



## **Internet and Social Media Guidelines For the Eparchy of Saint Maron of Brooklyn Reviewed and Revised March 14, 2022**

The following are a list of general guidelines to cover the use of the Internet websites and other social media sites. These guidelines, along with the recently issued United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) Social Media Guidelines <http://www.usccb.org/comm/social-mediaguidelines.shtml>, should cover most situations faced by any Pastor/Administrator.

1. The use of official parish websites and other social media platforms are entrusted to the confidence of the Pastor/Administrator and the Bishop. It is important to remember that once something is placed on the Internet, there are no deletions; it will remain forever in cyberspace. Thus, the Pastor/Administrator or his delegate should keep close watch over all postings to ensure that none of them are harmful, embarrassing, dangerous, or illegal.
2. Any unofficial websites associated with the parish must carry a disclaimer reflecting that postings are not the expressed opinion of the Parish, Eparchy or the Magisterium of the Catholic Church.
3. The official website of the parish must reflect the dignity of the Church, thus web-hosting companies, paid for by advertising, should be avoided. The Church has no control over the advertising that could, at a minimum, reflect badly on the dignity of the Church.
4. Due to privacy concerns, only business (not personal) accounts may be established on all social media platforms. That is because business accounts do not have an open wall and only allow for posting by the administrator. The Pastor/Administrator or a designated responsible adult should be the only administrator and the account should carry a disclaimer.
5. No photos of children taken in a private setting should be posted on a parish or personal website or on other social media sites. Photos of children taken in public settings should be posted according to the desires of the parents.
6. Church personnel are not to use Church computers for personal social media sites. These sites raise numerous security and privacy concerns for the Church. The Pastor/Administrator is to make sure there are enough filters in place to prevent access to improper and unwanted material.
7. Use by Church personnel of a Church computer to access, view and/or download pornography of any kind is strictly forbidden.
8. Use by Church personnel of a Church computer to access, view and/or download pornographic images of a person under the age of eighteen (18) years or of a person who lacks the use of reason regardless of his or her chronological age shall constitute grounds for dismissal. The Pastor/Administrator shall immediately report such conduct to the appropriate civil authority for investigation and/or prosecution, as well as to the Vicar General or Eparchial Bishop.

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Name

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Signature

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Date

Although the Eparchy cannot monitor or control personal accounts, in the context of one's use of social media (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, etc.), priests, deacons, religious, employees and volunteers should be mindful that postings and other statements made in these forums can be seen as connected to both their professional role and the Church.