

Code of conduct

Introduction

The documents which follow this introduction are legal and cautionary. When we first read the Codes for Pastoral Conduct, we were concerned about how individuals who consecrate their lives or dedicate their free time to the promotion of the Gospel might feel about the Codes, for Paul writes in 2 Corinthians 3.6: "Not that of ourselves we are qualified to take credit for anything as coming from us; rather, our qualification comes from God, who has indeed qualified us as ministers of a new covenant, not of letter but of spirit; for the letter brings death, but the Spirit gives life."

We, like you, are concerned about "life." Pope John Paul II writes in *Evangelium vitae*, 4:79:

We have been sent. For us, being at the service of life is not a boast but rather a duty, born of our awareness of being "God's own people, that we may declare the wonderful deeds of him who called us out of darkness into his marvelous light" (cf. 1 Pet 2:9). On our journey we are guided and sustained by the law of love: a love which has as its source and model the Son of God made man, who "by dying gave life to the world."

We have been sent as a people. Everyone has an obligation to be at the service of life. This is a properly "ecclesial" responsibility, which requires concerted and generous action by all the members and by all sectors of the Christian community. This community commitment does not however eliminate or lessen the responsibility of each individual, called by the Lord to "become the neighbor" of everyone: "Go and do likewise" (Lk 10:37).

Together we all sense our duty to preach the Gospel of life, to celebrate it in the Liturgy and in our whole existence, and to serve it with the various programmes and structures which support and promote life ([http://www.vatican.va/edocs/ENG0141/_PV.HTM#\\$2T](http://www.vatican.va/edocs/ENG0141/_PV.HTM#$2T)).

The life of our mission is well known to us. Recent events have made it necessary to facilitate civil expectations about personal conduct connected to our programs and structures and that is what the Code of Pastoral Conduct does. It states realities of dealing with individuals and groups and enunciates clearly and unequivocally what past practice has had to highlight, reject, and warn against. As such, the Code is important and to be heeded as much as we need to heed our call to be a service to the life of the Gospel and the Church.

Our concern is to have you know how much we support and encourage your pastoral work and how we feel this Code of Pastoral Conduct helps in your work. We endorse and pray for the success of your service to the Gospel in all sectors of our Christian community.

**The Committee on Codes of Pastoral Conduct
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