

Policy on Media Communications

The Archdiocese of Vancouver works to ensure it effectively advances the work of the Church through clear and consistent messages, internally and externally.

The Archdiocesan website, *The B.C. Catholic*, and the Communications Office are the primary sources of information for the Archdiocese and work in an integrated way to ensure messaging and responses to media inquiries are presented with a unified voice.

The Communications Director, acting as spokesperson, will ensure a clear, consistent, accurate, authoritative, and timely message is communicated to the public on behalf of the Archdiocese and the Archbishop.

In the interest of orderly, consistent management of information for news media and public, as well as broadening the reach of Archdiocesan news in an efficient manner, all Archdiocesan personnel including priests, deacons, seminarians, consecrated men and women, parish personnel, and staff of the John Paul II Pastoral Centre, are required to follow the following policy on media communications.

A. Share Your Story

As an Archdiocese, we try to cooperate with the media however possible, and parishes are encouraged to look for opportunities to share their stories of achievements and initiatives. The Communications Office is available to support you in reaching out to the media. Clergy and personnel directly involved or having expertise in the story may give in-person and on-camera interviews on non-controversial topics, such as a parish event or Archdiocesan initiative.

Parishes are asked to contact the Communications Office afterward with details of the interview and the expected broadcast or publishing date.

Archdiocesan clergy or personnel who in their official capacity wish to submit letters to the editor or correspond with news media must receive approval from the Communications Office.

B. Crisis Communications

Stories that may negatively affect the Archdiocese or its reputation are handled differently. To help us respond appropriately on behalf of the Archdiocese, the Communications Office and appropriate Archdiocesan and civil authorities must be notified immediately in the event of:

- Any emergency (fire, accident, natural disaster, crime, or other event presenting a threat and typically involving police, fire, or emergency medical personnel).
- Any controversy that may result in a negative story about the Archdiocese, parishes, or personnel, or may significantly impact the public perception or reputation of the Archdiocese. This includes crimes or threats against Archdiocesan personnel, inappropriate conduct by clergy or staff, litigation, fiscal irregularities, and personnel issues likely to become high profile.



If uncertain, contact the Communications Office immediately to discuss the issue. The Communications Director in consultation with the Archbishop and Vicar General will make the final decision on how the media inquiry will be addressed.

In the case of media inquiries about any emergency or controversial issue, Archdiocesan personnel are to advise the reporter that the Archdiocese of Vancouver's policy is to refer media inquiries to the Communications Office. An appropriate response to the media is: "I'm sorry, our policy is for all media inquiries to go to the Communications Office. Please contact them and the appropriate person will respond to you as soon as they are available. The phone number is (604) 683-0281. Their email is communications@rcav.org."

If a reporter, photographer, or video crew arrives unexpectedly at a parish, contact the Communications Office before allowing them on the premises. The pastor or an authorized representative may be directed to speak or not to speak with the media after the Communications Office determines if any response is appropriate.

Media may not enter Archdiocesan facilities to record, photograph, or attempt to interview anyone without explicit permission, but they cannot be prevented from photographing or filming the exterior of an Archdiocesan building. Contact the Communications Office, which will clarify with the news organization the nature of the story.

Approved: 2017-August-28
Memorial of St. Augustine

Handwritten signature of J. Michael Miller, CSB, in blue ink.

† J. Michael Miller, CSB
Archbishop of Vancouver

Appendix I: Contact Information – Director of Communications

May be shared with media:

Paul Schratz, Director of Strategic Communications:

Office: 604-683-0281, ext. 50314

Cell: 604-505-9411

Email: pschratz@rcav.org

Do not share with media:

Home: 604-556-2283