the DSPNSDA Bulletin Boards, Official Websites and the official Social Media Accounts.

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