

## Social Media Policy - St. Leonard Faith Community

This Social Media Policy applies to all online and mobile platforms for sharing content and information, whether controlled by the St. Leonard Faith Community or hosted by others, on which members of the St. Leonard Faith Community engage in discussions or activities relating to St. Leonard's. The term "social media" refers to social networking services, blogs, short-message services, message boards, wikis, podcasts, image- and video-sharing sites, and other methods for real-time information sharing among users. Because this is a constantly evolving area, this policy applies to all new social media platforms whether or not they are specifically mentioned in this policy.

**1. Core values.** In areas where this policy does not provide a direct answer for how members of our community should answer social-media questions, members should use their best judgment and take the most thoughtful and prudent action possible, bearing in mind the St. Leonard Faith Community's need to preserve accountability for the use of its name in all social media and the core values of this policy:

•**Be selective** – there are a variety of digital platforms available. Use the right medium for your message – a blog or social network might not be the right place for messages intended only for a small group, and email or other more targeted media might be best.

•**Be responsible** – social media are most often individual interactions, not official faith community communications. Members of the St. Leonard Faith Community are personally responsible for the content they publish.

•**Be smart** – a blog or community post is often visible to the entire world, and can be shared by others in ways that you cannot control. Remember that what you write is public, and will remain public for a very long time (perhaps permanently). Be respectful to our community.

•**Be identified** – authenticity and transparency are driving forces behind social media. Use real identities to the greatest extent possible rather than anonymous posts and comments.

•**Respect the privacy of others** – do not publish the personal information of others in the community without their permission or, in the case of children under 13, written permission of their parents.

•**Be respectful** – the St. Leonard Faith Community is a thoughtful and prayerful community that encourages free expression and values civil debate. If you disagree with others, do so with civility. Respect your audience, express your views with appropriate language, and be respectful of the Church and its teachings.

•**Be trustworthy** – respect the confidentiality of matters that are shared with you in confidence, or that are meant to be kept confidential by the nature of your work, ministry or volunteer mission.

**2. Duties of Owners and Moderators.** Moderators of official St. Leonard Faith Community social media are responsible for ensuring compliance with this policy. All comment and response areas should be moderated if possible and should be consistent with the goal of the forum. Leaders responsible for such areas should review and approve comments prior to posting, and should not post any comments that do not meet our standards for civility, misrepresent the position of the faith community or the Church, or that include profanity, defamatory language or speech that is otherwise inappropriate or off-topic. In an unmoderated forum, leaders should delete any comments or content that does not meet the standards of this policy as expeditiously as possible. Anonymous comments should be avoided except in circumstances where anonymous or pseudonymous speech is essential to the protection of the identities of the vulnerable. All moderators should reserve the right to ban repeat offenders. Moderators who permit users to post materials such as documents or photographs should make clear to users that the site will not archive those materials or be responsible for preserving them.

**3. Individual Judgment.** Even when engaging in social media for personal use, the comments of a member of the St. Leonard Faith Community may be viewed as a reflection on St. Leonard's. Users should use their best judgment when engaging in social media activities and should be on guard against actions and discussions that could harm the interests of our community.

**4. Transparency.** Users' social media communications are made in their personal capacity and not on behalf of the St. Leonard Faith Community. Statements made by members of the St. Leonard Faith Community should not be taken as expressing the formal position of St. Leonard's unless the speaker is specifically authorized to do so by the faith community staff.

**5. Privacy.** Personal information (that is, information that can reasonably identify a particular person, including name, phone number, address or email address) should not be disclosed without the prior written consent of the person identified. In cases where a user has consented to the publication of such information, appropriate privacy settings and levels should be utilized.

**6. Children.** Any site operated by the St. Leonard Faith Community that is directed toward youth between the ages of 13 and 18 should be designed to limit access to authorized members, and leaders of such sites should take steps to ensure that unauthorized users will not have access to the site (by use of password protection or similar methods, if available). Registration for such a site must require the use of a legal name and valid contact information, such as an operational email address. Users of such a site may not post images of children under 13 without the prior consent of a parent or legal guardian of any minor depicted.

**7. If You See It, Say It.** Any use of social media that does not comply with this policy should be brought to the attention of the faith community staff immediately.

*This policy has been adapted, with permission, from the Social Media Policy of Holy Trinity Catholic Church in Washington, D.C.*