

Alcohol Policy

Note: All diocesan entities must adhere to this policy at all times. In addition, this policy applies to the use of parish/school facilities by outside persons and organizations and the use of outside facilities by diocesan entities.

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The use of alcohol in our society has long been a source of controversy. On the one hand, as part of our many cultures for centuries, alcoholic beverages hold an honorable and welcome place in family life and community celebrations. Yet we all realize how easily alcoholic beverages can be abused, leading to great suffering because of the effects of dangerous addiction and the serious damage done under its influence.

In developing a policy on the serving of alcoholic beverages in the context of church-sponsored events, these values and these dangers must be carefully balanced.

Certainly we know that alcohol is not something evil. Christ our Savior gave us the Holy Eucharist, His living body and blood, under the forms of bread and wine. Catholics will always accept the basic goodness of alcohol as one of God's many gifts to us and may wish to use this gift in moderation in their own family circles.

However, because of the great amount of damage being caused by the abuse of alcohol in our present society, there is a pressing need to deal with it with special caution and for the Church to set an example of using it responsibly. Many parishes in the Diocese have already adopted policies in this regard, deciding not to provide alcoholic beverages of any kind at parish functions. Every parish is asked to consider carefully whether such a policy may be the best course.

The following minimum regulations are binding on every parish, school and agency of the Diocese of Fort Worth at all functions which they sponsor in any way. These regulations take effect on July 1, 1993.

1. Selling alcoholic beverages: No alcoholic beverage will be sold at any function sponsored by a parish, school, or other agency of the Diocese, whether the function takes place on or off church property. "Free will offerings" for alcoholic beverages at parish or school events are considered a sale and are prohibited.
2. Serving alcoholic beverages: Beer and/or wine may be served at a function sponsored by a parish, school, or other agency of the Diocese, whether the function takes place on or off church property, provided it is served without charge and only if food is also served on that occasion. When serving a meal, a parish or school may serve beer or wine with the meal and may have a brief social hour before the dinner at which beer or wine are served, even when tickets are sold for the event.
 - A. Alcoholic beverages must be given out by an adult rather than self-serve.
 - B. Such designated servers must be willing to refuse service when they determine a person appears to be intoxicated.

C. Under no circumstance can a person under the age of twenty-one consume alcohol, even when accompanied by their parents.

3. In serving alcoholic beverages when facilities are being used by persons at a function not sponsored by a parish, school, or other agency of the Diocese (e.g., weddings, anniversaries, Quinceaneras, etc.), beer and/or wine may be served, but only without charge at these functions, and only if a food is served.

4. When church facilities are used by persons at a function not sponsored by a parish, school, or other agency of the Diocese, they will be required to sign the contract provided by the Diocese, with the "hold harmless" agreement specified in number 7 of the "Contract for Use of Facilities" as provided in the *Handbook of Insurance and Risk Management*.

5. "BYOB" parties sponsored by parishes or schools are not permitted when a charge is made for admission. This term refers equally to hard liquor, beer or wine.