

Communications Policies and Guidelines

Section I: Purpose

The purpose of church communications is to relay information about the Gospel and about our parish to a broad, or to a specific, audience.

Tri-County Catholics Policies and Guidelines are intended to present clear guidelines to staff members and parishioners to deliver consistent, high quality, and appropriate communications to all members of the parish community, prospective members, and the neighboring community.

These policies cover communications by anyone—clergy, lay staff member, or parishioner—who represents Tri-County Catholics or its ministries, whether as a paid employee, layperson, or volunteer.

The policies apply to printed materials, mass mailings, ongoing publications, bulletin boards, interior, and exterior signs and to all electronic, social media groups and pages, and other electronic communications media or messages identified with Tri-County Catholics and any of the church's ministries, committees or groups, online or mobile-based communications tools, whether controlled by Tri-County Catholics or hosted on other social platforms. These policies do not apply to private or small-group communications between parishioners.

Section II: General Policies

- No copyrighted material will be published without proof of permission from the copyright holders.
- Church communications may not be used for partisan political messages. Any activity that could be perceived as supporting any political party and/or its candidates, including the signing of petitions promoting political issues is not permitted.

Section III: Announcement Guidelines

Article I: Requirements for Inclusion:

All requests for announcements are reviewed before publication on any communication outlet. Sacraments, Religious Education, and Parish Functions take priority over other ministry events. Tri-County Catholic ministries have priority over external Catholic ministries and events outside the parish.

All announcement submissions are ultimately approved by the Pastor. He or the qualified staff will review all entries before publication on any communication platform. We reserve the right to edit, omit, or replace text, images, etc. due to quantity, quality, content, or space available, lack of verified legal permission, if necessary.

Please make sure any event or activity representing Tri-County Catholics both on or off campus have been approved for inclusion on the parish calendar prior to submitting announcements. Events and activities that have not submitted a calendar request and have not been approved will not be promoted. Additionally, off campus events held during parish Mass times will not be promoted.

Please note we will make every effort to include your announcement when it is received on time and has appropriate content for the parish, but we cannot guarantee publication. Due to the limited nature of our communication efforts we cannot guarantee publication on all requested communication outlets for events that have been approved.

Tri-County Catholics will not promote any event, group, etc. that contradicts Catholic Teaching.

Article II: Submission Process for Announcements

Announcement requests should be submitted digitally via email to info@tricountycatholics.org in a text only format. It is best practice to send an announcement request as soon as your event is scheduled or need is known. This allows proper planning and notice for successful event attendance and/or participation. The latest a bulletin announcement can be sent for submission is 14 days prior to the Friday of the weekend bulletin your announcement should first appear.

Deadlines are subject to change due to Holidays, vacations, or publisher mandated deadline changes. The parish office will do our best to inform about early deadlines.

Article III: Run Times for Announcements

As a very active parish we often have an overwhelming amount of announcement requests. In an effort to keep our announcements fresh and give all parish ministries and groups an opportunity to share their events and activities with the parish announcements will generally be limited to a 3 week consecutive run, as space permits in accordance with priority order of announcements. (ie. Sacraments, Religious Education, and Parish Functions take priority over other ministry events. Tri-County Catholic ministries have priority over external Catholic ministries and events outside the parish.)

Article IV: Best Practices for Announcements

Announcements should be brief and to the point, not “chatty” and be sure your announcement includes the who, what, when, where, why. It should be assumed that announcements are being read by first time visitors to our parish and spell out acronyms the first time they appear. (Example: Tri-County Catholics (TCC)..)

When submitting text, please refrain from using two spaces between sentences or tabs and spaces to format. These extra spaces have to be edited out before publication as it disrupts the formatting. Only capitalize the first letter of your sentences and please refrain from using all caps or capitalizing the first letter of every word.

Section IV: Social Media Policy (TCC)

Tri-County Catholics maintains an official presence on three social media sites: Facebook/Facebook Groups, Instagram, and YouTube. These accounts are produced, maintained, and monitored by the Parish Office. These social media outlets are evangelization tools where all persons can witness the Catholic faith and our Tri-County Catholics community.

Article I: Official Social Media:

4.1.1 Approval:

Approval must be granted by the corresponding department head, pastor or principal prior to creation. A record of approved accounts will be maintained in the parish office.

4.1.2 Use of Logos:

Approved accounts are required to contain the official TCC, School, or related entity logo. No website account may include the official TCC logo or that of a related entity in a way that implies official ownership/sponsorship, without being an approved account.

4.1.3 Administration:

Approved accounts must have at least two adults with full administrative access and at least one of the administrators must be a parish or school staff member. All administrators, moderators, etc. must be Safe Environment trained and compliant.

4.1.4 Archdiocese of Cincinnati Social Media Policy:

All official accounts that represent Tri-County Catholics are subject to the rules established and set forth by the Archdioceses of Cincinnati Social Media Policy. Link: <https://resources.catholicooc.org/download/106/youth-evangelization/7214/social-media-policy.pdf>

Article II: Unauthorized and Unaffiliated Social Media:

4.2.1 Disclaimer:

Unauthorized and Unaffiliated Social Media accounts that are not valid representations of TCC must post the following disclaimer: "This digital space is not an official representation of Tri-County Catholics. The views and content expressed in this digital space do not necessarily represent or reflect the views of Tri-County Catholics or the Archdiocese of Cincinnati or of the Catholic Church at large"

4.2.2 Use of Logos:

Unauthorized and Unaffiliated Social Media may not include any official Tri-County Catholics logo or that of a related entity in a way that implies official sponsorship.

4.2.3 Administration:

Tri-County Catholics staff members may not be administrators, moderators, or hold similar roles within these Unauthorized and Unaffiliated Social Media accounts.

Article III: Comment Policy

4.3.1 General Policies

All of our fans and followers are welcome and encouraged to share post on Tri-County Catholics social media pages. All posts or comments should be relevant to the Tri-County Catholics community. You are personally responsible for all content you post online, whether in a blog, on a social networking site, or in the comments section.

We strive to make our social media community reflective of the values of Jesus and the Catholic Church. Therefore, Tri-County Catholics reserves the right, but is not obligated, to remove comments that:

- are off-topic
- are profane, violent or obscene
- are duplicate or spam
- advocate illegal activity
- are misleading or contain falsehoods and/or inaccurate information
- libel, incite, threaten or make ad hominem attacks on employees, guests, or other individuals
- endorse or oppose anyone campaigning for election to a political office

We also do not permit messages selling products or promoting commercial, political campaigns, or other ventures unless we deem them related to the parish, its members or its operation. Posted comments do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the parish.

4.3.2 Additional options for individual users:

- Hiding or reporting comments may also be an action you can take. Review the Terms and Community Guidelines for the service and see options available to you.
- You can always choose to express your disagreement or state your own point of view in a way that's consistent with the above policies.
- If you sense a comment is written with the express purpose of provoking an argument, denying the comment the attention it seeks is sometimes the best course of action.

Employees' social media usage is expected to comply with **Archdiocese of Cincinnati Social Media Policy** and all applicable policies. All users, including page administrators, are subject to the terms of service of each social media site and this policy.

If you have any concerns about the content posted on one of our social media outlets, please email us at info@tricountycatholics.org. We welcome all of your feedback and thank you for your help in creating a safe, vibrant and respectful online community.

Section V: Images, Photos, & Graphics

Article I: Photographic Images

We want to share what our ministries are doing to evangelize and to serve others for us to use in the bulletin, social media, or website. Photographs submitted for use in church publications are welcomed, provided the contributor owns the image or has secured permission from the owner and supplies proof of permission to the parish for publication. Images should be high-quality, relevant, and used with intention.

Be selective of the photos you share by avoiding sending too many or overly busy images. Ensure images are inspiring and have one clear focal point and are of adequate quality.

5.1.1 Submission of Photographic Images

- Email your photos along with a description of what your ministry is doing “in action” to info@tricountycatholics.org.
- Any ministry photos including minors will need to have the necessary parental or guardian Archdiocesan release form on file. If minors are included in your photos, please send the names of the minors in your email so that it is reviewed by the parish office. A copy of the release form should be sent to the parish office.
- In submitting photographic images for use by the church, contributors grant Tri-CountyCatholics non-exclusive rights to edit and publish the images in various print and digital media.
- Images must be of adequate technical quality and large enough, in terms of pixels, for the intended use. Ideally, photographic images will be created and provided at the camera’s highest possible resolution settings. Photographs should be high resolution jpg files (300 dpi preferred minimum resolution).

Article II: Graphics

As a general rule Tri-County Catholics does not use graphical images created outside the parish office. Any graphics that are used must have documented permission for use.

Section VI: Use of Generative AI in Communications

The ethical use of generative AI is an evolving field. Tri-County Catholics remains committed to the moral and social teachings of the Church.

Section VII: Encyclopedia of Parish Communications

Bulletin

The primary form of communication for the parish. The Bulletin is produced weekly and contains a variety of content including but not limited to notes from the pastor, articles of Catholic interest, spiritual reflections, and upcoming parish and regional Catholic events and activities as space allows.

Bulletin Inserts

Additional sheet of paper stuffed in the bulletin, used for designated collection information or extraordinary circumstances.

Robly (Parish E-News):

The parish email management tool. Specifically the parish e-News is a weekly digital newsletter sent on Friday afternoon and periodically an additional newsletter as needed. The newsletter is primarily for faith formation containing a limited number of announcements that are timely and relevant within the next week. Also used for critical communication outside of scheduled times.

Guest Speaker Announcements

A speaker invited by the pastor to speak briefly at Mass on a certain matter.

Posters/Flyers

Posters and flyers showcased in the bulletin boards are primarily for major parish events, faith formation and special collections.

Pulpit Announcements

Critical and timely announcements primarily relevant to the majority or parish announced at the close of Masses.

Slide Reel Announcements

Highlighted announcements at St. John the Evangelist shown before Mass selected from the announcement requests submitted for publication in the bulletin.

Social Media

Collection of several different online platforms and communities where Tri-County Catholics has a presence.

Website

The central hub for information about the parish.