

## **National Association for Lay Ministry Code of Ethics**

The following code of ethics was approved by the National Association for Lay Ministry (NALM) Board of Directors in 2003 and was included in the *National Certification Standards for Lay Ecclesial Ministers* which was published in 2006.

*They live a life authentically reflecting Catholic moral teaching, respect for life, and social justice principles.*

*They foster the Catholic ethical values in this code of ethics in all the communities in which one serves.*

Pastoral ministers strive to manage their lives in a healthy way, paying particular attention to nutrition, exercise, leisure and the need for peer ministerial support.

Pastoral ministers are aware of their sacred calling as servants of God. They maintain membership in an ecclesial body and are faithful in matters of doctrine while remaining true to their own conscience and the people they serve.

Pastoral ministers participate in the Church's sacramental life and ongoing spiritual growth opportunities, such as retreats, individual and group prayer, and reading. Pastoral ministers regularly participate in ongoing continuing education experiences, both formal and informal, in order to maintain and build upon their theological and professional competence.

Pastoral ministers respond to all people without regard for gender, creed, national origin, age, sexual orientation, marital status, socioeconomic status, political beliefs, or disability because they recognize the common dignity of each person.

Pastoral ministers act to ensure that all persons have access to the resources, services, and opportunities they require with special regard for disadvantaged or oppressed groups or persons.

Pastoral ministers strive for heightened awareness of ecumenical, interfaith, ethnic, ecological, and gender-related issues.

Pastoral ministers fully inform those they serve as to the purpose and nature of their ministerial activities as well as their level of training and competence, making appropriate referrals when in the best interest of the person with whom they are working.

Pastoral ministers know that those served have a right to see all pastoral records concerning them.

Pastoral ministers do not accept or offer gifts which involve expectations that would extend, curtail, or alter the service provided.

Pastoral ministers do not exploit a dispute between a colleague and employers to obtain a position or otherwise advance their interest.

Pastoral ministers respect the work of their colleagues and use appropriate channels to express differences when deemed necessary.

Pastoral ministers understand the responsibility for and limitations of confidentiality, maintaining the confidentiality of information received, especially when requested by the person or required by the circumstances, unless written permission is given to share the privileged information.

Exceptions may be made: when they judge that physical harm would come to the person or to third parties; when they are required by law to report; or when they judge the consultation with working professionals is necessary for the improvement of the service offered. In this case all names and any identifying circumstances are changed.

Pastoral ministers retain all notes and records of pastoral interaction/intervention in a locked, safe place and dispose of same, as appropriate, to protect confidentiality. Pastoral ministers do not release information to third parties without the expressed consent of those served or the order of a court with competent jurisdiction.

Pastoral ministers are willing to carry out the policies and purposes of the hiring body; however, when occasion warrants the minister may offer alternative perspectives for the benefit of those served.

Pastoral ministers report inappropriate conduct by a colleague in ministry to appropriate church/civil authorities in order to protect others from harm.

Pastoral ministers distinguish clearly between statements and actions they make as individuals, as representatives of the community of faith, and as pastoral professionals.

Pastoral ministers are aware that they have considerable personal power because of their ministerial position. Therefore, pastoral ministers are particularly aware of the need for clear, appropriate and healthy physical, sexual, intellectual, emotional and spiritual boundaries. Pastoral ministers fully comply and act in accord with the USCCB statement *Charter for Protection of Children and Young People* (revised edition, November 2002).

Pastoral ministers are aware of and make every effort to resist the influences and pressures which result from unavoidable, overlapping relationships as they may interfere with the exercise of professional discretion and impartial judgment.

I have read and understand the above code of ethics and commit to uphold this code in my ministry.

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Signature

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Date