



# SPEAKER POLICY

Diocese of Great Falls-Billings

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## I. RATIONALE

The rationale for establishing a diocesan-wide speaker policy is based on canon law, which requires the Diocesan Bishop to defend the integrity and unity of the faith (Canon 386 par. 2). Having a written policy prevents awkward situations that arise from individuals advocating opinions contrary to official Catholic teaching on faith or morals being invited to speak at a Catholic institution for events such as symposiums, graduations, retreats, etc., including having to disinvite the proposed speaker.

## II. SPEAKER POLICY

It is therefore the policy of the Diocese of Great Falls-Billings that:

1. Speakers who are being considered to give a presentation on faith and morals on Church property must be approved by the Diocesan Bishop before an invitation is extended.
2. No individual or group will be provided space and opportunity to promote information and/or opinion that is contrary to Catholic belief and practice. Doing so would provide a platform for error and scandal.
3. No individual or group who has publicly promoted beliefs and/or practices contrary to Catholic teaching on faith or morals (as demonstrated through their public speaking, voting record, published works, etc.) will be allowed space and opportunity to advance such beliefs or practices at a Catholic institution, even if the individual or group is not being invited to speak on these beliefs and/or practices.
4. Any individual or group who has been invited to speak at a Catholic institution and is discovered to have demonstrated positions contrary to Catholic teaching will be disinvited to speak.

## III. PROCEDURE

Catholic institutions within the Diocese of Great Falls-Billings are required to submit a request to the Office of the Bishop from the inviting party before an invitation is extended to the speaker. This request must include the following:

1. A formal letter from the inviting party, which includes the speaker's name and topic(s). It should attest to the speaker's faithfulness to the teachings of the Catholic Church and the topic's relevance in promoting the pastoral direction of the Diocese.
2. The speaker's *curriculum vitae*. If none is available, a summary of the professional work of the speaker(s) is to be provided.



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### 3. Other requirements:

- a. Cleric/Religious: If the speaker is a cleric/religious, a letter of support from the speaker's superior/ordinary attesting that the speaker is in good standing must be provided. A cleric must also have a *celebret*, indicating he has permission to celebrate the sacraments outside of his diocese.
- b. Laity: In the case of a Catholic lay person, a letter of support from the speaker's pastor verifying that he/she is a Catholic in good standing must be provided.
- c. College/University Professor: If the speaker is a college or university professor, a *mandatum* from his/her bishop is to be provided. If the speaker does not have one, this needs to be indicated in the letter of request.
- d. Non-Catholic: If the speaker is not a Catholic, the *curriculum vitae* should be accompanied by written assurance that the speaker's presentation will not conflict with Catholic teaching in any way.

*Promulgated July 18, 2008  
by Bishop Michael W. Warfel*