

# Social Media Policy

Capuchin Franciscan Province of St. Joseph

(Approved: 07/21/20 )

## I. Introduction

In the spirit of St. Francis of Assisi, the Capuchin Franciscan Province of St. Joseph is committed to using social media as a means to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

The province commits itself to maintaining safe environments that protect vulnerable children and adults from abuse. This social media policy has been adopted and updated in an effort to foster safe environments on social media.

The ubiquity of social media affords opportunities to engage and communicate with the public. While social media provides a means to reach people, it must be balanced with our duty to ensure the safety of minors (those 17 years of age and under), friars, staff, volunteers and those we serve.

## II. Policy

A. This policy categorizes the use of social media into two broad categories:

***Institutional Use*** promoting the Capuchin Franciscan Province of St. Joseph, its ministries and mission.

***Personal Use*** for the purpose of connecting and sharing with family and friends.

### Institutional Use

Ministries may maintain an institutional account to serve as the official face of the ministry on a social media network, such as Facebook, YouTube or Twitter. However, the ministry director and the Province's Public Relations Director must give permission prior to the launch of any social media account for institutional use. In addition, all institutional social media accounts must grant top-level administrator privileges to a member of the Provincial PR Office. Institutional social media accounts must always be public and fully discoverable, and have a minimum of two administrators, one of whom is a member of the Province PR team.

Copyright and intellectual property

Content posted on an institutional social media channel must be original content, licensed content or in the public domain. Original content is 100% original material created by the ministry or province. For example, a photograph or video shot by ministry or provincial staff is original content and is owned by the Province. Licensed content is content that was created by an outside party, for which the Province or ministry has obtained a license for its use. An example of this would be liturgical music that is part of a livestreamed Mass. Public domain content is material that is no longer copyrighted and is freely available for use by others without restriction. An example of such a work would be a public domain image of Caravaggio's painting of the Saint Francis of Assisi in Ecstasy. Note that it is permissible to share content for which we do not own the copyright via a social media share or retweet.

Friars that are part of a province-sponsored ministry are instructed to communicate on ministry-related activities through the institutional account instead of through personal accounts. When interacting on an institutional account, friars and staff should interact as the account administrator, rather than from a personal account. A friar may share a message from an institutional account on their personal account, but the content should originate at the institutional account and include the original post. This approach allows the ministry director as well as the Provincial PR Office, to monitor communications and ensures that no one has private (and possibly inappropriate) conversations with minors.

Friars and staff must not publish images or videos of minors on social networking sites without parental/ guardian permission. This can be done by obtaining a photo or video release form signed by a parent or guardian. Contact the Provincial PR Office for an electronic copy of this form.

## Personal Use

Friars may maintain private social media accounts for their own personal use. Friars should identify themselves as being members of the order, with language in their profile bio and/or by listing the Province as the organization they are affiliated with.

Generally, friars are encouraged to share the Gospel using personal social media. When posting about ministry work, friars are recommended to publish these communications on an institutional account first and then share the official post from their personal account. Friars should approach all communications on social media as public and have the same identity, regardless of a public or private account. This reflects their seamless private and public presence as a member of the order.

There are risks with social networking, especially with blurring boundaries of personal and professional relationships. Friars should use their personal accounts primarily for communicating with relatives and friends on a social level. Friars are strongly encouraged to never get into debates on social media communications, as these communications present a risk to the friar plus the province.

Friars may not speak negatively about their ministry, another friar, partner, or the province at any time on social media.

Friars using social media sites, especially those in a ministry that involve minors, must set very strict privacy settings on their personal account. Establishing boundaries is important. It is generally a good practice to avoid sending invitations to connect on social media with adults whom you are in a position of authority over. For example, avoid sending friend requests to staff. You may wish to accept friend requests from adult subordinates, but do not initiate them. Connecting with minors that a friar ministers to or with is never allowed. The Province's Office of Pastoral Care and Conciliation and PR Office are available to assist in understanding these settings. This helps to assure that youth and children do not have access to private and personal information.

Electronic communication should always reflect the mission, vision and values Capuchin charism. Any sexually-oriented conversations or discussions about sexual activities are prohibited on all forms of social media. Cyber-bullying or any other form of harassment, vulgarity or intimidation are also prohibited.

Friars may not create or share images of minors that are sexually suggestive, could be construed as sexually suggestive, or include minors in a state of undress on any social media or messaging platform, such as Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp and similar platforms. Should a friar receive such images, it should be immediately reported to the appropriate civil authorities and the Director of the Office of Pastoral Care and Conciliation.

If a minor reveals abuse or inappropriate interactions with an adult, the staff or volunteer must report this information to an administrator and the proper reporting agency immediately.

When using social media for purposes of a particular ministry involving minors, parents/guardians should be given a copy of this policy and information regarding the intended purpose of the site as well as how the parent or guardian can access the site.

Friars should participate online in the same way as you would with other public forums. Friars must take responsibility for the things done, said or written.

Carefully evaluate whether a particular message or post could put one's effectiveness as a friar at risk. Post only what is appropriate for the world to see.

Internal dialogue between friars should not be on any social media sites. Rather these communications should remain private on phone, email or Inforum. Community life should not be displayed for the public to read.

Friars should not accept minors they serve in ministry as 'friends' on social media sites, nor should they engage in direct messaging with minors on social media sites.

We recommend friars avoid using social media sites that are primarily used by minors or lack sexual content regulations. Examples of such sites include TikTok and Tumblr.

Friars publishing images or videos of adults on public ministry social media accounts must first gain signed permission from the individual. A copy of the photo release form will be provided to friars.

At public gatherings (i.e. Mass, public celebrations, etc.) friars should make a public statement stating that pictures or videos will be captured and will be published publicly to ministry sites. This will give an opportunity for adults and parents or guardians of minors to opt out of the pictures or videos.

At a minimum, friars should have Facebook privacy settings set to 'only friends'. Do not use 'Friends of Friends' or 'Everyone' as these open the content to a large group of unknown people. A friar's privacy and that of the friar's family may be at risk.

Maintain control of security, privacy and access to personal social media accounts and information.

Use strong passwords on all social media accounts with a minimum of 8 characters, one number, one capitalized letter and a special character (i.e. ! @ # \$ % ^ &). Unless the social network doesn't allow you to have one of those items in a password. Also we highly recommend you change passwords every six months. Password managers such as LastPass are recommended for this purpose.

### III. Confidentiality

The existence of social media does not change the province's understanding of confidentiality. Within the life of the church there are private conversations, confidential processes and private or closed meetings. All involved have a right to expect that others will respect confidential information they receive in any context. Breaking confidences is as wrong when using social media as it would be by any other means.

Always remember that participating in social media results in your comments being permanently available and open to being published in other media. Once something is posted to a social media site, blog or other internet site, assume it is still available even if it is later deleted from the original site. Content on the internet is frequently screenshotted, archived and easily searchable.

### IV. Definitions

**Institutional account** (i.e. a public account) – A social media account, blog or any internet website created by a friar or employee for the purpose of advancing the mission of the Province or ministries. A ministry account is the public face of a ministry or institution on a given social media platform.

**Personal account**– A social media account, blog or any internet website created by friar primarily to share personal communication with family and friends. (i.e. a private account)

**Email** – Electronic mail is a method of exchanging digital messages between one or more users. Email operates across computer networks, which are based on a store-and-forward model. Email servers accept, forward, deliver, and store messages.

**Instant Messaging** – Private real time communications between two or more users on a social media platform (i.e. direct messages on Twitter, communication using Facebook Messenger, WhatsApp or other messaging services).

**Content** – Words, images and/or videos published to a social media site. (i.e. a post on Facebook, a Tweet on Twitter, a Snap on Snapchat.)

**Comment/reply** – A public response to another user's social media content.

**Live stream** – A instantly published video that any user can view in real time. Livestreamed video is usually also archived and available to view after the live event has concluded.

**Reddit** – A social media, social news aggregation, web content rating, and discussion website. Reddit's registered community members can submit content, such as text posts or direct links. Registered users can then vote submissions up or down to organize the posts and determine their position on the site's pages. The submissions with the most positive votes appear on the front page or the top of a category. Content entries are organized by areas of interest called "subreddits". The subreddit topics include news, science, gaming, movies, music, books, fitness, food, and image-sharing, among many others.

**Snapchat** – An image messaging and multimedia mobile application launched September 2011. Snapchat evolved into a mix of private messaging and public content, including brand networks, publications, and live events such as sports and music. Nevertheless, according to survey studies conducted in March 2016, the personal oriented messaging was still being accessed by users more than the publicly offered content that was being presented.

**Tumblr** – A microblogging and social networking website founded in 2007, and owned by Yahoo! since 2013. The service allows users to post multimedia and other content to a short-form blog. Users can follow other users' blogs. Bloggers can also make their blogs private. For bloggers, many of the website's features are accessed from a "dashboard" interface. Due to lax copyright and decency standards, it is estimated that as many as half of Tumblr users either consume or produce pornography on the site.

**Twitter** – An online social networking service that enables users to send and read short 280-character messages called "tweets." Registered users can read and post tweets, but those who are unregistered can only read them. Users access Twitter through the website interface, SMS or mobile device app. Twitter was created in March 2006. The service rapidly gained worldwide popularity, and handles 1.6 billion search queries per day.

**Facebook** – A for-profit corporation and online social media and social networking service. The Facebook website was launched on February 4, 2004. Since 2006, anyone age 13 and older has been allowed to become a registered user of Facebook. The Facebook name comes from the face

book directories often given to United States university students. Facebook can be accessed by a large range of desktops, laptops, tablet computers, and smartphones over the Internet and mobile networks. After registering to use the site, users can create a user profile indicating their name, occupation, schools attended and so on. Users can add other users as "friends", exchange messages, post status updates and digital photos, share digital videos and links, use various software applications ("apps"), and receive notifications when others update their profiles or make posts. Additionally, users may join common-interest user groups organized by workplace, school, hobbies or other topics, and categorize their friends into lists. In groups, editors can pin posts to top. Additionally, users can complain about or block unpleasant people. Because of the large volume of data that users submit to the service, Facebook has come under scrutiny for its privacy policies. Facebook makes most of its revenue from targeted advertisements which appear onscreen that are based on the vast volume of user data, from both online and offline sources, owned and analyzed by Facebook. Facebook is a popular destination for livestreamed video content.

**Instagram** – A popular photo- and video-sharing site launched independently in 2010 and now owned by Facebook. Users can follow other users and like and comment on photos. Digital photo filters were an initial novel feature of the platform. Like many social media platforms, Instagram includes a direct messaging feature, allowing users to privately message one another. Users can also post Stories, which are a sequential series of photos and/or videos that may include emoji, stickers, text overlays and other effects.

**YouTube** – Owned by Google, YouTube is a widely-used video sharing and livestreaming platform. YouTube algorithmically scans all uploaded content and will automatically flag any content that contains copyrighted material. YouTube earns revenue by selling targeted advertising based on user data gathered online and offline by Google and other sources.

**Flickr** – A photo-sharing site owned by Yahoo. Flickr was popular prior to the rise of Instagram.

**TikTok** – A micro video-sharing platform widely used by minors and young adults.

**Discord** – A text, voice, video and photo chat service popular with videogamers. It has strong privacy and security features.

**Dating apps** – Because each friar takes a vow of chastity, dating apps should never be installed or used by any member of the Capuchin community.