



# Use of Media and Request for Information from Media Policy

Updated December 2017



## I. Policy

The Office of Communications is the primary source of information on behalf of the Diocese of Orlando about diocesan events, news and announcements – both internally and externally. Because it is important to present the Diocese and the teachings of the Catholic Church, both accurately and in the best possible light, the Office of Communication must be contacted with respect to all media use and inquiries as outlined in this policy.

This policy is applicable to all parishes, schools and entities of the Diocese of Orlando and is proffered through the Office of Communication for the appropriate management of information distributed to the members of the Diocese and affiliations, as well as the public, through the secular media.

## II. Definitions

**Diocesan Entity:** includes the Chancery, all parishes, schools, day care or pre-schools, Catholic Charities of Central Florida, Pathways to Care, San Pedro Spiritual Center, Bishop Grady Villas, Hope Community Center, and other entities recognized through the Diocese of Orlando Annual Directory or otherwise sponsored by or associated with the Diocese of Orlando.

**Diocesan Personnel:** includes clergy, religious brothers and sisters, lay staff and volunteers for any Diocesan Entity.

## III. Contact

Office of Communication  
jdrow@orlandodiocese.org  
407-246-4811 (office)  
407-412-4489 (cell)

## IV. Request from Secular Media for Information or Interviews

- A. **Diocesan/parish personnel** are to report all media calls to the Office of Communication immediately upon receipt and before answering any questions from the reporter. Provide the reporter's name, media outlet and telephone number, inquire about the reporter's deadline, the subject of the story and tell him/her that a representative of the Office of Communication will return the call promptly.

Alternatively, the reporter may be referred directly to the Office of Communication and contact information included above be provided to the reporter.

In order for the Office of Communication to return media calls and meet their deadlines, it is imperative that the notice to the Office of Communication is made immediately. If the reporter makes contact by way of a voice mail message, the voice mail may be forwarded to the Office of Communication. It is critical that all media calls be addressed on the same day they were received, if at all possible, so Diocesan/parish personnel are asked to verify that the Office of Communication receives voice mail or other information forwarded to the Office related to a media inquiry.



- B. **Diocesan/parish personnel** will not contact reporters or news outlets to initiate or suggest a story.
- C. **All Diocesan/parish entities are private property.** The secular media (print or broadcast) is not allowed on any Diocesan/parish entity without express permission from the head of the entity in coordination with the Director of Communication.
- D. **Diocesan/parish personnel** will not host, produce or purchase time to air radio and television programs or agree to a guest appearance without prior approval by the Director of Communication.

#### V. **Diocesan/Parish Entity Seeking Media Coverage or Responding to Media**

- A. Before granting an interview for topics which involve parish or entity events, celebrations, Workshops, or openings, **Diocesan/parish personnel** are asked to call the Director of Communication for a mini-briefing. The Director will be glad to share information about the reporter, the angle the story is likely to take, other stories the reporter may be researching or writing at the time, and any other background information that may be helpful for the interview. While media representatives often work under tight deadlines, they sometimes will fax or e-mail questions in advance and a few may be willing to read direct quotes back to a source.

When information is released, every effort must be made to avoid misunderstanding, misinterpretation or confusion. Once a misconception takes root, it is always difficult and often impossible to make a full correction.

Diocesan/parish personnel should ask when the story will appear in print or will be broadcast and should contact his/her supervisor and the Director of Communication after the interview has been completed to report on the interview.

- B. All requests for in-person and on-camera media interviews (interviews not conducted by phone) will be coordinated through the Office of Communication. If cleared through the Office of Communication and coordinated with the head of the parish, school or Diocesan entity, Diocesan/parish personnel who are in the field or at a public meeting may give in-person and on-camera interviews if they are directly involved in the subject matter and/or it is their area of expertise.

The individual should contact his/her supervisor and the Director of Communication after the interview has been completed to report on the interview.

- C. Most news releases are written and distributed by the Office of Communication on diocesan letterhead or via e-mail. A “News Release” is a news story/announcement written for and released to the news media including publications, radio and television/cable television media outlets.
- D. Information provided to the Florida Catholic, El Clarin, or Buena Nueva FM for coverage, either



through the “Arounds” column or a general story or to the Diocesan website calendar ([www.orlandodiocese.org](http://www.orlandodiocese.org)) for a listing, should be submitted using the Event Submission Form located online at [www.orlandodiocese.org/ministries-offices/communications](http://www.orlandodiocese.org/ministries-offices/communications) at least four weeks in advance of the event. The purpose of this form is to provide the Florida Catholic and the Office of Communications with the basic information about the event/program/service to include in the appropriate media.

- E. **Diocesan/parish entities**, with permission from the appropriate supervisor, may submit local calendar-type items directly to news outlets without prior notification to the Office of Communication. Consultation services are available for Diocesan/parish entities seeking publicity for programs, events and services.
- F. The Director of Communication will coordinate all media briefings, news conferences and background sessions for reporters.
- G. Diocesan/parish employees who are in a position to be interviewed by the media shall attend media relations/spokesperson training, which is offered periodically by the Office of Communication. These spokespeople are selected by the head of the **Diocesan/parish entity**.
- H. All “Letters-to-the-Editor” and correspondence with news media must be approved and issued by the Office of Communication to avoid misquotes or errors in the information published. If you are misquoted or if there is a serious error, contact the Office of Communication as quickly as possible.
- I. Editorial board meetings for the purpose of soliciting editorial support shall be coordinated by the Director of Communication. The director will coordinate the participation of personnel for these meetings. Diocesan/parish personnel who are contacted by editorial page writers and/or editors must refer the call to the Office of Communication.
- J. Diocesan/parish entities should consult with the Director of Communication on the content, design and placement of public service announcements, newsletters, brochures, paid advertising, etc. If advertising contracts are involved, seek approval from the Director of Communication before entering into any agreement with local media outlets. This is particularly important when considering the publication in which you may place advertising or public service announcements. Some publications could carry a negative connotation and may oppose Church teachings.
- K. **Parishes and Schools** may submit ads directly to media outlets, without prior approval, if the purpose of the ad is to advertise an event or program. Consultation services are available for parishes and schools that want to produce newsletters, brochures and other printed materials.