

**Parish of St. Thomas the Apostle**  
**Parish Communication Policy Document**

14 August 2018

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## 1. Objectives of this Policy Document

### Parish Mission Statement

*St. Thomas, the Apostle parish is an open, inclusive, outward looking, welcoming Church. It is here that our relationship with God is nurtured and nourished through the work of God and the celebration of the Sacraments. Through this relationship we grow in holiness, reach out to others and work for God's Kingdom.*

Since ours is an open inclusive, outward looking, welcoming Church, all our communications are founded in our parish mission. Therefore, the objective of all our communications is to bring life to the mission statement by:

- Facilitating inclusiveness and a welcoming atmosphere in the parish;
- Helping the parishioners to grow their relationship with God;
- Fostering a sense of community;
- Enabling the parish's ministries to better understand and meet the needs of the community.
- All involved in parish ministry must be vetted prior to any involvement in the parish.

### Internal parish communications

This document acknowledges and actively encourages, communications as a two-way process between parish ministries and parishioners. Should an issue arise that might threaten the spirit of our mission statement, such issue should be brought before the Parish Pastoral Council for discussion.

### External parish communications

In communicating with individuals and bodies outside the parish, our policy is to be true to the parish mission. To minimise the risk to the reputation of the parish of St. Thomas the Apostle, which could be caused by improper and unauthorised external communications, no person in any ministry may communicate directly to individuals and bodies on behalf of the Parish, outside the parish, without such communication having first been approved by the Parish Priest or by the Parish Pastoral Council, as appropriate.

## 2. Approved Methods of Communication

Currently, there are five approved communications media used in the parish:

- from the ambo
- Church grounds/property
- weekly leaflet
- website
- social media and electronic media

While each will overlap to some extent, each also has its own role to which it is best suited.

### Communication policy for the ambo

The ambo will only be used by the parish clergy, and people in parish ministry or other invitees, who may from time to time, wish to address parishioners. Addresses from the ambo are clearly planned in advance with the Celebrant and the speaker, so as to eliminate any ambiguity regarding the proposed content of the communication. Addresses by a member of any ministry who is invited to speak from the ambo, must ensure that the content of his/her message is in accordance with ministry policy, or with policy as clarified by Council on the subject matter.

The advantage of the ambo is that:

- It is direct and immediate
- Is the best medium for communicating to the people the importance of a message
- Is in keeping with parish policy
- Has the approval of the Parish Priest and the Council, as appropriate.
- The format of eulogies at funerals must be in accordance with Diocesan policy.

### Communication policy for Church grounds/property

Communications in this area includes signage, posters and direct personal contact by external people with parishioners who make use of Church facilities. The courtyard or wider Church grounds may only be used by the express permission of the Parish Priest.

### Communication policy for the parish leaflet.

The format of the parish leaflet is reviewed from time to time as required.

### Communication policy for the website and electronic media

Unauthorised websites, blogs, social network sites, direct mailings and use or inferred use of the parish name and/or logo are not permitted. No website may purport to speak for, or on behalf of St. Thomas the Apostle without prior approval of the Parish Priest or the parish Council, as appropriate.

1. [www.laurellodgeparish.ie](http://www.laurellodgeparish.ie) is the only authorised website of the parish, to represent ministries, events, activities, staff members and parishioners.
2. All communication via the parish website must first be communicated to the Parish Secretary at [glacey@laurellodgeparish.ie](mailto:glacey@laurellodgeparish.ie) or at the parish office – tel. 01-8208112.
3. The website aims to meet the needs of parishioners and visitors to the Church. The advantage of the website is that it provides a continuous channel to the outside world that is attractive and up-to-date. It can also store large documents and make them easily accessible to the public.

4. Information from the parish bulletin is added to the site weekly.
5. Information on special events is added by those authorised to do so and who have the appropriate access privileges.
6. All pages on the website are regularly updated.
7. The parish website only includes links to non-commercial sites that are not in conflict with the parish mission and goals.

### Social Media

Currently, the parish does not engage with social media (e.g. Twitter, Facebook, SnapChat). This document does not preclude the possibility that the parish may decide to engage with them at some time in the future. Should this happen, a detailed policy should be drafted to cover their use.

### E-mail Communications

All email communications are directed to the parish Secretary. All communication methods as outlined in this document should be read and understood by all parishioners operating within ministries.

### 3. Communication Style

All parish communications should reflect the decisions and policies of the Council.

- All communications from the parish should be courteous, timely, professional, appropriate and accurate.
- All individuals communicating on behalf of the Council should be aware that every communication reflects upon the reputation of the Council in the community.
- Parish communications may not be used for partisan political messages.
- No parish staff member or parishioner, who participates in a parish ministry, may be involved in a Church communication that can be used to promote any activity that would result in a financial benefit to that person.

### Breaches of this Communication Policy

Breaches of this communications policy should be brought before the Council for discussion. Corrective action shall be decided by the Parish Priest.

End.