

DIOCESE OF FORT WORTH
ETHICAL CONDUCT FOR THOSE WHO SERVE IN THE CHURCH

2.22

An Examination of Conscience

The Lord Jesus established the Church as the living sign of his presence in the world. The mission of our local Church, the Diocese of Fort Worth, is to proclaim the Good News of God's love for us by imitating the perfect example of God's Son, Christ Jesus, in every aspect of our lives. Every Christian is called to be a shining light of Christ's love for others. Those who serve in the Church as clergy, religious, ministers, employees and volunteers have a particular responsibility to present to those they serve a clear message of love, respect and care.

Because of the unique setting of work on behalf of the Church, the following questions are proposed to those who serve in the Church to help them in fulfilling their responsibilities as well as they possibly can. The topics that are mentioned for consideration cover not only areas of obvious concern to all Christians, but also touch on matters that pertain in a special way to those who in any way represent the Diocese, its parishes, schools and other agencies. These latter topics pertain to the special ethical and moral sensitivity by which the work of those who serve Christ's Church is made more fruitful.

It goes without saying that those who serve in the Church will acknowledge and respect in word and deed the dignity and worth of every human being and the sacredness of the environment, and will carry out faithfully the responsibilities entrusted to them in carrying out the unique work of the Catholic Church. But in addition, each of us who serves in the Church must ask:

1. Do I respond respectfully to others regardless of their race, gender, national origin, age, creed, disability, sexual orientation, marital status, socio-economic condition and political beliefs because I recognize the common dignity of each human being?

2. Do I follow the policies and procedures of the Diocese as well as the policies and procedures of the specific institution where I serve? Do I respect those responsible for governing and teaching in the church?

3. Do I strive to ensure that all individuals have access to resources, services and opportunities available within the Church and the community, with special regard for disadvantaged or oppressed groups of person?

4. Do I recognize and respond to the special needs of the poor, the homeless, and those who suffer as a result of educational, socio-economic or physical limitations or as a result of discrimination in any form?

5. Do I maintain the confidentiality of information received, not only when requested by an individual, but in all circumstances when disclosure could cause harm (except when an individual gives permission; when it is judged that non-disclosure could result in harm to the individual or others; or when required by law to report)?

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6. Do I avoid participating in gossip or rumors and avoid conflicting loyalties and interest? Do I recognize the need for my relationships to be healthy and holy in all aspects-- physical, sexual, emotional and spiritual?

7. Do I follow procedures which contribute to the preservation of the local and global environment? Do I use carefully and responsibly the resources and property of the Church?

8. Do I maintain high standards of competence and recognize the importance of spiritual and intellectual growth?

9. Do I distinguish clearly between statements and actions I make as a private individual, as a representative of the Catholic community, and in my special role in serving the Church?

10. Do I recognize realistically the limitations of my own expertise, acknowledge the diverse gifts of others, and respect the work of my colleagues? Do I use appropriate channels to express differences and seek always to contribute to the well-being of those with whom I interact?

Certainly, when those who serve in the Church examine themselves with these questions they will experience a continued path of conversion in their own lives and will find many ways to be more effective in their work and more faithful to their responsibilities to the people of Christ's Church. It is Jesus Christ, by the power of his Holy Spirit in our hearts, who gives us the grace to be truly signs of his love and presence. May his name be praised.

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