

§2200 AWARDS, HONORS AND INVITATIONS TO SPEAKERS OR ORGANIZATIONS

Great care and prudence must be exercised in giving awards and honors and extending invitations to individuals or organizations to speak or provide information at any event or gathering affiliated with any Diocesan entity. Examples include benefit luncheons or dinners, student gatherings, graduations, health fairs, parish programs, etc. It is crucial that everything taught or promoted in facilities or events associated with Diocesan entities is consistent with the Catholic faith

Many organizations and presenters that do “good work” in some areas are misguided in others, particularly in the areas of human life and sexuality. In the past some honorees, speakers or organizations presenting at gatherings for Catholic organizations have publicly advocated viewpoints that are in opposition to the faith, causing confusion and division within the Church. Even if these individuals or organizations do not address these specific topics of dissent at the facility or event, their appearance is a source of scandal and confusion.

The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops’ statement “Catholics in Political Life” states, “The Catholic community and Catholic institutions should not honor those who act in defiance of our fundamental moral principles. They should not be given awards, honors or platforms which would suggest support for their actions.” (Issued June 2004.) Consistent with this statement, the policy and procedures below are intended to provide guidance and foster unity between Catholic entities and the Diocese, as well as avoid unnecessary division.

§2201 ESTABLISHMENT OF POLICY

2201.1. Policy Any Catholic entity subject to the moral authority of the Bishop of the Diocese of Springfield in Illinois, and any boards / fundraising committees affiliated with them shall not give awards or honors or host presentations, speaking opportunities or appearances by individuals or organizations whose public position is in opposition to the fundamental moral principles of the Catholic Church.

Procedures

- a) An exception to the preceding policy may be made in secondary schools or at universities if a dissenting individual is participating in a debate with an individual who effectively presents the Church’s position.

- b) Due diligence into researching the appropriateness of a speaker or honoree is the responsibility of the sponsoring organization. When in doubt regarding a speaker or honoree, it is the obligation of the sponsoring organization to seek clarification from the Office of the Bishop.