

Memorandum

To: Priests, Deacons, Religious, Parish Staffs

From: Dr. Marlon De La Torre, Sr. Director for the Department Evangelization

CC: Deacon Thomas Berg Jr. Chancellor; Fr. William Hahn-Vicar for Clergy; Fr. Adam Streitenberger-Vicar for Evangelization; Fr. David Arroyo-Vicar for Hispanic Ministry

Date: 3/8/2024

Re: **Diocesan Guest Speaker Policy**

To ensure that all ministry partners which includes individual *guest speakers* are in good standing with the teachings of the Catholic Church and specifically serve to assist in the Diocese of Columbus' ministerial, evangelization, and catechetical efforts the following Diocesan guideline on the vetting of a Guest Speaker has been instituted.

The Diocesan policy applies to any individual *Guest Speaker* who desires to provide ministerial outreach through a presentation, workshop, retreat, day of recollection, catechetical, pastoral, or liturgical formation within the Diocese of Columbus. This policy aims to assist Pastors, Principals, Parish Directors of Religious Education, and Administrators of any Catholic institution or organization in the Diocese of Columbus as they consider inviting a Catholic lay speaker to assist in the formation of the Catholic faith toward the faithful of the Diocese of Columbus.

It is the responsibility of the Pastors, Principals, Diocesan Directors of Religious Education, and Administrators to follow the guidelines as articulated. The Sr. Director for the Department of Evangelization has been charged to assist and ensure that the speaker policy is faithfully implemented where applicable. **Note:** All Parish Pastors are responsible for approving any guest speaker they invite to speak at their parish. The Diocesan Department for Evangelization assists in the review process where applicable per the guidelines.

Guest Speaker suitability requires that the individual in question be in good standing with the Magisterial teachings of the Catholic Church. Specifically, this means that the individual in question must be in doctrinal harmony and fidelity to the teachings of the Catholic Church as revealed in the Catechism of the Catholic Church. Any guest speaker who publicly promotes or advocates views that are contrary to the teachings of the Catholic Church will not be approved.

Pastors, Principals, Parish Directors of Religious Education, and Administrators should make a prudential judgment after appropriate research about the suitability of a potential *Guest Speaker* concerning the criteria mentioned above. Generally, the invitation of any Guest Speaker should be an opportunity to evangelize and catechize the faithful. Thus, anything which may cause confusion or scandal or incite disrespect or dissent is to be avoided.

Required Documentation: Note: The Diocesan policy can be accessed online at: www.columbuscatholic.org under the Department of Evangelization

1. A letter of recommendation from a bishop, Vicar General, or Priest in good standing.
2. Proof of having completed Safe Environment Training.
3. Theme and Curriculum Content of Presentation.

If you should have any questions, please feel free to contact Dr. Marlon De La Torre, Sr. Director for the Department of Evangelization mdelatorre@columbuscatholic.org.