

CHAPTER VI

THE TEACHING OFFICE OF THE CHURCH

“The Church, to which Christ the Lord has entrusted the deposit of faith so that with the assistance of the Holy Spirit it might protect the revealed truth reverently, examine it more closely, and proclaim and expound it faithfully, has the duty and innate right, independent of any human power whatsoever, to preach the gospel to all peoples, also using the means of social communication proper to it. It belongs to the Church always and everywhere to announce moral principles, even about the social order, and to render judgment concerning any human affairs insofar as the fundamental rights of the human person or the salvation of souls requires it” (can. 747).

SECTION I: PREACHING

223 §1. Homilies, which explain the mysteries of the faith and the norms of Christian life, are to be given during the course of each liturgical year.¹

§2. The subject matter of homilies shall be exclusively concerned with the matters that pertain to the spiritual welfare of souls. Topics merely of a political or secular nature are to be avoided. All references of a critical or embarrassing nature concerning particular persons are strictly forbidden.

224 §1. A homily must be given at all Masses on Sundays and all other Holy Days of Obligation in all parish churches, chapels, and oratories where the faithful gather to fulfill their obligation of participation. It can be omitted only for a grave reason.

§2. It is highly recommended that a homily be given at Masses celebrated during the week, especially during the time of Advent and Lent.

§3. It is highly recommended that at funeral Masses there be a brief homily, but to the exclusion of a funeral eulogy of any kind.²

225 §1. The homily should ordinarily be preached by the priest celebrant himself or be entrusted by him to a concelebrating priest or, from time to time and if appropriate, to the deacon, but never to a layperson. In particular cases and for a just cause, a bishop or a priest who is present at the celebration but cannot concelebrate may give the homily. This also applies to a visiting or substituting celebrant.³

§2. In providing for preaching by the lay faithful the Diocesan Bishop may never dispense from the norm which reserves the homily to the sacred ministers. Speaking to the congregation by the lay faithful may not take place within the celebration of the Eucharist at the time reserved for the homily.⁴

226 §1: Without prejudice to the provision of can. 770, the permission of the Diocesan Bishop is required for extern priests to preach, conduct missions or retreats, or give public addresses. The names of prospective speakers on religious topics are to be forwarded to the Chancery for prior approval.

§2. A pastor may, however, on the occasion of a visit by an extern priest, grant permission for him to preach in his church, provided the visiting priest is approved for preaching by his own diocesan bishop or religious superior.

227 It is highly recommended that a sacred mission be conducted annually in each parish in this diocese.⁵

SECTION II: INSTRUMENTS OF COMMUNICATION AND SOCIAL MEDIA

228 §1. *The Dakota Catholic Action* is the Catholic newspaper of the Diocese of Bismarck. Any official notice that appears therein is to be considered duly promulgated and binding on all concerned.

§2. Pastors will make every effort to see that each family receives *The Dakota Catholic Action* in accordance with the directives given by the Diocesan Bishop.

229 Pastors have the duty and right to see that no harm is done to the faith or morals of the Christian faithful, especially regarding the virtue of chastity, through the use of instruments of communication and social media.⁶

230 §1. Pastors are urged to provide access to Catholic publications and media in their parishes.

§2. Catholics who purport to speak on a regular basis concerning matters of the Catholic faith must have the written permission of the Diocesan Bishop.⁷

§3. Pastors are required to receive approval from the Diocesan Bishop or his delegate when granting an interview or submitting comment or content to secular media outlets.

§4. It is understood that the grant of a *nihil obstat* and an *imprimatur* for any writings, printed or electronic, is an official declaration by the Diocesan Bishop or his delegate that the material is free from doctrinal and moral error, but it does not necessarily imply agreement with the content or opinions contained therein.

231 All usage of social media is public and permanent and thus requires discretion and prudence. It would be imprudent for one to think social communication is ever private.

SECTION III: CATHOLIC EDUCATION

Article A: Parental Obligations

232 §1. Parents are the prime educators of their children, especially in religious matters. To the greatest extent possible, they have a serious responsibility to send their children to Catholic schools when such are available. Exceptions to this norm are only to be made after prayerful consideration and consultation with one's pastor.

§2. In so far as possible, provisions should be made so that parents who have children with intellectual, physical, or emotional challenges have the necessary assistance they need to provide religious education for their children according to their specific needs.

Article B: Administration of Catholic Schools

233 §1. All Catholic schools in the Diocese of Bismarck are established, organized, and operated under the authority of the Diocesan Bishop to the fullest extent allowed by Canon Law, in accord with cann. 801-803 and the Statutes of this Article.

§2. The Constitutions and By-laws of Diocesan schools and school systems must be approved by the Diocesan Bishop.

§3. The board of directors of each Catholic school system includes the Diocesan Bishop, who is the chairman, the pastor of each participating parish, and appointed lay members.

§4. Lay members of each board of directors are to be recommended by their respective pastors and must be approved and appointed by the Diocesan Bishop.

234 §1. The pastor, if it is a parish school, or the president or superintendent, if it is part of a Catholic school system, in consultation with the school principal shall have full charge of the school under the general direction of the Diocesan Bishop or his delegate and in collaboration with the pastors associated with the school system.

235 §1. The high school chaplain, a validly ordained priest in good standing, is appointed by the Diocesan Bishop. His role is governed by the Diocese of Bismarck policy for the administration of high schools.

§2. The Diocesan Bishop reserves the right to appoint a person with the requisite qualifications and credentials to any position within each Catholic school or school system, including administrative positions.

§3. Whenever possible, it is preferable that pastors associated with Catholic schools or school systems, who are members of the board of directors, are priests who have publically demonstrated zeal for Catholic schools and Catholic education.

236 Particular attention within each Catholic school or school system must be given to Catholic identity, culture, and practice. It is the responsibility of the administration, faculty, and staff to ensure Catholic identity, which is uniquely entrusted by the Diocesan Bishop to a priest delegated by him, the pastors of each parish associated with the school, and the assigned priest chaplain.

Article C: Pastoral Support for Catholic Schools

237 §1. Pastors of parishes with Catholic schools or school systems shall instruct and encourage the Christian faithful of their parishes to send their children to a Catholic school.

§2. Pastors of parishes of Catholic schools or school systems shall allow access to their parishes for Catholic school advancement, development, and recruiting.

Article D: Financial Support for Catholic Schools

238 All parishes and all the Catholic faithful of the Diocese of Bismarck share a responsibility in building, maintaining, and funding Catholic schools. A child shall not be deprived of Catholic education solely because the parents are unable to give financial support.

Article E: Religious Education

239 §1. Every parish must provide all Catholic children of school age not attending a Catholic elementary or secondary school a parish course of religious education on a regular basis.

§2. It is the duty of the pastor to see that a well-organized course of parish religious education is provided for both grade and high school students. The course of study must follow the approved Diocesan guidelines and utilize texts approved by the Diocesan Bishop.

240 Pastors shall make every effort to ensure the participation of qualified members of the parish for teaching in the program of religious education. The faithful who enroll for this work are to be prepared by the pastor, with special attention given to those who prepare the faithful for the reception of the Sacraments.

241 Pastors must make provision for the proper faith formation of adults.

242 Pastors are to make provision that the message of the Gospel reaches the non-Catholics and non-believers living in their territory.

¹ **Can. 767 §1.** Among the forms of preaching, the homily, which is part of the liturgy itself and is reserved to a priest or deacon, is pre-eminent; in the homily the mysteries of faith and the norms of Christian life are to be explained from the sacred text during the course of the liturgical year.

² See Statute 186 §2.

³ See the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, n. 66: “The homily should ordinarily be given by the priest celebrant himself or be entrusted by him to a concelebrating priest, or from time to time and, if

appropriate, to the deacon, but never to a layperson. In particular cases and for a just cause, the homily may even be given by a bishop or a priest who is present at the celebration but cannot concelebrate. On Sundays and Holydays of Obligation there is to be a homily at every Mass that is celebrated with the people attending, and it may not be omitted without a grave reason. On other days it is recommended, especially on the weekdays of Advent, Lent, and Easter Time, as well as on other festive days and occasions when the people come to church in greater numbers. It is appropriate for a brief period of silence to be observed after the homily.”

⁴ See the Pontifical Commission for the Authentic Interpretation of the Code of Canon Law, 26 May 1987, in AAS 79 [1987], 1249.

⁵ See can. 770.

⁶ **Can. 823 §1.** In order to preserve the integrity of the truths of faith and morals, the pastors of the Church have the duty and right to be watchful so that no harm is done to the faith or morals of the Christian faithful through writings or the use of instruments of social communication. They also have the duty and right to demand that writings to be published by the Christian faithful which touch upon faith or morals be submitted to their judgment and have the duty and right to condemn writings which harm correct faith or good morals. See also can. 666: “In the use of means of social communication, necessary discretion is to be observed and those things are to be avoided which are harmful to one’s vocation and dangerous to the chastity of a consecrated person.”

⁷ See the USCCB Complementary Norm for can. 772 §2, as established in 2001: “The National Conference of Catholic Bishops, in accord with the prescriptions of canon 772 §2, hereby decrees that, with due regard for the norms of canon 763, a Catholic who regularly expounds Christian doctrine on radio or television must be specially qualified by his or her knowledge of the subject, by manifest adherence to the teaching of the Magisterium and by the witness of his or her life as a Catholic. The individual must obtain the permission of his or her proper diocesan bishop or the diocesan bishop of the place where the radio or television program is originally broadcast. In the case of members of institutes of consecrated life or societies of apostolic life, permission of the competent superior is also required, insofar as the constitution of the institute or society provides for it.”