

Diocese of Madison

Office of the Bishop

August 15, 2010

Solemnity of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary

To all Pastors, Pastoral Associates, School Chaplains, School Principals, Diocesan Staff:

As the Chief Shepherd of souls within the Diocese of Madison, the law of the Church obliges me “firmly to defend the integrity and unity of the faith to be believed” (*Code of Canon Law*, Can. 386 §2). As part of the fulfillment of this duty, it is important that I assist the pastors and those with pastoral authority in the Diocese to ensure that guest speakers who come to teach the Catholic faithful do so with fidelity to the Magisterium of the Church. When we provide a forum for a speaker within our parishes or schools, the faithful have the right to expect that what they hear will be consonant with the teaching of the Church, and with the pastoral direction of the Diocese (cf. Can. 229 §1).

Therefore, effective immediately and following the lead of numerous dioceses throughout our state and country, I ask you to submit for my review the requisite documentation for any person under consideration to lecture, present a workshop, give a retreat or otherwise speak or give an address on matters of faith and morals on diocesan property. This directive applies especially to those who come from outside the Diocese or those inside the Diocese who are not certified to engage in religious instruction by the Diocese of Madison. It is important to have any such individual approved by my office before an invitation can be extended. This will avoid the unpleasant situation of “disinviting” someone and all the complications this creates.

Further, Catholic parishes and schools should neither sponsor nor promote a speaker on matters of faith and morals, even if he is not speaking on Church property, without official approval. If a pastor is asked to sponsor or promote a speaker off Church grounds, he should make it clear to the person making the request that the speaker must be approved by the Bishop before he can do so. The requesting party, not the pastor, has the responsibility for obtaining the appropriate permission from the Bishop’s office.


There will be forms available for you on the Communications page of the Diocese of Madison’s website to initiate the approval of a given speaker. The completed form must include:

- 1) A *curriculum vitae* for the speaker
- 2) A letter of support from the speaker’s pastor, in the case of a layperson, establishing that he is a Catholic in good standing; a letter attesting that the speaker is a cleric/religious in good standing from the speaker’s superior/ordinary, in the case of clerics and religious

- 3) Clerics must also have a *celebret*, indicating they have permission to celebrate the sacraments outside their diocese
- 4) College or university professors should provide a *mandatum* from their bishop, if they have one

The Office of the Vicar General will also provide a list of recommended speakers upon request. Looking forward to your full cooperation, and thanking you for your important ministry for the Church, I am

Sincerely yours in Our Lord,

+ 
Most Reverend Robert C. Morlino
Bishop of Madison