

DIOCESAN PASTORAL MANUAL

North East India Regional Bishops' Council

2020

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P R E F A C E

I am happy to present to the Church in North East India this Pastoral Manual to serve as an easy reference book to those who are in pastoral ministry. This Manual will be of particular help to those who hold ecclesiastical offices.

The Church in North East India is relatively young. In a short span of 130 years, she has grown from being a distant mission area of the Archdiocese of Kolkata to a very vibrant Ecclesiastical Region of India comprising of three Archdioceses and twelve dioceses. The present fifteen ecclesiastical units of North East, though spread over seven states and at home in numerous cultures, share many common traditions and have developed a 'Church Culture' that is specific to the region. This places on us, the Pastors, the onus of setting up suitable administrative structures and formulating guidelines for their functioning. This Manual should help every ecclesiastical unit not only to preserve its valuable traditions but also to respect the time-tested administrative norms that form the common patrimony of the Universal Church. This Manual provides in simple language the administrative practices of the Church which may look complex as they appear in the Code of Canon Law and other documents of the Church. At the same time, this document does not replace the Code of Canon Law and the other legal instruments of the Church. This Pastoral Manual does not demand uniformity in the region in every aspect of Church administration. It is up to each Ordinary to make

particular laws adapted to certain customs and practices in his diocese. This Pastoral Manual is neither complete nor exhaustive. It is a growing body of law and practice reflecting the living and evolving Body of Christ, the Church, in our region. For this reason, its periodic revision will be inevitable.

I express my sincere thanks first and foremost to two eminent Archbishops Emeriti, Most Rev. Dr Joseph Mittathany and Most Rev. Dr Thomas Menampampil, S.D.B., under whose guidance the first draft of this document was made. Valuable additions to it had been made by the Most Rev. Dr Dominic Jala, the late Archbishop of Shillong. I also thank all other Bishops for their keen collaboration in bringing out this edition. I am grateful to Rev. Fr. Linus Neli who prepared the draft and incorporated the suggestions that came from various quarters. It is my sincere hope that each diocese will adopt whatever suits it best from these pastoral guidelines that are endorsed by our Regional Bishops' Council.

May the Good Shepherd guide us as we take this step in our common spiritual journey!

+John Moolachira

Archbishop of Guwahati & President NEIRBC

ABBREVIATIONS

Art.	Article
Can., Cann.	Canon, Canons
CBCI	Catholic Bishops Conference of India
CCBI	Conference of Catholic Bishops of India
CCEO	Codex Codici Ecclesiarum Orientalium
CD	Christus Dominus
CIC	Codex Iuris Canonici
FC	Familiaris Consortio
LG	Lumen Gentium
MD	Misericordia Dei
RP	Rite of Penance
RS	Redemptionis Sacramentum
VD	Verbum Dei

SECTION ONE
THE DIOCESE

Introduction

The Church that Jesus Christ founded on the Apostles is found in the Catholic Church. Christ constituted the College of Apostles with Peter as its head. He entrusted the government of his Church to the College of Apostles under the primacy of Peter (Mt 16:18). The Church spread throughout the world, with an Apostle or his successor (Bishop) to head each community. These communities are headed by the Bishop of Rome (the See of the successors of Peter) in vital communion. In this way we can find that there are two fundamental levels of organization in the Church – Universal and Particular.

By the decree of the Lord, the supreme power of the Church resides in the Pope (Roman Pontiff) and in the College of Bishops (LG 22, Can. 330). The Roman Pontiff and the College of Bishops are essentially related. By divine appointment Bishops are placed on the level of the Apostles (LG 20). United as the College of Bishops, the bishops bear responsibility not only for their own Particular Church but also the Universal Church. The communion of all Particular Churches, and in union with the Roman Pontiff, forms the Universal Church. Whoever is duly elected Pope (successor of Peter) is the Bishop of Rome, and as such he becomes the chief pastor of the Universal Church, while other Bishops (successors of the Apostles) are the pastors of their own respective dioceses. In this way, the “one holy Catholic and apostolic Church” is also expressed in a particular level of the

ecclesiastical constitution which is divine and dates back to the time of the Apostles (LG 20, 23). The relationship between the particular Church and the Universal Church is not merely between the parts and the whole, since the one and holy Catholic Church of Christ is “truly present and active’ in the particular Church (CD 11). The particular churches are grouped in various ways, principally in dioceses.¹

1. Definition of a Diocese

A diocese is a portion of the people of God, which is entrusted to a Bishop to be nurtured by him, with the cooperation of the *presbyterium*, in such a way that, remaining close to its pastor and gathered by him through the Gospel and the Eucharist in the Holy Spirit, it constitutes a particular Church. In this Church, the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church of Christ truly exists and functions (Can. 369; CD 11).

2. Diocesan Organization

2.1. The Diocesan Bishop

The diocesan bishop, in his own diocese, possesses all the power required to accomplish the pastoral function entrusted to him (Can. 381), so that he can perform all the acts of governance necessary or useful for governing the diocese. He even has the juridical power in individual cases to dispense his

¹ In the Catholic Church, due to special circumstances, there are other circumscriptions— particular churches - similar to the Diocese (Cann. 370-371). There are eight of them: *Territorial Prelature, Territorial Abbacy, Apostolic Vicariate, Apostolic Prefecture, Apostolic Administrator, Personal Prelature, Military Ordinariate, and Ritual Ordinariate*. These circumscriptions are insufficient in structures to become a full-fledged diocese. Some of them are normally headed by a Bishop (e.g. territorial prelate, apostolic vicariate, apostolic administrator), whereas territorial are not (e.g. territorial abbacy by an Abbot). In other words, the Diocese is the paradigm of all.

own faithful from the universal laws of the Church (Can. 87). Hence, he is said to have *ordinary power* (not delegated, since power is attached to his office), *proper power* (he can act in his own name), and *immediate power* (without any mediation).

The office of the Bishop has, by divine foundation, a three-fold function deriving from Jesus Christ – to teach (*munus docendi*), to sanctify (*munus sanctificandi*) and to govern (*munus regendi*). The Bishop is the visible principle and foundation of unity in the local Church (diocese) entrusted to him by the Pope, successor of Peter. He is also the link between the local Church and the universal Church. The Bishop is responsible for the mission of the Church in the diocese. He needs the collaboration of the clergy, religious and laity for the redemption and salvation of God's people.

If the diocese is extensive and very populous, he may be given a Coadjutor and Auxiliary Bishops to assist him in his ministry in some particular pastoral duties, or in caring for a part of the diocese (Can. 403). The Coadjutor Bishop is appointed in cases where the diocesan bishop suffers from personal limitations (age, sickness, etc), and with the right of succession to the See whenever it becomes vacant. He has a right to participate in the governing and decision-making process of the diocese. The Auxiliary Bishop is generally appointed because of some objective pastoral needs of the diocese, such as an increased number of the faithful, large geographical extension, etc. Normally this is on the request of the diocesan bishop who has the right to propose candidates that are suitable for the responsibility. The auxiliary bishop with special faculties (Can. 403§2) can be appointed at the request of the diocesan bishop or by the Holy See on its own initiative. Such appointment takes place where the ordinary reasons are pressing and serious (e.g. by illness or other personal difficulties of the diocesan bishop).

When the See is vacant in the diocese, a Diocesan Administrator is elected by the Consultors and he administers the diocese as canon law permits. (Can. 427§1).

2.2. The Diocesan Curia

This organ is the Secretariat of the Diocese. It is a permanent organ to enable the Bishop to govern the diocese and carry out his pastoral function. It is composed of Coadjutor/Auxiliary Bishops, Vicars, the Tribunal, Chancellor, the Notaries (secretary), Economer, and other Staff comprising clerics, religious, and laity. From the juridical point of view there are three fundamental types of acts (functions): i) *jurisdictional acts*, such as decrees, dispensations, appointments, etc; ii) *preparatory acts* of decisions, usually formed from consultations, views, suggestions, studies, etc, differing in nature and content; and iii) *material acts* of documentation, maintenance of the archives, certification, verification, etc. All the acts are carried out under the authority and in union with the Diocesan Bishop. All the powers (administrative, judiciary, and pastoral) are carried out in his name. The power of appointment belongs to the Bishop. The oath of secrecy is done on taking the office. The activities or functions are mainly pastoral, administrative, tribunal and miscellaneous. All these are done in the name of the Diocesan Bishop.

2.3. The Diocesan Vicars

There are provisions for creating various vicars like Episcopal Vicars, Vicar General, Vicar Forane, Judicial Vicar, Vicar for Religious, etc (depending on the pastoral situation in each diocese). In every diocese there has to be at least one Vicar General. The Vicar General has administrative/executive power for the entire diocese, not reserved by the Diocesan Bishop. The executive power given to him is a *vicarious* power as he acts in the name of the Bishop. Normally he is the moderator

in the diocesan curia. There can be Episcopal Vicar/s who may be empowered only for a zone/portion of the diocese, or one given type of ministry. If there be a Coadjutor or auxiliary bishop, then *ipso iure* he is the Vicar General.

2.4. Office of Chancellor, Notaries, Archives

The principal function of the Chancellor is to ensure that the acts of the Curia are drawn up and dispatched properly and swiftly. He is the chief custodian of all acts and documents of the curia. The functions of this office include interpreting diocesan and general law and policies of the Church as they affect diocesan activities, care of the records and archives, records pertaining to priests and religious, processing dispensation and permission to the faithful and other matters exercised at the direction of the diocesan bishop. The diocesan chancellor's office is not reserved to clerics alone as the law permits appointment of a lay person (Can. 483). Besides the chancellor, who is the chief notary, other notaries may be appointed if needed. The office of the notary includes writing acts and documents concerning decrees, arrangements, with a note of place, the day, the month and the year. He takes care that the acts or documents from the archives shown to those who lawfully request them are returned to proper places and he verifies the photocopies as conforming to the original copy.

2.5. Office of the Financial Administration

There are two principal canonical institutions that compose this section of the curia: the diocesan finance committee and the office of the financial administrator (also known as economist).

The *Diocesan Finance Committee* is composed of at least three persons appointed directly by the bishop. This committee depends on the bishop, who will have to consult with it in the administration of economic affairs of special importance.

Although constituted as a consultative organ, its advice at times can acquire a binding character. In specific financial transactions, the consent of the Finance Committee is required for the validity of the acts. The designation is temporary, lasting for ordinarily five years, but indefinitely renewable.

The *Financial Administrator (Economer)* is the diocesan business manager. He is appointed by the Bishop to administer the temporal resources of the diocese. His main task is the administration of the day-to-day budget (approved by the Bishop and/or by the finance committee). His office deals with disbursement and collection of money, accounting and auditing, buildings and constructions, maintenance, priests' allowance, salaries of the touring catechists, properties and other functions defined by the Bishop.

2.6. Consultative Groups

The principal consultative groups envisaged by Canon Law are the Council of Priests, Finance Committee, Diocesan Consultors, Diocesan Pastoral Council, Diocesan Synod, etc. These bodies do not have deliberative voice. They are to assist the entire ministries of the diocesan Bishop.

2.7. Diocesan Commissions

Besides the offices mentioned above, the diocesan Bishop is assisted by various departments and commissions. Specific responsibilities are entrusted to these Commissions: Biblical apostolate, Evangelization, Catechetics, Liturgy, Clergy, Education, Laity, Youth, Women, Communication, Family, Vocation, Health, Art & Culture, Social Services, Peace & Justice, Ecumenism and Dialogue, etc.

2.8. The Tribunal

The diocesan bishop has the power of governance expressed in three ways: *legislative*, *executive* and *judiciary*. In judicial

matters the bishop is responsible for all the juridical affairs in his diocese. He is assisted by others who, having fulfilled the requirements of the law, act in his name and under his authority. In the first place, he appoints a judicial vicar, with ordinary power to judge, and other diocesan judges and offices according to the provisions of the law. The diocesan bishop can establish tribunals with various competences to judge in matters of marriage, administration, and penal cases but pertaining strictly to the internal discipline of the Church. The Latin Code introduces three types of tribunals to serve the basic needs of the Church's judicial function. They are: i) the tribunal of first instance, ii) the tribunal of second Instance, and iii) the tribunals of Apostolic See. These tribunals are further structured into grades and kinds (species) in a hierarchical order. Among them are: i) the diocesan tribunal, ii) the regional or inter-diocesan tribunal, iii) the metropolitan tribunal, and iv) the tribunals of the Apostolic See. All the judges and tribunals duly appointed or established by the Church will have to act within their respective titles of competence and within the provision of the law for the acts to be valid.

SECTION TWO
PARISH AND GOVERNANCE

A parish is a definite community of the Christian faithful established on a stable basis within a particular Church; the pastoral care of the parish is entrusted to the Parish Priest who acts as the shepherd under the authority of the diocesan bishop (Can. 515§1).

1. THE PARISH PRIEST

Being appointed a parish priest is a mark of confidence which the bishop places in a priest's ability to lead a given portion of Christ's faithful. It implies a serious responsibility to co-ordinate the ministry of his parish team and lay leaders in matters primarily spiritual but also social and material.

- a) *The Proper Pastor*: The parish priest is the proper pastor (shepherd) of the parish entrusted to him, exercising pastoral care in the community entrusted to him under the authority of the diocesan bishop in whose ministry of Christ he has been called to share; in accord with the norm of the law he carries out for his community the duties of teaching, sanctifying and governing, with the cooperation of the other presbyters or deacons and the assistance of lay members of the Christian faithful (Can. 519).
- b) *Installation of the Parish Priest*: (See Can. 527 and Appendix n. 5).

- c) *Juridical Person*: The Parish is a Juridical person (Can. 515§3). The parish priest represents the parish in all juridical affairs in accord with the norm of law; he is to see to it that the goods of the parish are administered in accord with the norms of Cann. 532, 1281 – 1288.
- d) *Parish Community*: The parish priest is the leader of the parish community. He should strive to come to know the faithful who have been entrusted to his care; therefore, assisted by the Religious Sisters and the catechists, he is to visit village communities, families, sharing the cares, worries, and especially the grief of the faithful, strengthening them in the Lord, and correcting them prudently if they are wanting in certain respects. With a generous love he is to help the sick, particularly those close to death, refreshing them solicitously with the sacraments and commending their souls to God; he is to make a special effort to seek out the poor, the afflicted, the lonely, those exiled from their own land, and similarly those weighed down with special difficulties; he is also to labour diligently so that spouses and parents are supported in fulfilling their proper duties, and he is to foster growth in Christian life within the family. The parish priest is to acknowledge and promote the proper role which the lay members of the Christian faithful have in the Church's mission; he is to help realize that they are members both of the diocese and of the universal Church and participate in and support efforts to promote such communion (Can. 529).
- e) *Parish Liturgy*: The sacred liturgy is a visible sign that the Church is a community of praise and worship. The parish priest is responsible for the worship, prayer, and

the spiritual formation of the people of his parish. At every liturgical celebration – be it private or public - the parish priest must lead the members of his assembly into Jesus’ intimate love and make them aware of the “communion of saints” in the Universal Church. Liturgical ceremonies must exude and instill a sense of the sacred, be awe-inspiring and Spirit-filled experience.

- f) Concern for those not in the fold: In the context of the Northeast, a parish priest also should have a heart for the people who are not Catholics and are not even Christians so that they may discover in him a man of God. He must reach out to them especially in times of sickness, death and human tragedies so that they may experience the love and compassion of Jesus for all.

2. TAKING POSSESSION OF PARISH

- a) Before taking charge of a parish, he should meet the outgoing incumbent and learn from him about: i) the customs, traditions and practices prevailing in the community; ii) the parishioners – their needs, aspirations, organizations, services, etc; iii) missionary experience of those who worked there before; and iv) cultural styles and ethos of the people and possibly learn a new language.
- b) The new parish priest will take into account the goals mentioned in the vision and mission statements of the parish, and consider how he can bring them to fruition.
- c) The new parish priest will appreciate the presence and the activities of consecrated men and women (and if there be, of Secular Institutes and Societies of Apostolic Life, Order of Consecrated Virgins and Pious Associations) in the parish.

- d) The new parish priest is to earn the respect of his assistants and parishioners by example more than by precept.
- e) He is to avoid criticizing his predecessor. When people express appreciation for his predecessor, he should welcome their remarks, and not be disturbed or attribute ulterior motives to them. He should not make drastic changes in a hurry. In this way, he will win the goodwill and cooperation of all.
- f) After a transfer to another parish, the parish priest must not interfere with what is going on in his former parish nor make unpleasant comments in the new set up of that parish.
- g) A parish priest is never to speak ill of his assistants to the people and vice versa. This will only cause serious harm to himself and to the work in the parish. He must learn to respect the views and opinions of the assistants, as also of his people. A parish priest will make positive efforts to build up a loving, caring and sharing fellowship among the parish Fathers – praying together often, taking meals regularly with them, having concern for their personal needs. They should form a cordial community.
- h) At the transfer, Parish Priest should hand over the parish to the new Parish Priest in the presence of a Curia member/delegate, with properly made accounts, updated Pass Books, inventory documents, Chronicles, Registers etc. Handing over and taking possession shall be recorded and signed by both the priest and the Curia member, a copy of which shall be kept in the parish and the other in the Chancery.

3. PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL

3.1. Establishment

- a) After the diocesan bishop has listened to the Council of Priests, a parish pastoral council is to be established in each parish; the parish priest convokes and presides over it and through it the Christian faithful along with those who share in the pastoral care of the parish in virtue of their office give their help in fostering pastoral activity.
- b) Since the parish is a community of clergy, religious and laity working out their salvation together, all must be involved in the parish. The parish pastoral council relates to the pastoral life and growth issues of the parish community. The membership of the pastoral council is to be representative.
- c) This pastoral council possesses a *consultative* vote only and is governed by the norms determined by the diocesan bishop (Can. 536). In other words, the pastoral council is not a legislative body for issuing decrees or statutes that the parish priest must either sign or veto. It is not a platform to raise grievances or campaign for majority votes to manipulate parish policy.
- d) *Purpose:* The council is to study the life and activity of the people of God, that is, to search the needs, the ideas and the hopes of the people of God, to evaluate the parish in conformity with the Gospel, to recommend policies, procedures and programmes to enhance the pastoral life and activity of the parish.
- e) *Membership:* The council members must be registered in the parish; have demonstrated a commitment to the parish community; be in full communion with the

Catholic Church; commit themselves to spiritual growth; commit themselves to skills development as part of the Christian process; be willing to commit the necessary time and energy to offer effective consultation; be determined by the parish community.

- f) It will have three types of members. 1. Ex officio members: It will be the parish priest who is the president, the assistant parish priests, superiors of religious houses in the parish, the head Catechists, President and secretary of the women and youth commissions and president of any pious association that works in the parish with the permission of the parish priest. 2. Elected members: there will be elected members who represent various zones or village communities. 3. Nominated members: These members are nominated by the parish priest to give balanced representation of the parishioners. The elected members will form simple majority in the council.

When a parish priest leaves his parish or dies all official meetings of the pastoral council are suspended until the new parish priest or administrator reconvenes the council.

3.2. Role of the Parish Priest

- a) The parish priest must convene and preside at the council meetings and participate in its activities. There can be no parish council meeting without the parish priest. He, in response to the Church's call to consultation, must call the council, seek counsel on matters affecting the life of the parish, participate in the interaction, be open and respectful to the opinions of the parishioners and weigh seriously and respond appropriately to the collective wisdom or consensus of the council. He should also ensure that the membership is representative of the whole parish, assist in the formation of all its members, help in

the preparation of the agenda of the council, ensure that the council's concerns reflect the whole church, and facilitate council members in building their own community of faith.

- b) Normally, the parish priest should not act contrary to the counsel given, especially when there is a consensus. However, in matters that violate Church teaching or are contrary to the diocesan policy, the parish priest, after explanation to the council, must withhold his consent. In cases of non-acceptance of counsel, for whatever reason, appeals may be made to the diocesan bishop or his designee for clarification, consideration or arbitration.
- c) In his ministry, each parish priest remains faithful to the tradition of consultation by calling the pastoral council into reality. Once the council exists, he seeks the individual and the collective opinion, as well as their consensus. Lay persons, on the other hand, take seriously their call to serve the parish community as counsellors. They commit themselves to providing the best possible advice which is a result of prayer, reflection and dialogue as well as study, research and consultation with other parishioners.
- d) *Assistant Parish Priest:* It is important that the Assistant Parish priest participates in the pastoral council meetings. As he is appointed by the bishop to serve as co-worker with the parish priest, his role is distinct from that of parish staff persons employed by the parish priest. He should follow closely the proceedings as well as the resolutions arrived at and cooperate in their implementation. He takes the place of the parish priest when the parish priest is prevented from being present in

the parish and with the permission of the parish priest, may call the Pastoral council meeting.

- e) *Organization:* (See a workable sample of the Statutes of *Parish Pastoral Council* in Appendix no. 4). The statutes must be approved by the diocesan bishop.

4. FINANCE COMMITTEE (See Appendix -3)

4.1. Establishment

- a) Each parish should have a Finance Committee which is regulated by universal law as well as by norms issued by the diocesan bishop; in this council the Christian faithful, selected according to the same norms, assist the parish priest in the administration of parish goods (Can. 537).
- b) The Finance Committee is a separate entity from the parish pastoral council. The Finance Committee is to deal with the resources raised by the parish community. Parish finances are not handled by the parish pastoral council, but it is important to consult the pastoral council to determine the consistency of the budget with parish mission and goals. The appointed Finance Committee advises with regard to raising and utilization of resources.
- c) *Membership:* The parish finance council is to consist of not less than three parishioners who are Catholics. They should possess experience or expertise in business, finance and law and are in the common estimation of the parish community as honest and committed to the work of the parish. Members are freely appointed by the parish priest for a period of three-year, renewable for another term or until there is a change of the parish priest. Excluded from membership are persons who could have

a conflict of interest from such affiliation, such as staff members. Also ineligible is any close relative of the parish priest, such as brother, sister, nephew, niece or in-law.

- d) *Meeting:* The Finance Committee shall meet periodically.
- e) *Functions of the Finance Committee:*
 - i. Assist the parish priest in the administration of the parish in accordance with Canons 1281 - 1288.
 - ii. Assist the parish priest in the preparation of a yearly budget of income and expenditures and discusses the proposed budget with the parish pastoral council.
 - iii. Assist the parish priest in the preparation of the annual financial report of income and expenditures to the parishioners.
 - iv. Review the parish income and expense report quarterly.
 - v. Assist parish commissions and organizations in preparing and submitting budgets.
 - vi. Study parish revenues and make recommendations for increasing revenue to meet both parish and diocesan goals and priorities.
 - vii. Familiarize themselves with all diocesan fiscal policies and assist the parish priest in meeting these obligations.
 - viii. Encourage the faithful to support parish and diocesan programmes of raising resources as an expression of solidarity and stewardship.
- f) *Organization:* (See a sample of the *Statutes of the Parish Finance Committee in Appendix no. 3*). The statutes must be approved by the diocesan bishop.

5. PARISH OFFICES

5.1. Records

a) *Registers*

- i. *Types:* Every parish must have the following parish Registers required by the general law of the church: Baptisms, Confirmations, Marriages, Deaths, and Parish Census. Details of the administration of the Sacraments should be promptly recorded in these registers according to the norms set out in Canons 877, 895, 1121, 1122, 535.
- ii. Civil records such as Memorandum of association, Certificate of society registration, minutes of general and governing body, bank passbooks, audited statements, income tax and FCRA registration certificates, land patta, pan card etc are to be carefully kept.
- iii. *Entries:* All entries in parish records must be made in legible handwriting (possibly in black ink). Once entered, no alteration or overwriting should be made in the record.
- iv. The Vicar General (or the deans if established in big dioceses) is to inspect the parish records of each parish, including the record of Mass stipends for each priest, on a yearly basis, before December 31st and a report on each parish be given to the diocesan curia (Cann. 957, 958). In the absence of the dean, a suitable priest may be assigned by the bishop to do the same.

b) *Rules regarding Registers*

- i. Parish records are confidential and therefore, the information from them may be released only to the individuals who have a right to obtain them.

- ii. The most important parish records are that of baptism and marriage registers and they have value beyond strictly ecclesiastical use. Care should be taken that no register is left in the hands of the faithful or the Catechists to copy information from them. Often such persons go away with a long list of names of their friends or village members.²
- iii. It should be remembered, however, that those records are private in nature and therefore access to them must necessarily be limited. It is conceivable that a Baptismal record might contain information that would be pertinent in a civil or criminal matter. The individual will always have the right to ask for and to obtain his/her own record. It can be accepted as a policy that, when record is sought by a third party for purposes of litigation or, in any event, without the expressed consent of the subject in writing, this request will be declined for the above reasons.
- iv. No detail in a Parish Register is to be corrected even upon producing an affidavit except for a wrong spelling. There are enough cases when people want to correct the parish registers especially the date of birth as well as names to suit academic records.

² In case an authorization of release is required, the following format may be used: **Authorization of Release of Information:** I, ..., hereby authorize the Diocese of and (name of parish/place/State) to release a copy to (name/organization), of the ... (type of certificate) of (name/person on certificate). I agree to indemnify and hold harmless the diocese of, its bishop and successors in office, the aforesaid parish and all other persons connected with them from any liability for releasing this information pursuant to my request. (signature/address/phone/Dated). Note well: The person authorizing release should be the person to whom, the certificate relates, the parent if the certificate relates to a minor child, or the spouse or adult child if the person to whom, the certificate relates is released.

- v. All missed out entries as well as entries of the sacraments administered outside the Parish could be entered at another location well marked out in the concerned Register.
- b) *Census*: It is important to have the statistics of the parish taken every year ending with the calendar year. The diocese is asked to report to the Holy See with fresh data of the number of Catholics, and sacraments administered every year in the month of May. It should be a regular feature to be accomplished with the help of the Catechists or village leaders.
- c) *Inventory*: Parish Administrators must update regularly the inventory of all fixed and movable properties and furnishings of the parish and preserve one copy in the parish archive and another copy handed over to the Chancery. (Cann. 1283, 2°; 1283, 3°). It should be verified on occasions of transfers of the parish priest or principal.
- d) *Parish archives*
 - i. Memorandum of Association, organization and related papers or documents, parish reports, official correspondence, blue prints of buildings, photocopies of deeds, bulletins of special programmes, newspaper articles, census records, community news, the parish collections preferably supported by photographs should be saved. Annual programme/plans should be forwarded, one copy each, to the chancery archives. *Original* deeds (e.g. land, school recognition, property documents, loans or other obligations) belong to the Chancery archives. Copies of blue prints should be in the Chancery or parish files or the Diocesan Construction Manager's files.

- ii. Every Organization is bound to keep its chronicles, all minutes, membership, attendance, registers, activity reports, official correspondence, publicity releases, recordings of meetings, interviews and events, pictures, by-laws, newspaper clippings, historical sketches and other important profiles.

6. PRESBYTERIES

Residence at the presbyteries is limited to Priests and Brothers in formation. Lay persons are not allowed to live in the presbyteries on a stable basis either as partial remuneration for work or for other reasons. This norm also applies to former seminarians, relatives and others. With regard to women working in the presbyteries or Church premises, they should be living in a totally different building

7. THE ROLE OF AN ASSISTANT PARISH PRIEST

- a) *The co-operator*: The Code of Canon Law defines an assistant priest as “co-operator with the parish priest and sharer in his concern who, by common counsel and effort with the parish priest and under his authority, labour in the pastoral ministry” (Can. 545§1).
- b) *Parochial ministry*: Unless it is otherwise expressly provided in the Bishop’s letter of appointment, the assistant priest is by virtue of his office bound to help the parish priest in the entire parochial ministry, with the exception of the application of the Mass for the people (Can. 548§2).
- c) *Pastoral initiatives*: The assistant priest must regularly inform the parish priest about his pastoral initiatives, both

those planned and those already undertaken. In this way, the parish priest and the assistant can, by their joint efforts, provide efficient pastoral care of the parish for which they are together answerable (Can. 548§3).

- d) The assistant priest must partake of the community life in the presbytery (common prayers, meals, pastoral planning, etc) and be a sign of visible support to the pastoral initiatives taken by the parish priest.
- e) When the parish priest is absent, the assistant parish priest takes charge of the parish administration unless otherwise provided by the bishop. He is bound by all the obligations of the parish priest with exception of the obligation to apply masses for the people. The offerings which the Christian faithful make to the assistant parish priest on the occasion of his exercise of the pastoral ministry are to be deposited in the parish fund unless it is given specifically to him as a personal gift.
- f) The one who takes the place of parish priest, be it Assistant parish priest or the parochial administrator, should not do anything that prejudices the rights of the parish priest or cause harm to the ecclesiastical property. His office by nature is merely temporary and provisional. When he has discharged his office, he is to give an account to the parish priest.

8. THE SCHOOL PRINCIPAL

- a) *Responsibilities*
 - i. Normally when a diocesan priest is appointed principal of a school, if he is not the parish priest, he is also appointed as an assistant of the parish where he resides.

In addition to his usual duties in the school, therefore, he must be available for pastoral services in the parish. This, of course, would differ in each school and parish.

- ii. As a principal, he will see that the Catholic ethos prevails among the teaching and non-teaching staff and the students of the school he is entrusted with. The teaching of Bible and catechism to the Catholic Children is obligatory in all Catholic schools of the diocese.
 - iii. The principal will follow strictly the admission policy of the diocese. Any monetary or political pressure exerted for admissions should make the application void. Parents should be informed that donations, capitation fees or personal favours on the occasion of admission are absolutely forbidden.
 - iv. The principal must impress on his teaching staff that education and integral formation of the person must go hand-in-hand. He must discourage private tuitions and create an effective teaching-learning environment in the school which would eliminate the need for students to depend on outside tuitions.
- b) *Relationship with Parish Priest/Manager/Secretary*
- i. In parishes where there are diocesan schools, the parish priest, by his appointment as parish priest is the trustee and manager of the school, with all the responsibilities that such a position entails.
 - ii. The principal/headmaster, who is also an assistant in the parish, is fully responsible for the academic and extra-curricular activities, the appointment and the discipline of the staff of the school and timely compliance to the concerned civil authorities' orders in the matter.

- iii. The manager shall be responsible for structural changes to the building of the school. Hence, while the ordinary day –today maintenance will be the responsibility of the principal, the manager will be responsible for all modifications to existing buildings and construction of new buildings or extensions with due permission of the diocesan administration.
- iv. Every school shall have a Managing Committee, with the manager (who is the parish priest) as chairman and the principal as secretary. At least three persons should be nominated to this Board by the parish priest, in consultation with the principal, who have expertise in education and administration. It would be wise to seek the advice of the diocesan education commission in this matter.
- v. All extraordinary expenditure with regard to curricular and extra-curricular activities shall be budgeted for and approved by the Diocesan financial authority (with Bishop as the Chairman).
- vi. In general, there should be separate accounts for the school and the parish. The administration of the school comes under the responsibility of the Managing Committee.
- vii. The relationship between the parish priest and the principal should be like two brother priests with the same objective of making Jesus known and loved. While the parish priest should desist from interfering in matters relating to curricular and extra-curricular activities and the personnel of the school, the principal should keep him informed of the school programmes, performances and problems and should assist as much as possible in

the pastoral work of the parish, keeping in mind that his primary duty as a priest is pastoral. However, he is accountable to the parish priest in matters of policy or finance.

- viii. He should keep friendly, working relationship with the parents, teachers and the people of the locality and establish Parents' Teachers' Association (PTA) for this purpose and take the cooperation of all, particularly the parents, in the education of the children.

9. PRIESTS IN RESIDENCE

Priests who are unable to assume the full responsibilities of a parish priest because of age, ill health or other reasons, are invited to help in pastoral duties. These are, in particular: a) priests who have reached the *retirement age* (75 years) and can still help out in a parish, and priests who are sick but are able to look after themselves and assist in parish activities; b) priests who are in relatively good health, but are unable to continue bearing the responsibility of running a parish for reasons deemed important by the Bishop; and c) priests who, for personal reasons other than the above, need a break in their responsibilities. These priests can be appointed *On the Staff* of a parish and are expected to help in parish duties together with the other members of the parish team. The diocese will take appropriate steps to provide for their maintenance

10. PRIESTS IN SPECIAL MINISTRIES

- a) Some diocesan priests have been given specialized ministries in various institutions and commissions: e.g. Diocesan Curia, Diocesan Seminary, Clergy Home,

Marriage Tribunal, Pastoral Centre, Communication Centre, Health Care, Diocesan Estate, Diocesan Social Services, Youth, Evangelization, etc.

- b) These ministries are integral to the diocesan pastoral thrust and must be warmly welcomed and encouraged by all sectors of the Catholic community in the diocese.
- c) If those involved in these ministries are residing in some parish, they will get involved in parish duties inasmuch as their special ministry would permit.

11. THE CLERGY HOME

- a) The Clergy Home is the residence of the diocesan priests who, because of age or ill health, have retired from active ministry. They are now at the sunset of their lives and deserve every respect and consideration as those who have laboured and toiled for the diocese. The Clergy Home is governed by a Handbook which contains a set of rules and regulations which are approved by the diocesan bishop. All the residents will observe strictly the rules and regulations of the *Handbook*.
- b) *Care of the priests:* Priests residing in the Clergy Home will receive their monthly allowance, Mass Intentions, and health benefits from the diocese. They may accept to perform ministries in the parishes which invite them. They must, however, inform the Administrator/Director of the length of their absence and the place they will be going.
- c) *Visits and support:* The diocesan priests in active service should encourage their parishioners to visit their retired brother-priests following the directions given by the Clergy Home Administrator, and support generously to the needs of the priests there.

- d) *Temporary Stay*: Priests, who stay for a short period at the Clergy Home for convalescence, rest, or any other reason, as decided by the bishop, will continue receiving their allowance from the source which the bishop will decide. They can request for Mass Intentions and are entitled to medical expenses from the diocese. If they are invited to perform ministries in the parishes, they must inform the Administrator of the length of absence and the place they will be going.

12. FACULTIES AND CANONICAL RIGHTS OF PRIESTS

By granting the faculties the diocesan bishop acknowledges that a priest is qualified to exercise his priestly ministry in accordance with tradition and discipline of the Church. The faculties are also an assurance to the people that the bishop has confidence that the priest will minister to them in the spirit of the Church's understanding of the faith Christ revealed to the apostles. The following faculties are granted to priests in good standing for exercise within the territory of their respective diocese.

- a) *Liturgy of the Hours*: Priests must be faithful to the rich tradition of the Liturgy of the Hours except for serious reasons.
- b) *Preaching*: Priests, by law, may preach everywhere unless this faculty has been restricted or removed or unless particular law requires express permission (Can. 764).
- c) *Baptism*: The Bishop, Priests and Deacons are ordinary ministers of Baptism in conformity with the provisions of the law (cfr. Can 861§1; 862-863). Parish priests and assistant parish priests in the diocese are hereby permitted

to baptise those completed their fourteenth year and confirm them on the occasion, unless the diocesan bishop reserves to himself in specific cases (Cf. Can. 863; 882-884).

- d) *Confirmation*: Apart from the bishop, priests who have the faculty given by law or granted by the diocesan bishop are permitted to administer the sacrament of confirmation (Cann. 882; 883§2). In danger of death, any priest may confirm (Can. 883§3).
- e) *Eucharist*: All priests, not prohibited by law or censures, may celebrate Mass according to approved liturgical norms in any decent place, except funeral homes (Cann. 900§2, 932§1). Likewise, all priests may celebrate Mass twice on weekdays and three times on Sundays and Holy days according to the pastoral need, but this should not be a regular practice (Can. 905). The stipend of the binated / trinated Masses should be surrendered to the diocese.
- f) *Penance: Priests*, who possess the faculty to exercise the absolution of sin by virtue of the law itself or delegated faculty from a competent authority, are permitted to administer the sacrament of Reconciliation (Penance) in their respective diocese or anywhere in the world, unless restricted by the local Ordinary (Cann. 967§2, 973, 986§1). Confessors may remit a *latae sententiae* penalty for abortion and schism in the internal or external forum. As schism constitutes leaving the Church by a formal act, reconciliation with the Church should be expressed in the external forum with a notation in the baptismal register (Can. 1117). A priest, who actually procures abortion or is an accomplice in abortion, incurs *latae sententiae* excommunication and is an irregular to the exercise of Orders. Dispensation from the irregularity to

exercise orders in these cases is reserved to the Holy See (apostolic signatura) (cfr cann 1044 -1048).

- g) *Marriage:* Parish priests or assistant parish priests may delegate a priest or a deacon in an individual case to assist at marriage within the boundaries of the parish to which the parish priest or assistant parish priest is assigned. Only the local ordinary and a parish priest may give a general delegation to another priest or deacon (Cann. 137§3, 1111§1).
- h) *Funerals:* Parish Priest or Assistant Parish Priest may allow funeral rites for an unbaptised child if the parents had intended Baptism. He may allow funeral rites for a baptized non-Catholic, if this is not contrary to the wishes of the deceased and if a minister of the faith of the deceased is not available (Can. 1183).
- i) *Dispensation and commutation:*
 - i. Priests may consume some food before the second or third celebration of the Eucharist, even without an hour's interval (Can. 919§2).
 - ii. Parish Priests and Assistant Parish Priests may dispense from private vows of a parishioner or a visitor if by that vow an injury is done to the acquired rights of others. They may also commute the vow (Cann. 1196, 1197).
 - iii. Parish Priests and Assistant Parish Priests may permit a marriage between a baptized Catholic and a baptized – non Catholic in an *omnia parata* situation and in danger of death, if the conditions in Canon 1125 are met and the bishop is immediately notified in writing (Can. 1124).
- j) *Visiting Priests:* A visiting priest who is in good standing and has such faculties in his own diocese may be given

the faculties to preach for no more than one week by the Parish Priest or acting Parish Priest of a parish or by a superior of a religious community. If he stays more than one week and faculties are desired, they must obtain from the Chancery.

- k) *Personal confession*: Any priest in the diocese may give to any visiting priest in good standing the faculty to hear his own confession.

13. WELL-BEING OF PRIESTS

- a) Every priest (above 50 years of age) is advised to have an annual medical check-up and return the report to the Chancery. The medical check-up, if not covered by his insurance plan, is to be paid by the parish or ministry office in which he works.
- b) Medical and dental bills for diocesan priests are to be met according to the policy of each diocese.
- c) All diocesan priests should attend Annual Retreat of five days organized by one's own diocese (Can. 276). Attending retreats outside the diocese or in any other place should only be an exception, that too, with the explicit permission from the competent authority.
- d) Priests are allowed one month vacation annually. Days of retreat are not included in this total. Additional vacation time must receive the prior permission of the bishop (Can. 533).
- e) It is strongly recommended that each priest has a regular spiritual director or confessor.

- f) Priests desiring to be exempted from active ministry for reason of health are asked to submit a letter to the bishop along with medical report from their physician stating the nature of the problem and estimated leave time. If the leave is prolonged, the physician's recommendation should be reviewed every six months.

14. ON-GOING FORMATION

- a) All priests are expected to attend the on-going formation conducted by the Regional Bishops' Council or by the Diocese.
- b) Individual priests are welcome to take initiatives to attend short courses advertised by various training centres in the country. The diocese shall assist them to meet the expenses.
- c) Priests should consider it as part of their on-going formation to keep themselves updated on the ecclesial realities in the Universal Church. To facilitate this every parish/institution should subscribe to suitable Catholic literature.
- d) The continuing education allowances for priests approved by the local ordinary are to be paid by their parish or diocese. The diocese does not approve studies without permission from the local ordinary
- e) Priests are to attend pastoral courses in accordance with the provisions of particular law. At times determined by the same law, they are to attend other courses, theological meetings or conferences, which offer them an occasion to acquire further knowledge of the sacred sciences and of pastoral methods.

15. ALLOWANCE

- a) **Mass stipends** in each diocese shall be revised from time to time. Smaller stipends or even no stipends should not prevent the acceptance of a mass intention (Cann. 950, 952).
- b) **Stole fees** (Can. 531):As a general rule stole fees goes to the parish unless it is specifically intended by the donor as personal gift to the priest
- c) **Personal allowance** is to be fixed by each diocese and to be revised from time to time.
- d) Clerics who teach in the schools and colleges or undertaking offices drawing government salary or any other remuneration are not allowed to keep it for themselves but hand it over to the parish/ institution or the diocese as per diocesan policy.

16. PERSONNEL ASSIGNMENTS

- a) It is the prerogative of the bishop to appoint and transfer the priests in his diocese; and to assign them as parish priests, assistant parish priests, principals, directors, and for higher studies. He may also accept priests from other dioceses and religious orders and appoint them to hold diocesan posts for pastoral reasons.
- b) Parish priests are generally appointed for a term of three to six years. This may be extended for just pastoral reasons, particularly in cases of parish priests near retirement or shortened because of the needs of the diocese. Assistant parish priests are appointed for a term of one to three years, which may be modified in special circumstances.

- c) Priests of the diocese are asked to keep secret matters of a confidential nature which they may have discussed with persons in authority or anyone else.

17. RETIREMENT

- a) All parish priests are to submit a letter of resignation from the office/ministry of parish priest at the age of 75 years, although they may request it earlier for reasons of ill health or any serious reason. The same applies for priests in special ministry (Can. 538§3).
- b) Retired priests who are able and willing may be assigned to priestly ministry other than administration.
- c) A diocesan Priest not excommunicated and is in good standing is automatically covered by the pension plan of the diocese.

18. DEATH

- a) Every diocesan priest is to have a copy of his will together with an inventory of his personal property in a sealed envelope with his signature on it. This should be preserved in the Chancery.
- b) Each diocese is to arrange a suitable place for the proper burial of its priests in a common cemetery.
- c) It is proper for every diocesan priest to be buried in the diocese to which he is incardinated and served unless it is agreed upon by the bishop and the priest concerned with the means provided for the same by the priest.

SECTION THREE

SACRAMENTS CELEBRATION AND ADMINISTRATION

1. THE SACRAMENTS OF CHRISTIAN INITIATION

Through the *Sacraments of Initiation* men and women are freed from the power of sin and darkness. With Christ they die, are buried and rise again. They receive the Spirit of adoption which makes them God's sons and daughters and, with the entire people of God they celebrate the memorial of the Lord's death and resurrection.

Through the Sacrament of Baptism men and women are incorporated into Christ. They are formed into God's people and they obtain forgiveness of all their sins. They are raised from their natural human condition to the dignity of adopted children. They become a new creation through water and Holy Spirit. Hence, they are called the children of God.

Signed with the gift of the Holy Spirit at Confirmation, Christians more perfectly become the image of their Lord and are filled with the Holy Spirit. They bear witness to him before the entire world and eagerly work for the building up of the Body of Christ.

At the table of the Eucharist they are nourished by the Body and Blood of the Son of Man, so that they may have the strength to endure the daily struggles of life with the presence of Christ

living in them. Regular participation at the table of the Word and the table of the Eucharist make them to live for eternal life and show forth the unity of God's people. By offering themselves in and through the Church's sacrifice, they share in his universal sacrifice, offered to God the Father by Jesus, the High Priest. They pray for a greater outpouring of the Holy Spirit so that the whole human race may be brought into the unity of God's family.

Thus, the three Sacraments of Christian initiation namely, Baptism, confirmation and Eucharist, together, bring the faithful to the full stature of Christ and enable them to carry out their mission in the Church and in the world.

2. BAPTISM

1. Admission to the Catechumenate

The Code of Canon Law requires that, before an adult is baptized, he or she is to be admitted to the catechumenate and, to the extent possible initiated to the various stages of the sacrament of initiation (Can. 851,1°). The candidate must be sufficiently instructed in the truths of the faith and Christian life. Moreover, he or she must show forth evidence of living as a Christian, while still a catechumen, and must show sorrow for sins.

At the discretion of the parish priest and on the basis of the spiritual preparation of the candidate, the period of the catechumenate may in particular cases be lengthened or shortened; in extraordinary cases, like sickness, old age, etc., Catechumenate can be dispensed with and with the permission of the local bishop, such people be admitted to Baptism. However, it is his responsibility to make sure that they have the minimum faith required for the sacrament.

a) *Outline of Christian Initiation of Adults*

- i. The baptism of a person above the age of fourteen is to be referred to the local Ordinary (Can. 863). General permission is hereby given to the parish priests and the assistant parish priests for these baptisms without prior reference to the local Ordinary, except when there are a sufficient large number of adults that are seeking baptism. Wherever it is possible a suitable instruction for a period of at least six months prior to baptism is expected.
- ii. As a rule, unless there is a just reason to suggest otherwise, an adult is to be baptized in his/her proper parish church (i.e. where he/she has a domicile or quasi-domicile); and an infant in the proper parish church of the parents (Can. 857§2).
- iii. Unless there is a grave reason to the contrary, immediately after receiving baptism an adult is to be confirmed, to participate in the celebration of the Eucharist and to receive the Holy Communion (Can. 866). However, if there is a proximate opportunity for further catechesis, the Parish Priest may defer the confirmation.

b) *Marital Status of Candidates*

- i. Upon accepting a candidate into the catechumenate, the candidate's marital status is to be investigated by the priest. If the candidate is in an irregular marriage or is desiring to enter a marriage that would be irregular due to either spouse's previous marriage, the candidate is eligible only into the pre-catechumenate and catechumenate periods. The catechumen cannot enter the rite of Election if he/she is in an irregular marriage. If there is a possibility of regularizing the marriage and the

parties are willing to do so, the catechumen can be admitted to the Rites and to the sacraments of Initiation.

- ii. The candidate's marriage or intended marriage should be canonically clarified upon admittance to the initial process and the necessary annulment/dissolution processed so that they would be unable to enter the rite of election or the sacraments of initiation until their marriage cases are resolved.
- iii. The resolution of marriage cases for catechumens and their spouses or intended spouses takes time. According to tribunal practises, the petitions are heard in turns according to date of acceptance of the petition. No case will be pushed ahead of others simply because the person is in a hurry to receive baptism.

2. Rite of Christian Initiation for Children of a Catechetical Age

- a) This form of the rite of Christian initiation is intended for children, not baptized as infants, who have attained the use of reason and are of catechetical age. They seek Christian initiation either at the direction of their parents or guardians or with written permission from their parents, or on their own initiative. Such children are capable of receiving and nurturing a personal faith and of recognizing an obligation in conscience.
- b) The Christian initiation of these children requires both a conversion that is personal and somewhat developed, in proportion to their age, and the assistance of faith education according to their age.
- c) For the sake of Baptism, the children who have reached the use of reason (seven years) are considered, like adults (Can. 852§1). Hence, their formation should follow the

general pattern of the ordinary catechumenate as far as possible, with the appropriate adaptations permitted by the ritual. They should receive the sacraments of Baptism and Eucharist, together with the older catechumens. For pastoral reason, the children could be given Confirmation at a later age so as to have another opportunity for catechesis.

3. Reception of Baptized Christians into the Full Communion of the Catholic Church

- a) This is a liturgical rite by which a person born and baptized in a separated ecclesial community is received, according to the Latin rite, into the full communion of the Catholic Church.
- b) In all cases, discernment should be made regarding the length of catechetical formation required for each individual candidate for reception into full communion of the Catholic Church.
- c) One who was born and baptized outside the visible communion of the Catholic Church is not required to make an abjuration of heresy, but simply a profession of faith.
- d) The sacrament of Baptism cannot be repeated, therefore, it is not permitted to confer it conditionally, unless there is a reasonable doubt about the fact of baptism or its validity.
- e) Those who have been baptized but have received relatively little Christian upbringing may participate in the celebrations of the Word and catechesis together with those who are being prepared for the reception into full communion with the Church.

- f) The celebration of the sacrament of Reconciliation with candidates for reception into full communion is to be carried out after the Rite of Reception. For this reason, administration of other sacraments like confirmation and marriage etc. should be done preferably on another day.

4. Rite for Baptism of Infants

- a) Both in planning and execution, the baptism programme should be integrated into the life of the parish as a whole and into the other programmes of sacramental preparation. The meaning and necessity of baptism (and other sacraments) both for the child and for the life of the community, should be the regular subject of preaching.
- b) The celebration of and preparation for baptism must always take into account the religious background and cultural differences among the people.
- c) Baptism which is necessary for salvation is a sign and the means of God's love, which frees us from original sin and communicates to us a share in divine life. Considered in itself, the gift of these blessings to infants must not be delayed.
- d) Assurances must be given that the gift thus granted can grow by an authentic education in the faith and Christian life, in order to fulfil the true meaning of the sacrament.
- e) Every parish should provide adequate baptismal catechesis in a friendly atmosphere, being aware of the ethnic, economic and social needs of the parents and godparents (sponsors). Catechesis should:
 - i. Emphasize the importance of the parents in their role as models of the faith and as primary educators of their children.

- ii. Bring parents and sponsors to greater understanding of the teachings of the Church and its sacramental and liturgical life, especially within the Sacrament of Baptism.
- iii. Involve parents and sponsors in the preparation and celebration of the baptismal liturgy.
- iv. When one of the parents is not a Catholic, the instruction and discussion should be adapted to that situation.

The Role of Sponsors at Baptism

- a) The sponsors or godparents, together with the parents, are present to profess the church's faith, in which the child is being baptized. Therefore, in order to be appointed sponsor, the person must be suitable for this role and have the intention of fulfilling it.
- b) In order to carry out his/her proper liturgical function as specified above, the Rite of Christian Initiation (Can. 874) clearly states that a sponsor should: be appointed by the candidate for baptism, or in the case of infants by the parents or whoever stands in their place, or failing these, by the Parish Priest or minister; be mature enough to undertake this responsibility, having completed the 16th year (Can. 874§2); be a Catholic who has received the three sacraments of Initiation: Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist; and live a life of faith which befits the role to be undertaken; not be bound by any canonical penalty; not be the father or a mother of the one to be baptized.
- c) At least one sponsor is required for the celebration of baptism. At most two are permitted, in which case one must be male and the other female (Cann. 872 -873).
- d) For the celebration of Baptism, the Catholic sponsor must fulfil the provision of Can. 874§1.

Place and date of Baptism

- a) To reflect the communal nature of faith, the ecclesial aspect of baptism and its relationship to confirmation and the Eucharist, Baptism should take place in the parish church and not in a private home (Cann. 857, 860).
- b) For this same reason, Sunday should be the normal day for the celebration of the Sacrament (Can. 856).
- c) Names: Care must be taken that the candidate receives a name not foreign to Christian sentiment. (Can. 855).

Register

- a) General Procedure: It is the duty of the parish priest of the place of baptism to record the following information without delay: name of the person baptized, parents, place and date of birth, place and date of the celebration of Baptism, sponsors or Christian witness. The record is to be kept at the parish where the baptism was celebrated (Can. 877§1). If the baptism was administered neither by the parish priest nor in his presence, the minister of baptism, whoever that was, must notify the parish priest concerned (Can. 878).
- b) Baptism outside a parish: a) Prison baptism should be recorded in the baptismal register of the parish within which the prison is located. Special attention should be paid to preparing the incarcerated for full initiation (Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist) and not solely baptism; b) Emergency Baptism at the hospitals should be recorded in the parish register where the hospital is located. Parents should be reminded that at the earliest convenience they should contact their Parish Priest to arrange for the supplementing of the rite.

3. CONFIRMATION

Those who have been baptized continue the path of Christian Initiation through the sacrament of Confirmation. In this sacrament they receive the Holy Spirit who was sent upon the Apostles by the Lord on the day of Pentecost.

This gift of the Holy Spirit conform believers more perfectly to Christ and strengthens them so that they may bear witness to Christ for the building up of his body in faith and love. They are so marked with the character or seal of the Lord that the sacrament of confirmation cannot be repeated.

1. The Minister of Confirmation

- a) The ordinary minister of Confirmation is a bishop (Can. 882).
- b) All priests, by law, may administer the sacrament of Confirmation in danger of death. (Can. 883§3).
- c) The priest, who by virtue of his office or by mandate of the local Ordinary baptizes an adult or admits a baptized adult into communion with the Catholic Church, has the faculty from the law to confirm the person in question on the same occasion (Can. 883§2). However, it may be delayed if there is an opportunity for deeper instruction in the faith and the Bishop's visit is imminent.
- d) Parish priests and the assistant parish priests are given the faculty to administer the sacrament of Confirmation to those faithful in distant villages whom the Bishop will not be able to visit and who because of advanced age, poor health, distance, difficulty to travel or other justifiable reasons will not be present at places where the Bishop administers the sacrament of Confirmation at regular intervals (Cf. Cann. 883, 884). The same faculty

is given in respect of those who are admitted to marriage, but with specific permission (Can. 1065§1).

- e) Confirmation may not be administered outside the jurisdiction of the minister (Can. 887), except in danger of death. A priest who has this faculty must use it only for those in whose favour it is granted (Can. 885§2).

2. Qualifications of Candidates

Each baptized catholic has the right and the obligation to receive the sacrament of confirmation (Can. 889§1), but the candidate has the responsibility to personally choose to complete initiation into the faith life of the Church (Can. 889§2). The candidate may request the sacrament if he/she:

- i. is baptized and able to renew baptismal promises, unless a grave reason suggests otherwise;
- ii. exhibits an active faith life and knowledge of the church;
- iii. Participates in the sacramental life of the church, especially Eucharistic liturgy;
- iv. Is willing to continue to learn and grow in faith following confirmation and throughout his/her lifetime;
- v. *Age of candidates:* People do not mature and develop at the same rate. Not all young persons in a particular grade will be at the same stage in moral, faith or intellectual development. Extensive catechesis is necessary for some, besides the regular religious education programs. Except in danger of death, Confirmation should ordinarily be administered only to those who are above 12 years of age (Cann. 889§1, 891).

3. Sponsors

- a) Sponsors represent in a personal way the witness and support of the parish community. Opportunities for

catechesis should be offered to the sponsors in order to assist them in fully understanding their role in the ongoing formation of the candidates. The sponsors should participate with the candidates in their preparation, as well as the celebration.

- b) To perform the role of sponsor, it is necessary that a person:
 - i. Be designated by the one to be confirmed, or by the parents or the one who takes their place, or, in their absence, by the Parish Priest or minister and is to have the qualifications and intention of performing the role;
 - ii. Have completed the sixteenth year, unless a different age has been established by the diocesan bishop or it seems to the Parish Priest or minister that an exception is to be made for a just cause;
 - iii. Be a catholic who has been confirmed and has already received the sacrament of the Eucharist and leads a life in harmony with faith and the role to be undertaken;
 - iv. Not be bound by any canonical penalty legitimately imposed or declared;
 - v. Not be the father or mother of the one to be confirmed;
 - vi. More than one sponsor: More than one can be used but only one is designated as the liturgical sponsor, standing with the candidate at confirmation;
 - vii. A proxy may be used, but it is recommended that someone nearby be chosen to sponsor, so that he/she can become more involved in the candidate's preparation.
- c) *Parents:* For the sacrament of Confirmation, the parental role is one of spiritual companion and advisor, that is,

both parents and child learning and growing in understanding of Catholic traditions and beliefs. As a part of their continuing support and witness, parents are exhorted to attend catechetical sessions provided by the parish for their own faith formation. With the parish's help, parents will be better able to share their own faith journey, thereby helping the candidate reach his/her own decision to go forward in faith.

- d) *Catechesis*: Keeping in mind that all catechesis should lead a person to a conscious, active and living faith, each parish should provide a process of immediate preparation to celebrate the confirmation.
- e) *For baptized Catholics who seek Confirmation as Adults*: Some adult Catholics, for various reasons, were not confirmed in their youth. The parish is challenged to structure flexible programmes to meet the diversity of needs. Adults should be grouped with other adults and not be placed in the catechetical process with adolescents.

4. Celebration

- a) The celebration of confirmation should be carefully prepared and well executed.
- b) The ceremony should normally be celebrated within the Eucharistic Liturgy. The sacrament of confirmation should be held at a time when the parish community can witness and participate in this celebration of the growth of their parish family.

4.1. Confirmation before Holy Marriage

If they can do so without serious inconvenience, Catholics who have not yet received the sacrament of Confirmation are to receive it before being admitted to marriage (Can. 1065). If

one has not been confirmed and presents himself/herself for marriage, the Confirmation should be given if the person can be adequately prepared for confirmation. If it is impossible to prepare someone for Confirmation adequately before marriage, then the priest should proceed with the wedding but use every means possible to see that the person is confirmed on the first occasion after the marriage has taken place. If the Bishop is not available to administer the sacrament of Confirmation, a visiting priest assisting at marriage should obtain permission to confirm the candidate.

4.2. Change of Name during Confirmation:

As greater emphasis is placed on the intimate connection between baptism and confirmation, the baptismal name is seen as having greater significance. Candidates may change their name during confirmation, if they so desire. This is especially true if the baptism name is not a saint's name and if the person wants to choose a favourite saint for him/her. This should be noted against the Baptismal register.

4.3. Recording Confirmation

Parish Priests should record the names of the minister, those confirmed, parents, sponsors and the date and place of baptism in the Register for Confirmation. If the confirmed is not from one's own parish, the details of confirmation should be sent to the Church of baptism.

4. EUCHARIST

1. Liturgical Year

The Church celebrates the memory of Christ's saving work on appointed days in the course of the year. Every week the Church commemorates the resurrection of the Lord on Sundays called

the Lord's Day. Through the Liturgical year which begins with the first Sunday of advent continues to the feast of Christ the King, the mystery of Christ is unfolded and the birthdays (days of death) of the saints are commemorated.

2. Offices and Ministries in the Mass

All in the Eucharistic assembly have the right and duty to take their own parts according to the norms for their liturgical roles and they are to be trained before undertaking these offices. Individuals should not exercise two ministerial roles at the same Mass (e.g. server, lector or extraordinary minister of Holy Communion).

3. Place and Time of Celebration

- a) The Eucharist should be celebrated in a sacred place, unless in a particular case necessity requires otherwise. In such a case, the celebration must occur in a decent place (Can. 932§1). A particular case includes not only a single occasion but also an individual priest who must celebrate outside a sacred place on a regular basis. Cases of necessity include sickness, old age, distance from a church, pastoral advantage such as Masses for Children and other particular groups. A decent place is principally one that would not unduly hinder the participation of the people as a result of undesirable distractions as well as it is not a place regularly used for profane purposes.
- b) The Eucharistic sacrifice should take place on a dedicated or blessed altar. Outside a sacred place a suitable table may be used, always with a cloth and corporal (Can. 932§2).
- c) *In a Non-Catholic Church:* For a just cause and with the express permission of the local ordinary, a priest may celebrate the Eucharist in the place of worship of some church or ecclesial community which is not in full

communion with the Catholic Church, provided there is no scandal (Can. 933). The local Ordinary's permission is not needed to celebrate the Eucharist in an interdenominational chapel, such as at a hospital, prison, airport, or military installation.

- d) A priest should be allowed to celebrate the Eucharist even if he is unknown to the Rector of a church, provided he has a letter of recommendation from his Ordinary or his superior (a *celebret*) which is dated at least within the year. If he lacks such a letter he can still be allowed to celebrate the Mass if it can be morally ascertained that he is not debarred from celebrating it. (Can. 903).
- e) The Mass is not to be celebrated at political or secular motive/events, or out of a desire for a show. The Eucharist should not be emptied of its authentic meaning.
- f) Conjoining of various Rites during the Mass is prohibited (e.g. Latin, Syro-Malabar, etc).

4. Place of Priest at the Eucharist

4.1. Celebration

- a) The church earnestly recommends that priests should celebrate Holy Mass daily (can 904).
- b) The chasuble is always worn over an alb or cassock by the celebrant even for daily mass. In concelebration, a concelebrant may wear alb/cassock and stole. The celebrant and concelebrants are not to super-vest the alb/cassock with warm clothes.
- c) The Eucharistic Sacrifice is an act of Christ and of the Church. All celebrations contrary to the Roman Missal are abuses and are strictly forbidden.

- d) There should be no shouting, clapping of hands, waving of flags, etc, during a liturgical celebration.³

4.2. Concelebration

- a) Vatican II theology has emphasized the fact of unity of the Church and of the one Sacrifice. Hence, several altars are done away with and concelebration of the Eucharist is encouraged unless there is a specific individual need.
- b) Concelebration is *permitted* between priests of different Catholic churches *sui iuris* by observing the liturgical books of the president and wearing the appropriate vestments and insignia of one's own church *sui iuris* (cf. CCEO, Can. 701), following the interritual concelebration permitted by CBCI.
- c) Catholics priests are *prohibited* from concelebrating the Eucharist with priests or ministers of churches or ecclesial communities that are not in full communion with the Catholic Church (Can. 908).
- d) At the end of the preparation of the gifts, the concelebrants come near the altar and stand around it in such a way that they do not interfere with the actions of the rite and that the people have a clear view. They should not be in the deacon's way when he has to go to the altar in the performance of his ministry.
- e) The parts of the Eucharistic prayer said by all the concelebrants together are to be said in a softer voice that the celebrant's voice stands out clearly.

³ This is the mind of the Holy Father, Pope Benedict XVI, during the Beatification of Pope John Paul II (1 May 2011, Vatican), this restriction was made known and observed.

- f) Unless otherwise indicated, only the principal celebrant makes the gestures. However, at the epiclesis, the concelebrants speak the words with right hand outstretched toward the offerings; at the words of institution each concelebrant extends his right hand toward the bread and toward the chalice, and afterward bows low.
- g) Only one chalice and paten are elevated at the doxology by the celebrant and a deacon or concelebrant.
- h) After the celebrant receives from the cup, he begins the distribution of communion to the faithful without waiting for the concelebrants to receive from the cup.

5. Place of Deacons at the Eucharist

- a) The various ministries of the deacons at Mass may be distributed among several deacons who assist at the Mass wearing their vestments. Other deacons who are present but not called upon to function in the celebration should not vest or occupy a specific place in the Liturgy.
- b) Eucharistic Acclamation: The proper minister for the proclamation: “Let us proclaim the mystery of faith” is said by the main celebrant and not by a concelebrant or a deacon even when the Bishop presides over the Mass (SCDW letter dated 14.01.1983)

6. The Liturgy of the Word

- a) In the celebration of the liturgy, the Word of God, Christ is present: as He carries out the mystery of salvation; he sanctifies us and offers the Father perfect worship.
- b) Proclamation of the Word and Ministry of Reader:
 - i. The Gospel is proclaimed by a priest or deacon; the first and second readings are read by an appointed lay reader, whether a man or a woman.

- ii. All those entrusted with this office, even those not instituted in the ministry of Reader, should be suitably and carefully trained to read it clearly giving out the meaning of the text. (VD 58).
- iii. The Word of God thus constantly proclaimed in the Liturgy becomes a living and active Word through the power of the Holy Spirit. It expresses the Father's love that never fails its effectiveness toward us, on its listeners.
- c) The Homily at Mass:
 - i. The homily, being an integral part of the Mass, is a means of bringing the scriptural message to life situations in a way that helps the faithful to realize that God's Word is present and is at work to guide them in everyday life (VD 59).
 - ii. The homily should ordinarily be preached by the celebrant, a concelebrant, or a deacon. The lay persons are not permitted (Can.767§1). This excludes also the seminarians, students of theological discipline.
 - iii. Generic and abstract homilies which obscure the directness of God's Word should be avoided, as well as themes such as politics and profane, pseudo-religious subjects.
 - iv. The homilist should not make the sign of the Cross before and after the homily. The General Instruction directs the celebrant to make the sign of the cross at the beginning of the Introductory Rite and only at that time.
- d) Lay Preaching/Commentary:
 - i. Non-ordained Catholics may be admitted to preach (but not to give the homily) in a church or oratory if in certain circumstances necessity requires it or in particular cases it is useful (Cann. 766; 767§2).

- ii. When commentaries are given in the liturgical celebration it is important that they are brief and do not destroy the balance and proportion of the celebration; do not constitute a second homily; are understood as belonging to special occasions and do not become everyday or weekly occurrences.
- iii. Another time when commentaries or introductions by a lay person might be appropriate is at the opening of the Mass, either before the entrance procession or immediately before the formal greeting by the presiding celebrant. Commentaries made at this point should be brief and confined to a statement, or in the event of a special celebration, to a welcome.
- iv. Commentaries and introductions made during the liturgy should be well prepared and should reflect collaboration with the celebrant and planners of the celebration in order to ensure consistency in the tone and theme of the liturgy and to avoid duplication.
- v. The practice of offering “reflection” after communion is to be avoided, as this period in the Eucharist is reserved for a period of silence, a hymn of praise or a psalm.

7. The Eucharist Prayer⁴

- a) Eucharistic Prayer is the prayer of the Church and not a private prayer. Only those prayers found in the Roman Missal or those prayers legitimately approved by the Apostolic See are to be used at the Eucharistic celebration. Spontaneous composition of prayers in the Eucharist is an abuse and an aberration (RS51-53).

⁴ Cf. Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, *Redemptionis Sacramentum*, 24 March 2004, nn. 51-56.

- b) All translations of the Eucharistic Prayers in any language require a prior approval of the competent authority of the Church for its use in the liturgical services.
- c) Only the priests by virtue of their ordination are empowered to say the Eucharistic prayers – as such these prayers should not be recited by deacons, lay ministers, or the faithful.
- d) The celebrant/s should be capable of pronouncing the Eucharistic Prayer of that language; else he/they should not concelebrate, instead attend the celebration in choral dress in accordance with the norms.
- e) Music should not accompany while the priests recites the Eucharistic prayers and the words of consecration.

8. Use of Bread, Wine, and Water

8.1. Bread

- a) The bread must be unleavened, purely of wheat and recently made so that there is no danger of corruptibility (Can. 924§2). Wheat bread is necessary for validity. The unleavened bread is necessary for liceity.
- b) Adding other substances into the Bread like fruit, sugar, honey, etc. are forbidden.
- c) The host should not be broken during the narration of the words of consecration but at the time of fraction.

8.2. Wine

- a) The wine must be natural, from the fruit of the grape, pure and incorrupt (Can. 924§3). Wine made from other fruit or chemical is invalid matter.
- b) If wine becomes so sour that it tastes more as vinegar, then it is invalid matter.

8.3. Water

- a) During the celebration, a small amount of water is to be mixed with the wine. This is needed for liceity.

Specific Considerations

- ◆ If Mass is celebrated outside of a Church, care is taken that hosts are not consecrated in excess. The Hosts not distributed during the Communion Rite are to be consumed by the ministers, or be transferred immediately to a nearby tabernacle. It is not proper to allow the Hosts to remain in a hall or auditorium for transfer to a tabernacle at a later time.
- ◆ When Holy Communion is distributed under both species, care must be taken not to consecrate more wine than it is reasonably expected will be consumed by the communicants.
- ◆ The excess consecrated species must never be poured into the *sacrarium* or a sink.
- ◆ The precious Blood may not be reserved in the tabernacle for later use.
- ◆ When there are elements of the sacred species to be consumed, they must be taken reverently to the credence table and consumed in a respectful manner. The vessels may be cleansed after the Mass.
- ◆ Small particles that break off from the Hosts are to be treated with reverence. The ministers should be trained how to consume them when purifying the vessels.
- ◆ The Hosts are to be carried for distribution in a reverent manner.

- ◆ The altar cloth, corporal and purificator should always be clean. When they become even slightly soiled they should be replaced with fresh clean ones. The same is true of albs and vestments.

*Rite of Peace*⁵

- a) The Rite of Peace comes within the rite of communion and thus is a preparation for the reception of the Holy Communion. For according to the tradition of Roman Rite, this practice does not have the connotation either of reconciliation or of a remission of sins, but instead signifies peace, communion and charity before the reception of the Most Holy Eucharist. It is rather the Penitential Act to be carried out at the beginning of Mass (especially in its first form) which has the character of reconciliation among brothers and sisters.
- b) It is appropriate that each one give the sign of peace only to those who are nearest and in a sober manner. The priest may give the sign of peace to the ministers but always remains within the sanctuary, so as not to disturb the celebration. He does likewise if for a just reason he wishes to extend the sign of peace to a few of the faithful.
- c) As regards the sign to be exchanged, the manner is to be established by the Conference of Bishops in accordance with the dispositions and customs of the people, and their acts are subject to the approval of the Apostolic See.

The Eucharistic fast

A fast for one hour from food and liquid is required before Holy Communion (Can. 919§1). Water and medicine can be taken at any time before receiving the Eucharist (Can. 919§1). Those who are elderly or who are ill, as well as those who care

⁵ Cf. *Redemptionis Sacramentum*, 71-72.

for them are excused from fasting (Can. 919§3). A priest who celebrates two or three Masses on the same day may take something before the second or third celebration even if the period of one hour does not intervene (Can. 919§2).

9. The Holy Communion

Reception of Holy Communion

- a) The Eucharist is “an antidote by which we are freed from daily faults and preserved from mortal sins” (*RS*).
- b) Each person is to examine himself/herself at depth before receiving the Holy Communion. The sacrament of Penance should not be neglected.
- c) All the faithful are recommended to receive the Holy Communion.
- d) Catholic Ministers lawfully administer the Holy Communion only to the Catholic faithful. So too, the faithful lawfully receive only from the Catholic Ministers, with the exception of the provisions made in Canons 844§2,3,4; 861§2.
- e) Distribute or receive on the tongue or in the hand carefully to avoid profanation. It is not lawful for the faithful to take it by themselves or pass it on to others. The spouses administering Holy Communion to each other at a Nuptial Mass is an abuse.
- f) The priest must communicate himself first, then distribute it to the faithful. Un-consecrated host should never be used during the Holy Communion.
- g) The pouring of the Blood of Christ after the consecration from one chalice to another is completely to be avoided, lest anything should happen that would be to the detriment

of so great a mystery. Flagons, bowls, or other vessels that are not fully in accord with the established norms are never to be used for containing the Blood of the Lord. (RS 106)

- h) Those who suffer from celiac illness are allowed to use gluten-free hosts and those who suffer from alcoholism are allowed to use grape juice for Mass.

Communion under both species

- a) The teaching of the Church on the real presence of Christ under both the species of bread and the species of wine remains in force. Holy Communion has a more complete form as a sign when it is received under both kinds. For in this manner of reception a fuller light shines on the sign of the Eucharistic banquet. Moreover, there is a clearer expression of the Lord and of the relationship of the Eucharistic banquet to the eschatological banquet in the Father's kingdom.
- b) Communion under both species is permitted in parishes of the Diocese in conformity with the norms of the Church and provided that parishioners have been fully catechized.
- c) Holy Communion is to be given under the species of bread alone or, in accordance with the liturgical laws, under both species or, in case of necessity, even under the species of wine alone (Can. 925).
- d) The Blood of Christ may be received by drinking from the chalice directly, or by intinction. The communicant must not intinct the host himself/herself in the chalice or to receive the intincted host in the hand; nor to intinct do the unconsecrated host in the consecrated chalice for distribution to the faithful.

- e) Priests unable to consume wine may receive by intinction when concelebrating or, when celebrating alone, again by intinction, but leaving it to an assistant to consume the consecrated wine. Those who celebrate alone must receive permission from the local ordinary to receive by intinction.
- f) One who throws away the consecrated species or takes them away or keeps them for a sacrilegious purpose incurs a *latae sententiae* excommunication reserved to the Apostolic See, and it is a crime which must be reported to the Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith (*Delicta graviora*, 26 October 2009)

Communion more than once a day

The faithful may receive communion again on the same day, when they participate in a Eucharistic celebration. However, this is only a second time and not as often as one participates in the celebration of the Eucharist. Those in danger of death may receive viaticum any time, even if they have already received twice communion on that day (Can. 917).

Communion Outside Mass

- a) Holy Communion received during Mass is the more perfect participation. The faithful should be encouraged to receive Holy Communion during the Eucharistic celebration itself. Priests, however, are not to refuse to give Communion to the faithful who ask for it even outside Mass.
- b) Parish Priests should see that an opportunity to give the Eucharist to the sick and aged, even though not gravely sick or in imminent danger of death, frequently and, if possible, daily, especially during the Easter season. It is lawful to minister communion under the appearance of wine to those who cannot receive the consecrated bread.

- c) The faithful should be instructed carefully that, even when they receive Communion outside mass, they are closely united with the sacrifice which perpetuates the sacrifice of the cross. It is therefore proper that those prevented from being present at the community's celebrations should be refreshed with the Eucharist.

Extraordinary Ministers of the Holy Communion

- a) The extraordinary ministers of the Holy Communion come under the jurisdiction of the bishop (e.g. request, approval, mandate training, catechesis, deputation etc through the respective Parish Priests);
- b) Extraordinary ministers of the Holy Communion may be designated to distribute Holy Communion at Mass, to bring Communion to those confined to hospitals, institutions or their own homes;
- c) It is especially desirable that special ministers take the Eucharist from Mass on Sundays and Holy Days, as an extension of the community liturgy, and bring it to those confined to bed at home by illness;
- d) No one can begin this ministry without instruction, careful practical training by the Parish priests, the bishop's mandate and a parish deputation ceremony at Mass;
- e) Patients and staff of institutions and families of the home bound must receive a careful explanation before initiation. This includes: emphasis on the authorization by the Holy Father and the bishop; distinction between Holy Orders (consecration of the Holy Eucharist) and lay ministry (distribution of the Holy Communion); explanation of the extension of the liturgy from the community to the patients; description of the ceremony; arrangements for place, time, assembly of patients, bedside arrangements etc;

introduction of the special Ministries of the Eucharist to staff and patients by the local priest before initiation of the programme; an explanation to the families of institutional patients, where possible.

- f) It is for a Bishop to decide if he can institute Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion in his diocese and to lay down norms for the exercise of this ministry.

Specific Directives Regarding Eucharistic Ministry:

- a) The extraordinary Eucharistic Ministers do not communicate themselves when they assist the priest at mass. After the priest has received communion in the usual way, the ministers receive communion from the priest. As Ministers exercising their office, they may receive communion under both kinds.
- b) The priest or deacon offers the chalice to the extraordinary Eucharistic Minister. The Minister then receives the chalice or ciborium from the priest or deacon and distributes to the faithful with the words “Body of Christ”. No other words are to be used.
- c) An extraordinary Eucharistic Minister fulfils his/her function in a Mass only when there are not a sufficient number of ordinary ministers present. “The pontifical commission indicated that when ordinary ministers (bishop, priest, or deacon) are present at the Eucharist, whether they are celebrating or not, and are sufficient number and are not prevented from doing so by other ministries, the extraordinary minister of the Eucharist are not allowed to distribute communion either to themselves or to the faithful”.

- d) Local Ordinaries can permit individual priests exercising their sacred office on an ad hoc basis to appoint a suitable lay person (in case there are no major seminarians and religious sisters) who, in case of necessity (e.g. large crowd) would distribute the Holy Communion.

10. The Viaticum

- e) The faithful who are in danger of death from any cause should be refreshed by the Holy Communion that same day; it is highly recommended that those who are in danger of death communicate again. As long as the danger of death lasts, it is recommended that Holy Communion be administered a number of times, but on separate days. Holy Viaticum should not be delayed too long. Those involved in pastoral care are to be especially vigilant that the dying receives Viaticum while fully conscious. The cause for the danger of death must be proximate, not remote. For example, a person who is about to undergo open heart surgery is in proximate danger; a person taking an airplane trip is only in remote danger (Cann. 921, 922)
- f) Those who for medical reason are unable to take the consecrated bread may receive Viaticum in the form of wine alone (Can. 913§2)

11. Mass Offerings

In accordance with the approved custom of the Church who celebrates or concelebrates a Mass may accept an offering to apply the Mass for a specific intention (Can. 945§1).

- a) No one is allowed to accept more Mass offerings to be applied by himself than he is able to satisfy within a year (Can. 953).

- b) When a person donates a sum of money for a Mass Intention and a priest accepts it, he is entering in to a contract with the donor. This contract places on him the obligation of having that Mass celebrated within a reasonable period of time. To ensure that this contract is fulfilled, a record of it must be maintained. Hence the importance of maintaining registers for Mass intentions: a parish Mass register and a personal register by the priest.
- c) There should be a Mass Intention Register for the Parish. The Mass Intentions received in the Parish must be entered in this Register (Canon 958 § 1). It is the duty of the Ordinary to examine this register (Canon 958 § 2). The money received for the intention must be entered against it. At the end of every month the number of intentions exonerated must be entered in the register. The priest who fulfils the Mass intention can claim the amount fixed per Mass in the diocese. The rest of the amount is to be credited to the Parish account.
- d) A personal Mass diary is also to be maintained by every priest. Mass Intentions received and exonerated must be recorded in it. One must not accept more intentions than he can exonerate in one year. (Can 955 § 4). This register must be constantly updated and presented whenever Mass intentions are collected from the curia. When a priest dies, an official from the curia is to take possession of this register and ascertain the number of Masses still to be celebrated. The diocese is bound to have those Masses celebrated. The money required for that will be deducted from the money that is available in the personal account of the priest at the moment of death.

- e) If a priest receives from a personal source a larger amount for a Mass intention, with the explicit intention to give it to him as a personal gift, he may retain the whole amount. However, he must enter it in his personal diary.
- f) If several ‘Thanksgiving/prayer request’, or ‘Mass intention’ envelopes, or envelopes with nothing written on it are placed on the altar during any Mass, or given in hand, each of those envelopes is to be counted as a separate Mass intention however small or big the amount in it, and the amount is to be entered in the Mass intention register of the Parish. The Parish Priest must see to it that these intentions are celebrated (Can 948).
- g) If several people offer their intentions for a particular day, the priest may announce all the intentions, but is entitled to take the intention of one Mass only. He must celebrate Masses for each of the rest of the intentions or transfer the extra intentions to the Curia (Can 948).
- h) A parish priest is obliged to say one Mass as ‘Missa pro Populo’ every Sunday (Can. 534). Hence the number of Mass intentions he is personally entitled to is the total number of days in the month minus the number of Sundays in that month. However, if he celebrates a second Mass, he can take for himself the intention of that Mass.
- i) A priest is eligible to only one Mass intention money per day. If he celebrates more than one, then the second/third intention is to be reported to the diocese as bination/trination and the money has to be handed over to the curia to be passed on to the diocesan seminary fund (Can. 951 § 1&2). A priest who concelebrates (not as principal celebrant) a second Mass on the same day is not entitled to any money either for himself or for the good cause prescribed by the Ordinary. On Christmas day a priest

may retain intentions of three Masses if he celebrates them. (Can. 951 § 1)

- j) The obligation of Mass intentions is tied to the number of Masses indicated by the donor. When no indication is made of the number of Masses, their number is to be calculated on the basis of the rate for Mass offerings prescribed in the place of the donor (Can. 950).

12. Other Components of the Mass

a) Sacred Music, Vestments, Linens, Altar

- i. All these should be proper, clean and dignified worthy of the Sacrament. They should be truly noble in the common estimation within the given region to command honour to the Lord; not to diminish the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharistic species in the eyes of the faithful. Before using they are to be blessed by a priest according to the rites.
- ii. Sacred vestments should contribute to the beauty of the sacred action. Vestments like amice, alb, cassock, cincture, chasuble are to be worn according to the rubrics (especially the colour). The proper vestment of the Deacon is dalmatic and to be worn over an alb and stole.
- iii. *Abuses:* using other strange texts, celebrating the Word and the Eucharist at different times or places (illicit); it is also illicit to omit or to substitute the prescribed biblical readings on one's own initiative; omitting the names of the Supreme Pontiff and the diocesan Bishop, if it is done deliberately, is against Communion with the hierarchy and not merely breaking the tradition of the Church.
- iv. Priests are allowed to celebrate Mass with lights of any kind, and in case of necessity, even without light.

b) *Sacred Vessels*

- i. Among the requisites for the celebration of Mass, the sacred vessels hold a place of honour, especially the chalice and the paten, which are used in presenting, consecrating and receiving the bread and wine. Vessels should be made from materials that are solid and that in the particular region are regarded as noble. The Conference of Bishops will be the judge in this matter. But preference is to be given to materials that do not break easily or become unusable.
- ii. Chalices and other vessels that serve as receptacles for the blood of the Lord are to have a cup of non-absorbent material. The base may be of any other solid and worthy material.
- iii. Vessels that serve as receptacles for the Eucharistic bread, such as a paten, ciborium, pyx, monstrance, etc, may be made of other materials that are prized in the region, for example, ebony or other hard woods, as long as they are suited to sacred use.
- iv. Vessels made from metal should ordinarily be gilded with gold or silver on the inside if the metal is one that rusts; gilding is not necessary if the metal is more precious than gold and does not rust.
- v. The artist may fashion the sacred vessels in a shape that is in keeping with the culture of the region, provided each type of vessel is suited to the intended liturgical use.

c) *Paschal Precept*

- All the faithful, after they have been initiated into the Eucharist, are obliged to receive Holy Communion at least once a year. This precept must be fulfilled in paschal time

from the first Sunday of Lent to Trinity Sunday, but for just cause it may be fulfilled at another time during the year (Can. 920).

d) *Holy Days of Obligation*

- In addition to Sunday, the Church observes some solemn feasts as Holy Days of obligation. In India, most of the solemn feasts of the Church are commemorated on Sundays. Besides Sundays, we have only two days of obligation: Assumption (15th August) and Christmas (25th December).

e) *Anticipated Masses for Sunday and Feast Days*

- i. *Anticipated Masses* should be scheduled in the evening. No anticipated Mass for a Sunday or Holy Day may be scheduled earlier than 4 p.m.
- ii. *The obligation of assisting at Mass* is fulfilled by attending a Mass celebrated anywhere in a Catholic Rite, either on the Sunday or Holy Day itself, or on the evening preceding day (Can. 1248§1). Accordingly, participation in any Mass (e.g. Nuptial Mass celebrated after 4.00 pm on a Saturday) fulfils the precept. In such celebrations, the liturgical norms for the particular Sunday or Holy Day are to be observed.
- iii. If the Assumption and Christmas occurs on a Saturday or a Monday, the precept for participation in the Eucharist is for each of these days: the Solemnity and the Sunday.

f) *Paschal Triduum*

The instruction contained in the sacramentary relating to the paschal triduum should be carefully observed. The number of celebration should be limited to those deemed truly necessary for the pastoral needs. The Masses of Christian Burial is not

allowed on Holy Thursday, and throughout the paschal Triduum. However, a non-Eucharistic funeral service is always permitted.

- ◆ *Holy Thursday:* The Mass of the Lord's Supper is celebrated in the evening, at a convenient hour, with the full participation of the whole community and with all the priests and clergy exercising the ministry. Priests are not allowed to celebrate Mass on the morning of Holy Thursday. Only the Ordinary may give a permission to celebrate another Mass other than the Mass of the Lord's Supper.
- ◆ *Good Friday:* On this day, in accordance with ancient tradition, the Church does not celebrate the Eucharist: Holy Communion is distributed to the faithful during the Celebration of the Lord's Passion alone, though it may be brought at any time of the day to the sick who cannot take part in the celebration. The celebration of the Lord's Passion should begin at about 3.00 pm, unless pastoral reasons suggest a later hour. If the size or nature of a parish so indicates, the pastoral services may be repeated later.
- ◆ *Easter Vigil (Holy Saturday):* Only after the solemn Vigil during the night does the Easter celebration begin. Before the celebration on Holy Saturday evening, Holy Communion may be given only as Viaticum. The entire celebration of the Easter Vigil takes place at night. It should not begin before nightfall; it should end before daybreak on Sunday. (This Vigil should not begin until the conditions allow for the symbolism of the Light of Christ coming into the darkness of the world to be apparent). Although it is never permitted to celebrate the entire Easter Vigil more than once in a given Church or to anticipate the Mass of Easter before the Vigil, for

pastoral reasons an additional Mass may be celebrated after the Mass of the Vigil. Such a Mass may follow the Liturgy of the word of the Mass of the Easter Vigil and the Word of the Mass of the Easter Vigil and other texts of that Mass should include the renewal of Baptismal promises.

- g) *Christmas Midnight Mass* is not to be celebrated in a private home. Only in Churches, chapels and nursing homes is the celebration of Midnight Mass allowed.

13. Eucharistic Worship outside Mass

13.1. Visit to the Blessed Sacrament

- a) Believe in the Real Presence of Jesus: show a gesture of gratitude, a pledge of love, a debt of adoration.
- b) Foster Eucharistic adoration, whether brief or long, or continuous
- c) Make it accessible to the public
- d) Have access to the Source of Holiness
- e) Praying of the Holy Rosary may be integrated in prayerful contemplation of the mysteries of the life of Christ the Redeemer
- f) Reading of the Holy Scripture and appropriate singing is recommended
- g) In cities and towns, some Churches should foster perpetual adoration.

13.2. Eucharistic Congress and Procession

- a) The Bishop is to regulate the conducting of such devotion and participation

- b) It must be organized in a dignified way and promote adoration

13.3. Remedies to Abuses to the Holy Eucharist

- a) *Principles:* Proper proceedings are followed to safeguard the spiritual patrimony and rights of the Church in accordance with the law, employing all legitimate means. All “grave matters” concerning the Holy Eucharist must be promptly removed and reported to the Bishop.
- b) *Against the sanctity of the Most Holy Eucharist:* Competence against the following abuses are reserved to the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith:
 - i. taking or retaining for a sacrilegious purpose or the throwing away of the Consecrated Species as mentioned in Canon 1367;
 - ii. Attempting the liturgical action of the Eucharistic Sacrifice by a person who is not a priest (Can. 1378§1, n.1);
 - iii. Simulation of the Holy Mass (Can. 1379);
 - iv. Concelebration of the Eucharistic Sacrifice with ministers of Ecclesial Communities which do not have apostolic succession and do not acknowledge the sacramental dignity of priestly Ordination;
 - v. Consecration for a sacrilegious purpose of one matter without the other or even both either within or outside the Eucharistic celebration.

5. RECONCILIATION

The whole Church, as a priestly people, acts in different ways in the work of reconciliation which has been entrusted to it by

the Lord. Not only does the Church call sinners to repentance by preaching the Word of God, but it also intercedes for them and helps penitents with maternal care and solicitude to acknowledge and admit their sins and so obtain the mercy of God who alone can forgive sins. Furthermore, the Church becomes the instrument of the conversion and absolution of the penitent through the ministry entrusted by Christ to the Apostles and their successors (*RP 8*)

Individual and integral confession and absolution are the ordinary means by which the faithful, conscious of grave sin, are reconciled with God and the Church; only physical or moral impossibility excuses from such confession, in which case reconciliation can be obtained in others ways.

All those of whom it is required by virtue of their ministry in the care of souls are obliged to ensure that the confessions of the faithful entrusted to them are heard when they reasonably ask, and that they are given the opportunity to approach individual confession, on days and at times set down for their convenience.⁶

1. Times

- a) The sacrament of Reconciliation or Penance may be celebrated at any time on any day, but it should be publicized to the faithful (*RP 13*)
- b) The sacrament of Reconciliation is to be celebrated in the Church/Chapel before the Mass, and even during Mass if there are other priests available, in order to meet the needs of the people (*MD 2*).

⁶ Cf. *Motu Proprio*, Pope John Paul II, *Misericordia Dei*, 7th April 2002, n.1.

- c) It would be helpful in parishes to provide facilities for confessors on weekdays to meet the need of the people, in addition to Saturday and Sundays.
- d) Communal celebrations with individual confessions are encouraged by the Rite of Penance. It is fitting to offer several of these celebrations during the season of Lent (*RP 13*).

2. Place

Parishes and chapels should take care to provide suitable rooms for the Sacrament of Penance, in which the penitent may exercise the right to anonymous or face to face celebration of the Sacrament. This right should also be preserved in communal penance celebrations.

3. General Absolution⁷

- a) The condition requisites for general absolution are: i) *in danger of death* and there is no time for priest/s to hear the confessions of the individual penitents; and ii) a *grave necessity* (Can. 961). A grave necessity exists:
 - i. when in the light of the number of penitents a supply of confessors is not readily available to hear the confession of individuals in an appropriate way within an appropriate time;
 - ii. when the penitents would be deprived of sacramental grace of Holy Communion for a long time through no fault of their own.
- b) With reference to the case of *grave necessity*, it must be objectively exceptional such as can occur in mission territories or in isolated communities of the faithful, where

⁷ See *Misericordia Dei*, 4.

the priest can visit only once or very few times a year, or when war or weather conditions or similar factors permit.

- c) The two conditions set down in the Canon to determine grave necessity are inseparable. Therefore, it is never just a question of whether individuals can have their confession heard “in an appropriate way” and “within an appropriate time” because of the shortage of priests; this must be combined with the fact that penitents would otherwise be forced to remain deprived of sacramental grace “for a long time”, through no fault of their own.
- d) General absolution is not to be used without permission of the diocesan bishop (Can. 134).

4. Faculties

- a) Parish priests are granted the habitual faculty to administer the sacrament of Reconciliation. This same habitual faculty is extended to all assistant parish priests and priests who are either incardinated in the Diocese, or who have domicile in this diocese. This faculty may be exercised anywhere in the world, unless in a particular case the local Ordinary has restricted its exercise (Can. 967§2).
- b) Confessors may remit in the internal or external forum an automatic penalty (*latae sententiae*) for abortion, apostasy, heresy and schism. Leaving the Church by a formal act requires remission from the penalty of excommunication and reconciliation in the external forum.
- c) The sacramental absolution in automatic penalty has twofold consequence: forgiving the sin, and removing the excommunication.
- d) All the priests, in virtue of their ministry, have been granted the faculty to absolve the sin of procured abortion

and lift the excommunication imposed by the Church. (Cf. Pope Francis, Year of Mercy, 2015-2016).

- e) The religious who come to serve a diocese, must obtain faculty to hear confession within the diocese from the local bishop.

5. *Delicta graviora* against the Sacrament of Penance

Below is the extract from Motu Proprio, Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith, *Sacramentorum sanctitatis tutela*, 21 May 2010 (*Delicta graviora*: law and procedure):

§ 1. The more serious crimes against the sanctity of the sacrament of Penance reserved to the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith are:

- i. The absolution of an accomplice in a sin against the sixth commandment of the Decalogue, mentioned in Can. 1378§1 of the Code of Canon Law;
- ii. Attempted sacramental absolution or the prohibited hearing of confession, mentioned in Can. 1378§2, n.2 of the Code of Canon Law;
- iii. Simulated sacramental absolution, mentioned in Can. 1379 of the Code of Canon Law;
- iv. The solicitation to a sin against the sixth commandment of the Decalogue in the act, on the occasion, or under the pretext of confession, as mentioned in Can. 1387 of the Code of Canon Law;
- v. The direct and indirect violation of the sacramental seal, mentioned in Can. 1388§1 of the Code of Canon Law.

§2. With due regard for §1, n.5, also reserved to the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith is the more serious offence which consists in the recording, by

whatever technical means, or in the malicious diffusion through communications media, of what is said in sacramental confession, whether true or false, by the confessor or the penitent. Anyone who commits such an offence is to be punished according to the gravity of the crime, not excluding, if he be a cleric, dismissal or deposition.

6. ANOINTING OF THE SICK

Suffering and illness have always been among the greatest problems that trouble the human spirit. Although it is closely linked with the human condition, sickness, as a general rule, cannot be regarded as a punishment inflicted on an individual for personal sins (Jn 9:3). Part of the plan laid out by God's providence is that we should fight strenuously against all sickness and carefully seek out the blessings of good health.

The Lord himself showed great concern for the bodily and spiritual welfare of the sick and commanded his followers to do likewise. This is clear from the gospels and above all from the existence of the Sacrament of the Anointing of the sick, which he instituted and which is made known in the Letter of James.

Those who are seriously ill need the special help of God's grace in this time of anxiety, lest they be broken in spirit and, under the pressure to temptation, perhaps weakened in their faith. This is why, through the sacrament of Anointing of the Sick, Christ strengthens the faithful who are afflicted by illness, providing them with the strongest means of support.

The special graces conferred by this sacrament are thus described in the introduction of the Rite of Anointing: "The sacrament gives the grace to those who are sick: by this grace

the whole person is helped and saved, sustained by trust in God, and strengthened against the temptations of the Evil One and against anxiety over death. Thus the sick person is able not only to bear suffering bravely, but also to fight against it. A return to physical health may follow the reception of this sacrament if it will be beneficial to the sick person's salvation. If necessary, the sacrament also provides the sick person with the forgiveness of sins and the completion of Christian penance.”

1. Celebration

- a) The **only proper minister** of the Anointing of the Sick is the priest or bishop.
- b) All priests who have the care of souls have the duty and right to administer the sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick to the faithful entrusted to their pastoral care. For a reasonable cause, any other priest may administer this sacrament if he has the consent, at least presumed, of the afore-mentioned priest (Can. 1003§2).
- c) The sacrament of the Sick **may be celebrated**:
 - i. With those whose health is seriously impaired by sickness or old age.
 - ii. Before surgery, if the surgery is caused by a serious illness.
 - iii. With elderly people who have become notably weakened, even though no serious illness is present.
 - iv. With seriously ill children who have sufficient use of reason to be strengthened by the sacrament.
 - v. With those who have been anointed if they relapse after recovery or if the condition becomes more serious.

- vi. With those who are unconscious or who have lost the use of reason if there is probability they would have asked for the sacrament were they in control of their faculties.
 - vii. With those who are judged to have a serious mental illness.
 - viii. With those who, when they were in possession of their faculties, at least implicitly asked for it (Can. 1006).
 - ix. The Anointing of the Sick is not to be conferred upon those who obstinately persist in a manifestly grave sin (Can. 1007).
 - x. Judgment on the suitability of a candidate for Anointing should be made prudently and without scruple.
- d) Forbidden to administer the sacrament:** i) to those who obstinately persist in manifest serious sin (Can. 1007); ii) the sacrament of Anointing of the Sick is not to be administered to those who are already dead. The minister should instead, pray for the deceased.
- e) The **proper matter for the sacrament** is the oil of the sick (*Oleum Infirmorum*), blessed by the bishop during Chrism Mass. If this is not available, the priest may bless any plant oil according to the rite, but this should be absorbed in cotton wool and burned following the anointing.
- f) **Anointing and Penance:** If one who is ill wishes to celebrate the Sacrament of Penance as well as the Anointing of the Sick, Penance should be celebrated during a prior visit or prior to the actual anointing. The anointing should not be viewed as a substitute for Penance, especially if the individual is in serious sin.

- g) Catechesis:** The faithful should receive a thorough and ongoing catechesis relating to the Anointing of the Sick, including the following:
- i. The sacrament should be requested as soon as a serious illness is apparent.
 - ii. The sacrament should not be delayed, particularly to the moment of death.
 - iii. The sacrament should whenever possible, be celebrated within the context of the community of faith in the parish or institution, with family and/or those providing health care to the individual present.
 - iv. Whenever possible, individuals should celebrate the anointing and, if necessary, the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick in their home parishes before entering the hospital.
 - v. Regular communal celebrations of the Anointing of the Sick, with adequate catechesis to deter abuse, should be celebrated in parishes. During communal celebrations of the Anointing of the Sick, care must be taken that only those eligible be permitted to approach the sacrament (Can. 921).
 - vi. Parish bulletins, sacramental packets and other modes of communication should reflect this catechesis.
 - vii. Priests, deacons, directors of religious education, ministers to the sick and others who serve in ministry to the sick and in catechesis should be thoroughly grounded in the meaning and celebration of the Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick.

7. HOLY MARRIAGE

Married Christians, in virtue of the Sacrament of Matrimony, signify and share in the mystery of that unity and fruitful love which exists between Christ and his Church; they help each other in attaining holiness in their married life and in the rearing and education of their children; and they have their own special place among the people of God.

Priests and deacons should first of all strengthen and nourish the faith of those about to be married, for the sacrament of matrimony presupposes and demands faith (*Rite of Marriage*, Introduction, 1–7).

1. Marriage Preparation

- a) The goal of the initial contact is to communicate an attitude of openness toward couples seeking to marry, whatever their religious background or level of faith and to direct the couple to an initial face-to-face interview with the proper Parish Priest or his representative. Couples are to be treated with respect, openness and warmth, regardless of their faith development, registration status in the parish or financial contributions.
- b) Marriages are to take place in the parish of either party or in another Catholic church with permission of the proper pastor. Interfaith marriages are ordinarily to take place in a Roman Catholic Church (Can. 1115).
- c) *Formal engagement*: In some places the formal engagement is done in the Parish Office or Church after those who want to be married have gone through the pre-nuptial inquiry. In any case, it is necessary for couples to contact their parish as soon as the formal engagement is made and at least three (3) months prior to their

anticipated wedding. Individual parishes may require a minimum of six (6) months. Extra time must be allowed if either party had been previously married.

- d) The Parish Priest who will witness the vows has the responsibility to prepare a couple for marriage and complete the paperwork. In cases in which a couple is being prepared for marriage in another place, the priest/deacon doing the preparation should coordinate his efforts with clergyman who will be witnessing the vows. Couples who are preparing for marriage in a place other than that in which they will be married should stay in frequent contact with the deacon/priest who will be witnessing their vows. The Parish Priest should also obtain a written statement from those who are preparing the couple that the requirements for the marriage preparation in this diocese have been fulfilled.
- e) The records of the marriage are ordinarily kept in the Catholic parish in which the marriage took place.
- f) *Assistance in Marriage:* The primary task of the Church, the Parish Priest and others in marriage preparation is to assist the couple in making a judgment about their relational readiness and personal faith (Cann. 1063, 1071).
 - i. The initial interview is done by the priest/deacon (if required, with the help of Catechists and Sisters). The purpose is to establish rapport, explain the process and determine freedom to marry. The Prenuptial Enquiry Form may be completed at this time.
 - ii. Larger parishes may opt for a group introductory session prior to individual initial interviews. Or as done in some Dioceses, Marriage preparation courses are given to the

couples in parishes and proper discernment and interviews are carried out during this period.

- iii. Marriage preparation is to identify and deepen the couple's faith. Couples may be refused only when they explicitly and formally reject what the church intends to do in the marriage of baptized persons (*FC 70*).
- iv. A decision to delay is made by the priest, the couple and, on occasion, the parents after consultation with an outside party: e.g. a member of the parish staff, a professional counsellor, and the director of the Family Life Office or the Chancellor. The couple may appeal any decision for delay.
- v. Before Marriage takes place, it must be established that nothing stands in the way of its valid and licit celebration. Hence, prenuptial enquiry is a must for all marriages even for those which are regulated after cohabitation of the partners (Can. 1060) and marriage in danger of death.
- vi. For *Pre-nuptial Enquiry Form* (See Appendix n. 6).

2. Instructional Programme

The instructional programme is to present the essential human and Christian aspects of marriage so that the couple becomes aware of the total dimensions of the marriage covenant and is introduced to persons and resources available so that they might turn to the Church in times of personal need. This should include: context of marriage today; communication and conflict resolution; meaning of permanence and forgiveness; requirements of a sacramental marriage; role of faith, prayer and church; roles, expectation and responsibilities; self – awareness, personal healing , individual growth in marriage; sex and sexuality; value of children, parenthood and natural family planning.

- a) Resistance to any programme is a strong negative indicator of readiness for marriage.
- b) The priest/deacon should meet with the couple to see that the catechesis for the sacrament has been completed and to discuss the results of their instructional program. All documentary requirements should be completed by this time.
- c) The priest/deacon should, at this time, discuss the liturgical preparations for the marriage and encourage Catholics to celebrate the Sacrament of penance prior to the wedding.
- d) The rehearsal is conducted by the priest/deacon or his representative and offer the opportunity for group prayer by the wedding party.
- e) Special Circumstances provide the priest/deacon the opportunity to show care, concern and respect for the couple's unique situation, to speak of the teachings of the Church pastorally and, as needed, to refer the couple to appropriate persons for help and counselling.
- f) In cases in which the couple had not planned to marry, pregnancy is not sufficient reason to enter marriage or shorten the preparation process. In cases in which the couple had intended to marry, discernment and some instruction by married couples is still essential. In every case of pregnancy, a premarital inventory should be given and professional counselling is recommended.
- g) Diocesan policy for cohabiting couples seeking a Church marriage: Cohabiting couples seeking marriage in the church have increased dramatically in the past decade. These 'trial marriages' present a serious pastoral concern to clergy and lay ministers whose responsibility it is to

convey the Church's teachings and tradition to couples seeking the Sacrament of Matrimony.

- h) In mixed marriage, the cooperation and involvement of clergy from both faith communities in the instruction and celebration phases is highly encouraged (if ecumenically practicable). When possible, a witness couple who has been/is in a mixed marriage should be involved. The deacon/priest should submit the necessary petitions for dispensations and permissions.
- i) Couples married outside the church who wish to have their marriage convalidated should be adequately prepared for the sacrament of marriage. If it is important for the priest/deacon to inquire into the motivation of such couples and particularly to deal with issues arising out of troubled marriages, referral to a counsellor may be indicated. All couples validating their marriages should be helped to understand the sacramentality of the covenant relationship or enrichment program. Formal marriage preparation is important for couples married civilly for less than five years. Except in the case of a stable, long-standing union, the normal assessment and preparation process should not be waived. In no case should the validation occur until at least six months after the date of the marriage outside the church.
- j) If there is suspicion of chemical abuse or dependency, the couple should be referred to appropriate resources and a professional evaluation made to determine sufficient discretion and capability of assuming the obligations of marriage. The same applies in cases of current physical or emotional abuse.

- k) If one or both parties suffer from physical or mental disability, consultation should be made with family members and professionals to assess the individual's level of independence and ability to make a permanent commitment. The tribunal should be consulted if there is concern about canonical impediments.
- l) A Catholic is always bound by the canonical form for the validity of marriage. A Catholic having left the Catholic Church goes and marries someone outside the Catholic Church is considered as living in concubinage.⁸

3. Form of the Celebration of Marriage

- a) Only those marriages are valid which are contracted in the presence of the local ordinary or the parish priest or a priest or deacon delegated by either of them, who assist, and in the presence of two witnesses, according to the rules expressed in the following canons, with due regard for the exceptions mentioned in Canons 144, 1112§1, 1116 and 1127§2 and 3.
- b) A priest or a deacon witnessing a marriage within a parish other than his own must have delegation from the proper parish priest for the marriage to be valid.
- c) The one who has been validly delegated to witness a specific marriage cannot sub-delegate another priest or deacon on his own accord.
- d) The one assisting at a marriage is understood to be only that person who, present at the ceremony, asks for the

⁸ The concept of formal defection (see Cann. 1086-1124) has been deleted by the Holy See, cf. Pope Benedict XVI, *Omnium in Mentem*, October 2009.

contractant's manifestation of consent and receives it in the name of the church.

- e) The bishop or local Ordinary of the Catholic party may, for a just pastoral reason, dispense from canonical form in individual cases (Can. 1127§2), after consulting with the Ordinary of the place in which the marriage will take place and with due regard for validity and some public form of celebration. Types of reasons for requesting this dispensation includes:
 - i. To achieve family harmony or avoid family alienation;
 - ii. To obtain parental agreement to the marriage;
 - iii. To recognize significant claims of relationship or special friendship with a minister of another communion;
 - iv. To permit the marriage in a church that has particular importance to the other party.
 - v. It is forbidden to bless marriages even mixed marriages/ disparity of cult marriages outside Catholic form or in churches of other denominations or places of worship of other religions.

4. Wedding Liturgy

The wedding liturgy should encourage the participation of the assembly in worship, express the faith and commitment of the couple and of the assembly and call the faith community to prayer for the couple as a promise of support in their married life.

- a) The wedding should take place in the parish church. By permission of the local Ordinary, it may be celebrated in another Church, chapel, or suitable place (Can. 1118§1).

- b) A marriage between a Catholic party and an unbaptised party may be celebrated in a church or in another suitable place (Can. 11183).
- c) The general norms for liturgical celebration should be followed including those which call for the participation of the assembly.
- d) The various ministries should be filled by those skilled in them and chosen by the couple or provided by the community. The presider should not assume the various ministries.
- e) The Church provides three different rites for the celebration of marriage: sacramental during the Eucharist, sacramental outside the Eucharist (normally when one party is a baptized non-Catholic), and a non-sacramental rite (when one party is unbaptized).
- f) Music should be well-written, appropriate to the liturgy and assist the community to pray. The cantor/music ministers should help the assembly to participate in the singing.
- g) A hymnal or prepared worship aid should be available to the assembly.
- h) Parish policies should cover music, environment, photography, etc. and should discourage weddings during Lent and Advent, but may not prohibit them.
- i) The environment should take into consideration the liturgical season and should reflect both quality and appropriateness for the liturgy, not obstructing the view of the assembly or the liturgical movements of the ministers in the sanctuary.

- j) In *mixed marriages*, clergy from both traditions may be present, but only the Catholic minister is to receive the consent. It is recommended not to celebrate the Holy Eucharistic service in mixed marriages for the sensitivity of the non-Catholic party. Rather, a simple liturgy of the Word and short homily, if the situation warrants it. It is forbidden to have duplicate ceremonies. That is: to conduct another religious ceremony to exchange the marital consent, or to permit a Catholic minister and a non-Catholic minister to “co-officiate” and ask for and receive the consent of the spouses according to their respective liturgical rite (Can. 1127§3).
- k) Cultural adaptations are allowed, but should not overpower the liturgy. Such adaptations should be examined in the light of origin and content

5. Mixed Marriage and Disparity of Cult

- a) Priests are not to bless mixed marriages (between Catholic and non-Catholic Christian), if the Catholic party has not obtained the express *permission* of the local Ordinary through legitimate procedure (Can. 1124). The same applies also to marriages in disparity of cult (between Catholic and non-Christian) if a dispensation from the impediment of disparity of cult has not been obtained from the local Ordinary (Cann. 1125, 1129).
- b) It is recommended that no Wedding Mass be celebrated when only one party is Catholic and the other non-Catholic, unless the latter has freely given his or her consent.
- c) In case of grave difficulties in observing the canonical form (Can. 1108), the parish priest should apply to the

local Ordinary to dispense from the canonical form in mixed marriages (Can. 1127§§2,3).

- d) When witnessed by a priest or deacon:
 - i. Permission should be sought from the Bishop/Chancery in the event that a couple wishes to have their marriage witnessed outside of a sacred place.
 - ii. The parish responsible for preparing documentation is that in which the marriage would ordinarily take place, e.g., the parish of the Catholic.
 - iii. The usual pre-matrimonial investigation must be completed to ensure the adequate preparation, instruction and freedom of the couple.
 - iv. The priest or deacon must be the sole witness to the marriage.
 - v. Just as in the case where the marriage would take place in the Catholic Church, a non-Catholic clergy person may be present and may offer prayers and ask a blessing on the couple.
 - vi. In view of this restriction of participation by the non-Catholic clergy person, this must be discussed with him/her and be agreeable to him/her and his/her ecclesiastical superiors, if necessary.
 - vii. The priest witnessing the marriage requires canonical delegation from the territorial parish in which the celebration of the marriage will take place, if the place is outside his own parish.
 - viii. Notation of the marriage must be made in the register of the territorial parish within which the marriage actually takes place and the usual documentation is to be retained

in the files of that parish. It is proper to intimate the fact of marriage to their proper parish and to the parish where they are baptized.

- ix. Problem: Recent phenomenon in Manipur and Nagaland, the non-Catholic party (Protestant) requests the Catholic party not to bless the marriage in any church (Catholic or Baptist); but in a hall prayed over or blessed by: a Catholic priest, a Protestant pastor or a neutral Reverend arranged on their own. Their reasons: i) they will not force to re-baptise the Catholic party but allow her/him to remain Catholic, ii) they do not wish to enter the Catholic Church; iii) they do not wish to get ex-communicated from their own church. The ecumenical approach can be: i) the Catholic authority can give permission to have the marriage celebrated in a hall, with proper canonical form (delegated priest, two witnesses) without Mass; ii) the local Ordinary can grant dispensation from canonical form to celebrate in a public manner in the hall (provided the Catholic party made those promises required).
- x. It is the obligation of the priest witness to ensure that the usual notation is made in the proper Baptismal register.
- e) *Related Considerations*
- i. Members of other churches, as well as non-Christians, may be the official witnesses (best man and maid/matron of honour) in the celebration of marriage in the Catholic Church. A Catholic too may be best man or maid/matron of honour at marriage properly celebrated among non-Catholics.
- ii. When a Catholic with permission (mixed marriage) or proper dispensation (with an unbaptised) enters into

marriage with a person who is not a member of the Church, the celebration may be celebrated at the altar.

- iii. The banns for an ecumenical marriage may be announced, but should be omitted if it violates the norms of the other religious community involved. A dispensation from banns is no longer necessary; however, for every proposed marriage, the freedom of the parties must be proved by sworn declaration of witnesses.
- iv. Priests or deacons should endeavour to meet with the clergy of other churches in their community to explain the theological and pastoral reasons for the Catholic Church's law on marriage and, at the same time, to become thoroughly acquainted with the marriage regulations of other churches and communities.
- v. In counselling a couple about to enter into a mixed marriage, the priest or deacon should help them to realize that their different religious traditions in no way lessen the holiness of their marriage, which is a sacrament whenever two baptized persons are involved; and he should emphasize their common duty to grow in faith and in charity toward one another.

6. Inter-Ritual Marriage

- a) *Latin Rite Catholic and Oriental Catholic Rites:* The marriage can take place either in Latin Catholic rite or Oriental Catholic rite. In this case only one priest should perform the marriage rite; the blessing of the priest is necessary for the validity of marriage in Oriental rite (CCEO Can. 828).
- b) If the Catholic party contracts marriage with a non-Catholic of Oriental rite, the canonical form of marriage is to be observed for lawfulness only; for validity,

however, the intervention of a sacred minister is required, while observing the other requirements of law (Can. 1127§1).

- c) *Civil Law Requirements*: While celebrating the sacrament of Marriage, the priest should keep in mind the rules and regulation of the Civil Law Requirements issued from time to time. The Diocese is to take keen responsibility in this regard to keep all the priests informed of such development.

7. Radical Sanation (Retroactive Convalidation) and Simple Convalidation

Not all matrimonial consents, that are legitimately manifested, bring marriage into existence (because of defect of consent, lack of canonical form or other impediments). To reduce the number of invalid marriages, the Church provides norms of a canonical procedure called *convalidation*. It is done because the Church has the power to establish, abrogate, and dispense from ecclesiastical law.

The *simple convalidation* is done by dispensation or after the impediment has ceased, and that, at least the party who is aware of its existence must renew consent (Cann. 1156-1160). The *radical sanation or retroactive convalidation* means to grant “dispensation from the root” (*dispensatio in radice*) and ultimately a “healing in the root” (*sanatio in radice*). A radical sanation is a declaration of law by which competent ecclesiastical authority renders retroactively valid a marriage which was invalid from its origin without the renewal of consent by either party (Cann. 1161-1165).

- a) Marriage involving a Catholic entered into invalidly as a result of a diriment impediment of ecclesiastical law or as a result of the lack of canonical form may be radically sanated by the local ordinary as long as the consent of both parties perseveres.
- b) In cases of mixed marriage, the usual permission and promises apply (Cann. 1124-1129).
- c) A grave cause is necessary in order to grant a sanation. Examples of such are:
 - i. Serious inconvenience in informing the other party.
 - ii. Lack of cooperation by the non-catholic party.
 - iii. Ignorance of the priest/deacon witness or Ordinary which gives rise to nullity of the marriage ceremony.

8. Follow-up programme

- a) It is recommended that pastoral programmes be organized in each parish to follow newly-married couples through the first years of marriage, since statistics reveal that very often crisis occurs during this early period.
- b) Appeals may be made by an engaged couple in cases in which the deacon/priest has, after consultation with his marriage preparation team, decided to delay the decision. The right of the couple to marry and the right of the priest/deacon to delay or refuse the marriage are to be protected. The process of appeal:
 - i. The couple is advised of the right of appeal by the priest.
 - ii. The priest (if he is not the parish priest of either party) advises the parish priest of the delay and the facts of the case. The parish priest meets with the couple in order to hear their case. If no decision that is agreeable to all parties

is reached, the parish priest will refer the couple to the local Ordinary.

- iii. The local Ordinary or his delegate will meet with both the couple and the clergyman refusing the marriage, consulting if necessary other reliable experts.

9. Faculties

- a) All parish priests of their respective diocese (by virtue of law, Can. 1108§1) and assistant priests (by virtue of general delegation) may officiate at all marriages within the parish to which they have been assigned by their bishop. Parish Priests are allowed to delegate (even general delegation in writing for validity) and the assistant parish priests are allowed to sub-delegate this faculty. This power of sub-delegation is only for specific marriage to take place within the parish.
- b) Apart from the parish priest and assistant priests, no one can validly officiate at a marriage within the parish without a valid delegation or sub-delegation from the proper authority (cf. Can. 1111§2).
- c) A priest may not bless a marriage of those who are outside the confines of his jurisdiction, without a prior written consent of their parish priest.
- d) *Omnia parata*: Those able to assist at marriage may dispense from all the impediments to marriage which may be dispensed by the local Ordinary *if everything has been prepared (quando omnia sunt parata) for the marriage and the marriage cannot be delayed without the probable danger of the grave harm and the competent authority cannot be reached* provided the case is occult (can.1080§1). The bishop must be informed immediately in writing if this faculty is exercised. This includes only

the following: age, disparity of worship, abduction, crime, consanguinity in collateral line (except in the second degree collateral lines), direct line affinity, public propriety and legal relationship based on adoption in the direct line or the second degree of the collateral line. (Cann. 1083, 1086, 1090, 1091, 1093, 1094).

- e) In virtue of this faculty, all the parish priests are given the power to dispense from the following ecclesiastical matrimonial impediments: abduction (Can. 1089); affinity in the direct line (Can. 1092) when the marriage is not consummated; public propriety (Can. 1093); legal adoption (Can. 1094) provided the case is occult (can.1080§1).
- f) Certain marriages require the permission of the diocesan bishop for their licit celebration and in his absence that of the vicar general (Can. 1071).
- g) A baptized non-Catholic is considered validly married if he/she has lived with a woman/man with the intention of founding a family; if he/she has contracted a marriage according to the custom of his/her people; if he/she has contracted a marriage according to the laws of his/her Church; if he/she has contracted a marriage according to the civil law. Hence: a) no priest is allowed to bless another marriage of such a person even if he/she wants to be a member of the Catholic Church; b) the same rule applies even in the case where the first marriage was a disparate one (i.e. between a baptized non-Catholic and a non-baptised). This would be a case of Petrine privilege.
- h) When validly married non-baptized people are baptized in the Catholic Church or baptized non-Catholics are

received into communion within the Catholic Church, it is forbidden to bless their marriages in the canonical form.

- i) In danger of death, when the Bishop cannot be approached, the Parish Priest or any other priest, properly delegated, can dispense from the canonical form and all ecclesiastical matrimonial impediments, public or occult with the exception of impediment arising from sacred priesthood (Can. 1079§2).
- j) In danger of death, the confessor has the power to dispense from occult impediments for the internal forum only either within the act of sacramental confession or outside (Can. 1079§3).
- k) In the use of *Pauline privilege*, the parish priests and the assistant priests are empowered, if circumstances so warrant, to interpellate the converting party before baptism (Can. 1144§2).
- l) Parish priests and assistant priests are allowed to dispense from interpellation in the use of Pauline privilege if there are grave reasons for doing so, and if they are morally certain of either physical or moral departure of the non-converted party.
- m) It is the prerogative of the bishop to allow mixed marriages, if need be, in the use of Pauline privilege.

10. Decree of Annulment of Marriage

- a) The Annulment of marriages in the Church is regulated by the Diocesan Matrimonial Tribunal in accordance with the norms of the Church. All applications must be forwarded to the local Ordinary or judicial vicar who entrusts them to the respective judicial vicar of the diocese. The parish priests are to be acquainted with the

annulment procedures and guide the parties with pastoral concern and care.

- b) The judicial vicar or his delegate will meet the applicant party and initiate the annulment process in a formal procedure when he has established that there is a possible exit of nullity or there is a *prima facie* case.
- c) All appeal cases will be made to the bishop or judicial vicar.
- d) The person who has been granted an ecclesiastical decree of nullity from a former union must send that decree immediately to the Curia and to the parish priest concerned so as to ascertain the terms of any restrictive clause, and to ensure that these terms are duly observed. No date should be set for any further marriage until the matter has been examined and the consent has been given by the competent authority.

8. CHRISTIAN FUNERAL RITES

By means of the funeral rites, it has been the practice of the Church, as a tender mother, not simply to commend the dead to God, but also to raise high hope in her children and to give witness to its own faith, in the future resurrection of the baptized with Christ.

In the face of death, the Church confidently proclaims that God has created each person for eternal life and that Jesus, the Son of God, by his death and resurrection, has broken the chains of sin and death that bound humanity.

Christians celebrate the funeral rites to offer worship, praise and thanksgiving to God for the gift of life which has now been returned to God, the author of life and the hope of the just.

The celebration of the Christian funeral brings hope and consolation to the living. While proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ and witnessing to Christian hope in the resurrection, the funeral rites also recall to all who take part in them God's mercy and judgment and meet the human need to turn always to God in times of crisis.

- a) All the baptized Catholics have the right to an ecclesiastical burial celebrated according to Church law (Can. 1176§1).
 - i. Catechumens are buried as Christ's faithful (Can. 1183§1);
 - ii. Children whose baptism was intended by their parents, but who died before being baptized, are also to receive Christian burial. (Can. 118§2).
- b) Every Christian is free to choose his/her place of burial or repository for ashes (Can.1180).
- c) Christian Symbols should be used appropriately at the rite of the Christian funerals. These may include an Easter candle, holy water, incense, fresh flowers, the book of the Gospels and/or a cross on the coffin. It is advised that only Christian symbols may rest on or be placed near the coffin during the funeral liturgy.
- d) *The Liturgy* for the rites of Christian funerals may take place at several different stations, i.e., the home, the funeral home, the church, the cemetery and/or a chapel. Appropriate rites are provided for each.
 - i. In funerals at funeral homes or cemetery chapels, the Mass is not to be celebrated.

- ii. If the Mass is not celebrated in connection with the funeral rites, it is to be offered, without the body present, either before or after the funeral rites, within a reasonable time.
 - iii. The celebration of the funeral Mass is forbidden during the Easter Triduum, on solemnities, and on Sundays.
 - iv. The family of the deceased should be invited to assist in planning the funeral rites and, if possible, should exercise some of the liturgical ministries within the liturgy.
 - v. Each diocese is to judge how best to adopt indigenous cultural elements into the funeral rite.
- d) *Funeral Rites for Baptized Belonging to a non-Catholic faithful*
- i. Such rites are allowed provided this is not clearly contrary to the wishes of the deceased and provided a minister of the faith of the deceased, for whatever reason, is not available (Can. 1183§3).
 - ii. When a priest is asked by the family to officiate at the funeral service and burial of a member of another church, he may do so at the home, community hall or graveside. Baptized members of another church or ecclesial community may be buried with funeral rites in the Catholic Church if a minister of their own is unavailable. Church funerals for baptized member of other faiths should always be in accordance with their wishes and those of the diocesan bishop.
 - iii. Members of other faiths may be buried in a Catholic cemetery and with the clergy of another faith conducting cemetery rites, but the celebration of the Eucharist is not permitted. Members of other faiths may be invited to preach or read from the Scriptures during a funeral service outside the celebration of the Eucharist.

- iv. Roman Catholics are ordinarily to be buried in Catholic cemeteries as a sign of sharing life, death and resurrection with the faith community. Burial in other than a Catholic cemetery is permitted for the convenience of the family (e.g. general Christian cemetery, family plot, etc).
- e) Cremation
 - i. Those who have chosen cremation may receive a Christian funeral rite, unless their choice reflects a denial of the resurrection of the body or is dictated by anti-Christian motives (Can. 1176§3).
 - ii. The Church has a clear preference for the custom of burying the dead, after the example of Christ's own will to be buried. Any danger of scandalizing or shocking the faithful by the practice of cremation should be avoided.
 - iii. The rites usually held in the cemetery chapel or at the grave may, in cases of cremation, take place within the confines of the crematorium and, for want of any other suitable place, even in the crematorium room.
 - iv. The Mass of Christian burial should be celebrated with the body of the deceased present in order to respect the integrity of the signs within the liturgical action. The ashes are an expression of the corruptibility of the human body and thus are unable to express the inherent character of one sleeping, awaiting the resurrection. The body, not the ashes, receives liturgical honors since it was made the temple of the Spirit of God in Baptism.
 - v. If the body of the deceased cannot be brought to the church of the funeral Mass prior to its cremation, the Mass can be celebrated, but without the ashes of the deceased present.

- vi. Funeral directors should be informed of the expectation in Catholic rites that the cremation will follow the funeral liturgy.
- f) *Denial of Ecclesiastical Funeral Rites:* Unless there is some sign of repentance before death, the following must be denied church funerals: notorious apostates, heretics, schismatic, manifest sinners and those who chose cremation in opposition to the Christian faith (Can. 1184).
- g) Any form of funeral Mass is also to be denied to a person who has been excluded from a Church funeral (Can. 1185).

SECTION FOUR
GENERAL POLICIES

1. CATHOLIC EDUCATION

Introduction

Education is an important means of social change: qualitatively and quantitatively. Education is not merely about knowing the three ‘R’s of reading, writing and arithmetic. It is, as its root-word “*educere*” would explain, about drawing out the best. This would imply that education is about “having more” and “being more” simultaneously. Hence, education is about nurturing a child to be a man or woman of character as well as about imparting skills necessary for living a good and joyful life. That is, education is to give both information and formation. When we talk about ‘quality education’ we mean education that caters to both these aspects of human formation.

Our Context

Today when we look around we see many educated persons who indulge in violence and corruptions. We need to question the quality of education we are imparting. The emphasis, it appears to be, is on obtaining certificate for a white collar job. There is no importance given to character formation in our education system: from top to bottom. Corruption has infected the educational system itself. That is why we find the following practices: schools without students, schools without teachers, teachers getting pay without going to school, unqualified

teachers with qualified certificates, certificates bought and sold at exorbitant rate, students acquiring certificates without education, etc.

1. Quality Education

In the given situation of ours, many men and women of good will are frantically longing for quality education, which they think is the only way of saving our society from being destroyed by irresponsibility and corruption. While it will call for a Herculean task, it is not impossible if men and women of good will concertedly join hands to revamp our education system. It will need to revamp the whole social system, since education is not merely about sending the children to school, but a whole process of informing and forming the children in all areas of human development. Hence quality education which is the need of the hour will have to take into consideration the following questions:

- ◆ Who can impart true education? Truly qualified teachers who are at the same time men and women of character and vision. It must be noted that teachers many a time substitute the role of parents; often they exert more influence than the parents.
- ◆ What kind of environment will suit quality education? A healthy conducive social, political and religious atmosphere, where political leaders, Church leaders and parents live exemplary lives, concertedly promote social harmony, avail educational infrastructures and set a tradition of creative and serious discussion and thinking.

1. Secular Education

- a) The Christian faithful, since they are called by baptism to lead a life in conformity with the teaching of the gospel, have the right to a Christian education by which they

will be properly instructed so as to develop maturity of the human person and at the same time come to know and live the mystery of salvation (Can. 217). It should be the ideal of every Parish Priest that all the catholic children within his parish are getting proper education and the catholic institutions should see that every application from catholic parents for the admission of their wards into the institution is given priority. Every Priest should also take interest to see that talented Catholic children pursue studies that would place them in leadership positions in society.

- b) Every diocesan school authority must ensure that Catholic educational atmosphere is maintained adequately in every school. Our programme should manifest a sound Christian anthropology on human formation and overall development of personality. Prayers must be offered to almighty God every day. The good news that Jesus came to share with us is to be realized in our schools and to make our children know that the Lord Himself is at the heart of our community.
- c) Our schools should be characterized by good discipline and caring attitude. Inclusivity must be made visible to all, as children from many different ethnic backgrounds and speaking their own languages at home, form friendship in their class and throughout the school. All these things will give the impression to us and to others that there is a Catholic attitude to education.
- d) The distinctive nature of Catholic education is based on the theological understanding of its purpose; and the Catholic philosophy of education underpins our goal – that one may journey further in the knowledge of truth that we call God. The gift of the Holy Spirit leads us to

knowing that we are created in the image of the Creator as creatures with the ability to ‘know’, and that the act of knowing leads us on to know God. Our Catholic understanding of education is that the child or student ‘shall have life, and have it to the full’ (Jn 10:10); and these words of Jesus Christ will guide us as we strive to educate our children, because we believe the true fulfillment of human person can only come through a close friendship with Christ.

- e) Catholic education is based on our belief that human persons are made in the image of God, and this is most fully expressed in the desire to know and to love. We form the child’s intellect and expand his heart to love. It is hoped that eventually the child will grow up and learn to love God and its neighbour. The human person - body, spirit, and mind - drives us on to work harder for future generations.
- f) In our schools, some are Catholics and some are non-Catholic Christians; while others are people of non-Christian faiths or have no recognized religion, yet they all contribute to the success of Catholic education. We celebrate this blend of variety of people and faith and cultures; and we should always keep in mind the Church’s preferential love for the poor and needy.
- g) Our schools and colleges do not exist in vacuum. They are integrated, for example, into parish communities and into the local networks of schools and local authorities. They take part with community schools in many joint initiatives, sharing expertise and facilities as they serve civil society together.
- h) Catholic education takes place against the background of societal changes. Fostering the ongoing development

of the person spiritually, intellectually, physically, emotionally and socially, Catholic education addresses the diverse needs of all peoples, individually and as communities, enabling them to embrace their full maturity as adults. Catholic education empowers a person to witness to Gospel values, thus transforming the whole community by inspiring hope and joy. The mission of the Catholic school is to give our children and young people, as well as their parents, this gift of hope.

3. Religious Education

The diocese/parish should be committed to the religious education of all the faithful. It should have a director for religious education who has been trained in catechetics. Together with his team he will draw up a plan of catechesis for the whole catholic community irrespective of age or sex, through childhood to adulthood, train catechists and teachers to teach religion, and supervise its execution in the diocese, parish and institution.

- a) Catechist formation is a training given to the catechism teachers to acquire the knowledge and skills they need to proclaim Christ's message, to participate in efforts to develop community, to lead people in worship and prayer, and to motivate them to serve others. There is a felt need of Catechism teachers in our schools who are trained and competent to teach catechism/religion in secondary and higher secondary schools.
- b) All parishes and independent schools shall enrol their Catechism teachers and village catechists (full or part time) in the Diocesan Catechists Development programme with a view toward having all catechists receive a diocesan certificate. For this purpose, a suitable

curriculum shall be arranged along with the existing programmes available in the region or the diocese. These trained teachers will require renewal of their certificates, preferably every three year period, by attending additional hours of theology and teaching skills conducted by the training institute.

4. Youth Ministry

- a) Every diocese is to have a functioning office for youth ministry. The diocesan coordinator of youth ministry is the pastoral minister responsible for encouraging the ongoing formation of the whole person in adolescence by coordinating and directing the response of the parish to the needs of the young people and the sharing of unique gifts of youth with the whole community. The coordinator is directly accountable to the Parish Priest in the exercise of her/his gifts.
- b) The basic components of youth ministry are: Word – including evangelization, catechesis and retreats; worship – including liturgical and para-liturgical preparation and celebration, small group prayer and days of reflection; creating community – including adult and peer ministry, family and parish activities; guidance and healing – including spiritual and personnel counselling, vocational guidance, and healings in relationships; justice and service – including ministry of others, growth in moral leadership, education to Justice and sensitivity to all groups in society; enablement – including support and formation of ministry by youth and adults who minister to and with youth; advocacy – including facilitating ministry, bridge building, interpreting and speaking for youth.

2. FINANCE

Introduction

Along with self-sufficiency in personnel, self-sufficiency in finances also indicates the growth of the local Church. Hence every diocese and parish should strive for financial self-sufficiency and independence. Beyond self-sufficiency, it is our duty to transform our Churches from ‘receiving Churches’ to ‘giving Churches’. The example of the early Church in Antioch helping the Church in Judaea (Acts 11:29) is an example worth emulating. Every Church should aspire not only to self-sufficiency but also helping other Churches in their needs. Transparency in financial transaction and accounting is imperative in this process of financial management which lead to self-sufficiency.

1. Mobilizing Resources

Today, the trend is not so much to run after the funding agencies as to mobilize our own potential resources lying within our reach. They are grants from Government institutions, giant corporate societies, individual donors on the one hand, and generating from our own properties and potentialities on the other. This requires building network system and regular follow up.

2. Accounting

- a) All Parishes and Schools are to use the Standard method of book keeping.
- b) Transparency should be the principal aim of accounting. Proper and sincere account should be maintained by the parish, school, and other institutions.
- c) There should be only one account book and no double accounts – not one for the parish and the other for the Curia.

- d) Budgets: The Parish Priest/principal together with his finance committee is to prepare the parish/school budget for the upcoming year. In the event that this budget is not sent to the Diocesan Curia, the final totals from the previous year will automatically be shown as the budget.
- e) Annual Financial Reports are to be made by the Parish Priest/Principal in consultation with his financial council.
- f) The Parish, School and Institutions should have internal auditors fixed by the diocese and with their help the accounts be kept in order.
- g) At the end of every March, the accounts have to be ready and the same should be submitted to the diocese which will do the needful for civil effects.

3. Handling of Money

- a) Collections should be deposited in the bank without delay and not retained in the church or presbytery, as this provides an opportunity for theft and burglary and endangers the Parish Priest/Principal.
- b) The Parish Priest/Principal or the Assistant Parish Priests are the only authorized cheque signers. Two bank accounts are authorized in a parish: parish operating account and school operating account. All bank accounts should be jointly operated by the Parish Priest or anyone else approved by diocesan authority.
- c) All gifts, other than cash are to be converted to cash as soon as practicable and the proceeds utilized or deposited with the diocese.
- d) No loan should be taken without prior written permission of the Bishop.

- e) Special Collections:
 - i. Lenten Collection for hunger and disease via Caritas India;
 - ii. Good Friday collection for the maintenance of Holy Land;
 - iii. Vocation Sunday/Seminary Fund which goes to the diocese;
 - iv. Mission Sunday Collection via Pontifical Mission Society;
 - v. Holy Childhood collection which goes to Bangalore for Charity works of the Church.
 - vi. Peter's Pence – For the needs of the Universal Church especially the poor.
 - vii. Pro Afris
 - viii. Opus Sancti Petri

4. Diocesan Financial Support

- a) The diocesan bishop has the right to impose a moderate tax on public juridical persons, including parishes and schools, subject to his authority; this tax which should be proportionate to their income, is for diocesan needs and may be imposed only after hearing the Diocesan Finance Committee and the Council of Priests (Can. 1263).
- b) Diocesan expenditures include allowances to new parishes/centres, subsidized centres, sustenance of clergy, seminarians, catechists, students and charitable interventions, bishop's house, vehicles, village communities, etc.
- c) In the spirit of solidarity and oneness of mission of the Church, the goodwill to support the poorer parishes

should be in the mind of all priests of the diocese. Since our parishes are not financially equal and foreign aids are scarce, support from richer parishes and schools is a must and this should be done with great understanding and generosity. The amount of contribution is to be fixed by each diocese at a reasonable rate.

- d) No parish or institution, without authorization of the Bishop, is permitted to acquire, alienate, and alter permanently the property of the parish.

5. Parish Financial Support

- a) The parishioners should be invited to make the Sunday offering with generous hearts and in a regular manner. The offering should not be taken away by the Church committee and things offered in kind or cash should be given to the parish.
- b) The tithe should be made obligatory and should be collected from every village and proper record be kept in the village church as well as in the parish Church. Rules and regulations on tithe should be studied and updated for the benefit of the Church.
- c) Stole fees and fines should go to the parish.
- d) School fees and annual fees should be decided according to the place and economic condition of the people.

6. Property Deeds

- a) No landed property should be bought or sold without the permission of the Bishop.
- b) All property purchased for parish or institutional use is to be registered in the name of the Parish or Diocese and the document in duplicate is to be preserved in the parish and the originals in the diocesan archives.

- c) In the event of land being bought for the diocese in tribal areas, it should be in the name of the diocese represented at least by three persons.

7. Construction Policy

- a) No buildings in the diocese are to be added to, altered or demolished without approval by the bishop. This includes any renovation or major refurbishing of presbyteries, additions, or significant purchases. Routine replacement of individual worn articles of furniture, re-roofing and repainting, etc. is not in question. However, for redecorations, large purchases of furniture, air conditioning equipment, etc., a written proposal and the approximate expenditure with descriptions of financial resources must be directed to the Diocesan Finance Committee.
- b) Any construction or major changes amounting to more than Rs 25,000.00 should have the written consent of the bishop.

3. ASSOCIATIONS

- 1. Introduction: Christian faithful are called to participate in the sanctifying, teaching and shepherding ministry of Jesus Christ. They are encouraged to promote a more perfect society imbued with the Christian spirit by engaging in efforts of evangelization, works of piety or charity by common effort (Canon 298). To this end they are exhorted to form associations with permission of the legitimate
- 2. Membership: The membership of these associations is voluntary and is open to all catholic adults who are in good standing with the Church.

3. The associations do not share in the legislative, executive or judicial power vested in the hierarchy of the church. These associations function in the Church in the same way as Non-Government Organizations function in the Civil Society.
4. An association, in order to be recognised by the Church as ‘catholic’, must prepare a memorandum of association with its bye-laws which are binding only on its members and get them approved by the competent authority which in a diocese is the local Ordinary. (Can 300, 304, 312).

4. ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERN

1. Introduction:

Development rooted in sustainable environmental protection is a much talked about subject and much attention is being paid to it. “Laudato si” by Pope Francis is a wake-up call, loud and clear, and the whole world has started paying attention to it.

Covid - 19 that is afflicting the world and will be remembered for along time, has made every one cautious and attentive to the cry of nature. Serious thinking and reflection about the Post Covid years has to take place so that life can go on though very different from what it was till Covid 19.

North East India with its rich natural and environmental wealth too has become a prey to the greed of the business world that wants to make quick money through indiscriminate mining and deforestation. The flow of junk food into the region, the deteriorating health, depleting water levels etc. has begun to ring the alarm bells in our region.

2. The Church's response:

“Laudato Si”, the Encyclical of Pope Francis calls every individual on earth to “care for our common home”. Cardinal Oswald Gracious reiterates “Both out of respect for God’s Creation and Concern for those affected by its degradation, the ecological crisis become a moral issue for Catholics today”. The North East India Regional Bishops’ Council, and its social and developmental wing have done serious thinking about this and have initiated various steps to bring awareness to people and to create a lasting impact.

3. Regional plans and initiatives

- i. Create active cooperation and participation of Diocesan Social Work Centres (DSC), Peace and Justice Commission, Education Commission of the dioceses and Religious Congregations in the region.
- ii. Emphasize the importance of integration of Eco spirituality and Bio-diversity of the region in formation houses.
- iii. Engage the youth of the regions through various agencies like schools, hostels, colleges and youth groups to protect and preserve the environment.

4. Practical Suggestions

- a. Protect: Soil, water bodies, plants, earth’s biodiversity and habitat.
- b. Promote: Environment consciousness, growing food in one’s own land for one’s own need, climate justice, green diocese, green parishes, green school campus, and better waste management and carbon neutral facilities.

- c. Prevent: Deforestation, excess use of water, soil and air pollution, chemical farming/Synthetic inputs, green gas emission and use of plastic
- d. Reduce: Individual and collective carbon footprints, food wastage, dependency on fast food, automobiles, paper wastage, printing and plastic.
- e. Reuse: Old books, Newspapers, use both sides of the paper, plastic bags, old clothes & other materials.
- f. Recycle: Papers, pet plastic bottles, newspapers, books, old electronics such as computer, TV, Mobile etc.
- g. Utilize: Insist at all levels of formation on the maximum utilization of the land that we have. It is a gift from the Lord and keeping it unused is a crime against a huge portion of the landless humanity.

5. Strategies

a. Farmers:

Sharing of farmers initiatives on climate adaptive agriculture practices (FARM North East supported by Caritas India in 15 Dioceses, can be streamlined to give emphasis on Environment issues and then Climate Adaptive Agriculture Practices).

b. Educational institutions:

- i. Animation Empowerment in Schools: Assembly speech, write bands, wall painting, drawing competition, debate and seminars.
- ii. Promotion of One Child One Tree
- iii. Environmental Science Exhibition and pledge in Schools
- iv. Campaign against junk food and banning fast foods in our schools

- v. Cleanliness and personal Hygiene
- vi. Plastic free school campus
- vii. Save Electricity and Save Water
- viii. Installation of renewable energy units
- ix. Introducing classes in sustainability and having eco-clubs
- x. Annual magazine with a focus on environment

c. Parishes

- a. Liturgy with a focus on Environment
- b. Celebration of the environment day
- c. Cleanliness drive
- d. Tree plantation
- e. Avoidance of plastic

d. Diocesan Social Work Centres

- a. Integrate Environment activities in FARM North East
- b. Monitor the activities at Parish Level
- c. Education Commission to monitor activities at School Level.

5. Relationship With The Religious

- 1) The Bishop is the centre of unity in the diocese and by virtue of his office he coordinates all forms of diocesan apostolate. It is, therefore, the right and responsibility of the Diocesan Bishop to foster various charisms in his Diocese and to ensure that they are coordinated with due regard for each charism. Consecrated life belongs to the life and holiness of the Church and is to be fostered and promoted by everyone

in the Church. The Bishop, therefore, has the right to invite religious congregations to the diocese as per provisions of law and entrust missionary and pastoral apostolate to them (cfr can. 609-612, 681-683).

- 2) The religious who come into the diocese are aware that they are at the service of the Church in general and of the Diocese in particular and will work under the guidance of the Bishop and in collaboration with the Diocesan clergy, in the spirit of the Council documents. The diocesan clergy, in their stead, will accept them as welcome partners in pastoral ministry and equal stake holders in the kingdom of God.
- 3) It is the prerogative of the diocesan bishop to establish new parishes. He alone can suppress, divide or alter the salient features of parishes in his diocese including those entrusted to a Clerical Religious institute (can.515 §2). No one should do anything that is prejudicial to the authority of the diocesan bishop in this regard.
- 4) Religious women should be treated with respect and courtesy that is due to co-workers. Their autonomy and individuality are to be accepted and no unjustified demands are to be made on them. Priests should give due deference to the Superior's authority over her own subjects including students in their hostel. Feminine genius and its perception of pastoral realities are to be valued. Gender discrimination in any form is to be avoided. They should be given adequate remuneration as per diocesan policy.
- 5) Religious who work in the diocese are to enter into a contract with the diocese specifying the features of their apostolate. This contract is to be signed by the Bishop and the provincial superior and each must endeavour to fulfil the terms of the contract. Any change to the contract

has to be by mutual agreement. A contract entered into between the Bishop and the provincial superior of a religious congregation for women to work in a parish cannot be abrogated by any priest.

6. SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE ADULTS

Each diocese shall develop appropriate policies and procedures to safeguard children and vulnerable adults from sexual abuse, and everyone from sexual harassment at work place committed by the clergy, religious, and employees and collaborators of any institution under the administrative jurisdiction of the Church.

1. Objectives of the Policy of the Diocese.

- To examine with promptness every concern or allegation of sexual abuse of minors and vulnerable adults or sexual harassment of any one at work place by clerics and members of religious institutes or societies of apostolic life or by any person considered an employee or collaborator of an institution under the administration of the Church;
- To comply with civil and ecclesiastical laws in dealing with cases of the abuse of children and vulnerable persons;
- To stand in solidarity with victims of child abuse and to provide a pastoral response for victims and their families;
- To practice a preventive system of protection in our work with children, young people and vulnerable adults to ensure, as far as possible, safe environments for those entrusted to our care.

2. Urgent Measures to be taken:

- Every diocese shall establish a Reporting Office (hereafter ‘Office’) to handle the cases concerning sexual abuses committed by clerics and religious against minors, vulnerable persons, the use of child pornography, and cover-ups of the same abuse by Bishops and Religious Superiors.
- The designated Office must be stable, public, and easily accessible for the submission of reports concerning the aforesaid sexual offences;
- All the clerics, and all men and women religious, and all lay persons are obliged to report promptly all accusations of abuse of which they become aware, as well as any omissions and cover-ups in the management of cases of abuse, to ecclesiastical authorities.
- When a case of abuse comes to light, the burden of the Preliminary Investigation comes under the responsibility of the respective diocesan Bishop or Religious Superior. The delicate nature of such procedure requires promptness of action, secrecy and confidential handling of all acts from the part of the Bishop or Superior along with his team members.
- The designated office shall diligently and faithfully apply the procedural norms of the Church’s legislation. In carrying out the Office, lay persons who are qualified and trustworthy may be called to collaborate with the officials.
- The obligation to report to the local Ordinary or Religious Superior shall not interfere with any other reporting obligation that may exist with respect to civil law (e.g. POCSO).

- Other details of the working of this Office must be set in place as per the Church's official norms and heeding to the best practices of each diocese taking into account the particularities of social and cultural milieu.

3. Important Documents:

The documents listed below and any other relevant document issued by the State, Church and Episcopal Conferences on the matter should be taken into consideration in the process of implementing the policy of the Diocese and taking action.

- a) PROTECTION OF CHILDREN FROM SEXUAL OFFENCES ACT 2012, issued by the Government of India on 20th June, 2012 and commonly known as **POCSO** Act. Special attention is to be paid to articles 11, 12, 13 which describe the nature of the offence and article 19 which imposes on everyone who is aware of an offence to report the matter to the relevant juridical authority.
- b) THE SEXUAL HARASSMENT OF WOMEN AT WORKPLACE (PREVENTION, PROHIBITION AND REDRESSAL) ACT, 2013, India
- c) The Church has issued many documents on *DELICTA GRAVIORA* (More Serious Crimes). The first such document is the motu proprio "*SACRAMENTUM SANCTITATIS TUTELA*" which was first promulgated by John Paul II, on 30 April 2001. It was amended by Benedict XVI through "*Normae de gravioribus delictis*" on 30 May 2010. Article 6 of this document deals with crimes against morals and Clerical sexual abuse of a minor. It falls under the competence of the Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith. The diocesan Bishop or

Religious Superior is required to set up a Committee (ad hoc or stable office) to do the Preliminary Investigation.

- d) Pope Francis, who through an Apostolic letter issued the *motu proprio*, “AS A LOVING MOTHER” on 4 June 2016, established new norms for the removal of bishops or those equivalent to them in canon law from their offices in case they have - through negligence, acts of commission or omission - caused grave harm to others by “sexual abuse of minors or vulnerable adults.” The Church, like a loving mother, treats and protects with special affection the smallest and most helpless, especially victims of sexual abuse who are minors and vulnerable adults. The diocesan bishops and major superiors may be removed from office because of gross negligence and failure of their duties in this regard. The *motu proprio* came into effect from 5 September 2016.
- e) Pope Francis in his *motu proprio*, “*VOS ESTIS LUX MUNDI*” issued on 7 May 2019, established new procedures for reporting sexual abuse against minors and vulnerable persons, and the crimes of acquiring, possessing and distributing child pornography by clerics and members of religious institutes or societies of apostolic life. Article 2§1 states: “Every diocese or joint-dioceses “... must establish within a year from the entry into force of these norms, one or more public, stable and easily accessible systems for submission of reports, even though the institution of a specific ecclesiastical office.” The new law came into force from 1 June 2019, and each diocesan Bishop or the Religious Superior is to establish an Office latest by June 2020 designated as the Reporting Office. This Office should be stable and easily accessible for all clerics, religious and the lay public to submit

reports of complaint on sexual abuse against minors and vulnerable adults by clerics and religious.

- f) CBCI CHILD PROTECTION POLICY & PROCEDURES, 2015
- g) CBCI GUIDELINES TO DEAL WITH SEXUAL HARASSMENT AT WORK PLACE promulgated on 14th September, 2017.
- h) The document “VADEMECUM” issued by CDF on 16 July 2020 gives instructions to the Ordinaries on certain points of procedure in treating cases of sexual abuse of minors committed by clerics.

The Bishops, religious superiors and members of the Reporting Office shall constantly endeavour to keep themselves updated on every law or disciplinary measure promulgated by the State and the Church on the matter.

Please find below a model for the decree of erection of a Reporting Office by a Bishop.

Letter Head of the Bishop

By virtue of this Decree

And in pursuance of the Roman Pontiff's
motu proprio, *Vos Estis Lux Mundi*, (7 May 2019),
Article 2§1:

I hereby constitute a special Reporting Office in the Archdiocese/diocese of, with the competence to receive any report related to sexual abuses against minors, vulnerable persons, child pornography, sexual harassment at work place and cover-ups of the same abuse committed by clerics or religious residing and working in the Archdiocese/diocese of, and to do the necessary preliminary investigation of such reporting on my behalf, if there be a resemblance of truth.

The Reporting Office shall comprise the following persons, for a term of three years with effect from on..... day of 2020.

1. Rev. Fr.
2. Rev. Fr.
3. Rev. Sr.
4. Srimati.
5. Rev. Fr. (Notary)

The above mentioned persons shall familiarise themselves with the new norms of the *Vos Estis Lux Mundi* and other general norms of Canon Law in handling specific cases of such nature, and according to the best practices of the Archdiocese/diocese taking into account the particularities of social and cultural context.

Given aton2020

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Chancellor

.....
Bishop

APPENDIX

Note: *The Statutes and the Formularies given below are only structural models and they do not bind any diocese, they are free to reformulate in its own practice.*

1. STATUTES OF THE COUNCIL OF PRIESTS OR PRIESTS' SENATE

Whereas the Second Vatican Council has in its decree on the “Ministry and Life of Priests”, declared that there should be, in a manner suited to today’s necessities and with a structure and norm to be determined by law, a body of Senate of Priests, which by its advice will be able to give the Bishop effective assistance in the administration of the Diocese.

Whereas, further, the Code of Canon Law has laid down that in each Diocese there is to be established a Council of Priests whose role is to assist the Bishop in the governance of the Diocese, so that the pastoral welfare of the portion of the People of God entrusted to the Bishop may be more effectively promoted (cf. Can. 495§1).

So as to promote more effectively a spirit of collegiality, co-responsibility and the collaboration of the *Presbyterium* with the Bishop of
in the Pastoral Administration of the diocese, the Priests’ Council of
Diocese is hereby established with the following statutes.

Article 1: Name

The representative body of priests of N... Diocese shall be called **Council of Priests of N..... Diocese. Herein**-after it shall be referred to as **“The Council”**:

Article 2: Purpose

1. To assist the bishop in the governance of the diocese.
2. To strengthen the hierarchical communion between the bishop and the priests.
3. To foster fraternal relationship among the priests themselves by promoting their spiritual, Apostolic and temporal needs. To advise the bishop on important matters pertaining to the pastoral welfare and doctrinal formation of Christ’s faithful in the local Church.
4. To advise the bishop on the feasibility of holding a Diocesan Synod (Can. 461).
5. To advise the bishop in the modification of parishes (Cann. 515§2; 813).
6. To advise the bishop on the offerings of the faithful on the occasion of parish services (Can. 531).
7. To advise the bishop on the construction of a church or the conversion of a church to secular use (Cann. 1215§2; 122§2).
8. To levy on public juridical persons subject to his authority a tax for the needs of the diocese (Can. 1263).
9. To levy an extraordinary and moderate tax on other juridical persons and physical persons in grave necessity (Can. 1263).

10. To choose a group of pastors from whom the bishop will select his advisors whenever a pastor is administratively removed from office or transferred against his will (Can. 1742§1.
11. To advise the bishop on the division of the diocese.
12. To advise the bishop on inviting new Religious Congregations to the diocese.
13. To advise the bishop on opening new Parishes.
14. To advise the bishop on establishing Parish Council in each parish (Can. 536§1).
15. To acquire and transfer immovable diocesan property like land, building.
16. Any other matters of importance to the diocese as proposed by the bishop.

Article 3: The Nature

The Council is only a Consultative Body except in matters the bishop decides otherwise.

Article 4: Membership

A. General Body

- a) All the diocesan priests incardinated in the diocese.
- b) Religious Priests assigned to work in the diocesan Institutions.
- c) They shall have both an active and passive voice in an election to the council.

B. Membership in the Council

1. Members in the council/senate shall be of three categories: Ex Officio, elected and nominated.

2. The ex officio members of the Council shall be: The Vicar General, Chancellor and Diocesan Financial Administrator.
3. Elected Members: The priests themselves are free to elect more than half the number of the council as fixed by statutes belonging both to diocesan and religious clergy. They may be parish priests or Assistants.
4. Nominated Members: The bishop will nominate some members in order to ensure appropriate representation and the good of the diocese,

Article 5: Elections

All elections to the Council shall be in the appointed year and the elections shall be conducted in the following manner:

- a. The Secretary of the Council shall be the Returning Officer for the elections.
- b. Simple majority suffices.

Article 6: Term of Office

1. The term of office of the Council members elected shall be three years and shall be eligible for re-election for a further term of three years but not a third term consecutively.
2. The ex-officio members retain their membership as long as they are in office.
3. In case of death, out of the diocese transfer, prolonged illness, 3 consecutive absence from meetings without previous information or serious reason (the seriousness of reason shall be judged by the bishop) or resignation of a member, the non-expired term of office shall be filled by election by the council; in case of ex officio or nominated members, the bishop will fill in the vacancy.

Article 7: Office Bearers

1. President: the bishop shall be the President of the Council.
2. Vice-President: the Vicar General shall be the Vice-President.
3. Secretary: is to be elected from among the members of the Council with an absolute majority.
4. Executive Committee: the Council elects two members who along with the President, Vice-President and the Secretary form the “Executive Committee”.

Article 8: Duties of the Office Bearers

The Duties of the President:

- a) To finalize the agenda in consultation with the Executive Committee.
- b) To preside over the meetings or to delegate a member to preside over the meeting on an ad hoc basis.
- c) To approve the minutes of the meetings for circulation.

The Duties of the Vice-President:

- a) To assist the President.
- b) To act on behalf of the President in his absence or when requested by him to do so.

The Duties of the Secretary:

- a) To keep record of all meetings, attendance, correspondences and minutes.
- b) To notify the member of the time and place of the meetings after obtaining the approval of the President.
- c) To send copies of the minutes and agenda of forth-coming meetings to all members and all priests of the Diocese

after due approval from the Bishop. The Priests' council cannot go against can. 500 where the bishop's prerogatives are mentioned .

- d) To prepare the minutes of the meetings and send them to the President soon after the meeting for his approval.

The Duties of the Executive Committee:

- a) To implement the decision of the Council after the approval of the bishop.
- b) To assist the President in preparing the agenda for the meeting.

Article 09: The Duties of the Members

- 1. To attend the meetings regularly.
- 2. To present to the Council without bias and undue delay matters suggested to them by any priest and in particular by the priests they represent.
- 3. To express themselves openly, freely and responsibly at the meetings of the Council.
- 4. To keep in touch with the members of their respective groups/area that is with those priests they represent.
- 5. To maintain the secrecy that is demanded by pastoral prudence regarding matters discussed at meetings of the Council.

Article 10: Procedure of the Meetings

- a) The Council shall meet **three times a year** on the date announced by the Secretary.
- b) If one third of the members make a request for a special meeting, it shall be convened.

- c) The quorum of the Council shall be at least half of the total number of members for validity.
- d) The President shall appoint a Moderator for the meetings from among the members of the Council.

Article 11: Voting at Meetings

- 1. Any motion shall be carried by a simple majority.
- 2. At the request of any member ballot shall be a secret one.
- 3. In case of a tie, the President shall have the authority to break the tie.

Article 12: Committees

To provide for the efficient working of the Council, Committees may be formed as and when required.

Article 13: Amendments

Proposals to the amendments to the Constitution shall be:

- a) Sent to the Secretary at least two months before the Council meeting.
- b) Circulated to all the eligible members at least one month before the meeting, for ascertaining their views.
- c) Accepted by two thirds of the Council and subject to the approval of the President and provisions in Canon Law.

Article 15: Interpretation

Should any doubt arise about the interpretation of any Article or of any section or clause of any article, the interpretation given by the President shall be final.

Episcopal Decree of Promulgation

Considering the importance attributed by the Code of Canon Law to the diocesan PRIEST'S COUNCIL and its obligatory character in the Code, with the scope of organizing diocesan pastoral ministry effectively and efficiently, in accordance with canon 495 §1, I hereby promulgate the above **Statutes of the Diocesan Priests' Council**. They come into effect in the diocese of from the

Given at on

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(Chancellor)

+.....
Bishop of

2
**CONSTITUTION OF THE DIOCESAN
PASTORAL COUNCIL**

Article 1

Name

The name of the body shall be: The Diocesan Pastoral Council, herein after referred to as the Council.

Article 2

Aims and Objects

The aims and objects of the Council are to act in a consultative and advisory capacity to the Bishop in setting the direction for the ministries of the Laity, the Religious and the Clergy, so that all in the Diocese, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit may share in the pastoral mission. The Council shall provide a forum for regular dialogue among Catholics in the Diocese.

Article 3

Functions

The functions of the Council shall be as follows:

01. “ To investigate and to weigh matters which bear on pastoral activity and to formulate practical conclusions regarding them” (Vatican II, *Christus Dominus*, n.27)
02. To assist the Bishop in implementing the conclusions approved by him.

03. To promote and coordinate the pastoral work, individual and corporate, in the Diocese, without infringing on the internal autonomy of any association.
04. To elect members of the executive Committee of the council.

Article 4

Composition

Section 1: Representation

The Council shall be an Assembly representing all sections of the Catholics in the diocese, the laity, religious brothers, religious sisters, religious priests and the Diocesan clergy.

Section 2: Categories of Representation

A. Ex-Officio Members

1. The Archbishop/Bishop, the Vicar General, and Heads of the Diocesan Offices and Commissions
2. The Presidents of the Diocesan Lay Associations involved in the pastoral apostolate.

The total number of such ex-officio members shall not exceed one-third of the total members of the council.

B. Elected Members

1. Laity

- a. One representative from each of the parishes in the Diocese.
- b. One representative from among the Trained Catechists in the Diocese.

The parish representative shall be elected by the parish priest, preferably members of the parish pastoral council.

C. Priests and Religious

- a. All the Parish Priests and Assistant Parish Priests both diocesan and religious
- b. Superiors of all religious communities both men and women

D. Nominated Members

In order to make the council as representative as possible, the Bishops shall have the right to nominate more members.

Section 3: Tenure of Membership

1. The Ex-officio members shall serve on the Council as long as they are in the office.
2. The nominated member shall serve in the Council as long as his nomination remains in force. Nomination of a member shall be for a period of three years, and a nominated member shall be eligible for re-nomination.
3. The elected members shall serve on the council for a period of three years, and shall be eligible for the re-election for a second consecutive term.

Articles 5

Meetings

Section 1: Officers at General Meetings

1. The officers of the council at general meetings shall be the President, vice president and the Secretary.
2. The Bishops or his delegate shall be the President of the Council.
3. A member will be elected from the laity as vice president. His term is for three years and is eligible for re-election for another period of three years.

4. The secretary is to be elected for the period of three years. He is eligible for re-election. He will take the minutes of the meeting of the council.

Section 2: Number of Meetings

1. The Council shall ordinarily meet once a year.
2. Extraordinary meetings shall be called by the President whenever he thinks it desirable.

Section 3: Notice of the General Meetings

A written notice, specifying the place, date, hour and agenda of the general meetings, shall be made known to the members at least two weeks in advance.

Section 4: Rules and Procedures

1. All business at the general meetings shall be transacted by discussion.
2. The Council shall have the right to invite experts to speak at the meetings.

Article 6:

Executive Committee

Section 1: Composition and Membership

1. The council shall have an Executive Committee composed of: the Bishop and/or his delegate as President, a Vice President, and a Secretary.
2. The Elected members of the Executive committee shall hold office for a period of three years. They are however, eligible for re-election for another period of three years.

Section 2: Elections

1. The council shall elect the Vice-President and Secretary from among its members

2. Mid-term election shall be held should a vacancy arise.

Section 3: Number of Meetings

1. The executive Committee shall meet as often as is necessary to conduct its business.

Section 4: Functions

1. To prepare the Agenda for the General Meetings of the Council.
2. To decide on the ways and means of implementing the Recommendations approved of by the Bishops.
3. To circulate from time to time the Reports of the Council

3

STATUTES OF THE PARISH FINANCE COMMITTEE

Preamble

Documents of the Second Vatican Council and the Post-Conciliar Documents speak vividly of active participation of the Christian Faithful (laity and clerics) in the life of the Church including the administration of Church property (cf. AA, 10 & PO, 17). These directives for creating new forms of participation of the faithful in the financial administration are given in more and obliging terms in a significant passage of the Directory to Bishops, “The Bishop is to establish financial councils on the diocesan level, in all the parishes and other diocesan institutions. They are to be composed of clergy as well as laity, selected among the experts in administration, gifted with special honesty and love for the Church and her apostolate” (*Ecclesiae Imago*, Directory on the Pastoral Ministry of Bishops, issued by the Congregation for Bishops, 22nd February 1973, Vatican City, 1973, n. 135).

Taking these orientations and directives, Canon law lays down in Canon 537 that Finance Committee should be set up in every parish and other diocesan institutions of the diocese and in conformity with this canon, every parish and diocesan institutions are presented with Statutes of Finance Committee so that the ecclesiastical goods belonging to these parishes and institutions may be properly administered.

Article 1: Name

The name of the parish Finance Committee shall be:
..... (name of the Church) Finance Committee.

Article 2: Aim

To aid the Parish Priest in a spirit of love and service in administering the temporal goods of the parish for the effective attainment of the objectives outlined in the Code of Canon Law.

Article 3: Competence

The Parish Finance Committee is a *consultative and consent giving* body in accordance to the Code of Canon Law.

Article 4: Membership

Qualification for the Members:

- i) He/she should be a Catholic of good repute and should have completed 21 years of age.
- ii) He/she should be distinguished for honesty and integrity.
- iii) He/she should be skilled in financial affairs, civil laws and accounts or at least he/she should have practical knowledge and sound judgment in matters of finance and administration.
- iv) He/she should not be related to the Parish priest up to fourth degree consanguinity or affinity.

Number of Members:

There shall be a minimum of five and a maximum of seven members in the finance committee including the Parish Priest. Of these two shall be elected by the parish council from among its members and the rest appointed by the Parish Priest.

Article 5: Tenure of Office

1. The term of office of the members, other than the ex officio members, shall be five years. The president may reappoint them for another term of five years.
2. Membership shall cease if a member is absent for three consecutive meetings without prior intimation or proper reason. The president shall judge about the reasonableness of the reason given.
3. Membership shall cease when a member tenders resignation and the same has been duly accepted.
4. Membership shall cease if a member is found to be involved in any activity or conduct contrary to the teachings of the Church or in any way prejudicial to the interests of the parish.
5. For grave reasons, the Parish Priest can remove a member but only after consulting the Bishop.

Article 6: Functions

- a) To draw up a clear and accurate inventory (to be updated each year) of all immovable and moveable goods, precious objects, equipment, furniture etc.
- b) To be vigilant that no goods placed under their care in any way perish or suffer damage and to this end they are to arrange insurance contracts to the extent necessary.

- c) To ensure that the ownership of ecclesiastical goods is safeguarded and that the title deeds and other documents are kept in safe custody both in parish and in the (arch) diocesan archives, and to ensure the proper demarcation of the boundaries of the property so as to prevent any encroachment.
- d) To take special care that damage will not be suffered by the parish by non-observance of civil law. To this end they shall see that the taxes (if any) are paid in time, required licenses are obtained, lawful exemptions are claimed in due time, contracts are properly drawn up, etc.
- e) To seek accurately and at proper time the income and produce of goods, guard them safely and expend them as per law and the wishes of the donors.
- f) To ensure that no loans are taken or given without the written permission of the Bishop. And when permitted to do so, to see that the interest is paid or received, as the case may be, in due time, and that the capital is paid or received, as the case may be, within the stipulated time.
- g) To keep accurate accounts of income and expenditure, and for this purpose to employ a competent person so that the accounts are maintained in accordance with the requirements of auditing system.
- h) To draw up the account of administration at the end of each year and after proper scrutiny submit the accounts for auditing, with all the receipts and vouchers, books, registers, etc.
- i) To invest the surplus money wisely and profitably, observing the laws of taxation.

- j) To see that the parish bank account is in the name of the Church to be operated by the Parish Priest (in his official capacity and not in his individual name) and by the Vicar General (or Assistant Parish Priest?), either/or, and ensure that only a limited amount is kept in cash and the rest of the amount is credited promptly in the bank.
- k) To see the employees of the parish are recruited properly, their contracts are executed duly and they are paid just wages/salary regularly.
- l) To draw up the annual budget at least a month before the commencement of the financial year and to mobilize resources so as to make the parish gradually self-sufficient to meet its present and future requirements of maintenance and growth.
- m) To place before the parish council the budget as well as the audited accounts, plans and proceeds at the beginning of each financial year, and to give the parish council information on the financial position of the parish, as and when required, so as to ensure their cooperation.

Article 7: Vacancies

Vacancies shall be filled in the same manner as prescribed above and the term of office of such members shall end with the term of existing finance committee.

Article 8: Cessation

The Finance Committee does not cease with the transfer or demise of the Parish Priest. However the incoming Parish Priest may confirm or constitute a new one, only after six months.

Article 9: Office Bearers

President: The Parish Priest shall be the ex-officio president and shall preside over its deliberations. It is his right and duty

to convoke the council and determine the agenda for the meetings.

Secretary: A secretary shall be elected by the members from among themselves at the first meeting. He/she shall call for meetings under the direction of the president, prepare the minutes of the meeting, record the proceedings and attend to the correspondence of the committee. He shall prepare the agenda under the direction of the president.

Article 10: Meetings

1. The Finance Committee shall meet at least once in three months or oftener if the need arises.
2. Normally, not less than two weeks' notice of the meeting shall be given accompanied by the agenda prepared by the secretary under the direction of the president.
3. All opinions and deliberations shall be taken by the majority vote of those present. The Parish Priest does not vote in these sessions.
4. Half of the total number of members including the Parish Priest shall form the quorum.
5. In cases of a tie, the Parish Priest cannot break the tie by casting his vote. He should try to get a consensus. If he fails to do so, the matter may be dropped or referred to the Bishop, indicating the opinion of both sides and the number of votes polled on both sides. Bishop's decision shall be final in the matter.
6. In matters which deals with only consultation the Parish Priest is not bound to follow the opinion of the members. But in normal circumstance, it would not be good just to ignore their opinion, especially if it is unanimous.

7. Parish Priest is bound to follow the majority vote in matters in which he has to get their consent. He cannot act validly against the majority vote in these matters.

Article 11: Sub-Committee

The Finance Committee may set up sub-committees for finance, maintenance, fund-raising etc. as and when required.

Article 12: Finance Committee and Parish Council

- a) While these are two distinct and independent bodies, there should be a healthy relationship between them. And to this effect the Finance Committee shall place before the parish council the annual budget and the audited accounts for their information and provide information on the financial position of the parish as and when required.
- b) There shall be a joint meeting of both these bodies at least once a year for common planning and coordination.

Article 13: Interpretation and Amendments

Interpretation of these norms, their amendment and the dissolution of the parish Finance Committee shall exclusively belong to the bishop.

DECREE OF PROMULGATION

Considering the obligation to establish finance Council in every parish by virtue of canon 537, and after consulting the Finance Committee of the diocese, I hereby approve and promulgate the above Statues of the Parish Finance Council for the use in every parish ofdiocese. These Statues come into effect in this diocese from

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(Chancellor)

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Bishop of

4
**STATUTES OF PARISH PASTORAL
COUNCIL**

Preamble

Every parish is a cell, living and active, of the diocese. Through this basic institution, “the faithful are, by Baptism, made one body with Christ, and are established among the People of God. They are in their own way, made shares in the priestly, prophetic and kingly function of Christ. They carry out their own part in the mission of the whole Christian People, with respect to the Church and the world” (LG iv, 31).

The Second Vatican Council reminds pastors that they, themselves were not intended by Christ to shoulder alone, the entire saving mission of the Church towards the world. It is their noble duty and privilege to shepherd the faithful in such a manner that the latter may recognize their proper role and, thereby, share in the administration of the Parish (LG 30).

In our time of democratic leadership, it is imperative that every pastor share his responsibility with his flock by making the faithful responsible agents and not merely instruments, in the discharge of his duties. It is strongly recommended, therefore, that a group of representatives from the parish community should be chosen to collaborate with the pastor, voluntarily dedicating themselves to the service of their fellow-parishioners.

This in view the code of canon law decrees, “After the diocesan bishop has listened to the presbyteral council and if he judges it opportune, a pastoral council is to be established in each parish: ...” (Can. 536§1). Accordingly, the following Rules and Constitutions are laid down for the proper creation, orderly conduct and effective functioning of the Parish Councils in all the parishes of diocese.

Article 1: Name

The Council shall be called “The (name of the parish) Pastoral Council”. Hereafter it shall be referred to as “The Council”.

Article 2: Nature

1. In accordance with the mind of the Church, the Council shall have a consultative voice only.
2. Through its insights, expertise and prudent advice, it will help the Parish Priest identify, implement and evaluate those pastoral initiatives and policies best suited to the spread of the Gospel in this particular area of the Diocese (cf. Cann. 536§2; 127).
3. The Parish Priest will, therefore give serious consideration to the Council’s deliberations and will be the final authority in carrying out the useful suggestions made by the Council, while rejecting those which go counter to the good of the parish or the Church.

Article 3: Purpose and Objectives

1. The Council will examine and study the pastoral needs and possibilities of the parish in the field of evangelization and development of the people of the parish.
2. The Council will help to formulate practical conclusions in order that “the life and activity of the people of God

may be more conformed to the Gospel,” (*Ecclesiam Suam*, No. 16).

3. The main purpose is the promotion of the mission of the Church in its entirety in this particular area of Christ’s Vineyard. It shall work in close collaboration with the priests of the parish advising them in matters pertaining to pastoral ministry.

Article 4: Functions

1. To make *constructive recommendations and useful suggestions* on all pastoral matters pertaining to the life of the parish, whilst the members themselves are an example to others of regularity, discipline and fidelity to the teachings of Christ and His Church.
2. To create, inspire and demonstrate leadership in all matters relating to the spiritual (faith, hope and charity) and temporal affairs of the Church.
3. To plan, organize and implement the pastoral plans concerning preaching, sanctifying and charitable works in the parish under the guidance and with the permission of the Parish Priest.
4. To promote the best interests of the parish and to make recommendations concerning the good management and proper development of the parish.
5. To implement the directives and decisions of the diocesan authorities and the pastoral plans and projects recommended by diocesan Pastoral Council and the diocesan Pastoral Commissions.
6. To work in close contact with existing and future parish organizations and pious associations by encouraging and strengthening their activities, all of which retain their own competence and independence.

7. To plan, programme and schedule parish functions, and to organize and conduct them in an effective and orderly manner, with the approval of the Parish Priest.
8. To see that the subscriptions and contributions owing by families, individuals are paid regularly and in full.
9. To foster integration and to promote harmony between the various groups of people in the parish. For this reason, the Council will take special care not to interfere in the affairs of religious institutions, schools, etc. Irregularities, if any, in these institutions would be brought to the notice of the Bishop or the Parish Priest.
10. To determine pressing problems and urgent needs of the parish.
11. To deal with any other issues (pastoral, social, personal) which affect the pastoral life of the parish.

Article 5: Membership

1. The parish priest will determine the number of members needed to constitute the Council, in proportion to the Catholic population of the parish also according to the scope and means for the various activities and other related factors in the parish. However, the minimum number shall be 20 and the maximum 60.
2. **Members shall be of three categories: ex officio, elected and nominated.**

Ex-Officio Members: All the priests and head Catechists of the parish, one touring sister, all heads of the religious houses in the parish or their delegates and the Presidents of the Pious Associations.

Elected Members: They shall be elected from the various sections of the Catholic population in such a way that all the sections get adequate representation. They shall form at least half of the membership.

Nominated Members: The Parish Priest in consultation with the Assistant Parish Priest(s) may freely nominate some persons who are in good standing among the Christian faithful because of their talents, skills, or qualifications which are useful for the common good.

3. Qualification for elected and nominated members.

1. To be a member one should be a Catholic, of firm faith enjoying good name and repute among the people of God and must be free from bad habits like getting drunk, gambling etc.
2. He/she must be at least 18 years old and not more than 65 years old.
3. He/she should have a domicile in the parish.
4. He/she must be service minded and amenable to all.

4. Elections

1. The Parish Priest shall conduct the elections by secret ballot or by any other method he may deem appropriate for the purpose.
2. The elections of the Council shall be conducted at any convenient time once in three years. The Parish Priest shall give due importance and wide publicity to the proposed elections, at least one month in advance.

5. Term of Members

1. The term of the ex officio members shall be as long as they are in the office.

2. The term of elected/nominated members shall be three years.
3. They can be re-elected or re-nominated for another term of three years after which they can be members again only after a gap of three years unless they became *ex officio* members.
4. A member will forfeit his/her membership if he/she is absent without sufficient reason and information for three consecutive meetings. Inability to attend the Council meetings should be intimated in advance and in writing to the President. The Parish Priest will decide about the sufficiency of reason.
5. When a member loses his/her reputation among the parishioners (even without any fault on his/her part) or he/she acts contrary to the principles and values of the Gospel and the Church, the Parish Priest after consulting the Council, can remove him/her from the Council.
6. When a vacancy arises, the Parish Priest will have to fill it within a month for the remaining period of the term.
7. For a grave reason, on the advice of the Parish Priest, the Bishop can dissolve the Council. However, it must be re-constituted within a year.
8. For a grave reason after getting the permission of the Bishop, the Parish Priest can suspend the Council for a period of not more than six months.

Article 6: Office Bearers and their Functions

1. President: The Parish Priest is the president of the Council *de iure* (Can. 536§1). It is his duty to convoke the Council, to determine the agenda for the meetings preside over

them and approve the deliberations and decisions arrived at the meetings.

2. Vice-President: An elected lay person shall be the vice-president. He will help the Parish Priest in all his duties and preside over the meetings of the Council in the absence of the Parish Priest or at his request.
3. Secretary: The Council shall elect a Secretary from among its members. He convenes the general meeting in consultation with the President of the Council. He shall keep the minutes of the general meetings; take care of the records and documents concerning the meeting. He shall periodically inform the parishioners about the activity of the Council either in writing or announcements on suitable occasions. He shall prepare an annual report of the activities of the Council at the end of each year to be presented to the parishioners. A copy of it shall be forwarded to the diocesan office with the seal and signature of the President and the Secretary.

Article 7: Meetings

1. The Council must meet at least 2 times a year. The time and place shall be decided by the President and the Secretary.
2. Extra-ordinary meetings may be convoked by the President when there is a special need or when the majority (absolute) of the members request the President in writing.
3. At least 15 days before the meeting the Secretary should send the agenda to the members informing them of the date, time and venue of the meeting.

4. The quorum of the meeting shall be the absolute majority (half + one) of the total number of the members.
5. At the beginning of the meeting the Secretary shall present the minutes of the previous meeting and shall get it approved and duly signed by the President.
6. Every point discussed shall be put to vote and the members shall express their opinion by raising hands or voice (to be decided by the one who presides over the meeting). If there are delicate matters to be voted upon, it shall be done by secret ballot.

Article 8: Executive Committee

1. The President, Vice-president, Secretary and two other members elected for this purpose shall form the executive Committee.
2. Their main function is to see to the implementation of the decisions the Parish Priest arrives at after hearing the Parish Council.
3. The Executive Committee could help the President and the Secretary in preparing the agendas for the meeting.
4. In case of urgency, when the council cannot be convoked, the Executive Committee can meet and take decisions.

Article 9: Amendment

Amendment in these Statutes, for whatever reason, must be approved by the Bishop and duly authenticated by the Chancellor of the diocesan curia.

Decree of Approval and Promulgation

Considering the great need and the pastoral utility of Parish Pastoral Council in every parish and having consulted the Priests' Council, in conformity with canon 536§1, I hereby approve and promulgate the above Statues for the Parish Pastoral Council in my Diocese. These Statutes come into effect in this Diocese from the

Given at on the.....

.....
(Chancellor)

+.....
Bishop of

5

INSTALLATION OF A NEW PARISH PRIEST
The Profession of Faith
And Oath of Fidelity

(Each diocese may follow its own tradition)

Introductory Notes:

1. The installation of a new parish priest usually takes place within the Eucharistic celebration to emphasize the primary function of the parish priest. The Mass for the day with its assigned readings and prayers will be used for the liturgy.
2. The rite of installation takes place after the homily.

Bishop: Let the appointment letter of the new parish priest be read.

A senior priest in the vicariate reads the letter.

Bishop: Beloved brother in Christ, you must renew your Profession of Faith in the presence of the people to be entrusted to your pastoral care.

Parish Priest:

(Canon 833 enumerates those who are to make a profession of faith personally; and also those who are obliged to make the oath of fidelity on assuming an office.)

1. Profession of Faith

I, N., with firm faith, believe and profess all and everything that is contained in the symbol of faith namely -

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.

He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary.

He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried.

He descended into hell. On the third day he rose again.

He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

He will come again to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,

the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints,

the forgiveness of sins,

the resurrection of the body,

and life everlasting.

Amen.

I also firmly believe and hold that pertains to the doctrine of faith and morals, whether it has been solemnly defined by the Church or affirmed and declared by the ordinary magisterium of the Church, as it is proposed by the Church, in particular, what pertains to the mystery of the Holy Church of Christ, her sacraments, the sacrifice of the Mass, and the primacy of the Roman Pontiff.

2. Oath of Fidelity on Assuming an Office

(To be exercised in the Name of the Church)

I, the undersigned promise before God under oath to exercise faithfully the office ofcommitted to me, without any partiality to anyone and to observe secrecy within the limits and according to the prescriptions of law and of my superior.

So help me God and these Holy Gospels. (Place the hand upon the Bible)

[Alternative formula:

I, N., in assuming the office of, promise that both in my words and in my conduct I shall always preserve communion with the Catholic Church.]

Date: Signature:

Before me the undersigned:

.....

(Signature / Designation)

6
PRENUPTIAL INQUIRY
(Private and Confidential)

Statement of the Bride / Bridegroom

Having reminded the parties of the sacred character and the binding force of the oath they are about to take, the Parish Priest or his delegate shall *question* each party *separately* (that is, not in the presence of the other or anyone else), and in a careful and prudent manner explain the points 12 – 13.

BRIDEGROOM/BRIDE

The bridegroom/bride placing his/her hand on the Gospel (for a non-Christian he may merely raise his right hand), takes the following oath:

I.....
solemnly swear to tell the whole truth in answer to the following questions:

A. GENERAL DATA

1. Name and surname (Capitals)
2. Date of birth / Age.....
3. Place of birth (not in the hospital)
4. Nationality.....
5. Religion.....Rite (Latin/Oriental).....
6. Baptism: a. Place.....

- b. Date.....
- 7. Confirmation: a. Place.....
 - b. Date.....
- 8. Education: Level of Education.....
- 9. Work: Employed/self-employed/ business/farmer
- 10. Present status: Bachelor Spinster:
Widow/Widower Living together.....
- 11. a. Father’s name and surname.....
His Religion.....
 - b. Mother’s name and surname.....
Her religion.....
 - c. Parents’ Address.....
.....
- 12. Have you lived in other places (parishes) for a period of six (6) months or more after the age of (21 if it is male and 18 if it is female)?
 - a. Name those places.....
 - b. Do you retain domicile or quasi-domicile in any of these places?.....
Name these places.....

B. CANONICAL DATA

- 13. Have you been previously engaged to any other person?.....
 - a. Was this engagement in the canonical form?.....
.....

- b. Has this engagement been dissolved?
- c. If so, how? (by mutual consent and / knowledge of this Parish Priest?)
- 14. Have you lived with another man/woman without marriage?.....
 - a. His/Her name and surname.....
 - b. Is he/she alive or dead?.....
 - c. Did you beget children from this union?....
How many?.....
 - d. With whom do the children live?.....
.....
 - e. Who contributes to the children's expense?.....
?.....
 - f. Do you demand anything from him/her for the children?.....
- 14. Have you been married previously? In the church, civil court, or any other form?
- (A certificate of this marriage has to be produced)
- a. His/Her name and surname.....
- b. Place of marriage.....
- c. Date of marriage.....
- d. Are there children from this marriage?
- How many?.....
- e. With whom do the children live?.....
.....

- f. Does she/he demand anything for children from you?.....
- g. How was this marriage dissolved?
 - 1. Ecclesiastical decree;.... 2. Civil court..... 3. Death.....
{(It is necessary to attach to this form a copy of the ecclesiastical decree of invalidity; civil marriage certificate and divorce of the prior marriage(only for the civil marriage); or previous wife's death certificate)}

- 15. Do your parents agree with your decision to marry him/her?.....
- 16. Is any person or circumstance compelling you to marry him/her?.....
- 17. How long (years) have you known each other?.....
- 18. Are you related to each other?.....If so how?
 - a. by consanguinity?.....What degree?.....
 - b. by the same clan?.....By affinity: Direct Line..... Indirect line what degree?
- 19. Do either of you (bride or groom) have any incurable disease?What disease.....Does he/she know it?.....
(e.g. leprosy; epilepsy; HIV; AIDS; STD, or others)
- 20. Are you aware of any other impediment: ecclesiastical, civil, moral or physical, which would render your marriage invalid or unlawful?

- a. Mixed Religion?.....
- b. Disparity of Cult?.....
- c. Sacred Orders?.....
- d. Profession?.....
- e. Other vows of chastity?.....
- f. Crimes?.....
- g. Abduction?.....
- h. Force?.....
- i. Impotence?.....
- j. Any other reason?.....

C. DOCTRINAL DATA

- 21. a. Are you sufficiently instructed on the sacrament of Marriage?.....
 - b. Do you understand, and are you prepared to abide by the Catholic Doctrine that Marriage is:
 - i. for fostering of mutual love?.....
 - ii. to beget children?.....
 - iii. to bring them up in faith?.....
 - iv. to educate them?.....
 - c. Do you understand, and are you prepared to abide by the Catholic Doctrine that Marriage is by its very nature **One** and **Indissoluble** for life?.....

D. MARITAL DUTIES

- 22. Do you understand the main duties of married people to each other?
- 23. Have you any conditions for consent in this marriage?
.....
- 24. Have you anything else to add on your own?
.....

I solemnly declare and swear that the above answers are true and that of my own accord consented to this marriage knowingly and willingly.

.....
Signature of the Bride/Groom

.....
Signature of the Parish Priest/or his Delegate

Parish.....

Address.....

Date.....

Parish Seal

N.B.: Kindly preserve this form in the Parish Archive with the Marriage Register.
