

## Censors Liborum

The *Nihil obstat* and *Imprimatur* are official declarations that a book or pamphlet is free from doctrinal or moral error. No implication is contained therein that those who have granted the *nihil obstat* and *Imprimatur* agree with the contents, opinions, or statements expressed.

Canon 827 of the *Code of Canon Law* states,

§1. To be published, catechisms and other writings pertaining to catechetical instruction or their translations require the approval of the local ordinary...

§2. Books which regard questions pertaining to sacred scripture, theology, canon law, ecclesiastical history, and religious or moral disciplines cannot be used as texts on which instruction is based in elementary, middle, or higher schools unless they have been published with the approval of competent ecclesiastical authority or have been approved by it subsequently.

§3. It is recommended that books dealing with the matters mentioned in §2, although not used as texts in instruction, as well as writings which especially concern religion or good morals are submitted to the judgment of the local ordinary.

§4. Books or other writings dealing with questions of religion or morals cannot be exhibited, sold, or distributed in churches or oratories unless they have been published with the permission of competent ecclesiastical authority or approved by it subsequently.

There are two stages in the process for obtaining the necessary permission. First, the written material submitted for approval will be reviewed by one or more members of the Archdiocesan Board of Censors. The task of the censor is to grant or deny the *nihil obstat*, indicating that nothing that appears in the text is contrary or harmful to faith or morals. The second stage is the review, by the Archbishop, of the censor's report. If the Archbishop is satisfied, he will sign a decree granting his imprimatur. The decree will include the name of the censor, and the date and signature of the Archbishop.

Three distinct categories of written materials require the *imprimatur*:

- those that are properly considered catechisms or other catechetical instructional writings,
- textbooks for studies of scripture, theology, or other sacred disciplines, and
- writings on religion or morality which will be displayed, sold, or given away in a church.

Members of the faithful seeking the *imprimatur*, or permission, of the Archbishop of Saint Paul and Minneapolis to publish or publicly disseminate writings should apply through the office of the Chancellor for Canonical Affairs.