

Catholic Diocese of Fort Worth

Guidelines for Selecting Speakers

Diocesan Programs, Parishes. Movements, Apostolic Groups, Catholic Schools

The following policy applies to Pastors, Principals, Parish Directors of Religious Education, and Administrators of any Catholic institution or organization in the Diocese of Fort Worth as they consider inviting speakers who will be teaching- presenting on matters of faith and morals.

It is the responsibility of the Pastors, Principals, Diocesan Directors of Religious Education, and Administrators to present a list of potential speakers for Diocesan approval to the **Office of the Bishop (for all clergy and religious), to the Diocesan Department of Catechesis (for all lay speakers)**. The Diocesan Bishop or designated Diocesan official e.g. Vicar General, Chancellor-Moderator of the Curia holds the right to make the final decision on a speaker lay or religious.

Under current guidelines the Bishop of the Diocese of Fort Worth has designated the **Chancellor-Moderator of the Curia** for the Diocese of Fort Worth to review and certify all clergy and religious who request to speak/present within the Diocese. The **Department Director for Catechesis** is designated to review and certify all lay speaker presentations/workshops who request to speak/present within the Diocese of Fort Worth.

To be considered to speak with the Diocese of Fort Worth, the person should be in good standing with the Roman Catholic Church. The speaker's writings and previous public presentations must also be in harmony and fidelity with the teaching and discipline of the Church as prescribed in the Catechism of the Catholic Church. A priest who left the ministerial priesthood without dispensation would not be eligible for consideration. A priest who left the ministerial priesthood with dispensation and in good standing would be considered in a case by case basis. Those in irregular marriages or those living a lifestyle at variance with Church teaching would also not be eligible.

Any speaker who publicly promotes or advocates views which are contrary to Church teaching may not give a talk, retreat, workshop, course, etc, at Church related events , or on church, school or diocesan property in the Diocese of Fort Worth. Likewise, anyone who publicly promotes or advocates views which are contrary to Church teaching may not be given awards, honors, or other marks of public recognition.

Pastors, Principals, Parish Directors of Religious Education, and Administrators should make a prudential judgement after appropriated research about the suitability of a speaker in light of the above criteria. As a general rule, the invitation of any speaker or honoree 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.

With regard to granting of honorary awards, degrees, special recognition or commendation, the Diocese of Fort Worth abides by the 2004 policy of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops that we should not honor those who act in defiance of our fundamental moral principles. They should not be given awards, honors, platforms that might suggest support for their actions.

Required Documentation

For Priests/ Religious

1. Letter from the Diocesan Bishop or the Religious Superior. **(It must be original and recent- within a calendar year of the request.)**
2. Completion of all required Diocesan forms.
3. Proof of having completed Safe Environment Training.
4. A *Curriculum Vitae* with the following information:
 - a. Education (Catechetical/ Theological training and certifications) **Note: It is important that the speaker show evidence of competency in presenting the topic(s) in questions.**
 - b. Ministerial Experience
 - c. Current position

For Laity:

1. Letter from their Pastor or Diocesan official (where applicable) indicating that they are a Catholic in good standing. Form needs to be signed and dated with a visible seal.
2. Completion of all required Diocesan forms.
 - a. Request Form
 - b. Testimonial of Suitability signed and dated with visible seal
3. Proof of having completed Safe Environment Training.
4. A *Curriculum Vitae* with the following information:
 - a. Education (Catechetical/Theological training and certifications). **Note: It is important that the speaker show evidence of competency in presenting the topic(s) in question).**
 - b. Ministerial Experience
 - c. Current Position
5. Outline of Presentation or brief paragraph explaining the talk topic(s).

Parish/Host's Responsibilities

1. Submit the completed Request form.
2. Collect and submit all required documentation to the appropriate Diocesan office at least three (3) months prior to the scheduled presentation date.
3. Include an assessment of the speaker(s) i.e. reviews from past presentations etc
4. Clarify the purpose and goals of the event with the speaker and make sure these are clearly written on all forms.
5. Check Visa information (if the speaker is from outside the country).
6. Verify all appropriate speaker documents (i.e. *Curriculum Vitae*).
7. Provide an environment that supports learning (space and materials).
8. If it is possible arrange for coverage with the media, video recording, etc.

Please Note:

- **A parish may not use a speaker already approved to speak at one parish to present at another parish without consent/approval of the Pastor of the parish in question and completion of a new Diocesan speaker form(s).** If the same speaker is presenting-teaching a new topic, a new

Diocesan form will need to be filled out to explain the background and purpose of the new topic in question.

- **Please use the Request Form for Incoming Priests, Deacons and/or Lay Speakers** when submitting requests to the Office of the Bishop or the Department of Catechesis.
- **All speaker requests must be turned in at minimum three (3) months prior to the scheduled event.**
- **All speakers must provide any information requested during the vetting process.** Failure to do so may risk being denied.