



CATHOLIC DIOCESE of RALEIGH

SOCIAL MEDIA MODERATION GUIDELINES

PURPOSE

To maintain a charitable, respectful and constructive social media environment aligned with Catholic values, while moderating conversations consistently, proportionally and transparently.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- **Charity first:** Assume goodwill unless behavior shows otherwise
- **Behavior, not beliefs:** Moderate tone and conduct, not viewpoints
- **Least force necessary:** Escalate only when prior steps fail
- **Consistency matters:** Use shared language; avoid ad-lib responses
- **Protect the space:** Our goal is healthy dialogue, not winning arguments

LEVEL 0: OBSERVE CLOSELY

When to use:

- Sensitive or controversial content
- Early signs of tension or borderline tone to the conversation

Action: Monitor the thread closely, but do not engage publicly

LEVEL 1: PUBLICLY REMIND, REDIRECT, CLARIFY OR CORRECT

When to use:

- Misinformation begins spreading
- Comments framed as fact but inaccurate
- Good-faith confusion
- Passive-aggressive or dismissive language
- Repeated off-topic engagement

Response style: Factual, respectful, calm, brief

Example post to the thread:

Just to clarify, the diocese has not announced this. Verified information will always be shared directly through our official channels.

-or -

Please keep comments focused on the topic of this post and avoid personal attacks, in keeping with our commenting guidelines ([link here](#)). Thank you for keeping this conversation on topic, presuming goodwill and engaging from a perspective rooted in our Catholic faith.

Goal:

- Correct without escalating
- Reduce spread of confusion
- Give users a chance to self-correct

LEVEL 2: HIDE COMMENT

When to use:

- Policy violations
- Escalating conflict

Goal:

- De-escalate without further triggering
- Protect the space, not win the argument

LEVEL 3: REMOVE COMMENT, WARN USER

When to use:

- Severe policy violations – particularly profane, vulgar, sexually explicit, violent, racist comments
- Repeated behavior after public redirection
- Bad-faith persistence

Response style: Clear, calm, policy-referenced

Example (private message to user):

Your comment has been removed because it did not meet this page's commenting guidelines regarding (insert bullet item from policy here). This page is a moderated space for constructive conversation rooted in Christian charity and respect. We ask that comments remain on topic and respectful and avoid misleading or disruptive content. Please note that continued violations of our commenting policy (link here) may result in further moderation action. Thank you.

Goal:

- Set clear expectations
- Create a documented warning step

LEVEL 4: BLOCK USER

When to use:

- Repeated violations after warning
- Harassment, threats, impersonation
- Coordinated or automated behavior

Optional message to user:

After repeated moderation efforts, your account has been blocked from this page for violating our posted commenting guidelines.

Goal:

- Protect community
- Preserve moderator capacity

LEVEL 5: LIMIT OR CLOSE COMMENTS ON THE POST

When to use:

- Thread no longer productive
- Escalation despite multiple interventions
- External brigading or media attention

Response style: Transparent, neutral, brief

Action options:

1. Limit comments on the post to Established Followers, OR
2. Add an optional note, then close comments on the post

Optional note:

Comments are being limited at this time to maintain a respectful and constructive environment.

Goal:

- End harm without assigning blame
- Preserve trust in moderation

WHEN TO TURN OFF COMMENTS: A '30-SECOND TEST'

If **2 or more** of the following are true, consider turning comments off:

1. The post is normative or directive (policy, rules, discipline).
2. The post involves moral teaching likely to be debated.
3. The post could be screenshot and misread.
4. The post is controversial and you do not plan to actively moderate for the next 24-48 hours.

HOW TO TURN COMMENTS OFF WITHOUT BACKLASH

Turning comments off triggers ratios when it feels defensive. Framing matters.

Avoid "Comments disabled due to negativity."

Use "*To keep this space focused and charitable, comments are turned off for this post.*" -or- "*Because this is an official announcement, comments are closed.*"

HYBRID OPTIONS

1. Turn comments **off and link** to:
 - A longer article
 - An FAQ
 - A pastoral letter
 - An email contact
2. Turn comments **off for 24-48 hours** as a "cool-down" period.