

## II. Principles of Ethics and Integrity in Ministry: Code of Ethics

### Principles of *Ministerial* Relationships:

Relationships among people are a foundation of Christian ministry and are central to Catholic life. Defining healthy and safe relationships is not meant, in any way, to undermine the strength and importance of personal contact or one's ministerial role; rather to demonstrate our love and compassion for children and adults in the most sincere and genuine relationships.

This Policy has been adopted by the Diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph to help ensure the charitable character of ministerial relationships and vigilantly guard against all harm. Therefore, ALL those who serve in ministry in the Diocese are asked to carefully consider each provision in this Policy before signing (or acknowledging online) the agreement to adhere to its standards and continue in service. The abbreviation EIM in this policy refers to Ethics and Integrity in Ministry (EIM).

### Those who serve in ministry in the Diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph shall:

- Exhibit the highest Christian ethical standards and personal integrity.
- Conduct oneself in an ethical manner that is consistent with the discipline, norms and teachings of the Catholic Church.
- Provide a professional work environment that is free from harassment.
- Not take advantage of a counseling, supervisory or authoritative relationship for one's own benefit.
- Not act in an abusive or neglectful manner.
- Report concerns about unethical behavior to your supervisor (such as Pastor, Principal, Vicar General, Superintendent of Catholic Schools or the Bishop).
- Report suspicions of sexual abuse of a minor to the Missouri Child Abuse hotline, law enforcement (the police, sheriff, FBI, or the law enforcement agency with jurisdiction in your area),
  - Also report sexual abuse of a minor and/or suspicious behavior including boundary violations involving a minor or vulnerable adult to the Ombudsman of the Diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph if the suspected perpetrator is a member of the Church personnel.
- Adhere to the requirements of the law of the State of Missouri regarding the reporting of any suspected abuse or neglect of a minor.
- Accept one's personal responsibility in the protection of minors from all forms of abuse.
- Follow the *Policy on Ethics and Integrity in Ministry* (EIM).

## III. Guidelines for *Ethical* Behavior

### Ethics in Ministry—the Foundation of Catholic Virtue

1. Ethical behavior is behavior that is consistent with the morals and teachings of the Catholic Church. It is fundamental to the mission of the Diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph that Church personnel exhibit the highest ethical standards and personal integrity. This includes following the laws of the church outlined in the Ten Commandments.
2. Church personnel enjoy a public trust and confidence. It is essential, then, that one view their own actions and intentions objectively to assure that no observer would have grounds to believe that immoral conduct exists. Our personnel have a responsibility to strive to uphold ethical behavior in their day-to-day work and personal lives. This expectation of ethical behavior exists for both "in person" and "virtual" interactions (which encompass online and electronic communications and all social media use).

3. Church Personnel must respect the rights, dignity, and worth of every person without regard to their economic status or degree of participation in parish life.
4. Church personnel should be sensitive to cultural differences among people and appreciate the opportunities that diversity brings.
5. Church Personnel are expected to have a high level of competency in their particular ministry. Church Personnel who are “accredited” professionals shall endeavor to maintain their competency and currency through training, continued education and experience. Competence also means knowing one’s limitations.

## Prohibited Conduct—the Foundations of Evil

1. Scandal is an attitude or behavior which leads another to do evil. Scandal damages virtue and integrity. It is a grave offense if by deed or omission another is deliberately led into a grave offense (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, No. 2284).
2. Misconduct creates scandal. All types of misconduct are prohibited. Additionally, Church Personnel are prohibited from engaging in conduct or situations that can give the appearance of misconduct.

## Misconduct includes, but is not limited to, the following behaviors:

- **Immoral conduct:** Conduct that is contrary to the discipline and teachings of the Catholic Church and which may result in scandal to the faithful or harm to the ministry of the Catholic Church.
- **Harassment:** The illegitimate and offensive use of power where the purpose or the effect is to create a hostile, intimidating, or offensive work or ministerial environment.
- **Exploitation:** Taking advantage of a person, situation, etc. unjustly or unethically for one’s own gains. This could be physical, financial or emotional.
- **Breach of Confidentiality:** The improper disclosure of information shared during the course of pastoral care or spiritual direction.
- **Conflict of Interest:** The taking advantage of a pastoral care or spiritual direction relationship in order to benefit or further the personal interests of the provider.
- **Discrimination:** The showing of bias against another on the basis of age, gender, race, religion, sexual orientation, physical or mental abilities, or language.
- **Abuse:** Abuse includes physical abuse, sexual abuse and emotional abuse and is further defined in the “Essential Norms”
  - **Physical abuse:** Non-accidental injury that is intentionally inflicted upon a person.
  - **Sexual abuse of a minor or vulnerable adult:** Any contact of a sexual nature that occurs between an adult and a minor or an adult and a vulnerable adult, that is intended to produce sexual stimulation of the perpetrator. Prevention of sexual abuse is of particular importance within the Diocese. This includes, but is not limited to:
    - sexual exploitation
    - sexual assault
    - fondling
    - making a minor watch sex acts or pornography
    - using a minor in any aspect of the production of pornography and
    - possession or distribution of child pornography
  - **Sexual Abuse:** Any contact of a sexual nature that is unwanted or forced.

- **Emotional abuse:** Mental or emotional injury that results in an observable and material impairment in the person’s growth, development or psychological functioning.
- **Neglect:** The failure to provide for a minor or vulnerable adult’s basic needs or the failure to protect a person from harm.

## IV. Guidelines for ***Integrity*** in Ministry

### Integrity in the Workplace or Place of Ministry:

Integrity is characterized by honesty, soundness of judgment and sincerity of manner. Church personnel are expected to maintain a high standard of integrity and a work environment free from harassment. Church personnel shall not engage in harassment and shall not tolerate harassment by those with whom they work.

Harassment encompasses a broad range of physical, psychological, written, or verbal behavior that includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- abuse
- racial insults
- derogatory ethnic slurs
- demeaning a person based on gender
- sexual comments or sexual jokes
- unwelcome sexual advances or touching
- requests for sexual favors as a condition of employment, or to affect other personnel decisions, such as promotion or compensation
- display of offensive materials
- intimidation

Harassment may be severe and/or pervasive conduct. Severe conduct is sufficient to alter a workplace environment even though it may occur only once. Pervasive conduct is a persistent pattern of harassment. All forms of harassment are prohibited.

### Pastoral Care and Spiritual Direction:

**Pastoral care** is a ministry of care and compassionate presence where the provider offers emotional support and family education to individuals and families, and connects these individuals and families with community mental health and counseling resources as needed.

**Spiritual direction** is a ministry of “holy listening” where the spiritual director serves as a companion to help individuals listen and look at the action of the Holy Spirit in their lives, and helps them to listen to God speaking to their own heart. It is a ministry by which one person helps another in the practice of the spiritual life.

Those engaged in pastoral care or spiritual direction shall work within their limitations and competencies and shall refer people to professionals when appropriate. Although it may not be outlined in a job description, many clerics, deacons, employees and even volunteers will occasionally find themselves in a situation where it is appropriate to provide pastoral care or spiritual direction to members of the diocese.

Those providing care should always consider the following values:

1. **Prevention of Exploitation:** To prevent any opportunities for exploitation and inappropriate behaviors, those providing pastoral care or spiritual direction shall also:
  - Set and maintain clear and appropriate boundaries.
  - Be judicious in use of physical contact which should always be respectful and consistent with the intent to provide a safe and comfortable environment.
  - Conduct pastoral care and spiritual direction in appropriate settings at appropriate times; and sessions should not be held at places or times that would cause confusion about the nature of the relationship for the person being served and others.
  
2. **Importance of Confidentiality:** Confidentiality is a hallmark of a trusted relationship; therefore it is important to maintain a strict confidence in the pastoral care and spiritual guidance provided. One should always abide by the following touchstones of confidentiality:
  - Information disclosed during the course of pastoral care or spiritual direction shall be held in the strictest confidence possible, with due regard for the norm of civil or canon law.
  - The nature of confidentiality, including its limitations, should be discussed with each person who seeks pastoral care or spiritual direction.
  - In accordance with the norm of canon law (c.983), the sacramental seal is inviolable by divine mandate; therefore, it is absolutely forbidden for a confessor to betray the confidence of a penitent in any way and for any reason. This is applicable both while the penitent is living and, if applicable, after he or she has died.
  
3. **Conflicts of Interest:** Church Personnel shall not engage in a conflict of interest. Even the appearance of a conflict of interest can call into question integrity and professional ministerial conduct. If a conflict of interest exists or arises, all concerned parties should be informed. Resolution of the issues must protect the person being served. Clear, appropriate boundaries regarding business, professional, and social relationships must be established and maintained to avoid conflicts of interest. Example: When the personal or professional concerns of a clergy, employee or volunteer affect his or her ability to put the welfare of the organization before personal benefit, conflict of interest exists.