



Code of Conduct.
For Bishops, Priests,
Priestesses, Deacons,
Sub-deacons, Minor Clergy,
Laity, Staff & Volunteers.



Code of Conduct

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Preface

The purpose of the *Code of Conduct* is to assist in developing and implementing uniform guidelines for appropriate behaviour in situations of ministry, pastoral care, counselling and spiritual direction, especially when dealing with Children, Youths and Vulnerable Adults. The *Code of Conduct* is not intended to address all situations that may arise in ministry or Clergy's relationship with their Parishes, Dioceses and Monastic Demesnes or the wider community. It is intended to create a structure for addressing a variety of circumstances that, if not appropriately addressed, may create a risk of incidents, allegations, claims and-or lawsuits.

The Church must be exemplary. Clergy, Staff and Volunteers should and will be held accountable for their behaviour. In order to maintain the highest level of accountability, there must be a clear and unambiguous blueprint of appropriate and inappropriate behaviour. The *Code of Conduct* provides a basic structure for identifying limits. It is intended as a "continuous improvement document." Therefore, your suggestions and recommendations for additions and revisions are encouraged.



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I. Preamble

Bishops, Priests, Deacons, Sub-deacons, Minor Clergy, Staff and Volunteers in our Churches, Monastic Demesnes, Parishes, Communities and Organizations must uphold the strictest morals, values and standards of conduct. The *Code of Conduct* provides a set of standards for conduct in certain pastoral situations.

II. Responsibility

The public and private conduct of Clergy, Staff and Volunteers can inspire and motivate people, but it can also scandalize and undermine the people's faith. Clergy, Staff and Volunteers must, at all times, be aware of the responsibilities that accompany their work. Responsibility for adherence to the *Code of Conduct* rests with the individual. Clergy, Staff and Volunteers who disregard this *Code of Conduct* will be subject to remedial action by their presiding Ordinariat, Priest-Priestess, Abbot-Abbess or the Synod of Bishops. Corrective action may take various forms ranging from a verbal or written reproach to removal from the ministry and possible excommunication from the Church of St Mary and St John, depending on the specific nature and circumstances of the offense and the extent of the harm.



III. Clergy, Staff and Volunteer Standards

1. Conduct for Bishops, Priests, Deacons, Sub-deacons, Minor Clergy, Staff and Volunteers

(All Clergy, Staff and Volunteers must respect the rights and advance the welfare of each person.)

1.1 Clergy, Staff and Volunteers shall not step beyond their competence in counselling situations and shall refer clients to other professionals when appropriate.

1.2 Clergy, Staff and Volunteers should carefully consider the possible consequences before entering into a counselling relationship with someone with whom they have a pre-existing relationship (i.e., employee, professional colleague, friend, or other pre-existing relationship). *[See Section 7.2.2]*

1.3 Clergy, Staff and Volunteers should not record via audio or video any sessions.

(Written records may be kept with prior permission from the subject and in accordance with the Data Protection Act (GDPR) 2018 in the UK or the Acts relevant to the country or territory you are in)

1.4 Clergy, Staff and Volunteers must never engage in sexual intimacies with the persons they counsel. This includes consensual and non-consensual contact, forced physical contact and inappropriate sexual comments.

1.5 Clergy, Staff and Volunteers shall not engage in sexual intimacies with individuals who are close to the client, such as relatives or friends of the client, when there is a risk of exploitation or potential harm to the client. Clergy, Staff and Volunteers should presume that the potential for exploitation or harm exists in such intimate relationships.

1.6 Clergy, Staff and Volunteers assume the full burden of responsibility for establishing and maintaining clear, appropriate boundaries in all counselling and counselling-related relationships.

1.7 Physical contact of any kind (i.e., touching, hugging, holding) between Clergy, Staff and Volunteers and the persons they counsel can be misconstrued and should be avoided.

1.8 Sessions should be conducted in appropriate settings and at appropriate times.

1.8.1 No sessions should be conducted in private quarters.

1.8.2 Sessions should not be held at places or times that would tend to cause confusion about the nature of the relationship for the person being counselled.

1.9 Clergy, Staff and Volunteers shall maintain a log of the times and places of sessions with each person being counselled.



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2. Confidentiality

(Information disclosed to a member of Clergy, Staff or Volunteers during the course of counselling, advising, or spiritual guidance shall be held in the strictest confidence possible and always in line with the Data Protection Act (GDPR) 2018 in the UK or the appropriate Act or Legislation in your country.)

2.1 Information obtained in the course of sessions shall be confidential, except for compelling professional reasons or as required by law.

2.1.1 If there is clear and imminent danger to the client or to others, the Clergy, Staff, or Volunteer may disclose only the information necessary to protect the parties affected and to prevent harm.

2.1.2 Before disclosure is made, if feasible, the Clergy, Staff and Volunteers should inform the person being counselled about the disclosure and the potential consequences.

2.2 Clergy, Staff and Volunteers should discuss the nature of confidentiality and its limitations with each person in counselling.

2.3 Clergy, Staff and Volunteers should keep minimal records of the content of sessions.

2.4 Knowledge that arises from professional contact may be used in teaching, writing, homilies, or other public presentations only when effective measures are taken to absolutely safeguard both the individual's identity and the confidentiality of the disclosures.

2.5 While counselling a minor, if a member of Clergy, Staff, or a Volunteer discovers that there is a serious threat to the welfare of the minor and that communication of confidential information to a Parent or Legal Guardian is essential to the child's health and well-being, then the member of Clergy, Staff, or Volunteer should:

- Attempt to secure written consent from the minor for the specific disclosure.
- If consent is not given, disclose only the information necessary to protect the health and well-being of the minor.

Consultation with the appropriate Church supervisory personnel is required before disclosure.

These obligations are independent of the confidentiality of the confessional. Under no circumstances whatsoever can there be any disclosure, even indirect disclosure, of information received through the confessional.



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3. Conduct with Youths

(Clergy, Staff and Volunteers working with youths shall maintain an open and trustworthy relationship between youths and adult supervisors.)

3.1 Clergy, Staff and Volunteers must be aware of their own and others' vulnerability when working alone with youths. Use a team approach to managing youth activities.

3.2 Physical contact with youths can be misconstrued and should occur:

- only when completely nonsexual and otherwise appropriate.
- never in private.

3.3 Clergy, Staff and Volunteers should refrain from:

- the illegal possession and-or illegal use of drugs* and-or alcohol at all times.
- the use of alcohol & drugs when working with youths.

3.4 Clergy should not allow individual young people to stay overnight in the cleric's private accommodations or residence.

3.5 Clergy, Staff and Volunteers should not provide shared, private, overnight accommodation for individual young people including, but not limited to, accommodations in any Church owned facility, private residence, hotel room, or any other place where there is no other adult supervision present.

3.5.1 In rare, emergency situations, when accommodation is necessary for the health and well-being of the youth, the Clergy, Staff, or Volunteer should take extraordinary care to protect all parties from the appearance of impropriety and from all risk of harm.

3.5.2 Use a team approach to managing emergency situations.

**(Excludes the Medicinal & Ceremonial use of The Sacred Holy Herd, Cnàibe.)*



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4. Sexual Conduct

(Clergy, Staff and Volunteers must not, for sexual gain or intimacy, exploit the trust placed in them by the community.)

4.1 Clergy, Staff and Volunteers who provide pastoral counselling or spiritual direction services must avoid developing inappropriately intimate relationships with Minors, other Staff, or Parishioners. Clergy, Staff and Volunteers must behave in a professional manner at all times.

4.2 No Clergy, Staff, or Volunteer may exploit another person for sexual purposes.

4.3 Allegations of sexual misconduct should be taken seriously and reported to the Synod of Bishops, the Vicar General and to the civil authorities if the situation involves a minor. The Church of St Mary and St John's procedures will be followed to protect the rights of all involved.

4.4 Clergy, Staff and Volunteers should review and know the contents of the child abuse regulations and reporting requirements for the country-state in which they reside and should follow those mandates.



5. Harassment

(Clergy, Staff and Volunteers must not engage in physical, psychological, written, or verbal harassment of staff, volunteers, or parishioners and must not tolerate such harassment by other Church Clergy, Staff or Volunteers.)

5.1 Clergy, Staff and Volunteers shall provide a professional work environment that is free from physical, psychological, written, or verbal intimidation or harassment.

5.2 Harassment encompasses a broad range of physical, written, or verbal behaviour, including without limitation the following:

- Physical or mental abuse.
- Racial insults.
- Derogatory ethnic slurs.
- Unwelcome sexual advances or touching.
- Sexual comments or sexual jokes.
- Requests for sexual favours used as a condition of employment, or to affect other personnel decisions, such as promotion or compensation.
- Display of offensive materials.

5.3 Harassment can be a single severe incident or a persistent pattern of behaviour where the purpose or the effect is to create a hostile, offensive, or intimidating work environment.

5.4 Allegations of harassment should be taken seriously and reported immediately to the Synod of Bishops, the Vicar General as well as your Ordinariat or Abbot-Abbess. The Church of St Mary and St John's procedures will be followed to protect the rights of all involved.



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6. Church, Parish, Community and Organizational Records and Information

(Confidentiality will be maintained in creating, storing, accessing, transferring and disposing of church, parish, community or organizational records, in line with the Data Protection Act (GDPR) 2018 or such Acts appropriate to the country you live in.)

6.1 Most Sacramental records shall be regarded as public. However, when compiling and publishing Church, Parish, Diocese, Monastic Demesne, Community or Organization statistical information from these records, great care must be taken to preserve where possible, the anonymity of individuals.

6.2 Most Sacramental records are open to the public.

6.2.1 Information regarding adoption and legitimacy remains confidential, regardless of age.

6.2.2 Only staff members who are authorized to access the records and supervise their use shall handle requests to view records.

6.3 Church, Parish, Diocese, Monastic Demesne, Community or Organization financial records are confidential unless review is required by the Vicar General or the appropriate government agency of your country of residence. Please contact the Vicar General upon receipt of any request for release of financial records.

6.4 Individual contribution records of the Church, Parish, Diocese, Monastic Demesnes Community or Organization shall be regarded as private and shall be maintained in strictest confidence.



7. Conflicts of Interest

(Clergy, Staff and Volunteers should avoid situations that might present a conflict of interest. Even the appearance of a conflict of interest can call integrity and professional conduct into question.)

7.1 Clergy, Staff and Volunteers should disclose all relevant factors that potentially could create a conflict of interest.

7.2 Clergy, Staff and Volunteers should inform all parties when a real or potential conflict of interest arises. Resolution of the issues must protect the person receiving ministry services.

7.2.1 No Clergy, Staff, or Volunteer should take advantage of anyone to whom they are providing services in order to further their personal, spiritual, political, or business interests.

7.2.2 No Clergy, Staff, or Volunteer should provide counselling services to anyone with whom they have a business, professional, or social relationship. When this is unavoidable, the client must be protected. The counsellor must establish and maintain clear, appropriate boundaries.

7.2.3 When counselling or spiritual direction services are provided to two or more people who have a relationship with each other, the Clergy, Staff, or Volunteer must:

- Clarify with all parties the nature of each relationship.
- Anticipate any conflict of interest.
- Take appropriate actions to eliminate the conflict.
- Obtain from all parties written consent to continue services.

7.3 Conflicts of interest may also arise when a Counsellor's or Spiritual Director's independent judgment is impaired by:

- Prior dealings.
- Becoming personally involved.
- Becoming an advocate for one (person) against another.

In these circumstances, the Clergy, Staff, or Volunteer shall advise the parties that he or she can no longer provide services and refer them to another member of Clergy, Staff, or Volunteer.



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8. Reporting Ethical or Professional Misconduct

(Clergy, Staff and Volunteers have a duty to report their own ethical or professional misconduct and the misconduct of others.)

8.1 Clergy, Staff and Volunteers must hold each other accountable for maintaining the highest ethical and professional standards. When there is an indication of illegal actions by Clergy, Staff, or Volunteers, you should notify the Synod of Bishops and the Vicar General immediately. Who will advise the appropriate authorities.

8.2 When an uncertainty exists about whether a situation or course of conduct violates this *Code of Conduct* or other spiritual, moral, or ethical principles, consult with:

- The Synod of Bishops or the Vicar General.
- Others knowledgeable about ethical issues.
- Peers.

8.3 When it appears that a member of Clergy, a Staff Member, or a Volunteer has violated this *Code of Conduct* or other spiritual, moral, or ethical principles:

- Report the issue to a supervisor or next highest Church authority.
- Refer the matter directly to the Synod of Bishops or the Vicar General.

8.4 The obligation of Clergy, Staff and Volunteers to report client misconduct is subject to the duty of confidentiality. However, any agreement or duty to maintain confidentiality must yield to the need to report misconduct that threatens the Safety, Health, or Well-being of any of the persons involved.
(except as provided for in Section 2.5.)



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9. Administration

(Clergy shall treat all other Clergy, Staff and Volunteers justly in the day-to-day administrative operations of their ministries.)

9.1 Personnel and other administrative decisions made by Clergy, Staff and Volunteers shall meet civil and Canon Law obligations and also reflect spiritual and social teachings as well as this *Code of Conduct*.

9.2 No Clergy, Staff, or Volunteer shall use his or her position to exercise unreasonable or inappropriate power and authority.

9.3 Each Volunteer providing services to children and youth must read and sign the “*Volunteer Code of Conduct*” before providing services.



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10. Clergy, Staff and Volunteer Well-being

(Clergy, Staff and Volunteers have the duty to be responsible for their own spiritual, physical, mental and emotional health.)

10.1 Clergy, Staff and Volunteers should be aware of warning signs that indicate potential problems with their own spiritual, physical, mental and-or emotional health.

10.2 Clergy, Staff and Volunteers should seek help immediately whenever they notice behavioural or emotional warning signs in their own professional and-or personal lives.

10.3 Clergy, Staff and Volunteers must address their own spiritual needs. Support from a Spiritual Director is highly recommended.

10.4 Inappropriate or illegal use of alcohol and drugs* is prohibited.

**(Excludes the Medicinal & Ceremonial use of The Sacred Holy Herd, Cnáibe.)*



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IV. Volunteer's Code of Conduct

Our children are the most important gifts the Divine has entrusted to us. As a volunteer, I promise to strictly follow the rules and guidelines in this Volunteer's Code of Conduct as a condition of my providing services to the children and youth of our Organizations and Communities.

As a volunteer, I will:

- Treat everyone with respect, loyalty, patience, integrity, courtesy, dignity and consideration.
- Avoid situations where I am alone with children and-or youth at Church activities.
- Use positive reinforcement rather than criticism, competition or comparison when working with children and-or youth.
- Refuse to accept expensive gifts from children and-or youth or their parents without prior written approval from the Church.
- Refrain from giving expensive gifts to children and-or youth without prior written approval from the parents or guardian and the Church.
- Report suspected abuse to the Clergy, Synod of Bishops and the Vicar General as well as the relevant local government agencies. I understand that failure to report suspected abuse to relevant civil authorities is a breach of the law.
- Cooperate fully in any investigation of abuse of children and-or youth.

As a volunteer, I will not:

- Smoke or use tobacco products in the presence of children and-or youth.
- Use, possess or be under the influence of alcohol at any time while volunteering.
- Use, possess or be under the influence of illegal drugs at any time.
- Pose any health risk to children and-or youth (i.e. no fevers or other contagious situations).
- Strike, spank, shake or slap children and-or youth.
- Humiliate, ridicule, threaten or degrade children and-or youth.
- Touch a child and-or youth in a sexual or other inappropriate manner.
- Use any discipline that frightens or humiliates children and-or youth.
- Use profanity in the presence of children and-or youth.

I understand that as a volunteer working with children and-or youth, I am subject to a thorough background check including criminal history. I understand that any action inconsistent with this Code of Conduct or failure to take action mandated by this Code of Conduct may result in my removal as a volunteer with children and-or youth.

(Print Volunteers Full Name)

(Volunteers Signature)

(Date)