



Malaysia-Singapore Region of the Society of Jesus

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To ALL MAS JESUITS AND PARTNERS-IN-MISSION

Dear Friends,

MAS CODE OF CONDUCT

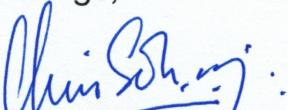
Greetings of Advent Hope, Peace, and Joy!

After due consultation and prayerful consideration, with this letter, I now promulgate the attached document, *Cultivating Integrity in Ministry: A Code of Conduct for the Malaysia-Singapore Region of the Society of Jesus*. As we do our utmost to adhere to its provisions, may this *Code of Conduct* prove an effective instrument for helping us to nurture and maintain a culture of protection in the communities and works of our Region, to the greater glory of God.

Thank you for your attention.

With prayers and every good wish.

Blessings,


Christopher Soh, sj
Regional Superior

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CULTIVATING INTEGRITY IN MINISTRY

A CODE OF CONDUCT

FOR THE MALAYSIA-SINGAPORE

REGION OF THE SOCIETY OF JESUS

1. RELATING WITH INTEGRITY

1.1. In their lives and ministries Jesuits bear witness to God's love for every human person. They do this by showing sensitivity, reverence and respect in their relationships.

This means:

- Recognising the dignity of everyone being given pastoral support – man, woman or child;
- Avoiding every impulse to ‘lord it over’ (cf Mt 20:25) those served;
- Actively avoiding all forms of discrimination;
- Resolving disputes through respectful dialogue and/ or professional mediation;
- Not cultivating dependency or subservience, but encouraging collaboration and mutual respect.

To safeguard integrity, and to preserve clarity of sexual and professional boundaries, Jesuits must avoid any behaviour that could reasonably be interpreted as harassment, i.e., where a hostile, offensive, humiliating or intimidating environment is created.

Harassment encompasses a broad range of behaviour, including but not limited to:

- Physical, verbal, written or psychological abuse;
- Bullying;
- Racial and religious insults;
- Derogatory ethnic slurs;
- Insults regarding people’s sexual orientation;
- Unwelcome touching and inappropriate behaviour;
- Sexual jokes and comments;
- Requests for sexual favours;
- Display of pornographic materials.

1.2. Pastoral care means that Jesuits need to respect the physical and emotional boundaries appropriate to relationships with adults and minors.

This calls for prudence that:

- Keeps the well-being of the other as its goal whenever initiating or responding to physical contact, such as giving a comforting hug or an affirming touch;
- Exercises pastoral ministry only in places that offer a sufficiently safe environment with openness and visibility – and never in sleeping quarters or bedrooms;
- Is careful when showing affection and regard, and in giving and receiving gifts.

1.3. Special care must be observed when attending to the most vulnerable, especially to children and youth.

Jesuits must:

- Make sure another adult is present or close by when providing pastoral ministry to a minor;
- Avoid over-familiarity or inappropriate language;
- Avoid engaging in play or sports like wrestling that involve much physical contact;
- Avoid being alone with a minor or group of minors in sleeping, dressing or bathing areas; if another adult cannot be present, special prudence is called for;
- Avoid staying overnight in the same room with a minor or vulnerable person; if it cannot be avoided, make every provision for a safe environment, e.g., get the permission of a parent or guardian, and ensure appropriate openness and visibility;
- Use electronic and print media responsibly, in a manner consistent with Christian values and standards for good behaviour;
- Never offer alcohol or any controlled substance to a minor;
- Never administer corporal punishment;
- Know the causes and signs of child abuse or neglect, and what to do if abuse or neglect is suspected or observed.

2. SERVING WITH INTEGRITY

2.1. Jesuits are particularly called to bear witness to a spirit of service. Because of the trust they are given and the public nature of their witness and leadership, they have unique power and responsibility.

Jesuits need to:

- Be careful not to use status or institutional power for self-advantage;
- Discourage the development of “personality cults”, i.e., an excessive focus on the popularity and influence of any particular Jesuit;
- Cultivate relationships characterised by freedom and growth, by being open to feedback and constructive criticism.

2.2. Superiors and Directors of work are called to support those for whom they exercise pastoral care.

They do this by:

- Cultivating opportunities for ongoing formation, development and renewal;
- Clearly communicating with respect to roles, expectations and outcomes;
- Being fair and consistent in the way they treat those entrusted to their care.

2.3. Jesuit clerics serve the communion of the Church by ministering or presiding at prayer, sacraments and the Eucharist for communities of active and equal persons. Thus they should look to the fullest expression of communities' prayer, praise and communion in the life of God.

Jesuits who are clerics need to:

- Prepare for and participate in liturgy and prayer with reverence, humility and respect for all in the community;
- When hearing confessions, respect penitents' right to privacy and to a safe environment; options must be offered for openness and visibility to those who desire it.

3. INTEGRITY IN JESUIT LIFE

3.1. Led by the Spirit, Jesuits continually respond to a call that comes from God, and is lived in the Church and within the human community.

Jesuits must recognise the value of:

- Faithful commitment to prayer and the sacraments;
- Nourishing one's spirit through spiritual reading;
- Doing an annual retreat;
- Receiving spiritual direction;
- Participating in ongoing spiritual formation.

3.2. Jesuit commitment bears witness to a life of chastity that acts with integrity in every relationship.

Each Jesuit must:

- Avoid sexually provocative actions or language;
- Reject any invitation to sexual behaviour;
- Shun situations and relationships that test one's commitment to celibacy

4. INTEGRITY IN PASTORAL MINISTRY

4.1. Jesuit vocational commitment calls for developing the pastoral and professional skills that ministries require. This includes adhering to ethical standards and practices that ensure one's personal and professional competence and accountability.

Jesuits who are engaged in regular and ongoing pastoral ministry, particularly in the form of counselling, therapy or spiritual direction are enjoined to:

- Acquire regular professional supervision;
- Establish processes to evaluate the quality of one's work, with assessment by one's peers and feedback from those one serves;
- Protect the rights of persons to privacy and confidentiality, while maintaining professional accountability in the keeping of records, notes of sensitive information, diary of appointments, etc.

4.2. Seeking the good of those they serve, Jesuits recognise the limits of their own skills. While often consulted, they should offer regular, ongoing counselling and/ or therapy only if professionally qualified to do so.

Jesuits need to:

- Be clear about the context, purpose and expectations of spiritual direction, counselling, support or advice;
- Recognise how counselling differs from spiritual direction, as well as one's limitations in those areas;
- Be familiar with professionals to whom people with specific needs can be referred;
- Be attuned to complex personal or relationship problems that ought to be referred to trained professionals who are more equipped to deal with them;
- Avoid using psychological tools or tests unless accredited and supervised in their use.

4.3. As ministers of healing, Jesuits should be sensitive to the risks in relationships where professional and personal lines get blurred. A minister's behaviour should always focus on the well-being of the other, avoid exploitation, and safeguard professional judgment.

Jesuits must:

- Avoid potential conflicts of interest when asked to advise family members, employees and close friends; it is often advisable not to enter into a formal counselling relationship with them;
- Avoid having close business relationships with anyone receiving intensive and/ or one-to-one pastoral care;
- Be wary of situations prone to conflict of interest, e.g., when counselling or giving spiritual direction to more than one person from the same family;
- Be very prudent in giving or receiving gifts from those under one's spiritual and pastoral care.

4.4. Jesuits are strongly urged to terminate a pastoral relationship when it becomes reasonably clear that the person seeking support is not benefiting from it. The person may need to be helped to find another source of assistance.

Jesuits need be reminded that:

- When doubts arise about a pastoral relationship, they can ask a colleague or supervisor for help in assessing it
- This is called for when one:
 - * Feels continually frustrated or angry in the relationship;
 - * Is unduly attracted sexually to the one being helped;
 - * Starts projecting his own feelings and issues onto the other person in the pastoral relationship.
- It is prudent to seek professional advice when the person being helped:
 - * Acts in a sexual manner;
 - * Is continually angry or frustrated in the context of the support relationship;
 - * Shows no movement towards resolution of the issues at hand.
- It is important to maintain a good referral network of pastoral ministers, counsellors, therapists, spiritual directors and supervisors

5. INTEGRITY IN ADMINISTRATION

5.1. Jesuits who have the responsibility to supervise the work of others bear witness to the Gospel value of justice by ensuring just working conditions.

Jesuits engaged in administration need to:

- Ensure that all employment procedures are based on principles of justice and equity, appropriate to each particular situation;
- Negotiate clearly documented and agreed upon descriptions of each person's roles, responsibilities and duties, including those of the supervisor;
- Provide safe and healthy working conditions;
- Provide just remuneration for skill, responsibility and performance;
- Have appropriate grievance procedures against improper or unreasonable administrative acts;
- Follow civil legislation regarding terms and conditions of employment.

5.2. Jesuits act with integrity and fairness when they give serious attention to complaints of sexual, physical or psychological abuse.

Issues related to these concerns are dealt with more specifically in the Malaysia-Singapore Region's *Professional Boundaries: Guidelines for Caring and Serving*. However, Jesuits are reminded that in dealing with complaints of abuse, they must:

- Respond promptly, sincerely and with pastoral sensitivity;
- Promptly inform the Major Superior and the one he has delegated to deal with matters of this nature;
- Alert the complainant about the Region's Protocol (*Professional Boundaries: Guidelines for Caring and Serving*) for dealing with allegations of misconduct, and provide relevant contact and referral details;
- Help the complainant identify immediate means to ensure that he or she feels safe from further abuse;
- Explicitly assure anyone alleging abuse that immediate independent support can be made available;
- In collaboration with the Major Superior, support the healing of others who, with the victim, have been seriously affected by the abuse – family, friends and community of both the alleged victim and the offender;
- Abide by the requirements of mandatory reporting and other relevant civil legislation; they must also ensure that the proper processes of law are not interfered with. Notwithstanding whatever civil law requires, the Major Superior will determine whether and how information shall be shared with the pertinent Church authorities.

5.3. Jesuits responsible for administering property and finances exercise their responsibilities in the service of communion and in the light of Church Tradition.

They must:

- Observe what Canon Law says about administration of property and finances, and follow what is set out in the Society of Jesus' *Instruction on the Administration of Goods* (IAG).

- Plan and review responsible stewardship of property and finance by:
 - * Drawing up a budget of income and expenditure;
 - * Keeping accurate records of income and expenditure;
 - * Submitting all accounts to annual auditing;
 - * Complying with civil and Church law regarding reporting and accountability

5.4. Governed by integrity and justice, Jesuits should not use their positions to seek financial gain or other personal advantage.

Jesuits are urged to:

- Issue receipts for financial gifts or benefits given on behalf of any ministry;
- Refuse gifts or benefits that may compromise the integrity of ministry;
- Refrain from soliciting gifts or benefits for oneself, and be prudent in giving gifts;
- Faithfully honour the intentions of the donor/ benefactor;
- Refrain from borrowing or misappropriating money from accounts.

6. INTEGRITY IN SEEKING PERSONAL AND COMMUNAL WELL-BEING

6.1. For their own well-being, and to offer more effective service to others and the Gospel, Jesuits must exercise stewardship over their own physical and emotional health.

Jesuits need to:

- Seek timely help from a trusted professional, colleague or friend when a difficulty arises in either pastoral or personal life;
- Get periodic physical checkups;
- Eat regular balanced meals, get regular exercise and adequate sleep;
- Schedule regular days off and annual holidays;
- Refrain from unhealthy habits such as excessive smoking, alcohol consumption, and overeating.

6.2. Superiors and leaders must promote the health and well-being, just working conditions, and professional development of Jesuits in their communities and ministries.

This means:

- Upholding the importance of participating in community life to maintain the individual well-being of Jesuits;
- Creating community structures that support physical, spiritual and emotional health;
- Monitoring stress, isolation, and other health risks to community members;
- Discussing health issues in individual pastoral dialogue with community members.
