



SHINING CHRIST'S LIGHT  
SUNRISE TO SUNSET

*A Mutually Shared Vision*

*Dialogue is much more than the communication of a truth. It arises from the enjoyment of speaking and it enriches those who express their love for one another through the medium of words. This is an enrichment which does not consist in objects but in persons who share themselves in dialogue.*

JOY OF THE GOSPEL, POPE FRANCIS, 142



# Communication Best Practices Report

June 3, 2015





# P R E F A C E

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Together, we live in a world that is perpetually changing. Technology is moving forward and evolving at a pace quicker than we could have ever imagined. Despite great strides in new ways to communicate, humanity still cherishes the same longstanding value, the personal touch. The need to connect, share and be accepted is worldwide.

An effective and caring communication can build bridges, but a disconnect in communication can build walls. We, a team of eleven diverse individuals from the Diocese of Gaylord, were tasked with creating a model for best practices using various forms of communication. Each member of the team was carefully selected to bring to the table the voices of the people that we serve. Having prayerfully worked on this document for over two years, it has become near and dear to us because of its viability, vibrancy and service to others.

The first and most important thing to remember is that the result of our communication, regardless of the method(s), is to be a joyful and loving witness of our daily encounter with Christ. Our findings provide for a number of different communication methods and it is acceptable if the entity does not utilize all of them. One lesson that we learned in this process was that we need to continue to use traditional methods of communicating as well as embrace technology. Each entity needs to determine what its goals are and how to effectively implement them for its location, demographic and staff resources. Whatever forms of communication chosen (and you should choose several), concentrate on doing each well. Remember that the goal is not just to deliver the message but to build unity and connect with the hearts of the faithful.





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# INTRODUCTION

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The Year of Faith (2012-2013) was a special time of grace for the Diocese of Gaylord. Throughout our 21 counties, there were many special opportunities to rediscover the content of the faith that we together profess, pray, celebrate and live. It was also an ideal time to assess our situation, clarify goals and reflect upon what we must do as a diocese to share the Good News of Jesus throughout the Diocese of Gaylord and beyond.

For more than 18 months the Diocese of Gaylord, under the leadership of its former bishop, the Most Rev. Bernard A. Hebda (now Coadjutor Archbishop of Newark, NJ) and facilitated by the Catholic Leadership Institute based in Pennsylvania, undertook an extensive process to discern a Mutually Shared Vision for the Catholic Church in Northern Lower Michigan. Through the envisioning process, which included extensive reflection and wide consultation with leaders and parishioners throughout the diocese, five key values were consistently expressed in listening sessions and helped form a foundation for the plan: Prayer and Worship; Catechesis; Evangelization; “Communio;” and Service.

Three priority areas surfaced: Evangelization, Faith Formation and Communications. The team was also led to define its reason for existing as a diocese, that is, to proclaim the sacred purpose: “In response to God’s love, the faithful of the Diocese of Gaylord, relying upon the Sacraments, Catholic Tradition and Prayer, seek to form a community that hopes in Christ, shares the Good News and lives the Gospel of justice and peace.”<sup>1</sup>

We are a Church called to a Mutually Shared Vision to be witnesses to God’s love by “*Shining Christ’s Light: Sunrise to Sunset.*” Sr. Chris Herald, OP, was selected to continue facilitating the process locally. The Mutually Shared Vision document was completed and distributed as the Year of Faith drew to a close on the Feast of Christ the King, 2013. The complete document may be read on the diocesan website at [www.dioceseofgaylord.org](http://www.dioceseofgaylord.org).

Two goals were established for each of the three priority areas. This report focuses on Goal 2 from the Communications Priority which was to “Publish a model reflecting best practices for communications throughout the diocese by September 29, 2014.” With the reassignment of Bishop Hebda and subsequent 9 months as a vacant see, some work was slowed as we waited for a new bishop to be appointed. However, Msgr. Francis Murphy, in his role as Diocesan Administrator, encouraged all teams to continue their work in hopes of having recommendations prepared for the new bishop. This team accepted the challenge and continued to meet with the understanding that the date for completion may need to be altered.

The Most Rev. Steven J. Raica was appointed the Fifth Bishop of Gaylord by Pope Francis on June 27, 2014, and consecrated and installed on August 28. Bishop Raica

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<sup>1</sup> Mutually Shared Vision (MSV) Document, Diocese of Gaylord, 2013



accepted the Mutually Shared Vision without modification and also encouraged the teams to continue to move forward. This report is the result of this team's efforts.

### **Team members**

The team was comprised of a cross section of individuals with experience working within the diocese in the chancery, parishes, schools and wider community. The team included:

- **Ann Brown**, Secretary, Catholic Community of Manistee
- **Julia Bushong**, Network Administrator, Diocese of Gaylord
- **Karol DeBolt**, Office Manager, Holy Family, East Tawas
- **Mary Dickerson**, Ecclesiastical Notary, Tribunal, Diocese of Gaylord, and Mutually Shared Vision Communication Team Leader
- **Terry Duley**, Secretary, St. Ann Catholic School, Cadillac
- **Kevin Endres**, Permanent Deacon Candidate for the Diocese of Gaylord and private business owner, Traverse City
- **Fr. Craig Haider**, Administrator, Cheboygan Catholic Community
- **Caryn Jacobs**, Resource Staff, Office of Catholic Schools, Diocese of Gaylord
- **Sr. Barbara Matievich, OP**, Pastoral Administrator, St. Helen, St. Helen (and former director of the Diocesan Secretariat for Faith Formation for Adults)
- **Candace Neff**, Director of Communications, Diocese of Gaylord and Mutually Shared Vision Communication Priority Point Person
- **Priscilla Oddo**, Resource Staff, Secretariat for Communications, Diocese of Gaylord

Following a process outlined by the Catholic Leadership Institute, the team created a "Team Charter." This document, drafted and signed by all members, guided discussions and formed the basis for its work.

### **Team Vision**

*Our Communication Team's vision is to connect hearts and minds by creating a comprehensive infrastructure for effective communication of the Gospel of Jesus Christ within the Diocese of Gaylord.*

### **Team Purpose**

Our Communication Team's purpose is to use its experiences, creativity, collaborative efforts and resources to develop, publish and implement a communication model of best practices to spread the Good News.

### **Team Values**

Each team member made the commitment that discussions would be guided by these values:

- **Prayerful** – to be open to the guidance of the Holy Spirit.





- **Respectful** – To be patient and considerate in listening to one another’s ideas and opinions during team discussions.
- **Efficient** – To reaching desired outcomes while being good stewards of resources.
- **Bold/Courageous** – To be willing to think and share ideas “outside the box.”
- **Enthusiastic** – To bring excitement and joy to the task at hand.

### Team Outcomes

The team set a course for reaching its ultimate goals by expressing them through four Key Responsibility Areas (KRAs). “SMART” goals were also created to ensure the team was always moving forward. “SMART” is an acronym indicating that all goals had to be **S**pecific, **M**easureable, **A**ttainable, **R**ealistic and **T**ime-bound.

The Key Responsibility Areas (KRAs) and Smart Goals are outlined below:

#### KRA #1:

**To assess and evaluate the existing communications tools and strategies to determine what has and has not been effective and to identify what is missing within the Diocese of Gaylord.**

##### **SMART Goal #1:**

Create a survey on existing communications methods by **August 31, 2013**, that are used by:

- All Schools (Staff)
- Chancery (Staff)
- All Parishes (Staff)
- Institutions (Staff)

##### **SMART Goal #2:**

Distribute survey on existing communications methods by **September 10, 2013**

- Closing date of survey is **September 24, 2013**
- Follow up with those who have not responded by **September 30, 2013**

#### KRA #2:

**To research and explore other methods of communication strategies to determine what has been successful and effective so that they might be implemented in the Diocese of Gaylord.**

##### **SMART Goal #1:**

Poll Communications ListServ (nationwide Diocesan Communications Directors) for best practices by **July 10, 2013**



**SMART Goal #2:**

Compile and review published studies regarding communications strategies and preferences by ***September 30, 2013***

**SMART Goal #3:**

Research other organizations, corporations and denominations regarding their communications strategies and effectiveness by ***November 30, 2013***

**KRA #3:**

**To listen to the Parish and School communities of the Diocese of Gaylord to discern how they prefer to receive information and solicit their input.**

**SMART Goal #1:**

Create and distribute a survey to the people of the Diocese of Gaylord by ***October 1, 2013***

**SMART Goal #2:**

Complete Listening Sessions regarding communications throughout the Diocese. Through the extensive survey and consultation process undertaken, which included the opportunity for involvement from virtually every person in the diocese, it was decided conducting personal Listening Sessions would not glean significant new information. Together the team decided to not fulfill this original goal.

**KRA #4:**

**To create and publish the model of best practices for communications within the Diocese of Gaylord.**

**SMART Goal #1:**

Complete the model of best practices for communications within the Diocese of Gaylord by ***September 29, 2014***.

**Special Note:**

While we did not meet our original deadline, given the change in bishops, nine months as a vacant see and time of some uncertainty as to the future direction of the Mutually Shared Vision in total, we believe this report is presented in a timely manner and are pleased to present the fruits of our collective efforts.



# PROCESS UNDERTAKEN

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Our team was tasked with finding the best practices in communications that could be implemented throughout the diocese to efficiently and effectively communicate the mission, messages, events, activities and teachings of our faith to our sisters and brothers in our chancery, parishes and schools as well as the secular population. A good place to start was to review the past work done in the study of communications.

The Communication Best Practices Team proceeded to review and study the November 2012 Report from the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA) commissioned by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB). This report conducted a national poll of adult Catholics to measure their use of new media. CARA developed a questionnaire to conduct the survey which was completed by 1,047 self-identified Catholics.

Additionally, the team reviewed various documents on communications written by Saint John Paul II, Pope Emeritus Benedict and Pope Francis. A presentation on social media was given to the team by Priscilla Oddo outlining the vast array of communication methods available through technology. The team discussed the current communication methods utilized by our chancery, parishes and schools and weighed the pros and cons of these methods.

The team contacted Communication Directors of various dioceses throughout the United States, asking for input and models of best practices. Interestingly, published best practices seem to be non-existent. One contact even stated, “If you find the magic bullet, let us know,” while several asked for our report once it was completed.

The team studied Pope Francis’s exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* (The Joy of the Gospel) to gain a focus and direction. Most of the exhortation is the Holy Father’s personal insight on the Church’s primary mission of evangelization in the modern world.

Several months of prayerful collaboration led the team to realize that in order to obtain a clear picture of communication practices within the diocese, it would be necessary to gather information from a variety of sources.

- Chancery, parish, school and diocesan institution employees and volunteers, both within and outside the diocese.
- Parishioners of the diocese.
- Non-profit organizations.

## **Survey Development**

The team carefully drafted surveys and deployed them utilizing the web-based tool, Survey Monkey.



### **Staff Surveys** (See *Communications Best Practices Appendix*)

- The team wanted to gather the following information from the employees of the diocese:
  - Role within the organization (e.g. pastor, secretary, bookkeeper).
  - Frequency of use of various communication methods (e.g. email, social media, telephone).
  - Methods utilized when communicating among internal staff and among staff of our Catholic entities (e.g. parish with the chancery, chancery with schools) and the most effective and least effective methods.
  - Methods utilized when communicating with their audiences (e.g. active parishioners, homebound parishioners, seasonal parishioners, parish councils, commissions, wider community) and the most effective and least effective methods.
  - Opportunities desired for additional training in areas that would be of value in performing their job (e.g., computers, website usage, etc.).
  - Respondents were also encouraged to share additional comments and/or suggestions regarding communications.
- The team systematically gathered and analyzed the results of 242 employees from around the Diocese and, based on these results, development of the Parishioner Survey began.

### **Parishioner Survey** (See *Communications Best Practices Appendix*)

- The team felt its main challenge in the development of the parishioner survey was to remain concise, while also including the capacity to provide the detail needed to obtain a clear picture of the communication wants and needs of our parishioners. No small task! Parishioners were given the opportunity to complete the survey on-line or complete a printed survey.
- The following information was collected:
  - Age.
  - Average Mass attendance.
  - Communication methods utilized.
  - Preferred methods to receive information.
  - Sources used to receive general, parish and diocesan information.
  - Knowledge of both parish and diocesan activities, events and ministries.
  - Information parishioners would find beneficial to receive from and about the Catholic Church.
  - Additional comments or suggestions regarding communication with their parish and the diocese.



- The team was encouraged by the number of parishioners responding to the survey. In total, we heard from 1,480 parishioners from around the diocese.
- The results were gathered and analyzed. Valuable information was gathered not only in the area of communications but also in the areas of hospitality, evangelization and stewardship.

### **Organization Interviews** (See *Communications Best Practices* Appendix)

Our team conducted telephone interviews with a variety of non-profit organizations around the Diocese and throughout the United States with the goal of gathering input and experiences as to the most and least effective communications practices utilized.

Organizations who responded to interview requests included:

- Adrian Dominican Sisters
- Catholic Human Services
- Diocese of Helena, Montana
- Diocese of Richmond, Virginia
- Diocese of Rockville Center, New York
- Eparchy of Parma, Ohio
- Father Fred Foundation
- Grand Traverse Area Catholic Schools
- Salvation Army
- St. Matthew Catholic Church, Charlotte, North Carolina
- St. Vincent de Paul
- United Way

### • **Other Communication Directors**

Our team reached out via email to other Directors of Communications from dioceses nationwide to solicit their ideas, suggestions and input. Among those who responded to our request were:

- Archdiocese of Denver, CO
- Diocese of Amarillo, TX
- Diocese of Joliet, IL
- Diocese of Marquette, MI
- Diocese of Rockville Centre, NY
- Diocese of Saginaw, MI
- Episcopal Diocese of Eastern Michigan
- Kentucky Catholic Conference



## **In Summary**

The communication best practices that are recommended in this report are the product of the comprehensive process described above and are predominantly based upon the input of staff, parishioners and institutions throughout the Diocese of Gaylord. Over 1,700 respondents provided feedback.



# MAJOR FINDINGS

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A major finding is a conclusion reached after examination or investigation; a statement or document containing an authoritative decision or conclusion.

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In his Apostolic Exhortation, *The Joy of the Gospel*, Pope Francis explains:

*Today, when the networks and means of human communication have made unprecedented advances, we sense the challenge of finding and sharing a “mystique” of living together, of mingling and encounter, of embracing and supporting one another, of stepping into this flood tide which, while chaotic, can become a genuine experience of fraternity, a caravan of solidarity, a sacred pilgrimage. Greater possibilities for communication thus turn into greater possibilities for encounter and solidarity for everyone. If we were able to take this route, it would be so good, so soothing, so liberating and hope-filled!<sup>2</sup>*

Of all means of communication, nothing, especially in ministry, can replace personal, face-to-face communications. A sense of community comes with the ability to interact and socialize. Even where email or other electronic means are widely used to communicate, the effectiveness of those methods are improved after an initial face to face meeting. As leaders and the face of the Church, body language and facial expressions alone can set the tone for future communication. Each encounter should be the beginning of a faith filled relationship.

Respondents to the surveys expressed a desire to be better informed about their local parish and school, events in the surrounding area, messages from the Holy Father and news of the Universal Church. The faithful tend to look to their local parishes to provide this information. Survey respondents indicated there seems to be a disconnection in the dissemination of event information between the chancery, parish and school, and parishioners.

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<sup>2</sup> Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium (The Joy of the Gospel)*, Apostolic Exhortation of the Holy Father Francis to the Bishops, Clergy, Consecrated Persons, and the Lay Faithful on the Proclamation of the Gospel in Today’s World, published December 2013, 45.



Results have shown that people value printed communication. While the younger population prefer online sources of communication, many others are embracing these newer technologies such as email, social media and websites.

Many parishes and dioceses throughout the country are experiencing a resurgence of young adult and youth participation. The Diocese of Gaylord is unique in that it does not have a large college or university attracting a younger population. In fact, the age demographic of Michigan is, on average, older than the rest of the country. It is estimated that in the coming years, factors like a longer life expectancy and a lower birth rate are expected to increase the average age of Americans and Michiganders alike.<sup>3</sup>

### **Directory**

Chancery, parish and school staff respondents indicated they would like a printed Diocesan Directory distributed annually.

### **Email**

Respondents across all age groups indicated a strong preference for email communication. Messages from the Bishop and parish leadership, parish activities, faith formation opportunities and information on the wider Church could be effectively shared via email.

Chancery, parish and school staff indicated email is a significant method of communication between staff because of its convenience.

### **Event/Activity Notification**

Despite the multitude of ways that information is disseminated throughout the diocese, parish and schools, results indicate it is a challenge to effectively coordinate and communicate information, events and activities.

### **Hindrances**

It became immediately apparent that communication may be hindered by a lack of resources. Overall, responses from staff indicated that at times they have insufficient equipment and training. Even when the equipment and training are available, there is often a shortage of personnel. Many cited limited funds and resources contributed to unsuccessful communication, while others noted that lack of time, energy and enthusiasm added to the challenge. Recognizing it is neither practical nor possible to spend with abandon, our team feels strongly that there are still many ways to improve communication.

Responses indicate that a strong commitment of support and coordination by leadership, particularly at the parish level, would greatly improve communication efforts.

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<sup>3</sup> Kenneth Darga, "Trends in Age Distribution and Support Ratios: Can America Afford to Support Future Generations in their Retirement?" from the Michigan Department of Technology, Management, and Budget, October 21, 2013, available at ([www.michigan.gov](http://www.michigan.gov)).





## Transparency

A common theme in the responses was a desire for improved transparency regarding decision making and finances. Although this information is often made available, it appears that it is not reaching the desired audience. Assumptions are often made when transparency is lacking.

## Print Media

Overwhelmingly, print resources were the most informative and requested sources of communication among the faithful of the Diocese of Gaylord. Our findings were consistent with the results of the Center for Applied Research of America (CARA): “Many Catholics are not abandoning Church print publications the way they may be discarding of secular newspaper subscriptions.” By far the most widely used Catholic news and information source is the parish bulletin. Almost 24 million adult Catholics reported regular use of their parish bulletin (either online or print). Almost 10 million reported regular use of their diocesan newspaper or magazine. Significantly more Catholics use one or both of these sources than anything related to the Catholic Church that is exclusively available online.”<sup>4</sup>

From the 1,494 Diocese of Gaylord parishioners who responded regarding their *current* sources of information, the following statistics were revealed:

- 91% stated that the parish bulletin was the source for receiving information regarding parish events or information.
- 83% listed their parish bulletin as their current source for receiving general Catholic news, 55% indicated they received this information from network television, and 49% from other religious print publications.
- 84% stated that the bulletin was their source for diocesan events and information. The Catholic Weekly, an independent newspaper, was listed by 35% of those surveyed as a source for diocesan events and information.

When asked for their *preferred* method of receiving information, results were similar. Though slightly divided between age demographics, participants in all age groups stated that receiving information in print format was preferred. An overwhelming 80% of respondents over age 46 (the majority demographics of our diocese) preferred receiving information via print format.

Each participant was given the opportunity to make comments, suggestions, or criticisms about communication within the diocese. As we compiled these responses, some suggested changes to the current way the bulletin is produced. Examples included: review bulletins of clustered parishes for their effectiveness, have more communication from the priest, include financial information, etc.

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<sup>4</sup> Mark M. Gray, Ph.D., and Mary L. Gautier, Ph.D., “Catholic New Media Use in the United States, 2012,” from the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA), Washington, D.C., published November 2012, 4.



A repeated suggestion was that the diocese consider producing its own regularly printed publication to be available to all parishioners throughout the diocese.

### **Social Media**

With the growing usage of social media, our survey results support increased use of social media to promote events and disseminate information. Particularly for those under 45, over half of the participants stated that they prefer to receive communication via social media.

Social media is a growing trend that allows inexpensive (if not free) and instantaneous communication to be shared among a large audience. It is also a forum for incoming communication to be shared, via messages, posts, polls, and photos. The use of social media is anticipated to increase as the current generation lives longer and becomes more ‘active’ online.

Social media is being used by the Church globally. The Holy Father says:

*A culture of encounter demands that we be ready not only to give, but also to receive. Media can help us greatly in this, especially nowadays, when the networks of human communication have made unprecedented advances. The internet, in particular, offers immense possibilities for encounter and solidarity. This is something truly good, a gift from God.<sup>5</sup>*

### **Training**

The survey responses from chancery, parish and school staff indicated a need for additional training in a wide variety of areas. Comments regarding training included requests for instruction on updating the diocesan website, navigating social media and improving computer skills. No amount of equipment or software will improve communications if staff does not know how to use the medium.

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<sup>5</sup> Pope Francis, “Message of Pope Francis for the 48<sup>th</sup> World Communications Day: Communication at the Service of an Authentic Culture of Encounter,” June 1, 2014.



# BEST PRACTICES



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A best practice is a technique or methodology that, through experience and research, has been proven to reliably lead to a desired result.

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Communication (from Latin *communicare*, meaning “to share”) is the activity of conveying information through the exchange of ideas, feelings, intentions, attitudes, expectations, perceptions, or commands, as by speech, gestures, writings and behavior. It is the meaningful exchange of information between two or more participants.

Communication remains God's great gift to humanity without which we cannot be truly human. It can be said to reflect “God's image.” Communication must be seen as central to the Church, as the process in which God's love is received and shared, thus establishing communion and community. As heralds of the Good News, we shape this path through the spoken and written word; build bridges of understanding; and ultimately smooth the way for a closer relationship with the Lord.

Church communication is about “formation” not just “information.” It is about stewardship, evangelization, discipleship, and education. Effective communication is essential to every ministry of the Church.

Pope Francis shared in his *Message for the 48<sup>th</sup> World Communication Day*: “Communication is a means of expressing the missionary vocation of the entire Church; today the social networks are one way to experience this call to discover the beauty of faith, the beauty of encountering Christ. In the area of communications too, we need a Church capable of bringing warmth and of stirring hearts.” Following Jesus’ example, as in the parables, we must use imagination and creativity to invite others to encounter the mystery of God's love. It must reach all ages through all available means.

In all methods of communication, be respectful, professional, courteous, and friendly. Remember to listen and to apply the rule “to think before you speak,” in spoken and written form. Consider your audience and tailor your message appropriately. Be clear and kind in every email you send, every bulletin you produce, every post on social media, and every conversation you have. Good communication takes practice. Thus, it is recommended that we all practice communication skills until it becomes a life changing routine.



In all communications remember the basics:

- Know your goal and state it clearly.
- Communicate all necessary details.
- Avoid abbreviations and acronyms.
- Be mindful of how your communication impacts the recipient.
- Use proper and correct grammar and punctuation.
- Reread what you have written.
- Listen.

We hope the following best practices will help achieve our Mutually Shared Vision to *Shine Christ's Light: Sunrise to Sunset*. These recommendations are intended to assist and not burden our parishes, parishioners, schools, and other ministries. The effectiveness of these best practices requires personal responsibility. Each of us must take a proactive role to share and receive information, to utilize the variety of tools available, and to be open to new technologies.

## **Branding**

Branding – creating a visual identity – has become increasingly important in the world of non-profit organizations. According to a recent study by the Harvard University Hauser Center for Nonprofit Organizations, non-profit branding has become not only a tool to manage an outside perspective of an organization, but also a way for the organization to express its “purposes, methods and values” and assists organizations in fundraising, development and building partnerships.<sup>6</sup> With Pope Francis actively calling the faithful to evangelize, branding can be an important and useful tool to share messages and create a lasting impression.

Creating a visual identity through branding includes:

- Using a consistent color scheme across all platforms of communication.
- Using a crest or logo on documents.
- Having all contact information (address, phone, fax, website, social media) present on various forms of communication for cross-promotion.
- Having a uniform design for all business cards used by staff.
- Using graphics that are recognizable and easy to read.

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<sup>6</sup> Nathalie Kylander and Christopher Stone, “The Role of Brand in the Nonprofit Sector,” *The Stanford Social Innovation Review*, Spring 2012 Edition, available online at (<http://www.ssireview.org/>).



## **Calendar of Events**

- Public and shared calendars should be made available in both printed and electronic forms.
- The number of individuals able to post events or edit the calendar should be limited to avoid confusion and accidental editing or deletion of information.
- Calendars should include the basics of “What, Where and When?”
- Events should be posted as early as possible in order to provide advance notice and avoid scheduling conflicts.
- Calendars intended for internal use should include staff whereabouts (i.e. vacations, out of office, etc.)
- The Diocese of Gaylord maintains a diocesan-wide events calendar at [www.dioceseofgaylord.org](http://www.dioceseofgaylord.org). Parishes, schools and organizations hosting events, particularly for spiritual enrichment, which are open to all may submit events to be considered for placement on the diocesan calendar.
- To encourage broader participation, parish and school calendars intended for a wider audience should include:
  - Local parish, school and other church organization activities.
  - Events taking place at neighboring parishes.
  - Diocesan events.
  - Spiritual, educational and ecumenical opportunities.
- To prevent scheduling conflicts and encourage broader participation:
  - Consult and/or notify neighboring parishes of upcoming events and activities.
  - Consult the Diocesan Secretariat of Communications in a timely manner for assistance in promoting events.
  - Consult the Diocesan Calendar of Events and neighboring parishes in advance of planning events in order to alleviate scheduling conflicts and to allow for broader promotion.

## **Confidentiality**

As employees and volunteers of the Church, we are called to respect the privacy and dignity of each person. It is important to follow the proper channels of communication when dispersing information.

- In ministry, it is common for employees, volunteers and parishioners to receive information regarding illnesses, births, deaths and other personal information. Many times well-meaning individuals share such information in hopes that prayers would be offered for those struggling or celebrating. Before communicating any personal information through any means, be sure to have the specific permission of the person who is the subject of the information.



- Be aware of your surroundings so as not to share or disclose confidential information with anyone other than those who need to know and are entitled to the information through the course of their duties. It is the responsibility of all employees and volunteers to safeguard sensitive information.
- Do not verbally communicate anyone's personal information in the common areas of your office or school, within your home, or in public spaces.
- Keep your desk clear of personal information. If your work is highly confidential, consider a privacy screen for your computer monitor.
- Preserve all private information in locked file cabinets.
- Outgoing emails and faxes should contain a confidentiality statement in the signature line of the email and on the cover page of the fax. A sample statement would be:

This email (fax) and any files transmitted with it are confidential and are intended solely for the use of the individual or entity to which they are addressed. If you are not the intended recipient or the person responsible for delivering the email (fax) to the intended recipient, be advised that you have received this email (fax) in error and that any use, dissemination, forwarding, printing, or copying of this email (fax) is strictly prohibited. If you have received this email (fax) in error, please notify the [name of diocesan entity] at [phone number].

- Retrieve data on printers, copiers and faxes promptly.
- For security purposes:
  - Passwords of former employees and volunteers should be disabled immediately.
  - The Diocese should be informed immediately of all employee changes, as well as any volunteers who have access to web-based diocesan programs.
- Data confidentiality pertains to identifiable data and those who have access to it. Be educated about how to identify personal data and keep it secure. Refer to *Communications Best Practices Supplement*, page 51, on Personal Identifiable Information (PII).
- Prevent unauthorized access to the computers and network by using authentication of users through passwords. Refer to *Communications Best Practices Supplement*, page 44, on Password Creation.
- Since passwords can be guessed or stolen, an alternative is to use more sophisticated authentication technologies, such as coded ID cards, voice recognition software, retinal scanning systems, or handprint recognition systems. These methods of authentication also make it possible to track computer activity and hold users accountable for their use of the system.
- Prevent data breaches. Hazards of data breaches for an individual include identity theft, embarrassment, or blackmail. Hazards to an organization include



loss of trust, legal liability and costs, and scandal. Refer to *Communications Best Practices Supplement*, page 28, on Data Breaches.

- Remember that email and other forms of social media are not confidential.
- If you send confidential information electronically, it must be properly encrypted before transmission.
- Diocesan entities should use software which meets standards of auditing access to personal identifying information, such as inappropriate access to personal identifying information.
- Digital signatures can be used to authenticate emails and other outside documents. This technology provides proof of the origin of documents and helps prevent email spoofing.
- Diocesan entities should put in place the most restrictive set of rights/privileges or accesses needed by staff (or processes acting on behalf of staff) for the performance of specified tasks. Concerning PII, the diocesan entities can ensure that users who must access records containing personal identifying information only have access to the minimum amount of PII, along with only those privileges (e.g., read, write, execute) that are necessary to perform their job duties.
- Diocesan entities should prohibit or limit access to PII from portable and mobile devices, such as laptops, tablets and cell phones, which are generally higher-risk than non-portable devices (e.g., desktop computers).
- Portable storage devices (e.g. flash drive, memory stick, CD) containing confidential information should be limited and secured with password protection or eliminated altogether. When no longer in use for confidential information CD's should be destroyed and portable flash drives and memory sticks should be properly erased/formatted.

## **Copyright**

A copyright is a form of protection provided by the laws of the United States to authors of "original works of authorship." This includes literary, dramatic, musical, artistic, and certain other creative works. The copyright protection begins from the moment a piece of work is created in a "fixed, tangible form of expression" (for example, written or recorded) and is immediately the property of the author who created the work. In the case of a piece of work created by an employee, it is the employer – not the writer – who is considered the author. It does not have to be officially published or registered through the U.S. Copyright Office, nor does a copyright symbol (©) have to be attached in order for the copyright to be in effect. There can be strict penalties, fines and costs for violating copyrights.

There are some limited exceptions which may allow use of a portion of copyrighted materials under the "Fair Use" doctrine, such as for criticism, comment, news reporting, teaching, scholarship and research. "Fair Use" is not easily defined in each case and there is no specific number of words or "measuring stick" to ensure usage would fall within the "Fair Use" statutes. It is always safest to get the permission of the copyright owner.



- In order to use copyrighted materials (which includes anything written or recorded by someone else), permission of the copyright holder must be obtained.
- Attributing the work to the author is not necessarily sufficient to avoid copyright infringement.
- Making photocopies and/or distributing a work without the permission of the copyright owner, even if they are free, for one-time use, or for a limited audience, is still generally a violation of copyright.
- The length of time that a copyright remains in effect varies depending upon when the work was originally authored.
  - For works created after January 1, 1978, the copyright remains in effect until 70 year after the author's death.
  - For works created prior to January 1, 1978, terms vary due to changing laws.
  - Prior to using any material, appropriate research should be done to determine the specific length of copyright for that particular piece of work. Refer to *Communication Best Practices Supplement*, page 22, for a chart detailing copyright duration terms.

Because material is available online, it can be easy to inadvertently violate copyright. Just because something appears on the Internet or because someone else has handed it out at a meeting, used it on their website, printed it in their bulletin or worship aid, does NOT mean that such usage was permissible or not used in violation of copyright.

Copyright laws also extend to DVDs and videotapes of movies and television shows. Even if one has purchased or rented a DVD or videotape, copyright rules are still attached.

- Showing the movie to family members or a small group of friends is usually considered a “private” performance and is typically permissible.
- Showing the movie to a group of people in a public venue or to a larger group of people, regardless of whether a fee is charged for attendance, is generally considered a “public performance” and would require permission of the copyright owner and/or obtaining a “Public Performance License.”
- In addition to obtaining proper licensing, any DVD or tape used for a public showing would have to be legally obtained – i.e. taping from a televised movie would not be permissible.
- Limited exceptions include:
  - Using a movie for face-to-face teaching in a classroom. The showing must be for instructional purposes (not just for entertainment) and typically must also correspond to the course's curricular goals.
  - Using a film in the Public Domain. Research would have to be done to determine if the copyright expired.





Software is considered a literary work (like the ones described above) and literary works are all covered by copyright.

- All software used in diocesan entities must be licensed by the entity. When you purchase software, you do not become the owner of the copyright. Rather, you are purchasing the right to use the software under certain restrictions imposed by the copyright owner, typically the software publisher.
- All rules of the licensed software must be followed. Carefully read the documentation that accompanies the software. Make sure you have enough licensed copies for the number of users.
- Do not copy software and share with others. If you copy, distribute, or install the software in ways that the license prohibits, you are violating federal copyright law. Helping someone make software copies or sharing software between home and office are other ways that software licenses are commonly violated. This applies to software that you purchase and download from the internet.
- Follow appropriate copyright laws available through the U.S. Copyright Office at [www.copyright.gov](http://www.copyright.gov).
- Refer to *Communication Best Practices Supplement*, page 2, for additional Copyright information.

### **Cross-Promotion**

Cross-promotion is the cooperative marketing by two or more companies of one another's products or information. Different entities such as the chancery, parish, or school have different audiences. Information that the chancery has may be of interest to the parishes. For example, the Diocese of Gaylord posts a message on their Facebook page relating to an upcoming priestly ordination occurring at the Cathedral. It would be beneficial for a parish to share this information on their Facebook page or website as well. Having the parish cross-promote the information of the event helps increase the size of the audience that will receive the information. It will also advise parishioners to the fact that the Diocese has a Facebook page. Cross-promotion should be used to increase the exposure of a message to a larger audience and drive traffic to the intended information.

Cross-promotion can also be beneficial within one's business or entity to use one product to advertise another. Different media platforms have different audiences, e.g. bulletins, websites, Facebook page, Twitter feed, letters, or other social media accounts. For example, any letter or bulletin sent out by a parish should include the link to the parish's website. Parishioners would be encouraged to visit the parish website for more information. The parish website should have a link or feed to the parish Facebook page or other social media accounts. Cross-promotion is a tool to leverage the distribution of information of one product's audience with others.

Benefits of Cross-Promotion:

- Cost of promotion is minimal with greater reach when information is shared over multiple platforms.



- A win-win situation for both parties.
- Cross-promotion marketing is the easiest and often one of the most successful marketing strategies.
- Businesses or entities can promote themselves simultaneously.
- Simple to quickly distribute and share information.

### **Diocesan Directory**

- The Diocesan Directory is a diocesan-wide collaborative effort. The Secretariat for Communications should maintain an updated Diocesan Directory.
- Diocesan entities contained within the Diocesan Directory should provide regular updates to the Diocesan Communications Office, including any staffing changes.
- The directory should be updated annually on the diocesan extranet and in PDF format.
- The Diocesan Directory is for internal use only and should not be made available to the public.

### **Efficiency**

Recognizing that resources – human, time and material – are limited, technology can provide effective tools for communicating efficiently. There are often economies of scale that may be realized by purchasing in larger quantities. Utilizing uniform software within or across the diocese or within a parish and school may provide for the elimination of duplication of effort. Further, training and support may also be more easily accomplished.

Some examples include shared electronic calendars, contact management, databases, census, and finance packages.

However, it is important to note that unified processes, while valuable, may not always be the best solution, may not be practical, or may not suit all needs. It is critical that such decisions only be made after significant and thorough research is conducted with appropriate time dedicated to explore all facets by knowledgeable personnel. This would include consideration of the necessary equipment required, existing infrastructure, technical capabilities, support, staff, security, etc.

### **Email**

Email was found to be the timeliest and most cost effective form of communication.

- Every diocesan entity should use email to communicate effectively.
  - Each diocesan entity should purchase a private domain (e.g. user@parishname.org).
  - All church personnel should have their own business email address. Personal email should not be used for business purposes. Choose your email address wisely. It will determine, in part, how you are perceived.



- All diocesan entities should have at least one general office email address (e.g. info@parishname.org).
- All priests, pastoral administrators and deacons are to be assigned a diocesan email address (@dioceseofgaylord.org).
- Each diocesan entity should have/maintain/utilize a group email list (e.g. distribution list(s) or electronic address book) for its designated audience.
- Web addresses, Facebook pages, confidentiality statements, FAX number, and phone number should be included within the email via signature line or automated by an email server.
- An auto-reply message should generate if the business email address will not be checked for more than one business day. Do not put an auto-reply message on a general email address (e.g. info@parishname.org).
- Email should be checked on a regular basis.
- Every email should be read in its entirety.
- General protocol for email creation should be followed:
  - Be concise and to the point.
  - Include an informative subject line.
  - Be sure your name is reflected professionally in the “From” field.
  - Answer all questions thoroughly.
  - Use proper spelling, grammar and punctuation.
  - Make it personal, professional and courteous.
  - Respond to email promptly.
  - Restrict the size of attachments.
  - Use proper structure and layout.
  - Do not write in CAPITALS.
  - Do not copy a message or attachment without permission.
  - When replying do not leave out the message thread.
  - When forwarding be cautious of including a message thread.
  - Add a confidentiality statement (disclaimer) to emails.
  - Read the email aloud before it is sent.
  - Do not overuse “Reply to All.”
  - Do not overuse the “high priority” option.
  - Avoid using abbreviations and emojis/emoticons.
  - Limit formatting.
  - Use standard fonts like Arial, Verdana, etc.



- Do not use backgrounds/stationery.
- Be aware of the difference between Rich Text and HTML messages.
- Do not forward virus hoaxes and chain letters.
- Do not use “request delivery” and “read receipts” without good reason.
- Do not use email to discuss confidential information.
- Do not send or forward emails containing libelous, defamatory, offensive, racist, or obscene remarks.
- Do not reply to spam.
- Use the “Cc” and “Bcc” fields appropriately.
- Release email is not always the best choice for all topics: discipline, complaints, etc.
- Never send an email when you are angry.
- Remember that email is a public document.
- Diocesan entities should enhance their communication efforts by cross promotion (e.g. include website address within email signature, etc.).
- Refer to *Communication Best Practices Supplement*, page 34, for Email Etiquette.

### **Face-to-Face Communication**

Nothing beats the power of the personal touch. It was a resounding echo in all of the data collected. One can learn more about the people they communicate with a face-to-face connection. Staff and parishioners appreciate “face” time and these are reasons why:

- Creating a bond (trust) with someone often can be a result of simple small talk face-to-face. Digital devices cannot build trust.
- Give people an opportunity to see you for all that you are by making a great first impression.
- Read body language. When we truly look at someone, we can see the state of his/her being; confidence, fear, loneliness, happiness. Perhaps his/her words say he/she is fine, but in actuality he/she is not.
- Visit someone in his/her environment. We can learn a lot about a person by the environment in which he/she might be thriving or surviving.
- Share the gift of yourself with others. Let others into your life and they will invite you into theirs.
- Research shows that having a coffee break or lunch with fellow staff members increases productivity and morale.

### **Internet**

- Each diocesan entity should have reliable internet access and service.



- Because electronic information is shared with other Diocesan entities (e.g. email, file sharing via Sage 50/Peachtree, Paycor) it is expected that each Diocesan entity shall abide by the following rules:
  - Computer networks should be protected by a firewall that is updated regularly and securely maintained. A firewall is a system designed to prevent unauthorized access to or from a private network. Implement a firewall in either hardware or software form or a combination of both. Properly configured and maintained, a firewall will detect intruders, block them from entering the network, and record information about the intrusion in log files for review.
  - Every computer/server/laptop connected to the network/internet should be fully updated with operating system patches and fixes. For example, Microsoft puts out security patches to its operating systems regularly. Additionally, the use of outdated and vulnerable operating systems, like Microsoft Windows XP, should be discontinued as soon as possible.
  - Every computer/server/laptop connected to the internet should be protected by a working, updated and reputable Antivirus software.
  - Software that is used to access internet or send data over the internet, like a browser or financial software installed on your local computer/server/laptop, should be kept updated with the most current or recommended version.
- Web filtering software is recommended to be installed on the network to prevent inappropriate usage or sites unbecoming to the Church. Many firewalls can also function as a web filter if properly configured. Firewalls can be set to monitor both incoming and outgoing Internet traffic. They can also be used to prevent unauthorized access to game playing, inappropriate social media, or adult sites on the internet.
- Spam filtering software is recommended to be used in conjunction with your email service. Filtering spam from your email will reduce the number of viruses to which your communication is exposed.
- A firewall cannot protect information once it leaves the network. If you must transmit confidential data, then an encryption product must be used to prevent third parties from capturing data while it is being transmitted over the Internet. Encryption programs put data into a scrambled form that cannot be read without a key.
- If guest access is provided, such as a guest wireless internet access, then it should be protected with a password and separated from the internal network. Guest passwords should also be changed frequently.
- Refer to *Communication Best Practice Supplement*, page 44, for Password Creation.



## Meetings

- Meetings are effective for communication and sharing information.
- Parish and school staffs, councils and commissions should conduct regular meetings.
- Meetings should be structured, timely and efficient.
- Agendas should be distributed in advance of the meeting, allotting time for each topic.
- Minutes should be taken and archived.
- Minutes should be prepared in the same format from meeting to meeting to ensure consistency.
- Minutes should be distributed shortly after the meeting in order for absent members to be informed as well as to address tasks to be accomplished prior to the next meeting.
- Minutes from Parish Councils and Committees should be made available to parishioners.
- Cell phones should be silenced and put away.
- Refer to *Communication Best Practices Supplement*, page 30, Effective Meeting Structures for additional reference.

## Print

- **Permissions**
  - Do not use materials without proper permission. Text, videos and photos that are posted on the Internet are not Public Domain, and there can be serious consequences for using them.
  - Ensure compliance with laws and diocesan guidelines before using photography or videos. Someone else's text, photographs, or videos cannot be used without permission.
  - Photos and videos taken in public places are generally permissible if there would normally be no reasonable expectation of privacy. For instance, one can normally photograph people in a public park but not in a restroom or locker room. Items that are newsworthy or in the public interest to know are often permissible to photograph but care should be taken to ensure subject's reasonable expectations of privacy as well as personal dignity are respected.
  - Photography of church events pose unique circumstances. Churches are private property hosting events typically open to the public. While it is always best to have written permission, it is not always possible or practical. There would generally be no expectation of privacy within the liturgical or event space where a group is gathered, but there are moments and personal space which should be respected. Media invited or attending church events should receive specific instruction as to what is permissible.



- If the photographer intends on selling photographs or using them for commercial purposes, written permission should be obtained.
- Special care should be taken with regard to images of children. It is always best to have written permission of a parent. See *Communications Best Practices Supplement*, page 46, for sample Permission Forms.
- Registration forms for events should have a statement indicating photographs may be taken and used. (See *Communications Best Practices Supplement*, page 47, for examples.)
- Because there are many “gray” areas, specifically with regard to photography, contact the diocesan Secretariat for Communications with any questions.
- **Diocese of Gaylord Publication**
  - A widely distributed publication under the full editorial control of the diocese is recommended. Such publications provide an optimal platform for sharing messages and teachings of the Bishop, spiritual enrichment, lifelong catechesis, news of the wider church and are proven evangelization tools.
  - Such a publication should be distributed:
    - to every Catholic household in the diocese.
    - to those in nursing homes.
    - to public libraries.
    - to hospitals, medical and other offices for waiting rooms.
    - to community organizations and event organizers willing to accept them.
    - to parishes and schools.
  - The publication should also be made available electronically.
- **Newsletters**
  - Newsletters are an alternate way to communicate with a specific audience to share news, as well as inform people about events, catechesis, faith formation, evangelization, and news of the wider Church.
  - Newsletters should be available in both print and electronic formats (e-Newsletter).
  - Personalize newsletters by using graphics, pictures, logos, etc.
  - Always be up-to-date on copyright laws prior to submitting materials for publication.
  - Diocesan entities should enhance their communication efforts by cross promotion (e.g. include your website address in your newsletter).
  - Refer to *Communication Best Practices Supplement*, page 43, for additional information on Newsletter/Bulletin Editing.



- **Parish Bulletins**

- Bulletins should be used as a tool for evangelization and faith formation for adults and children, as well as to communicate parish, school and diocesan information.
- Studies show that the front page is "valuable real estate" ideally positioned for evangelization and timely messages. Refrain from using the front page for office hours, staff directories, sacramental requirements, etc.
- Information to be considered for publication should be provided to bulletin editors at least two (2) weeks in advance in order to provide ample notice of upcoming events (parishes, schools and diocese) for optimal participation.
- Care should be taken to include news and events of all parishes within clusters. When using "clustered bulletins," each representative parish should be given adequate space for news and events.
- The bulletin is an ideal opportunity to share stories and happenings of the parish or school which highlights the relationship between the parish and the school.
- Include news and information about parish organizations (e.g. Council of Catholic Women, Knights of Columbus, Daughter of Isabella, etc.).
- Include local and national Catholic news (use approved Catholic sources and/or provided by the diocesan office). Refer to *Communication Best Practices* Sources of Information for approved Catholic sources.
- Bulletin editors should utilize resources available to them through the diocesan website (upcoming events, bulletin announcements, etc.).
- Utilize the bulletin to point parishioners to sources of information (e.g. Michigan Catholic Conference, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, the Vatican, etc.).
- Pictures and visual aids enhance and personalize bulletins.
- Consider distributing ministry schedules via another source to "free up" valuable bulletin space.
- Before using materials that are being submitted, research whether they have copyright limitations; many materials may be copyrighted. Use caution when utilizing copyrighted material. For additional information refer to *Communication Best Practices Supplement*, page 2, on Copyright.
- Bulletins should be published electronically.
- Bulletins should be provided to homebound parishioners.
- Diocesan entities should enhance their communication efforts by cross promotion (e.g. include your website address, parish/school email address, Facebook name etc. in your bulletin).
- Refer to *Communication Best Practices Supplement*, page 43, for additional information on Newsletter/Bulletin Editing.





## **Resources**

The economy of our rural area can lead to downsizing and cutbacks. It can create an environment where remaining staff are required to do more with less. The quality of the employee's work environment has the most impact on his/her level of motivation and subsequent performance at work. The church is no different from many organizations which are now at a point where they can't ask their employees to over extend themselves.

Projects and daily workloads need to be tailored to the number of staff available and the abilities of the staff. If the ability of the staff is lacking, consider how training could improve the productivity of loyal employees. Frustration is a silent epidemic that saps organizations of their best employees, who are otherwise engaged and motivated but are prevented from doing their jobs due to lack of resources (staff, equipment and time).

Without adequate resources, it is difficult to bring about change, even if you have full cooperation and flexibility from staff members. Less than adequate resources are more obvious in a healthcare scenario where a patient dies because of substandard equipment, lack of staffing, or poor training. Losing parishioners in the pews takes longer to notice but can be a direct result of the actions or inactions of an overworked pastor or parish staff member, lack of quality faith-filled programs, or lack of resources to fully evangelize to the faithful of the diocese.

## **Staffing**

- **Supervisors should:**

- Strive to provide adequate staffing to complete projects without causing undue stress on staff members.
- Create a work environment that fully energizes staff by promoting their physical, emotional and spiritual well-being.
- Express appreciation for good work completed on a regular basis.
- Be clear and transparent with what is expected from staff members.
- Encourage stress relievers like vacation time, coffee breaks, or staff outings.
- Continue to improve their own leadership skills.
- Encourage staff to be part of a team. Many times management has the opportunity to attend trainings, leave the office, or network with colleagues. Give staff the same courtesy and opportunity to grow by encouraging them to attend trainings or to connect with others that have similar jobs.

- **Supervisors and staff members alike should:**

- Strive to maintain a positive attitude.
- Come to work well rested.



- Take a lunch break. Studies show that walking, socializing and getting fresh air all help you return to your desk refreshed.
- **Staff members should:**
  - Recognize they are part of a team. Remember you are a part of something greater that is meant to evangelize and share the good news to all in everything you do.
  - Show dependability in their work, including being on time, dressing and working in a professional manner, and demonstrating a high level of commitment.
  - Staff members should be trustworthy, have solid reputations – inside and outside of work, including social media activity – and have a good work ethic. Staff members are the daily “face” of the Church and should take pride in that duty.
- **Equipment Availability**
  - Staff should be provided with appropriate and working equipment so that they can do their job efficiently. Avoid bringing in personal equipment that will end up costing the employer money to support.
  - Staff should be provided with the supplies needed to function and flourish.
  - Software should be licensed, regularly maintained (updated), and installed on properly maintained technology (computer/laptop/phone/tablet).
  - Furniture and work space should be ergonomic to promote good health.
- **Time Management**
  - Schedule time for interruptions. In order to keep staff from becoming burnt out, take into account the number of daily interruptions when projects are planned. Give adequate time for project completion without expecting staff to routinely exceed the typical 40 hour work week.
  - Policies focused on flexibility contribute to a more energized workplace. When staff have the flexibility to tend to personal matters when they occur, they will be more productive and dedicated employees in the long term.

### **Secular Media**

- The Diocesan Director of Communications is the official spokesperson for the diocese. Requests for interviews on news topics should always be referred to the Diocesan Secretariat for Communications.
- The Diocesan Secretariat for Communications is available to assist parishes, schools and related organizations with media activities.
- Diocesan entities should utilize various forms of secular media, including community calendars, newspapers, radio, television, Chambers of Commerce,



and other community organizations to provide information about their events and activities to the wider community.

- Maintain a list of local news media including names, addresses, phone numbers, and email addresses as well as deadlines for news or activities submission.
- Designate one person to be the contact for media regarding parish or school activities.
- Notify local media of special events taking place at your parish or school in advance so that they might publicize it or attend.
- Local secular media are often interested in subjects like interviewing a new Pastor or leader, upcoming outstanding speakers, new parish projects, outreach to the elderly or needy, awards received or given, etc. Do not inundate local media with routine events.
  - Be sure to frame your message so that it demonstrates why it would be of interest to the general population.
  - Create media releases that answer the basics of “who, what, where, when and why.” Be sure to include contact information so that the media outlet can get further information. Within a couple of days, follow-up to ensure your material was received.
  - Follow-up events with articles and a few good, clear photos.
- For radio, consider also providing a condensed version of the information that can be read as an announcement or Public Service Announcement (PSA) in 15 to 30 seconds.
- If media indicate they will attend an event, ensure your designated media contact greets them and provides instructions as to where they can sit or stand, provide background information, etc. Particularly in the case of a special liturgy, care should be taken to ensure media understand what is happening, where they can be located, whether flash photography can be used, etc.
- Always tell the truth. Never lie or deliberately mislead a reporter. If you don’t know the answer, the correct response is, “I don’t know.”
- Everyone makes mistakes. If a mistake should be made in the reporting of a story, do not respond in anger. If it is a significant factual mistake, it may be appropriate to contact the reporter to calmly and respectfully explain the error so that it might be corrected in future articles.

## **Social Media**

- Utilize various forms of social media (Facebook, Twitter, blogs, etc.) to highlight current events, share photos, catechize, and evangelize. With social media you with the opportunity to post instantly, if desired.
- Include a Code of Conduct/Comment Policy on your social media page(s). See *Communication Best Practices Supplement*, page 59, for sample social media policies.



- Those operating websites or social media sites are not allowed to knowingly collect or distribute information online from a child under 13 years of age without advance written permission from parent/guardian.
  - This includes full name, address, email address, telephone number, or any other information that may be used to identify or contact a child, as well as photos, videos, or audio files.
  - Children’s Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA) also covers other identifiable information such as hobbies or interests.
- COPPA requires that all websites that are aimed at or will host children under the age of 13 must post a link to its privacy notice in a clear and prominent spot on its website, as well as on any page where information will be collected from children. See *Communications Best Practices Supplement*, page 1, for privacy notice requirements.
- For a more detailed description of COPPA requirements, see *Communication Best Practices Supplement*, page 59, on Social Media Guidelines.
- All diocesan entities should adhere to United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) and Diocese of Gaylord guidelines for social media, such as:
  - Site administrators should be adults.
  - Each social media site should have at least two administrators to allow for rapid response/moderation.
  - Personal social media sites and profile pages should not be used for diocesan or parish leaders, ministries or programs. Depending on the social media platform, a separate account, page, or site should be created for the ministry. For example, in Facebook, “profile” pages are for personal use and users “friend” one another. Titles are not permitted. A priest, for example, may set up a personal profile, but should not use it for his ministry. In fact, the page will eventually be shut down for Facebook if a title (such as “Fr.” or “Rev.”) is used. Facebook “pages” – previously known as “fan pages” are the appropriate avenue for the ministry. “Pages” rely on users “liking” the page, not a mutual “friend” connection. Personal profile pages have been shut down by Facebook for not following rules regarding “profiles” and “pages.”
  - Students or youth group members on personal social media sites are not to be “friended.”
  - Permission must be obtained from a minor’s parent/guardian before contacting a minor via social media. See *Communication Best Practices Supplement*, page 46, Permissions.
  - Parents must have access to the same information that is provided to their children via social media. However, the communication does not need to be via the same technology.
  - Communication of a personal nature initiated by a minor to an adult should be documented and archived.



- Nothing on the internet is private. Therefore, do not divulge confidential information about others without permission (e.g. illnesses, deaths, births, staffing changes, etc.).
- Do not claim to represent the official position of the parish or organization unless you are authorized to do so.
- Copyright laws should be observed.
- Review privacy settings regularly.
- Know how to report and block inappropriate content that others post to your page.
- Do not ‘follow,’ ‘like,’ ‘retweet,’ etc., any content that is inappropriate or not in line with the Catholic faith.
- Do not ‘follow,’ ‘like,’ ‘retweet,’ etc., any content that seems appropriate but is not from a reputable source.
- Diocesan entities should enhance their communication efforts by cross promotion (e.g. your Facebook page should include a link to your website address).
- For further information refer to *Communication Best Practices Supplement*, page 59, Social Media Guidelines.

### **Sources of Information**

- There are many sources of information available for Catholic news and events. However, many organizations which have “Catholic” in their title or claim to be “Catholic”, may not in actuality be recognized or approved by the Roman Catholic Church. Many sites on the Internet are “blogs” or “opinion” sites. It is important to ensure that materials used (with proper permission) are “officially” recognized by the Roman Catholic Church. When looking for resources, news and information – particularly for sharing within your parish or school – these sources are appropriate:
  - The Vatican ([www.vatican.va](http://www.vatican.va)).
    - Messages, Pastoral Letters, Homilies of the Holy Father.
    - Prayers.
    - Bulletins from the Vatican Press Office.
    - Vatican News Service ([www.news.va](http://www.news.va)).
    - Vatican Radio Service ([www.news.va](http://www.news.va)).
    - Vatican Photo Service ([www.news.va](http://www.news.va)).
  - United States Conference of Catholic Bishops ([www.usccb.org](http://www.usccb.org)).
  - Catholic News Service ([www.catholicnews.com](http://www.catholicnews.com)).
  - Michigan Catholic Conference ([www.micatholic.org](http://www.micatholic.org)).



- Diocese of Gaylord ([www.dioceseofgaylord.org](http://www.dioceseofgaylord.org)).
- More fully utilize printed resources that are readily available (e.g. MCC Focus, USCCB publications, etc.).
- Diocesan entities should more fully utilize prepared resources by approved sources of information for distribution, many of which are available in electronic or printed format and often are free upon request. Care should be taken to ensure that resources are from appropriate and approved Catholic organizations. Two examples include:
  - “Focus” essays which are published several times a year by the Michigan Catholic Conference and provide information and reflection upon Church teachings focused on social concerns, legislative priorities and elections. Michigan Catholic Conference will provide printed copies at no charge.
  - The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) provides resources for parishes through subscription to “MyUSCCB.org.”

### **Telephone/Cellular Phones**

- Often the first contact an individual has with the chancery, parish, or school office is through a telephone call and serves as a very important first impression. Therefore, telephone calls should be answered by a person whenever possible and not routed through an answering system.
- All telephone calls should be handled in a courteous and professional manner.
- When answering or placing a call, identify yourself and your diocesan entity.
- Telephone calls should be returned in a timely manner.
- Accurate written messages should be taken when needed and include: caller’s name, phone number(s), message, and date of call.
- After hours or when staff is not available to answer a call personally, an answering machine should be used.
- If an employee is out of the office for more than one business day, a voice message should reflect when the employee will return.
- For the main offices, outgoing messages should identify the entity, office hours and other pertinent information. Parishes should include a plan for after-hour emergencies within the message.
- Leaders and parishioners should turn off cell phones for Mass. Ideally, cell phones should be silenced and put away during meetings and group gatherings.
- Place simple signs “Cell Phone Use Prohibited” in areas where their use is not allowed or would be disruptive.
- Refer to *Communication Best Practices Supplement*, page 68, Telephone/Cellphone: Etiquette.
- Refer to *Communication Best Practices Supplement*, page 73, Telephone/Cellphone: Robocalls.



## Texting

- Texting is an effective but informal form of communicating. For professional use, it should generally be used as a last resort to verbal or email communication.
- The following best practices should be used for work related texting:
  - Do not send a text containing confidential, private or embarrassing content.
  - Do not send a text unless it is urgent.
  - Do not send a text message if you are able to send an email.
  - Do not send a text message if you are able to make a telephone call.
  - Be clear in your message.
  - Show respect and courtesy to surroundings when texting.
  - Avoid texting people who don't text you.
  - Do not text bad news.
  - Do not type in all CAPITAL LETTERS.
  - Do not assume people know acronyms and text slang.
  - Do not text during meetings.
  - Use punctuation.
  - Do not text after business hours unless there is a good reason.
  - Proofread your messages.
  - Avoid long text messages as sometimes they spill over into two or three separate messages.
  - Include your name (signature).
  - Be respectful and courteous in the tone of your message.
  - Return text messages.
  - If your phone disturbs others, apologize.
- Common courtesy still takes precedence. Texting alters the continuity, focus and momentum of encounters. Giving others our full attention is our mission when we communicate.
- Before texting a minor, you must have permission from a minor's parent/guardian. Parents should be included on any text to a minor.
- Federal laws are to be observed when texting – Federal Trade Commission (<https://www.ftc.gov/>). For further information refer to *Communication Best Practices Supplement*, page 40, Email: Spam – Unwanted Email and Text Messages.
- Text blasts (one-way outgoing texts to multiple people) are effective for notification of cancellations, information, reminders, etc.



- Group texts (two-way text to multiple people) should only be used in limited professional situations.
- For safety and in accordance with Michigan law, no employee or volunteer of the chancery, parishes, or schools, should EVER text while driving. Likewise, do not read text messages when driving.
- Refer to *Communication Best Practices Supplement*, page 75, Texting Etiquette for further information.

## **Training**

Investing in opportunities for staff and volunteers to improve their skills, acquire new expertise and operate in their areas of strength allows them to excel in giving their best work. Training adds flexibility and efficiency. Cross-training also fosters a team spirit. The right training provides focus, purpose and motivation as well as job satisfaction and loyalty.

- Training should be encouraged and provided for staff and volunteers in the following areas:
  - Basic computer usage
  - General office software
  - Email
  - Internet security
  - Data confidentiality
  - Bulletin design
  - Newsletter design
  - Photography/photo editing
  - Creating/maintaining websites
  - Diocesan website usage/updating
  - Social media
  - Diocesan extranet
  - Video conferencing/webinars
  - Accounting software
  - Parish census software
  - P.A.S.T. (Parish Archival Sacramental Tool)
  - Cell phone used for business
  - RenWeb School Software
- Utilize online training resources and local opportunities that are available.

## **Transparency**





When members of the Church have a clear and accurate understanding of the temporal realities of the church they love, they are much more likely to support the church and its mission.

- Financial reports should be made readily available and periodically distributed via print, electronically and/or website. (Canon Law and diocesan policy requires that financial reports be prepared at least quarterly for review by the parish Finance Council and submitted annually to the parishioners and the diocese.)
- Each parish should produce an Annual Report to the Faithful, which could include:
  - Information and statistics on the parish's mission, ministry and activities.
  - Names of the Finance Council members, Pastoral Council members, Commission and Committee members, and staff.
  - Summary statement of financial position.
- Meeting minutes of Councils, Commissions and Committees should be made readily available to parishioners.
- Questions and concerns from parishioners regarding parish, school and diocesan matters should be directed to a staff person knowledgeable of the subject. Questions should be answered in a courteous and timely manner.

### **U.S. Postal Service**

For some populations and in certain circumstances, mailing directly to households can be an effective means of communication, such as for homebound and seasonal parishioners. In addition, the U.S. Postal Service is often used for communicating between diocesan entities.

- Confirm address list is current.
- Ensure communication is clearly addressed.
- Ensure proper postage is affixed.
- Items mailed to parishes and schools within the weekly diocesan Friday mailings should clearly state:
  - Intended recipient(s) (e.g. pastor, secretary, music director, etc.).
  - Include specific instructions for distribution if applicable.
- Items mailed to the chancery from parishes and schools should be clearly addressed to intended recipient or office.

### **Video Conferencing**

Numerous systems, equipment and “cloud-based” solutions are available for video conferencing for meetings, gatherings and education opportunities.

- The Chancery should take a more active role in utilizing these technologies to save time and expense of travel.



- Active efforts should be undertaken to assess the potential for video conferencing, including products available, user access, training, technical requirements at both ends, and staffing. This would benefit not only the chancery staff but the entire diocese as well, particularly if some “economies of scale” could be realized.
- Appropriate financial resources should be dedicated to enable utilization of an easy-to-use video conferencing solution to enable effective communication across the diocese.
- To enable staff to fully utilize and embrace emerging technologies such as video conferencing for better connecting with one another, parishioners and families, the diocese, and wider Church community, future technology purchases should consider what equipment or software might be necessary. With limited budgets, sometimes there are temptations to buy “home” versions of operating systems and software or to eliminate features such as cameras, speakers and microphones. Leadership should keep in mind that technology advances very quickly.
- “Professional” versions of software and well-equipped hardware with space for future needs and growth are strongly advised when making purchases for use in an office setting.

### **Website Presence**

- All diocesan entities should have a website. (The Diocese provides a limited web presence for all parishes and schools through the Diocesan Website.)
- Each diocesan entity should purchase a private domain (e.g. www.parishname.org).
- Web hosts should be chosen that use minimal or no advertising.
- Appropriately trained personnel from the diocesan entity should be designated as the website manager.
- Access to the administration of the website should be limited.
- Websites should:
  - Be user friendly and provide clear and easy navigation to the information.
  - Be accurate and include regularly updated news, information and other content.
  - Include a staff directory with contact information, such as name, department, position, phone number, and email address.
- Diocesan entities should enhance their communication efforts by cross promotion as follows:
  - Promote your website address on all forms of communication, including letterhead, email signatures, etc.



- If your diocesan entity has internet presence in addition to a website, such as Facebook, Twitter, or other social media accounts, each should contain a link to direct users back to the website and vice versa.





# GLOSSARY OF TERMS

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**Blog:** A type of website, usually maintained by an individual, with regular entries of commentary, descriptions of events, or other material such as graphics or video. Entries are commonly displayed in reverse-chronological order.

**Church Personnel:** Any priest, deacon, religious, bishop, lay employee, or volunteer who provides ministry or service or is employed by an entity associated with the Catholic Church of the Diocese of Gaylord.

**Cluster/Clustered Parishes:** Two or more parishes under the spiritual and administrative care of a single pastor.

**Cross Promote:** The idea behind cross promoting your content is rather simple. As the term seems to imply, we are talking about helping followers connect with many aspects of your entity.

**Data Breach:** A data breach is an incident where sensitive, protected, or confidential data has been viewed by an unauthorized individual. This can just as easily happen when you leave a file cabinet unlocked or if you have a weak or blank password on electronics that contain personally identifiable data.

**Digital Signature:** A digital signature is a mathematical technique used to validate the authenticity and integrity of a message, software, or digital document, and guarantees that the contents of the message have not been altered in transit. Similar to an ink signature, it preserves your identity.

**Diocesan Entities:** The Diocese of Gaylord parishes, schools and chancery offices.

**Domain Name:** The identifying name of an internet site. This is what internet users type into the address bar in order to locate a specific site online. A unique name that identifies an internet resource such as a website (<http://dioceseofgaylord.org>) or email address (@domainname or @dioceseofgaylord.org).

**Domain Name Extensions:** Extensions indicate the purpose for which a website exists. Here are the most frequently registered extensions and their common usage although it must be noted that any extension can be used for any purpose.

- **.biz** - Business
- **.cc** – Commonly used when .com is unavailable
- **.com** – Commercials, for-profit businesses
- **.edu** – Degree granting colleges/universities



- **.gov** – United States federal government agencies
- **.info** – Information
- **.name** – Personal Websites
- **.net** – Internet administrative sites
- **.org** – Non-profit organizations
- **.us.mi.us** – Used by state, counties or cities in Michigan.

**Economies of Scale:** Economies of scale are the cost advantages that an entity may obtain due to size, output, or scale of operation, with cost per unit of output generally decreasing with increasing scale as fixed costs, are spread out over more units of output.

**Employee:** An employee is a person employed by the Diocese of Gaylord or an affiliate. An employee may be a cleric or a lay person who may also be a member of a religious institute.

**Encryption:** Encryption is the most effective way to achieve data security. To read an encrypted file, you must have access to a secret key or password that enables you to decrypt it. Many encryption systems use two keys; a public key available to anyone and a private key that allows only the recipient to decode the message. Unencrypted data is called plain text; encrypted data is referred to as cipher text.

**Firewall:** A firewall is a hardware security device that is installed between a computer network and the Internet. Properly configured and maintained, a firewall will detect intruders, block them from entering the network, notify the system administrator, record information about the source of the attempted break-in, and produce reports to help authorities track down the culprits.

**Financial Statements:** A financial statement is a formal record of the financial activities of a business, person, or other entity. Relevant financial information is presented in a structured manner and in a form easy to understand.

**HTML Text:** Hypertext Markup Language (HTML) is the language in which the Web pages are written. Also known as hypertext documents, Web pages must conform to the rules of HTML in order to be displayed correctly in a Web browser. The HTML syntax is based on a list of tags that describe the page's format (font, color, graphic, and hyperlink effects) and what is displayed on the Web page. In regards to email, know your audience. If you are unclear as to the technology that will be used to read the email that you are sending, you may want it in plain text. Otherwise some of your recipients may have difficulty reading it.

**Hyperlink:** Hyperlink is a navigational reference to another document or page on the World Wide Web. It is typically activated by clicking on a highlighted word or icon at a particular location on the screen.



**Internet:** The internet is a global network connecting millions of computers. More than 100 countries are linked into exchanges of data, news and opinions.

**Internet Protocol (IP) Address:** An IP address is a number that identifies a computer or other device (like a printer, switch, wireless access point) on a network. It is written in this form xxx.xxx.xxx.xxx.

**Medium:** A medium is a means by which something is communicated or expressed.

**Message Thread:** A message thread is a series of messages that have been posted as replies to each other. In email, sometimes when you are responding to an email, it is nice to retain the message thread so that the sender recalls what they wrote to you or to retain the entire conversation together for such recall.

**Network:** A network consists of two or more computers that are linked to share resources (such as printers and CDs), exchange files, or allow electronic communications. A local area network (LAN) is a group of computers that are connected together in a localized area to communicate with one another and share resources such as printers. A wide area network (WAN) is a network that covers a large geographic area and may contain other LANs within it.

**PDF:** Portable Document Format (PDF) is a multi-platform file format developed by Adobe Systems. A PDF file captures document text, fonts, images, and even formatting of documents from a variety of applications. A PDF file can be viewed using a free software called Adobe Reader distributed by Adobe Systems. Additionally, an Acrobat plug-in is available for Web browsers. A PDF file is so universal that it can be viewed by almost anyone for free.

**Plain Text:** Plain Text is the most efficient way to store text. It does not support formatting of any kind, only numbers, symbols, and spaces. You can use a basic text editor such as Notepad or WordPad (for Windows) or TextEdit (for Mac). This is the simplest form you could use for email or documents.

**Private Domain:** A private domain belongs to a particular person or organization that may allow others to see or use it with permission.

**Protocols:** Protocols are a set of rules governing the exchange or transmission of data between devices.

**Rich Text:** Rich Text Format (RTF) is a file format standardized by Microsoft for creating formatted text files. Unlike a basic text file, an RTF file can include information such as text style, size and color. The RTF format is a universal format, meaning it can be read by nearly all word processors.



**Secular Media:** Secular media is media not pertaining to or connected with religion.

**Social Media:** Social media is anything that allows interaction (Tumblr, Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, Pinterest, etc.)

**Social Network:** A social network is a Web 2.0 site that is entirely driven by content of its members. Individuals are allowed flexibility in privacy settings, in posting text, photos, video, links, and other information, and in level of interaction with other members. Examples of these communities include:

- **Facebook:** An online community for people to connect or re-connect with others. It enables people to share information, pictures and videos of themselves.
- **LinkedIn:** A professional, online community used to network with fellow professionals; an online resume-sharing site.
- **YouTube:** An online site for uploading and discussing videos. YouTube videos can also be embedded onto other social media sites such as blogs or social networks.
- **Twitter:** A micro-blogging community where posts and links are 140 characters or less. Users can follow each other's messages. (Tweet is a post/entry made on Twitter.)

**Spam:** The term "spam" refers to unsolicited – usually commercial – email and text messages sent to a large number of people at once. Examples of spam include chain mail, "get rich quick" schemes, advertisements for pornography, and pleas for money. The spammers often use tricks that help disguise the origin of their messages. Spam eats up network bandwidth. Fun Fact: There is some debate about the source of the term, but the generally accepted version is that it comes from the Monty Python song, "*Spam spam spam spam, spam spam spam spam, lovely spam, wonderful spam*". Like the song, spam is an endless repetition of worthless text.

**Spoofing:** A spoof is an imitation or a trick played on someone as a joke. When referred to email, called email spoofing, it is when an email APPEARS to be from someone but is not. It is designed to trick you into opening it so that you will respond to their solicitation. A spoofed email could try to collect sensitive data from you. Another type is IP address spoofing, where an intruder sends messages to a computer with a false IP address with the intention of gaining access to the network.

**Text Messaging (SMS):** Text messaging, or texting, is the act of composing and sending brief, electronic messages between two or more mobile phones, or fixed or portable devices over a phone network.

- **Text Blasts (Opt-in SMS):** A text blast describes a SMS text message that is sent, via an automated messaging system, to multiple phone numbers. Text blasts are





a simple and effective way for a person or organization to communicate a message quickly to cell phone users. It can provide a faster, less cumbersome alternative to a voice broadcast or "voice blast."

- **Group Text:** Group text is the sending of a single text message to more than one person. The receiver can respond.

**Transparency:** Transparency is operating in such a way that it is easy for others to see what actions are performed.

**URL:** Uniform Resource Locator (URL) is the technical term for a web address (e.g., <http://www.dioceseofgaylord.org> is a URL).

**Video Conferencing:** Videoconferencing is the conduct of a videoconference (also known as a video conference or video teleconference) by a set of telecommunication technologies which allow two or more locations to communicate by simultaneous two-way video and audio transmissions.

**Virtual Private Network:** A Virtual Private Network (VPN) is technology that creates a secure network connection over a public network like the internet. VPN's allow employees to securely access their company's network remotely by encrypting the data that is sent. VPNs can be either remote-access (connecting a computer to a network) or site-to-site (connecting two networks.)

**Volunteer:** A volunteer is a person who works without financial or material gain on behalf of the Diocese of Gaylord or its entities who is not an employee or cleric.

**Website:** A website is a location connected to the Internet that maintains one or more pages on the World Wide Web.

**Web 2.0:** Web 2.0 is the second stage of development of the World Wide Web characterized especially by the change from static web pages to dynamic or user-generated content and the growth of social media.

**World Wide Web:** The World Wide Web is an information system on the Internet that allows documents to be connected to other documents by hypertext links enabling the user to search for information by moving from one document to another.







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