

# Social Media

## BEST PRACTICES, TIPS & GUIDELINES



### OFFICE OF MULTIMEDIA

843-261-0513 · [socialmedia@charlestandioocese.org](mailto:socialmedia@charlestandioocese.org)

Although social media platforms are used in different ways, the same principles of ethics and integrity apply across all digital media: Sometimes it's a landmine – but it can be a thing of beauty.

### THE BASICS

There are a few questions to ask before you start a social media page. Really important questions like:

- On what social media platform is your audience (twitter, Facebook, reddit, Snapchat, Instagram, Pinterest)?
- Can you offer frequent content specific to your office/church/school?
- Do you have enough content to warrant your own page?
- Do you have a clear goal in mind for what you want your social media to achieve?
- And most importantly: Do you have time, desire and energy to post daily, respond to comments, answer questions, create events, and share from other sites?

If not, join the main Diocesan social media pages and ask your followers, parishioners and friends to do the same: @DioceseChas on Facebook, Twitter and YouTube.



### AND NOW *(if you have enough time & content to start)*

- **Learn how to use a social media platform** before setting it up. Take the time to familiarize yourself with what the service can and can't do. There are lots of tutorial pages that will help you navigate social media platforms. If you need help, the Office of Multimedia is glad to assist.
- **Name your pages consistently.** Roman Catholic Diocese of Charleston Church of the True Cross Life Community Council of South Carolina might need a re-think.
  - If your parish's Facebook page is named St. Polycarp Catholic Church, then have your school's Facebook named St. Polycarp Catholic School. It is confusing if every digital platform has a different name:
    - Rock Hill Catholics of St. Polycarp
    - St. Polycarp Catholic School of Rock Hill, South Carolina
    - South Carolina St. Polycarp Catholics in Rock Hill ... you get the idea.



- **Keep brand standards.** Everything we post should let users, followers, members and supporters know that we are Catholic. **Catholic is our brand.**
- **Use that logo.** Your parish or school most likely has a logo. Use it on everything you create or promote. It doesn't need to be changed per event. Remember, your logo is not your brand.
- **Moderate comments.** Make sure you state your comment policy in your "About" sections.
  - **Example from the Diocesan Facebook page:**  
"Please be aware that we reserve the right to remove any posting or other material that is off-topic, inappropriate or objectionable. Civil discourse is welcome, but personal attacks or trolling behavior will result in being blocked. All posts and comments should be made with Christian charity and respect for the truth. They should be on-topic and presume the good will of other posters. Discussion should take place primarily from a faith perspective. No advertising. Facebook posts to this page do not necessarily reflect the views or endorsements of the Diocese or the Bishop of Charleston."
- **Comments don't need to be deleted or blocked** unless things turn disrespectful. A negative can be turned to a positive without arguing. We all know that trolls and spam are inevitable, but a challenging question or comment can become a useful, important online discussion or evangelization tool. Feel free to consult with the Office of Multimedia if you have questions about whether or not to respond.
- **Be especially mindful of your responses to commenters.** Social media can provide a terrific engagement point for supporters, so always post in Christian charity. Always post in faithfulness to the Catholic Church and her teachings.
- **Use caution when presenting personal views** on contentious public issues. Please steer clear of retweeting rumors without confirming their validity and/or clarifying that views expressed in the post might not be in agreement or accordance with the Catholic Church's view, or with the Bishop of Charleston.
- Twitter can be a minefield. **Retweet only from trusted, Catholic sources:** @usccb, @pontifex, @DioceseChas, @TheMiscellany, etc. If you're unsure, please ask!

### POINTERS

- Engage your super users! Those dedicated few that comment constantly and share your posts? Keep them encouraged and acknowledge their work!
- Keep posts short in length, clear, and easy to digest.
- **ALWAYS** use a photo or video.

### FOR DIOCESAN OFFICES

- **Your profiles** or screen names must clearly reflect your office, and your profile image should be professional and descriptive of your office.
- **Your Diocesan social media pages may not** contain personal information or images. Integrity and professionalism are key.
- **Your pages must include a link to the Diocesan website** and social media pages (if your office has a Facebook page, please link to the Diocesan Facebook page, etc.).
- Because we're a non-profit organization, 501(c)(3), you **may not join any political advocacy groups** without authorization from your supervisor and the S.C. Catholic Conference Director, Michael F. Acquilano, [macquilano@charlestandioocese.org](mailto:macquilano@charlestandioocese.org).

### WHY?

The purpose of these social media practices is to help maintain a level of professionalism, and most importantly, to maintain the tenets and beliefs of Catholic Christianity in the digital world. Our overall goal is to make it easy to spot official, trusted, truthful Diocesan social media spaces.

*Always remember that **social media pages from Church institutions are a form of evangelization:***

- *a way to keep Catholics Catholic;*
- *to help estranged Catholics come home;*
- *and to help those of other faiths understand what and why we believe.*

