

## **Instruction for Pastors and Administrators Regarding Those in Public Ministry in the Diocese of Lincoln**

Updated: May 20, 2015

As a result of our dignity flowing from our rebirth in Christ, all the Christian faithful “cooperate in the building up of the Body of Christ” and “even in their own manner of acting, are always obliged to maintain communion with the Church” and to “direct their efforts to lead a holy life and to promote the growth of the Church and its continual sanctification, according to their own condition” (C.I.C. Canons 208-210). The communion of the Catholic Church is preserved in the visible bonds of a common profession of faith, the seven sacraments, and ecclesiastical governance under the Pope and the bishops in communion with him (*Lumen Gentium* 14).

Serving Jesus Christ and His Church in a leadership role in the various liturgical, catechetical, formation, and outreach ministry roles, or in any Church approved apostolate is undertaken at the discretion of the pastor or administrator. Catholics in the Diocese of Lincoln who serve in these roles are expected to maintain full communion with the Church by believing, accepting, and forming their behavior – both public and private – in accord with all that the ordinary and universal Magisterium of the Church teaches to be revealed by God.

If it becomes known in the external forum that a person who is serving – either paid or volunteer – in public ministry or a Church approved apostolate, is acting in a manner not in accord with the teachings of the Church regarding faith and morals\*, the pastor or administrator shall meet with the individual and ascertain the facts of the case. The pastor or administrator shall inform the person how he obtained the information in the external forum. The pastor or administrator must document and keep a record of the facts of the case.

If corrective action is necessary, the person shall normally receive a warning to correct the improper behavior or to renounce publicly any public advocacy positions made contrary to the teachings of the Church. The warning likewise must be documented. Whenever a warning has been issued, the pastor or administrator shall contact the Chancery. The pastor or administrator shall follow-up with the individual within a time period not to exceed 30 days and document how the person ultimately responded to the warning. Failure to follow the guidance of the pastor or administrator may result in a suspension or removal from the position, as the gravity of the offense merits, and as determined by the local pastor or administrator, or the Bishop of Lincoln. In case questions arise, the pastor or administrator shall contact the Chancery.

\* This applies when an immoral behavior becomes known in the external forum, or when one chooses to advocate or support positions or causes in a public manner (such as by becoming a member of an organization, participating in a public demonstration, signing a petition, writing via social media, etc.) that are contrary to the teachings of the Catholic Church.

**\*By printing and signing my name down below I agree that I have read this document and agree to all its contents.**

**PRINT NAME:** \_\_\_\_\_

**SIGNATURE:** \_\_\_\_\_

**DATE:** \_\_\_\_\_ **TEAM/CLUB:** \_\_\_\_\_