

Code of Ethical Standards

for the
**Roman Catholic Archdiocese of
Kansas City in Kansas**

6/11/03

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PREAMBLE

As people committed to embodying and continuing the ministry of Jesus Christ, all those who minister and serve in the name of Christ in our parishes, ministries and institutions must always uphold and exemplify Christian values and conduct. The teaching of Jesus articulated in the Gospels calls us to the highest ethical standards and behavior. Additionally, the Code of Canon Law and other Church directives require us to act in a Christlike manner in all relationships especially those related to Church life and ministry.

This Code of Ethical Standards for the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Kansas City in Kansas articulates some of these ethical demands in light of Church ministry today and contemporary society and its needs. This Code of Ethical Standards does not presume to provide the answers to all the ethical questions that may arise in the course of Church life and ministry. It does, however, establish a set of general ethical standards in light of Gospel values to help delineate boundaries by which ethical questions can be decided and evaluated.

This Code of Ethical Standards is provided for all who serve in positions of Church leadership including priests, professional and volunteer staff and all who by office, designated position or specific responsibility act as representatives of the Church in the Archdiocese. Herein all these will be referred to under the term 'church leader'.

This code is not intended to supercede canon law, civil law or other ethics documents in use within the Archdiocese. It establishes ethical standards that our Church leaders are expected to adhere to in the performance of their duties.

The conduct of Church leaders, both public and private, has the potential to inspire and motivate people or scandalize and weaken their faith. All leaders must be aware of the responsibilities that accompany their work. They should know God's goodness and grace support them in their ministry.

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GENERAL PRINCIPLES

The ethical Church leader recognizes the authority of leadership comes from God as a gift. An ethical response to that gift involves living a life of integrity and competence, respecting the dignity, rights and responsibilities of others and embracing a commitment to the Church and community as taught us by the Gospel.

STEWARDS OF AUTHORITY

Throughout his public ministry, Jesus encountered challenges from the chief priests, scribes and elders concerning the origin of his authority. "By what authority are you doing these things? And who gave you this authority?" (Mt. 21:23, Mk. 11:28). Church leaders recognize that the authority of leadership comes from God as a gift for the welfare of the Church. Consequently, Church leaders are stewards of this gift of authority and leadership. The response of the faithful steward is to use this gift prayerfully and prudently for the growth of the Church and the wider community.

INTEGRITY

Church leaders are expected to be persons of integrity, honesty, and of high moral standards, and as such they have a responsibility to lead by example. In the performance of their duties they are expected to conduct themselves in a responsible and conscientious manner, free from any deception, corruption, or action that could be deemed as improper.

RESPECT FOR OTHERS

Church leaders shall respect the rights, dignity and worth of each member of the Church community as a creation of God.

Church leaders strive to be sensitive to cultural differences among people and appreciate the opportunities that diversity brings. Church leaders take the time to understand the unique history of their particular parish, office or ministry.

Church leaders are aware that issues of age, gender, race, religion, physical and mental disabilities, and language all affect how the message of the Gospel is received and interpreted.

COMPETENCE

Church leaders are expected to have a high level of competency in their particular ministry. As professionals, Church leaders shall endeavor to maintain their competency and currency through training, continuing education, and experience. Church leaders shall not attempt to provide services in those areas in which they lack competence. Competence also means knowing one's limitations.

COMMITMENT TO THE CHURCH AND THE COMMUNITY AS TAUGHT US BY THE GOSPEL

Church leaders embrace the teachings of Jesus and work to promote the Gospel. At the Rite of Ordination to the Diaconate, the Bishop places the Book of the Gospels in the hand of the man to be ordained and he says to him, "Believe what you read. Teach what you believe. Practice what you teach." All Church leaders should take these words to heart. The Scriptures and the Magisterium of the Roman Catholic Church guide Church leaders when decisions must be made that directly affect the parish and community.

Church leaders shall exhibit a deep commitment to the Church. Loyalty to the traditions of the past, attentiveness to the realities of the present, and readiness/preparedness for challenges of the future should be evident. They are responsible for nurturing the life of the community, especially its sacramental life.

Church leaders shall show a commitment not only to the parish family, but also to the larger church and civic communities, embracing a special care and concern for the needs of the poor and the oppressed. Active reflection on Catholic social teachings will assist Church leaders in addressing community social concerns. Church leaders shall share the spirit of ecumenism in their interactions with other community religious groups.

PERSONAL WELL-BEING

Church leaders are responsible for attending to their own physical, mental, emotional, spiritual and intellectual health. Church leaders should nurture their gifts in these areas and attend to their shortcomings. They should be supportive of one another in maintaining each other's well being, and call their peers' attention to those instances where, due to a lack of well being, ministry suffers. Church leaders should be alert to any impediments to their well being, and seek appropriate assistance. When necessary, some instances of impediments should also be called to the attention of the appropriate responsible authority.

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ETHICAL STANDARDS IN PROFESSIONAL RELATIONSHIPS

Church leaders are to be guided by a selfless attention to truth and fairness in all relationships. Church leaders model behavior that respects, protects and shares the God-given life, worth and dignity of every person. Further, Church leaders are committed to creating an environment throughout their organization that encourages and supports the dignity of others. In such an environment, conflicts of interest, harassment, sexual misconduct, and any inappropriate conduct cannot be tolerated.

1. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

Church leaders should avoid putting themselves in a position that might present a conflict of interest since the existence or even the appearance of a conflict of interest can call into question one's integrity and professional conduct.

- 1.1. The potential for a conflict of interest exists in many circumstances. Examples of such behavior by a Church leader include conducting private business or other dealings with the Church or any of its members, accepting substantial (non-token) gifts for services or favors; employing or engaging in transactions with his or her friends or relatives; acting with partiality toward employees or Church members; or violating a confidence of another for personal gain.
- 1.2. A Church leader should disclose, to the appropriate responsible authority, any circumstances that might have the appearance of a conflict of interest, thereby diffusing any potential situation.

2. HARASSMENT

Church leaders respect and protect the God-given life, dignity and worth of every person, regardless of gender, cultural background, age or disability.

- 2.1. Church leaders do not engage in physical, psychological or verbal harassment of employees, volunteers, or parishioners and will not tolerate such harassment by other church employees, volunteers or others.

- 2.2. Church leaders are committed to providing a professional work environment for their employees, which is totally free of harassment. This commitment continues the diocesan policy of fair and equal employment to every person regardless of race, color, sex, national origin, religion (except where religion is a bona fide occupational qualification) age, or disability.
- 2.3. Harassment encompasses a broad range of physical or verbal behavior, which can include, but is not limited to, the following:
- physical or mental abuse;
 - racial insults;
 - derogatory ethnic slurs;
 - unwelcome sexual advances or touching;
 - requests for sexual favors used as a condition of employment or affecting any personnel decision such as hiring, promotion or compensation;
 - display of offensive materials;
 - stereotyping;
 - name-calling;
 - sexually-offensive, insensitive or vulgar comments.
- 2.4. Harassment can occur as a result of a single egregious act or a persistent pattern of behavior, which results in the creation of a hostile, abusive, offensive, or intimidating work environment, or unreasonably interferes with or adversely affects a person's performance or opportunities. Such behavior is not acceptable, and cannot be tolerated. At a minimum, such conduct constitutes bad manners and bad example. It may also be immoral and illegal as well.
- 2.5. Church leaders are to follow the established procedure for reporting of harassment as specified in diocesan policy (refer to Section 4 – Supporting Documents & Resources).
- 2.6. Church leaders should exercise a special concern for any person who may be isolated, bullied, harassed, alienated or the target of inappropriate conduct.

3. SEXUAL CONDUCT

Church leaders respect the personal dignity of all persons and maintain appropriate professional boundaries that neither exploit nor abuse those entrusted to their care.

- 3.1. Church leaders do not exploit relationships with those entrusted to their care or supervision for sexual gain or intimacy.

- 3.2. It is the personal and professional obligation of the Church leader to be knowledgeable about what constitutes sexual exploitation and to be familiar with the laws of the State of Kansas regarding sexual exploitation, sexual abuse, and sexual assault (refer to Section 4 – Supporting Documents & Resources).
- 3.3. Church leaders have a responsibility to witness to chastity in all relationships appropriate to their state in life, whether celibate, married or single.
- 3.4. Any allegations of sexual misconduct will be taken seriously and reported to the Archbishop's delegate, to the Vicar General or to the Archbishop.
- 3.5. Church leaders should be knowledgeable of the State of Kansas Child Abuse Regulations as well as the *Policies and Procedures Concerning Sexual Misconduct* of the Catholic Archdiocese of Kansas City in Kansas and know the proper reporting requirements. Church leaders shall also comply with all mandatory reporting requirements except if the information was received under the seal of the confessional.
- 3.6. Church leaders should always strive to witness to the fullness of Catholic virtue.

4. CONDUCT WITH MINORS

Church leaders working with minors should use appropriate judgment marked by personal and professional integrity to ensure safe and trusting relationships, avoiding any and all appearances of impropriety

- 4.1. Church leaders must be aware of their own vulnerability and that of any individual minor with whom they may be working. In every instance possible a team approach to ministry with youth should be considered.
- 4.2. In group settings an appropriate ratio of adults to young people should be maintained.
- 4.3. Church leaders should exercise prudent caution when meeting with minors, especially in a one-on-one encounter. Secluded meeting places must be avoided.
- 4.4. Any physical contact with minors may be misconstrued by both minors and other adults and should only occur under appropriate public circumstances.

Church leaders are responsible for maintaining sexual boundaries in a pastoral relationship with minors. Church leaders should know and understand the diocesan policies and procedures concerning allegations of sexual misconduct involving minors and the developmentally disabled.

- 4.5. Church leaders do not supply or condone the use of alcohol, tobacco and/or any other illegal drugs by minors. Further, Church leaders are to refrain from the use of alcohol, tobacco and illegal drugs while working with minors.
- 4.6. Church leaders do not provide any sexually explicit, inappropriate, or offensive material to minors, nor do they discuss their own sexual experiences or use sexually explicit or vulgar language.
- 4.7. Providing overnight accommodations in rectories or other personal residences for parish minors, or other minors with whom the Church leader may have other than a close familial relationship, is prohibited.
- 4.8. Church leaders should not go on vacations or overnights alone with minors other than their own children. It is not appropriate for an adult to share a bed with a minor. Sharing a bedroom, other than a dormitory style room, with a minor(s) is not permitted.

5. ADMINISTRATION

Church leaders exercise just treatment of employees and volunteers in the daily performance of their ministries.

- 5.1. Church leaders seek to relate to all people with respect, sensitivity and reverence. Meetings are to be conducted with patience and courtesy toward the views of others in an environment where it is safe for others to offer constructive criticism.
- 5.2. Church leaders seek to empower others, supporting each person to live the life to which God calls them. They should seek to work in ways that respect the different talents people bring to the Church.
- 5.3. Church leaders exercise responsible stewardship of all parish resources. They should ensure that whatever their area of ministry there is a clear accounting of all parish funds.
- 5.4. Personnel and other administrative decisions made by Church leaders should meet all civil and canonical requirements and reflect a fidelity to Church social teachings.

6. CONFIDENTIALITY

Information disclosed to a Church leader during the course of counseling, advising, spiritual direction, and any other professional contact should be held in strictest confidence.

- 6.1. Parishioners and other persons who come to the Church leader should feel they are entering a professional relationship marked by respect, trust and confidentiality.
- 6.2. The Church leader should safeguard the confidentiality of any notes, files, or computer records pertaining to professional contact with individuals.
- 6.3. If consultation with another professional becomes necessary, utmost care should be taken to do so only by using non-identifying information; when this is not possible, the other professional must be bound to the same degree of confidentiality as the Church leader. If the other professional is not so bound, the disclosure should not be made.
- 6.4. When consultation is necessary, the Church leader should exercise great care to limit the content of the information to be shared. The Church leader should first determine the precise information that needs to be shared, with whom the information is to be shared, and why it needs to be shared.
- 6.5. When it is necessary to disclose confidential information, it should only be done with the written, informed consent of the individual(s) concerned.
- 6.6. When entering into a counseling or pastoral relationship, Church leaders should instruct the person from the outset regarding any exceptions to the ordinary right of confidentiality: such as threats of self-inflicted harm to the person, threats against others by the person, or the need to take corrective action in employment situations, or the civil or canonical reporting requirements which limit absolute rights of confidentiality in specific situations.
- 6.7. Knowledge that arises from professional contact may be used in teaching, writing, preaching or counseling only when effective measures have been taken to safeguard absolutely individual identity and confidentiality.
- 6.8. Under no circumstances can the confidentiality of the confessional ever be violated, even indirectly.

7. RECORDS AND INFORMATION

Appropriate confidentiality should be maintained in creating, storing, accessing, transferring and disposing of parish or institutional records.

- 7.1. The Code of Canon Law and directives of the United States Catholic Conference of Bishops should be observed with regard to all sacramental records, especially as regards issues of adoption and legitimacy. Older sacramental records might be made available in special circumstances such as genealogical research. Sacramental records considered confidential should be made available only to persons directly impacted, as in sacramental preparation processes and status of persons cases.
- 7.2. Parish financial records should be held as confidential with due regard for accountability to the parish at large and to parish and diocesan financial institutes. Public inquiry into financial records by government, media or other entities should be directed to appropriate diocesan officials.
- 7.3. The records of individual contributions to the parish should be regarded as private. Church leaders should generally not reference such records except as necessary. Church leaders should not solicit on behalf of themselves or unauthorized parties.

8. COUNSELING: INDIVIDUAL AND SMALL GROUP SITUATIONS

Church leaders, when they engage in counseling or spiritual direction, or when they participate or lead meetings of any group, shall respect the rights and protect the welfare of each person, seek to promote the common good, and recognize the limitations of personal competence.

- 8.1. The parameters for professional counseling by Church leaders should be dictated by their training or certification from a recognized professional association of peers or licensure from the State of Kansas or other appropriate accrediting agency. Most Church leaders are not licensed counselors but engage in many sorts of pastoral counseling, advising, and spiritual direction. Such counsel, advice, or direction should be harmonized with any professional therapy the individual may be engaged in elsewhere. In some cases Church leaders may need to refer the individual back to his/her therapist. In other cases, Church leaders may need to refer the individual to a trained therapist for the good of the individual's faith or salvation.

- 8.2. Church leaders should strive to ensure that no individual is subject to emotional abuse resulting from group interactions. The nature of any Church group (including support groups, parish organizations, faith-sharing groups, etc.) should be clear to the participants and the parameters of confidentiality of all individual disclosures understood by all participants.
- 8.3. Church leaders ordinarily should not disclose information learned from a pastoral counseling or spiritual direction session. For clarification of confidentiality issues refer to Section 6.
- 8.4. Church leaders lacking professional accreditation as described above should generally avoid long-term counseling relationships. Church leaders should make clear at the commencement of any counseling relationship the limits of their competence. Referral should be provided for issues outside the realm of competence of the Church leader. Early referrals are generally encouraged. Referral would also be appropriate for cases where a professional relationship must be broken due to a re-assignment of the Church leader.
- 8.5. Church leaders ordinarily do not commence a professional counseling relationship with someone with whom they share a pre-existing relationship, such as an employee, professional colleague, family member, etc.
- 8.6. Any physical contact may be misconstrued and generally should be avoided. The Church leader should always be focused and prepared to enforce appropriate boundaries.
- 8.7. Appointments and meetings, whether with individuals or groups, should be conducted in an appropriate setting and at an appropriate time. They should not occur in private living quarters or at places or times that would be ambiguous or misleading to any party. Wherever possible, Church leaders should avoid co-mingling of private and public spaces.
- 8.8. Church leaders should be clear about what constitutes a counseling or spiritual direction session. Accountability should be established through professional peer evaluation or supervision such as Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) techniques for evaluating one's performance. A calendar of times and places of contacts might be kept, especially in the case of more frequent meetings with the same person. Record or document all referrals.

- 8.9. When a Church leader's independent judgment is impaired (for example, by prior or concurrent personal or professional relationships, where he or she becomes personally involved, or where he or she becomes an advocate for one person against another), the Church leader should advise the party/parties that he or she can no longer provide counsel and refer him/her/them to other professionals.
- 8.10. Pastoral care such as pastoral counseling and spiritual direction are spiritual goods of the Church and are provided as part of the ministry of the Church. Therefore, any association between the providing of such services and the payment of a fee or 'donation' for services should be avoided unless otherwise established by competent church authority.

A violation of a provision of this Code shall not give rise to a civil cause of action nor should it create any presumption that a legal duty has been breached. This Code is designed to provide guidance to Church leaders. It is not designed to be a basis for civil liability. The Code provides a just basis for a Church leader's self assessment and does not imply that an antagonist in a collateral proceeding or transaction has standing to seek enforcement of the Code. Accordingly, nothing in the Code should be deemed to augment any substantive legal duty of a Church leader.

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SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS
& RESOURCES

Further information about the following list of resources is available by contacting the Chancery Office of the Catholic Archdiocese of Kansas City in Kansas at 913-721-1570 (unless another phone number is listed for a particular resource).

Kansas Statutes Annotated 38-1521 et. seq. Reporting of Abuse; Mandatory Reporters.

Code of Ethical Standards, Archdiocese of Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

Code of Ethical Standards for Church Leaders, Archdiocese of Anchorage, Alaska.

Code of Ethical Standards for Priests, Pastoral Administrators, Deacons, and Diocesan Officers, Archdiocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph.

Acknowledgement of Employment at Will.

Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People.

Sexual Misconduct Policies & Procedures, Archdiocese of Kansas City in Kansas

Sexual Harassment Policy, Archdiocese of Kansas City in Kansas

Employee Handbook for Catholic Charities, Catholic Archdiocese of Kansas City in Kansas

Handbook of Catholic School Policies & Procedures.

Human Resource Manual for the Catholic Archdiocese of Kansas City in Kansas.

Lay Employee Benefit Summary.

Employment of School Principals & Teachers, Catholic Archdiocese of Kansas City in Kansas.

RECOGNITION OF BASELINE DOCUMENT

The Archdiocese of Kansas City in Kansas respectfully recognizes the substantial effort previously put forth by the Diocese of Milwaukee in the drafting and issuance of their document "Code of Ethical Standards for Church Leaders". We are grateful for the expressed opportunity to use this as a model for the drafting of a document to serve the Archdiocese of Kansas City in Kansas.

Church or Institution: _____

City or Town: _____

RECEIPT

I hereby acknowledge that I have received a copy of *The Code of Ethical Standards for Church Leaders of the Archdiocese of Kansas City in Kansas*, dated June 2003. I understand its meaning and agree to conduct myself in accordance with its contents.

SIGNATURE

PRINT NAME

DATE

The original of this signed document should remain in the Church/Institution files.