



I. Rationale

The reason for establishing a diocesan speaker policy is based on canon law, which requires the Ordinary to defend the integrity of the faith (Canon 386, § 2). Having a written policy prevents awkward situations that arise from individuals advocating opinions contrary to official Catholic teaching on faith or morals who have been invited to speak at Catholic institutions or 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, public 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 directly 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.
5. Diocesan staff members are always acceptable speakers, and there is no need to submit paperwork in these instances.
6. Visiting prelates should notify the Bishop of his intended presence in the diocese. The inviting party must coordinate the visit in advance.

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 **2 – 3 months 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.



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2. The speaker's *curriculum vitae*. If none is available, a summary of the speaker's professional work is to be provided.
3. Under special circumstances this policy may be waived with permission from the Bishop.

IV. Other Requirements

1. **Cleric/Religious:** If the speaker is in this category, a letter of support from the speaker's ordinary/superior attesting that the speaker is in good standing must be provided. A cleric must also have a *celebret*, indicating that he has permission to celebrate the sacraments outside his diocese.
2. **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.
3. **Catholic College/University Professor:** If the speaker is in this category, a *mandatum* from his/her bishop is to be provided. If the speaker does not have one, this quality of acceptability must be indicated in the letter of request.
4. **Non-Catholic:** If the speaker is in this category, the *curriculum vitae* should be accompanied by written assurance that the speaker's presentation will not conflict with Catholic teaching in any way.

Revised and Promulgated by:
Bishop Michael W. Warfel
November 27, 2017



SPEAKER AND EVENT POLICY

Diocese of Great Falls-Billings

Speaker and Event Policy Form

Date of Event _____ Site of Event _____
 Speaker's Name _____ Topic _____
 Inviting Party's Name _____ Purpose of the event _____
 Speaker's Web Site _____

Select One: ___Diocesan Event ___Vicariate Event ___City-wide
 ___Parish Event ___School Event

Location(s) where the speaker will appear _____

Formal letter from Inviting Party, including:

- Speaker's name
- Topic
- Expected outcome of event
- Attestation to faithfulness to the teachings of the Catholic Church
- Topic's relevance in promoting the pastoral direction of the diocese
- Anticipated audience
- Expected outcome
- Projected cost of event and source of income to pay for the event
- **Required in all instances:** Include speaker's Certification of Safe Environment Training

Speaker's *Curriculum Vitae* or summary of professional works

Cleric/Religious ___ Yes No ___

- Letter of support from superior/ordinary attesting to good standing
- *Celebret* indicating permission to celebrate sacraments in this diocese

Laity ___ Yes No ___

- Letter of support from the speaker's pastor, verifying that he/she is a Catholic in good standing

Catholic College/University Professor ___ Yes No ___

- *Mandatum* from his/her bishop
- Or, provide information in the letter of request attesting to adherence to Catholic teaching

Non-Catholic Yes ___ No ___

- Written assurance that the speaker's presentation does not conflict with Catholic teaching in any way

SEND COMPLETED FORM AND ALL DOCUMENTATION TO THE CHANCELLOR IN A TIMELY FASHION (chancellor@diocesegfb.org / PO Box 1399, Great Falls, MT

For Chancery Use Only:

- ___ Event is marked on the Diocesan Calendar
 ___ Event has been reviewed by Ministry Resource Staff