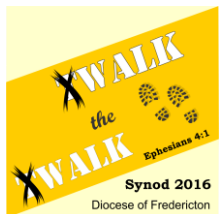


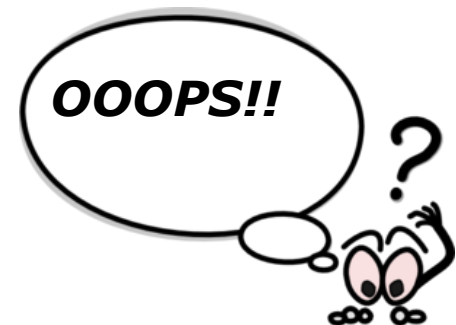
The Anglican Diocese of Fredericton

Dealing Successfully (and painlessly) With The Media



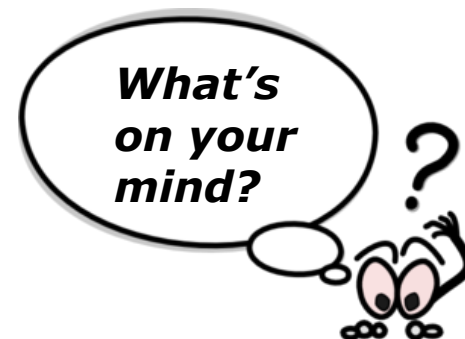
First steps are important!

- When a reporter calls to ask for an interview, your first steps are crucial.
- You can never take back what you have said, so it's important to be prepared and well informed.
- The most important message today is get permission before speaking to the media!



STEP ONE

- Find out what topic the reporter wants to talk about and what questions will be posed. This is considered the pre-interview.
- Some reporters will launch right into questions without really stating it's an interview, so ask – 'is this an interview?' If it is, tell them you need permission first and don't answer the questions.
- Details of your church's Easter play have far less potential for concern than speaking about a court case or a social issue. Your first task is to ask precisely what the issue is, and when a response is needed (their deadline). Say you will try to have a reply ASAP, keeping their deadline in mind.



You are under no obligation to speak to the media

- **HOWEVER**, most local community papers and broadcasters are just trying to promote events and fill their paper/timeslot. Your hesitation to help do that can brand you as negative and unco-operative.
- You don't want that reputation with the media.
SO.....



Step One, Part II

- You should not refuse requests for interviews on mundane events and topics.
- **HOWEVER**, before you do grant such a request, you must contact the diocese.



Step Two

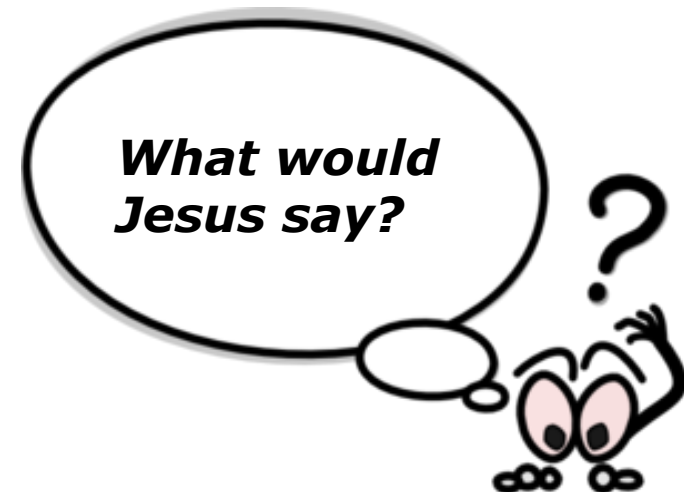
- **Seek permission from the diocesan office (459-1801) before speaking to any reporter. No one is permitted to speak on behalf of the diocese without permission.**
- **If it's a sensitive topic, you probably won't be given permission to speak on behalf of the diocese, so rest assured, most of your interviews with reporters will probably be on common-place affairs like fundraisers.**



Assuming you have permission...

- Here's a good tip to remember:

**When asked for an opinion
(as opposed to the facts of an event), your
comments should reflect the scope of our Christian
mission.**



You could say this:

- **Example - Food bank/soup kitchen story:**

“We are doing what Christ would do – feeding the hungry, nurturing relationships, caring for people in need. It’s what we do as the church.”



DON'T SAY THIS!

“If the politicians and bureaucrats weren’t so tight-fisted and compassionless, there wouldn’t be a problem and people wouldn’t be hungry and homeless!”



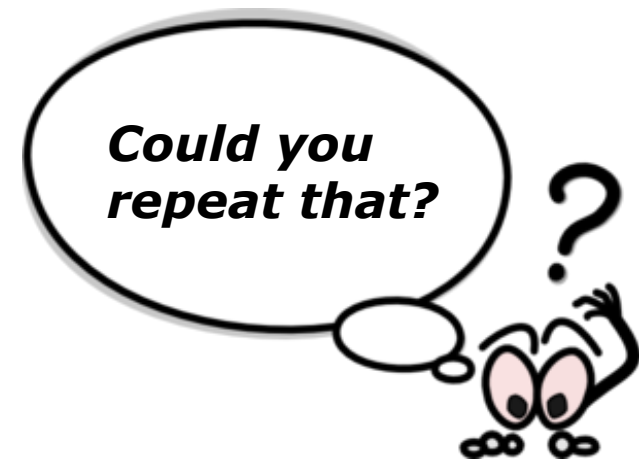
STEP THREE - Be prepared

- **Prepare information on the topic (who, what, where, when, why and any key messages you want to get out) for the reporter.**
- **Jot down this information so you can refer to it. Call the reporter back.**
- **Be assured the conversation is being recorded.**



STEP FOUR - The Interview

- **Answer the questions using your notes – but talk, don't read.**
- **If you have a poster of the event you're being interviewed about, provide it to ensure accuracy of event details.**



Uncomfortable questions

- **Take time to think before speaking. You can tell the reporter you will check on that and respond later. If you need clarification on a question, ask for it.**
- **If there is an uncomfortable silence, DO NOT feel compelled to fill it.**



Discomfort, Part II

- You may develop a good working relationship with a local reporter, but remember the role of the media is not to make you look good or excuse your errors.
- If you have said something sensational that's going to make people's eyebrows rise, reporters are probably going to use it in their story.



To sum up

- **Get diocesan permission first.**
- **Prepare your information first.**
- **Think before you speak, and delay answering any question that you need to check on first.**
- **Don't answer if you're not comfortable. You are not obligated to answer all of their questions.**
- **Ask the communications officer for guidance.**



TIP ONE

- Blame it on the diocese — in a nice way:

You can say, “Clergy aren’t permitted to speak for the bishop, and this sounds like a question for him. I can give you his email address if you’d like.”



TIP TWO - “Off The Record”

- Unless you have had media training and years of experience dealing with media, do not fall into a habit of saying things “off the record.”
- Off the record is the understanding that what one is about to say is not for publication or broadcast. It has to be said BEFORE the statement, not after.



“Off The Record,” Part II

- Some reporters don’t play that game, or have different rules, and exactly what was on or off the record can become confused or blurred.
- It is crucial that you consider every moment of the interview — from the first word to the last — to be on the record and suitable for publication. It’s a good habit to get into.



TIP THREE – Don't be a pest!

- Do not ask the reporter if you can read the story before it's published. No reporter or editor allows that.
- For one thing, it would halt production of the paper or broadcast because of so much time wasted. You have to have faith.
- You can say, 'if you need any clarification, let me know.'



TIP FOUR - Corrections

- Once you see, hear, or read the story, if there are any inaccuracies, inform the reporter immediately.
- Ask for a correction to be provided to the public. Media outlets do this every day so it's not a big deal.
- Be sure, though, before you start this process, that it really was their mistake. They can verify everything you said with their recording.



Final Thoughts

- You cannot control the media and you cannot keep them from publishing or broadcasting a story.
- Losing your temper with a reporter brands you as someone to watch.
- All interactions with reporters should be cordial and professional.
- Try not to give them a reason to be curious about you.



Final Thoughts, Part II

- Now that you're scared to death, rest assured that your interactions with reporters will probably be pleasant and free from worry.
- It's best to understand what they want, be prepared for it and think before you speak.
- Don't forget to check with the diocese for permission before your interview!



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