



Official Communiqué 23

Diocesan Communications Policy

*«Communication should be at the service
of an authentic culture of encounter.»*

Pope Francis

*«If we succeed in expressing adequately
and with beauty the essential content of the Gospel,
surely this message will speak
to the deepest yearnings of people's hearts. »*

The Joy of the Gospel – Pope Francis

Background

The Church of Saint-Jean-Longueuil has a long tradition when it comes to communications. Starting in the late '60s, acting on recommendations from Vatican II, the Diocese, under the leadership of Mgr. Gérard-Marie Coderre, created the Information Office, considering his communications activity as one of the front-line means of fulfilling his mission of teaching and proclaiming the Gospel message. In 1978, Mgr. Bernard Hubert, Bishop of the Diocese, officially launched the Fondation Mgr Gérard-Marie Coderre, a foundation still having as one of its objectives the dissemination of Diocesan religious information. Note that this interest has been maintained through the commitment of Mgr. Jacques Berthelet, Bishop from 1997 to 2010, who did not hesitate to give his support to enable the diocese to be among the first to use the new information technologies in the social media era.

Since its inception, the Office of Communications [le Service des communications] has been working along with other groups to further the mission. The development of a culture within the institution where communications and the efficient flow of information are among its “values” contributes to improving and encouraging the quality of life and the sense of belonging, the sense of forming a community, in the service of the New Evangelization.

Moreover, the quality of the services offered to the various bodies, diocesan offices, parishes, pastoral units, movements and the religious and Christian communities comprising the Diocesan Church, lies in a long-standing concern for giving effective and suitable communications both inside and outside the institution.

By updating its communications policy¹ and subsequently producing an action and development plan, the Diocese of Saint-Jean-Longueuil in this way promotes disseminating a coherent message for all of its activities and imparting the influence of that message and the image of an open and responsible Church. It shows as well its intention to move to new information technologies and to be a Church keeping up with the times, being present in virtual communities and in the periphery.

Objectives of a Communications Policy

- Ensure a coherent dissemination of communications in accordance with norms known to all to foster the transmission of a consistent and understandable message with regard to all of the activities of the Church in every community.
- State the principles which should govern all of the communications of the Diocesan Church to ensure that all the departments, parishes, partners and other entities would be visible and properly represented, as and when required, in any communications.
- Foster dialogue and understanding of the guidelines of the Diocese and the statement of the mission with a view to its implementation:

**“in God's plan and the mission of the Church...
We, who are baptized in Jesus Christ,
let's go today,
with the joy and hope of the Spirit,
to welcome and reveal to the world
the Word that frees and gives life.”**

- Establish trusting relations and adequate conditions to be connected as well as to encourage communications that are cross-cutting (linking separate interests) and reaching out to the periphery.
- Encourage the co-responsible creation as well as the production and dissemination of information.

Values and Attitudes

Regarding the objectives, the values and attitudes mentioned below favour their realization:

- Synodal togetherness,

¹ A document, Plan pastoral diocésain de communication [Diocesan Pastoral Communications Plan], in which a Communications Policy was mapped out, was produced in 1995 by the Office of Communications [le Service des communications] of the Diocese of Saint-Jean-Longueuil, under the responsibility of Micheline LeRoy. In 2000, the document was updated under the titre: Planifier nos communications en Église [Planning our Communications as a Church], a reference document.

- Co-responsibility (recognizing the contribution of every woman and man),
- Fraternity/community,
- Pastoral dialogue,
- Multilateral and interactive communication (free flow of information),
- Accessibility, coherence and transparency,
- Pro-activity (Being aware and informed about new trends in communication),
- Respect and the dignity of individuals,
- Honesty and thoughtfulness.

The Standards

Communications from the Diocese are the responsibility of the Diocesan Office of Communications [Service diocésain des communications], which reports directly to the Bishop's Office, the incumbent being a member of the Executive Team.

To ensure the functioning of the Diocesan Office of Communications, the Communications Officer can rely on the assistance of a webmaster and the Comité de pastorale des communications [Pastoral Committee for Communications].

Communications are conducted in close collaboration with Diocesan communities.

To respond to specific requests other than those related to the Diocese or parish(es), resource persons or spokespersons are delegated by the Bishop: religious patrimony, litigation, harassment, etc.

Communications are primarily in French, while ensuring a proper representation of the Anglophone clientele.

As well, to ensure a more targeted transmission of information and with due care to avoid duplication, every week, the Service des ressources humaines [Department of Human Resources], the Service de coordination de la pastorale diocésaine [Diocesan Pastoral Care Coordination Service] and, as needed, the Service de l'économat [Diocesan Financial Services], respectively, publish a news and information communique. At any time, a communique may be issued by the Bishop's Office.

To the Attention of Parishes and Pastoral Units

Each parish and pastoral unit will work to ensure the application of this policy at their level by designating an individual to handle communications, by setting criteria in compliance with the objectives and values of this Policy.

The person designated will work in close collaboration with the Diocesan Office of Communications.

Each parish or pastoral unit will identify the relevant and applicable elements in this policy.

Individuals and groups affected by this Policy

- The Bishop
He is the official spokesman when the aim is to express guidelines and the decisions taken in accordance with the Executive Team.
- Executive Team
The members are: the Auxiliary Bishop, the Vicar general, the officers in charge of the Service diocésain des ressources humaines [Department of Human Resources], the Service de coordination de la pastorale diocésaine [Diocesan Pastoral Care Coordination Service] and the Service de l'économat [Diocesan Financial Services] and the Executive Secretary of the Bishop's Office.
- The Bishop's Office
which includes the Auxiliary Bishop, the Chancery, the Archives and the Office of Communications.
- Members of Diocesan Departments and Services:
Department of Human Resources, Diocesan Pastoral Care Coordination Services and the Diocesan Financial Services.
- Two Bishop's Delegates
to the Anglophone and Francophone Regional Councils, respectively
- The Diocesan Communications Officer, the Webmaster and the Pastoral Committee for Communications
- The persons in charge of parishes and pastoral units, their personnel as well as the individuals designated to handle communications
- The members of councils, commissions and committees
- The Chemins de vie Team
- The Phare de Longueuil Team

Partners

- The Fondation Mgr Gérard-Marie Coderre
- Movements
- Religious Communities and Institutes for Consecrated Life
- Community and Other Associations and Bodies
- Dioceses
- Christian Churches and Other Religious Traditions
- Print, Electronic and Social Media
- Other Civil and Political Authorities

Areas of Activity pertaining to Communications from and within the Diocese

In General

- Produce a triennial action and development plan for internal and external communications. This states the communications priorities for the period covered. Furthermore, as and when required, for any important pastoral activity, it is advisable to map out a communications strategy.
- Ensure relations with the press and respond to requests from the media for interviews and, as appropriate, refer to designated individuals as spokespersons.
- Remain alert to the developments and achievements of organizations (diocese and religious and other communities) connected with the Church in Quebec, Canada and universally as well as organizations with an ecumenical and interreligious vocation. Disseminate some of this information.
- Participate in meetings with ecclesial communication partners such as Communications et Société, TIC (Table interdiocésaine des communications), Association des médias catholiques et œcuméniques, etc.
- Become acquainted with and develop, as relevant, new communications media and concepts.

Roles and responsibilities of the affected individuals and offices:

➤ **Internally**

- Develop a sense of confidence and belonging.
- Work in synodal togetherness and in co-responsibility through close collaboration with the various services and offices in their communication actions (dissemination and promotion of their activities) and for any other related request.
- Publicize the themes, priorities and pastoral activities of the Diocese.
- Develop the habit of establishing in partnership a communications strategy announcing any important pastoral activity and make provision for an ex post facto assessment.
- Ensure the flow of information on a regular basis via the website, Facebook, the Thursday messages, the Diocesan Review “La vie dans notre Église”, etc.
- Offer training to enable individuals who care about good communication by giving them various tools such as Facebook, video and communiques.

- Foster multilateral communication.
- Become acquainted with and/or cover activities and events underway in various communities in order to transmit the information.
- Set guidelines to ensure a proper transmission of information with realistic deadlines for its dissemination. (*See Mode de fonctionnement pour la diffusion par le Service diocésain d'événements provenant des paroisses [Operating Procedure for Dissemination by the Diocesan Office of Communications of Events Originating in Parishes]*, December 2014)
- Develop in conjunction with the members of the various offices, tools, flyers, posters and videos to ensure the visibility of the Church's Mission.
- Sundries

➤ **Externally with its partners**

- Ensure the flow of information on a regular basis.
- Publicize the activities of the Diocese, via the media and social networks.
- Develop a habit of communicating with the media.
- Respond to requests from the media and/or refer them to resource persons or spokespersons depending on the nature of the request.
- Become acquainted with and /or cover activities or events connected with the Church in order to transmit the information.
- Meet with organizations and partners.
- Sundries.

Linguistic and Social Standards

The Diocese of Saint-Jean-Longueuil attaches great importance to the quality of its communications. Information about policies, programs and services must be clearly, objectively and understandably presented. Any communication should respect the values of what the Church of Saint-Jean-Longueuil is about.

Adequate communications practices include removing stereotypes of a sexual nature and truly representing ethnic groups, cultural and religious communities and persons with disabilities.

Acknowledgements

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Given at Longueuil, on the 17th day of November 2015.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "+ Lionel Gendron, p.s.s." The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'L'.

† Lionel Gendron, p.s.s.
Bishop of Saint-Jean-Longueuil

Jean-Pierre Camerlain, v.e.
Chancellor

References*

Documents produced by the Diocese of Saint-Jean-Longueuil:

- Plan pastoral diocésain de communication (1995) [Diocesan Pastoral Communications Plan]
- Planifier nos communications en Église (November 2000) [Planning our Communications as a Church]
- Mode de fonctionnement pour la diffusion par le Service diocésain d'événements provenant des paroisses (December 2014) [Operating Procedure for the Dissemination of Events Originating in Parishes]
- Les communications au Diocèse de Saint-Jean-Longueuil (February 2015)[Communications in the Diocese of Saint-Jean-Longueuil]

* The documents are available from the Centre de documentation at the Diocesan Centre

Other References

- Politique de communication – Document jointly prepared by the CLSC-CHSLD des Maskoutains, the CLSC des Seigneuries and the CLSC Samuel-de-Champlain (May 2012)
- Politique de communication – City of Sept-Iles (September 2011)