

# SECTION I

## SACRAMENTS

### POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

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Priests, deacons and pastoral ministers of the Diocese of Rockville Centre serve parishes and institutions through sacramental ministries. The following sections of the *Pastoral Manual* are offered to assist them in serving the faithful. They are a general guide and are not meant to be exhaustive in nature. The disciplines of the universal Church and the specific policies of the Diocese of Rockville Centre are summarized below.

Note that this section is preceded by a *table of contents*. The *general index* at the end of the *Pastoral Manual* may also be helpful.

For a more complete treatment of these sacraments, reference should be made to the *1983 Code of Canon Law* which contains legislation for the universal Church; the *rite* for each sacrament also explains the details of sacramental celebration. Diocesan policies and procedures are coordinated by the Chancellor's Office. Often parishes have their own sacramental policies which assist Church ministers in serving their parishioners.

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# **I. SACRAMENTS: INTRODUCTION**

## **A. Catechesis and Preparation: *Readiness for the Sacraments***

In the Diocese of Rockville Centre catechesis and preparation for the sacraments is described in *Readiness for the Sacraments*. This is available in pamphlet form from the Office of Catechesis. [It is reproduced below in the following section (II.) of the *Pastoral Manual*.]

## **B. Validity and Lawfulness**

The sacraments are carefully regulated by Church discipline so that the faithful may receive the very best that our tradition has to offer. Ways in which the sacraments are protected are called validity and lawfulness (or *liceity*).

- a) **Validity** is based on the essential components of the action. Without these the sacrament is not valid; it does not take place. Validity is always indicated by precise and clear language, such as "for validity...". For example,
  - (1) Baptism: water poured and Trinitarian formula used
  - (2) Eucharist: wheat bread and grape wine, words of consecration
  - (3) Marriage: a man and woman exchange consent in the presence of a priest or deacon and two witnesses.
- b) **Lawfulness ("liceity")** can be based on other components that remain most important for the full and proper celebration of the sacrament. The absence of these elements does not invalidate the sacrament, but the requirements for lawfulness are never to be ignored or omitted.

- (1) Eucharist: leavened wheat bread
- (2) Baptism: proper sponsors
- (3) Marriage: proper permissions given when marrying a baptized non-Catholic.

**C. Offerings: General Principles**

*The minister should ask nothing for the administration of the sacraments beyond the offerings defined by the competent authority, always being careful that the needy are not deprived of the help of the sacraments because of their poverty (canon 848).*

1. **Prohibition** to ask for an offering: always freely offered by the faithful.
2. The **poor** have a right to sacraments and we manifest special concern and solicitude for them.
3. Money should not keep people from the sacraments, and people are not to feel distanced from the celebration of sacraments because of monetary concerns. However, the community expects support from its members to assist in the pastoral activities of the parish and to maintain church structures. Offerings on the occasions of sacraments such as marriages, funerals and baptisms contribute to the upkeep of the parish and to the support of the priests.
4. Limits for Offerings  
In the Diocese of Rockville Centre the current maximums are as follows:
  - (1) *Announced Mass intentions*: \$10.00  
This includes the offering requested for a “collective Mass intention.
  - (2) *Marriage*: \$300.00 (fees for musicians are separate)
  - (3) *Funeral*: \$150.00 (fees for musicians are separate)



- (4) *Baptism:* The offerings are given to the parish.

See the pertinent sections below for further explanation of these offerings.

## **II. *READINESS FOR THE SACRAMENTS***

### **GUIDELINES FOR PREPARATION AND CATECHESIS**

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Sacramental preparation in the Diocese of Rockville Centre is described in *Readiness for the Sacraments* (second edition, 1989). It is available in pamphlet form from the Office of Catechesis. These guidelines are being revised. Further questions can be directed to the Office of Catechesis, the Office of Worship, the Office of Family Ministry (marriage preparation) and the Chancellor's Office.

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#### **A. Introduction**

The dawn of this decade found a committee of religious educators in our Diocese preparing what was to become the first edition of *Readiness for the Sacraments*. Then and now, the Church here on Long Island is justifiably grateful to the twelve men and women whose time, talent, and effort found expression in their discussions of this topic and in the text of *Readiness for the Sacraments* which they prepared for our Bishop's approval.

*Readiness for the Sacraments* has served us well since then, providing religious educators on both diocesan and parochial levels with helpful assistance in assessing someone's readiness for reception of a sacrament, in assuring the quality of sacramental preparation programs, and in providing for a prayerful celebration of these moments in life's journey.

As the 1980s drew to a close, a revision of this document seemed appropriate. The promulgation of the Code of Canon Law in 1983 and the final approval of liturgical texts which were once in provisional form are two important intervening developments. The place of the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults* (hereafter RCIA) is especially worthy of note as the normative way of welcoming others to share our Catholic faith experience. As a process, the RCIA involves not only catechumens and candidates, but also the whole Church, the People of God to which they are invited.

In undertaking this revision, the professional staff of the Office of Catechesis and the Office of Worship sought to retain the balanced and positive characteristics of the initial document. The ease with which the goals of the RCIA, the revised Code of Canon Law, and more recently approved liturgical texts could be incorporated into *Readiness for the Sacraments* speaks well of the work done by that initial committee.

We are sincerely grateful to all those whose expertise and experience were so helpful in preparing this second edition. Essential to a document such as this, Bishop McGann's approval illustrates not only his role as Teacher in our Diocese but also his support of many ways in which people are being prepared to celebrate and live the Church's sacramental life.

As was true of the first edition of *Readiness for the Sacraments*, not every question can be foreseen and answered. Then and now, future editions of *Readiness* will be based on the suggestions and comments of those having a role in sacramental preparation. You are invited to send such comments to the Office of Catechesis and the Office of Worship.

For this edition, we voice the same hope expressed when *Readiness* was first published, that this document will help focus discussion on an aspect of the Church's ministry which partakes so intimately of her central mystery.

## **B. Principles for Sacramental Preparation**

Sacramental preparation is the task of the entire local Church, that is, the Diocese and its parishes. In fulfilling this task the local Church makes use of the elements of prayer, worship, education and Christian service.

### **I.**

Since it is in liturgy that we find the fullest expression of personal and communal faith, the local Church has the responsibility to see that liturgical celebrations are carefully planned, and that people come well prepared to celebrate the sacraments.

### **II.**

Sacramental preparation does not bestow faith, but is meant to help people

come to a conscious and active expression of faith.

III.

Sacramental preparation achieves its goal by the following means:

1. Proclamation and reflection on God's word;
2. Enlarging the person's understanding of Church teaching, especially about the sacraments;
3. Stimulating a person's growth in prayer;
4. Presenting opportunities for Christian service;
5. Helping persons to an awareness of their readiness for the sacraments according to age, ability, and circumstances (for example, persons with disabilities, persons of different cultures, etc.)
6. Preparing persons to celebrate the liturgy of each sacrament.
7. Developing an awareness in the local Church of the entire community's relationship to those receiving the sacraments and encouraging the assembly's participation.

IV.

While the celebration of the sacraments is naturally communal, it is also uniquely personal. The preparation should be carried out in an atmosphere of respect for each person's worth and readiness. Attention should be given to sacramental preparation programs which are distinct from the grade levels of schools of religion and the age levels of children.

V.

Responsibility for sacramental preparation, celebration, and ongoing Christian development belongs to the whole Church. In union with the Bishop, the entire parish community carries out this mission. Through such co-responsibility, the communal and personal nature of sacramental initiation can be assured even in very large parishes.

VI.

A Catholic who makes a reasonable request for the sacraments is to be admitted to them. By this is understood:

- a) A desire to receive the sacraments expressed early enough to participate meaningfully in sacramental preparation.

- b) An indication of understanding the teachings of the Church, especially with regard to the sacrament(s) to be received.
- c) The willingness to continue responsible participation in the total life of the Church.

VII.

The preparation of children for the sacraments should be carried out with the cooperation of their parents. This is in accord with the vocation of the family as the "domestic Church." It is also an opportunity for the family to enhance its own participation in the life of the Church, or to overcome obstacles which impede participation. Preparation programs should be designed in consultation with parents and be flexible enough to accommodate the circumstances of peoples' lives. While these programs should be required, parental cooperation in them is not to be the sole criterion in discerning the readiness of the child. It should be emphasized with the parents of younger children that the children's participation in the life of the Church can only be carried on with their cooperation.

VIII.

When it becomes apparent that there is serious reservation about a person's readiness to receive the sacrament, the need for further preparation should be discerned with the person, his or her family, and the pastor well in advance of the time the person would ordinarily expect to receive the sacrament. When such a serious concern cannot be resolved on the parish level through such consultation and communication, the person may be referred to the Bishop through the Chancellor's Office.

IX.

When a person requests to celebrate a sacrament for the first time in a parish community other than his or her own, the priest should confer with the person's pastor. A priest should decline to give consent to those who wish to receive sacraments outside their proper parish, if he believes that such a request is motivated by a desire to avoid a properly extensive and inclusive sacramental preparation program.

**C. Sacraments of Initiation**

1. Introduction: Catechesis and the Sacraments of Initiation
  - a) The Church's understanding of itself and its sacramental life is expressed first of all in the gestures and words of her liturgy and in the introductions to the rites found in the revised *Roman Ritual*.
  - b) In the sacraments of Christian initiation we are freed from the power of darkness and joined to Christ's death, burial and resurrection. We receive the Spirit of adoption which makes us God's sons and daughters and are part of the entire people of God in the celebration of the memorial of the Lord's death and resurrection.
  - c) Baptism incorporates us into Christ and forms us into God's people. This first sacrament pardons all our sins, rescues us from the power of darkness, and brings us to the dignity of adopted children, a new creation through water and the Holy Spirit. Hence we are called and are indeed the children of God.
  - d) By signing us with the gifts of the Spirit, confirmation makes us more completely the image of the Lord and fills us with the Holy Spirit, so that we may bear witness to him before all the world and work to bring the Body of Christ to its fullness as soon as possible.
  - e) Finally, coming to the table of the eucharist, we eat the flesh and drink the blood of the Son of Man so that we may have eternal life and show forth the unity of God's people. By offering ourselves with Christ, we share in the universal sacrifice (that is, the entire community of the redeemed offered to God by their High Priest), and we 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 closely combine to bring us, the faithful of Christ, to his full stature and to enable us to carry out the mission of the entire people of God in the Church and in the world. (*Roman Ritual*, General Introduction on Christian Initiation, nn. 1-2)

2. Baptism: the Necessity of Preparation:

- a) The Church has the obligation and the right to see that the sacraments are celebrated well, and that those who come to them are properly disposed. Nowhere is this responsibility more evident than a baptism when the Church undertakes a responsibility toward the candidate, so that thereafter he or she has certain rights. But prior to baptism, the Church does not automatically assume faith. Those who have a pastoral ministry are not only leading people to faith but discerning whether signs of faith are manifest.

Therefore baptism is, above all the sacrament of that faith by which we respond, enlightened by the Spirit's grace, to the Gospel of Christ. That is why the Church believes it is her most basic and necessary duty to inspire all catechumens, parents of children still to be baptized, and godparents, to that true and living faith by which they hold fast to Christ and enter into or confirm their commitment to the New Covenant. In order to enliven such faith, the Church prescribes the pastoral instruction of catechumens, the preparation of the children's parents, the celebration of God's word, and the profession of faith at the celebration of Baptism. (*Roman Ritual*, General Introduction on Christian Initiation, n.3)

- b) Every parish is to have a pastoral program or process of preparation for baptism, as well as the RCIA for new adult members. Unbaptized children who have reached catechetical age and who seek Christian initiation are welcomed by means of the RCIA with Children (see RCIA, n. 252 and following). Part of the parish's pastoral care will be to assist the catechumens (if they are adults), or parents and godparents (in the case of infants and children) to profess the Church's faith, to discern their own readiness to undertake the responsibilities of baptism, and to prepare them to celebrate the liturgy of the sacrament.

3. Preparation for the Baptism of Children

- a) Preparation programs for the baptism of children are directed to the parents. Whenever possible the godparents should be included. Although the rite of Baptism emphasizes the role of parents as the "first teachers of their children in the ways of

faith," godparents also assume a responsibility for the Christian education and formation of children who are baptized.

- b) An initial interview between the parents and a member of the pastoral staff should ordinarily begin the preparation process. This interview, which is pastoral in tone, serves several purposes. It creates the climate of hospitality in which the deeper questions of faith and discipleship will be raised. It also indicates the level of catechesis which is to follow. Thus, in some cases the appropriate response will be evangelization, so that a family can hear the call to faith and be encouraged to begin or resume the practice of the faith. In other cases, where faith is already evident, catechesis can begin immediately, while remembering that the call to conversion is constant and that even those who have come to faith must deepen it.
- c) The content of the catechesis will vary according to the need and circumstances of those persons preparing and the design of parish programs. Specific attention to baptism, its meaning and its celebration, should be part of every program.
- d) Typically, a curriculum might include a treatment of the sacrament in its historical, ritual, and theological aspects, as well as the witness which a married couple can give to the practical dimensions of living the Christian life. Audio-visual materials may also be found useful.

4. Flexibility

- a) Persons always come before programs. Yet, programs are organized and policies are set to ensure consistency and unity within the parish. They also facilitate the work of the pastoral staff. Programs should be flexible enough to accommodate themselves to the situations of peoples' lives. For example, single-parent families and parents working shifts or second jobs may be unable to participate in scheduled activities. Other arrangements should be made to accommodate their reasonable requests and special circumstances. Consideration should also be shown to parents who have recently participated in the program for another child.



- b) The child of an unmarried parent should not be withheld from baptism if the family is willing to raise the child as a Catholic. Likewise, children of parents whose marriage is not recognized by the church should not be deprived of baptism if the family is willing to raise the child as a Catholic. The parish staff is also to assist such a couple in exploring possibilities which would rectify their marital status. The preparation of children who have reached catechetical age and are seeking Christian initiation is carried out according to RCIA, n. 253 and following.

5. The Judgment of Readiness

Pastoral indication of the readiness for baptism would include:

- a) A desire for baptism for oneself or one's children expressed early enough to participate in sacramental preparation.
- b) An understanding of baptism or an openness to continue to grow in its understanding.
- c) A willingness to accept the responsibilities of baptism: for an adult, conversion and discipleship; for the parents of children, training them in the practice of the faith, bringing them up to keep God's commandments as Christ taught, by loving God and neighbor. (see *Rite of Baptism for Children*, n. 39)
- d) A willingness to begin or continue responsible participation in the total life of the Church. For adult admission to the sacraments of initiation, also see RCIA, n. 120 and following.
- e) If the minister has reason to believe that any of the above criteria are not met, serious consideration is to be given that the adult is not ready or that the parents are not ready to have their children baptized.
- f) When a decision is made to defer the reception of baptism, pastoral contacts with the family should be maintained. Parents have the right to appeal a deferral of the sacrament according to the procedure outlined in general principle IX in

***Readiness for the Sacraments:***

When it becomes apparent that there is serious reservation about a person's readiness to receive the sacrament, the need for further preparation should be discerned with the person, his or her family, and the

pastor well in advance of the time the person would ordinarily expect to receive the sacrament. When such a serious concern cannot be resolved on the parish level through such consultation and communication, the person may be referred to the Bishop through the Chancellor's Office.

6. Place and Minister: Parish Policy
  - a) Far from being a private induction ceremony, baptism is initiation into a local community. Its celebration occurs in the parish church and is the prerogative of the local pastor. Where a visiting priest or deacon is coming to baptize, the parish preparation program should be carried out. If a priest or deacon is requested to baptize a person from outside his parish, he should follow the procedure outlined in General Principle X above. A parish policy concerning baptismal preparation and celebration should be established and published.
  - b) It is better to avoid using the term "private baptism" when referring to a situation where only one child is to be baptized. The term "single baptism" may be a more appropriate description.
  - c) In addition to the Easter Vigil, baptism may be occasionally celebrated at Sunday Eucharists during the year. After a person has been baptized, the entire parish community assumes the responsibility of nurturing him or her in the Church's faith and life.

## **D. Confirmation**

### **1. The Preparation of Adults**

- a) With regard to adults, the same principles should be followed (with suitable adaptations) which are in effect in individual dioceses for the admission of catechumens to baptism and the Eucharist. There should be sufficient effective relationship of the candidates with the Christian community and with individual members of the faithful to assist in their formation. As represented by the local Church, the people of God should understand and show by their concern that the initiation of adults is the responsibility of all the baptized. Therefore, in the pursuit of its apostolic vocation, the community must

always be fully prepared to give help to those who are searching for Christ. Those preparing to celebrate the sacrament should be directed toward their giving witness of a Christian life and exercising the Christian apostolate, while developing a genuine desire to participate in the Eucharist. (See *Rite of Confirmation*, n. 12, Introduction to RCIA, n. 9, and Canon 1065, §§1,2).

- b) According to the ancient practice maintained in the Roman liturgy, adults are not to be baptized unless they receive confirmation immediately afterward (see RCIA, nn. 14 & 24), provided no serious obstacles exist. This connection signifies the unity of the paschal mystery, the close relationship of the Son and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, and the joint celebration of the sacraments by which the Son and the Spirit come with the Father upon those who are baptized. (See RCIA, n. 14).
- c) Although historically the bishop is the original minister of confirmation, The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (n. 12 and 232) and the Rite of Reception of Baptized Christians into the Full Communion of the Catholic Church (RCIA, n. 481) give the faculty of confirming to a priest who baptizes or receives by profession of faith an adult or child old enough to receive catechesis. It will be seen from the foregoing that this is to be the normal practice (that is, for the priest to confirm immediately), and that confirmation is to be delayed only by way of rare exception.
- d) In addition, there may be adult candidates for confirmation (especially at the Easter Vigil) who were baptized as Catholics in infancy but remained uncatechized and unconfirmed. It is often the case that such adults are preparing for marriage and have been incorporated into a process modeled on the RCIA. In accord with the provisions of Canon 884, §1, the bishop may concede to individual priests the faculty to confirm such Catholic adults for reasons of pastoral necessity. Application should be made through the Chancellor's office.

2. The Preparation of Baptized Children:

- a) Persons must be baptized to receive the sacrament of confirmation. In addition, baptized persons who have reached the age of reason must be in a state of grace, properly instructed, and able to renew their baptismal promises (see *Rite of Confirmation*, n. 12 and Canon 889). Liturgically, confirmation developed in the context of a single initiation rite. In the course of time it came to be separated from baptism in the Latin (or Western) Church. The *Rite of Confirmation* (n. 11) recognizes that the sacrament is generally postponed until about the seventh year. (The Eastern Rite Churches have maintained their ancient tradition of confirming infants.) The rite allows bishops' conferences to choose an age which seems more appropriate. However, the National Conference of Catholic Bishops has not made a determination in this regard, and the rite never speaks of confirmation as a sacrament of maturity.
- b) When confirmation is celebrated with young persons, the catechist should approach the preparation with an awareness of the psychology of the young person who is the subject of manifold influences. The family certainly plays a dominant part in the young person's decision-making process, but the freedom of the candidate must be respected. One should never feel compelled to ask for the sacrament, and social or cultural motives for requesting the sacrament should be examined. Peer group influence is also an intense force. Furthermore, while personal freedom is certainly present it is not fully matured, and is greatly affected by the young person's responses to parents and peers.
- c) Appropriate formation should take these factors into account. As a result, the preparation asks the young person to discern his or her readiness to receive the sacrament and an awareness of the implications of his or her baptismal promises within the context of all these influences. The young person is not expected to exercise a degree of personal freedom which is only appropriate for a mature adult.
- d) Therefore, the question of when one ought to receive confirmation is not a question of having attained a certain age or of determining an adequate level of psychological maturity. Rather, having been chosen by God in baptism, the

candidate recognizes God's faithfulness to her or him, and that one is called to respond ever more fully to this divine invitation. As far as possible, preparation programs should not be absolutely tied to grade levels, lest admission to confirmation be thought of as automatic.

- e) Confirmation is received only once. If a child who has been confirmed at baptism is catechized along with a group which is preparing for confirmation and wishes to participate in the sacramental liturgy, he or she should be given some role such as gift bearer or possibly proclaimer of the Word. Under no circumstances should the child be involved in a way which might suggest a second reception of the sacrament.

### 3. The Preparation

- a) Pre-sacramental sessions must not be seen as rote administrative exercises. Their purpose is to help candidates and their parents understand the implications of a decision for sacraments and to support that decision at the maturity level of each person. A pastoral interview between the one seeking confirmation and a staff member is a valuable means of helping the candidate discern readiness. Such an interview should not be primarily a test of the candidate's knowledge (this can be accomplished in class) but rather an opportunity for a young Christian to be exposed to the faith experience of a mature community member. The interview can become the catalyst for the candidate's personal reflection on and response to the person of Jesus and his church. A large classroom situation often mitigates against such reflection and dialogue. For this reason, enriching preparation programs with prayer and/or retreat days is strongly recommended.
- b) Catechesis of significant duration, adjusted to the level of the candidate and specific regarding the meaning and celebration of confirmation (including aspects of its history, theology, and ritual), should be part of every program or process. Ongoing evaluation should also be part of every program. The opportunity to perform service projects in the community can bring out the meaning of Christian witness and the commitment which the sacrament demands.

4. Preparation of Unbaptized Children of Catechetical Age
- a) While the RCIA is the appropriate process to welcome adults into the church, unbaptized children who have reached the age of reason are welcomed into the church through the Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults adapted for children (see RCIA, n. 252 and following). Through this process they are to receive catechesis and sacramental preparation suitable to their age and spiritual development.
  - b) The process of initiating unbaptized children extends over several years. It is accomplished in stages, and like its adult counterpart, must be adapted to the journey of each candidate. Formation occurs in community, which already contains within it support systems and personnel such as parents, teachers, peers, and other catechumens in religious education programs or schools. Any of these persons and groups can be important influences in a child's formation process. Where feasible, young catechumens should come to the sacraments of initiation at the same time their baptized companions receive communion or confirmation. However, whether the children are being initiated into the church when their peers are receiving first communion or confirmation, or between those times, they should have significant contact with their peers.
  - c) The final preparation of unbaptized children of catechetical age should coincide with Lent and be celebrated at the Easter Vigil. However, prior to admission to the three Easter sacraments, the children's readiness should be determined.
  - d) It is important that suitable representatives of the faithful as well as those who play a significant personal role in the catechumen's formation be present. These would include parents, family, members of the catechumenal group and adult friends. However, if it is pastorally advisable, celebration of the acceptance into the catechumenate, the scrutinies, and the presentations may occur without the entire parish community being present. Those who preside at the rites are encouraged to use the options and employ the

adaptations necessary and recommended throughout the ritual.

5. The Parents

Programs for parents are aimed at helping them understand the sacrament and assisting their children in preparing for it, as well as making clear the parish policy and details.

The initiation of children into the sacramental life is for the most part the responsibility and concern of Christian parents. They are to form and gradually increase spirit of faith in the children and, with the help of catechetical institutions, prepare them for the fruitful reception of the sacraments of confirmation and the Eucharist. The role of the parents is also expressed by their active participation in the celebration of the sacraments. (*Rite of Confirmation*, n. 3)

6. Adult Candidates for Confirmation

In addition, there may be adult candidates for confirmation (especially at the Easter Vigil) who were baptized as Catholics in infancy but remained uncatechized and unconfirmed. It is often the case that such adults are preparing for marriage and have been incorporated into a process modeled on the RCIA. In accord with the provisions of Canon 884.1, the bishop may concede to individual priests the faculty to confirm such Catholic adults for reasons of pastoral necessity. Application should be made through the Chancellor's office.

7. The Judgment of Readiness

- a) Pastoral indication of the readiness for confirmation would include:
  - (1) A desire for confirmation expressed early enough to participate in a substantial preparation program.
  - (2) An understanding of confirmation or an openness to continue to grow in its understanding. (cf. General Principle IX)

- (3) A willingness to accept the responsibilities of confirmation: a profession of the faith of the Church, closer conformity to Christ, Christian witness and service, prayer, active membership in the Church. (see General Principles IV and VII; *Rite of Confirmation* n. 22, the bishop's homily)
  - b) When a decision is made to defer the reception of confirmation, pastoral contact with the candidate and the family should be maintained. This should be the case even when the candidate declines the sacrament. Parents have the right to appeal a deferral of the sacrament according to the procedure outlined in General Principle IX above.
- 8. The Confirmation Liturgy  
(also, see section below in the *Pastoral Manual*, “Confirmation,” “Liturgical Norms,” the guidelines prepared by the Bishop’s Office)
  - a) The liturgy of confirmation should be carefully prepared, using the current diocesan guidelines which are regularly revised and published separately. The primary liturgical signs of the sacrament are the laying of hands (with the accompanying prayer) and the anointing with the perfumed oil and chrism. These elements must stand out, and ought not to be obscured by secondary symbols which may have been useful as part of pre-sacramental catechesis. These elements can find a fitting place in pre-confirmation liturgies.
  - b) Recent studies of the history of initiation have provided further insights regarding the identify and function of sponsors. In the recent past, confusion in terminology has contributed to some misunderstanding. To summarize the present discipline: parents cannot function as sponsors for the sacraments of initiation, because persons cannot be both parents and godparents (sponsors) to their children. However, parents are permitted to present their children to the bishop at the time of the anointing with chrism. Confirmation liturgies which include both sponsor(s) [required] and presenter(s) [optional] should be celebrated with dignity.



## **E. Eucharist**

### **1. Centrality of the Eucharist**

*The catechesis about the eucharistic mystery should aim to help the faithful to realize that the celebration of the Eucharist is the true center of the whole Christian life both for the universal Church and for the local congregations of that Church. For “the other sacraments, as indeed every ministry of the Church and every work of the apostolate, are linked with the Eucharist and are directed toward it. For the Eucharist contains the entire spiritual good of the Church, namely Christ Himself, our Passover and living bread, offering through His flesh, living and life-giving in the Spirit, life to men who are thus invited and led on to offer themselves, their labors, and all created things together with Him.”*

*The Eucharist both perfectly signifies and wonderfully affects that sharing in God’s life and unity of God’s people by which the Church exists. It is the summit of both the action by which God sanctifies the world in Christ and the worship which men offer to Christ and which through Him they offer to the Father in the Spirit. Its celebration “is the supreme means by which the faithful come to express in their lives and to manifest to others the mystery of Christ and the true nature of the Church.” (See **Instruction on Eucharistic Worship**, May 25, 1967, n. 6)*

### **2. The Preparation of Adults**

- a) Eucharist is the completion of initiation. When adults are initiated, they celebrate baptism, confirmation, and Eucharist within one liturgy. The RCIA is the model for the catechesis of adults and their ritual initiation.
- b) When an adult has already been validly baptized in another ecclesial communion the ***Rite of Reception of Baptized Christians into Full Communion with the Catholic Church*** is used (See RCIA n. 473 and following). Ordinarily, this takes place at Mass so that the place of the Eucharist in the initiation process may be seen.
- c) If the profession of faith and reception take place within Mass, the candidate according to his or her own conscience

should make a confession of sins beforehand, first informing the confessor that he or she is about to be received into full communion. Any confessor who is lawfully approved may hear the candidate's confession. (**RCIA: Rite of Reception**, n. 482). An adult who has been baptized a Catholic but who was not catechized and/or was not brought up in the practice of the faith, should be catechized and admitted to communion at an appropriate time. Suitably adapted, the RCIA will be found useful for this purpose.

3. The Preparation of Children

- a) The preparation of children for first Eucharist should involve not only the children and their families, but the whole parish family as well, especially the pastoral staff and catechists. Children and their families must recognize that they are preparing not only for their first communion, but for an entire life which is eucharistic. "In holy communion they will share the banquet of Christ's sacrifice, calling God their Father in the midst of the Church." (*Rite of Baptism for Children*, n. 68)
- b) The celebration of sacraments is a parish event. Religious education programs are arms of an overall total parish educational effort, whose purpose is to teach the necessary attitudinal and doctrinal content according to suitable levels. The sacramental celebration transcends what is formally educative.
- c) The proper place for the celebration of first Eucharist is the parish church where the parish family gathers. Because first communion is initiation into a eucharistic community, a home Mass is not an appropriate context for its celebration. The eucharistic liturgy should be a truly festive one, at which the larger parish is represented.

4. Preparation

- a) Every parish is to have a pastoral process of preparation for first Eucharist. Its purpose is to assist families in the preparation of their children for first Eucharist. This goal will

be achieved by a catechesis on the Eucharist suitably adapted to the age and maturity of children. Therefore,

- b) All who have a part in the formation of children should consult and work together. In this way even if children already have some feeling for God and the things of God, they may also experience the human values which are found in the eucharistic celebration, depending upon their age and personal progress. These values are the activity of the community, exchange of greetings, capacity to listen and to seek and grant pardon, expression of gratitude, experience of symbolic actions, a seal of friendship, and festive celebration. Eucharistic catechesis...should go beyond such human values. Thus, depending on their age, psychological condition, and social situation, children may gradually open their minds to the perception of Christian values and the celebration of the mystery of Christ. (**Directory for Masses with Children**, n. 12)
- c) Special mention should be made of the catechesis through which children are prepared for first communion. Not only should they learn the truths of faith concerning the Eucharist, but they should also understand how from first communion on -- prepared by penance according to their need and fully initiated into the body of Christ -- they may actively participate in the Eucharist with the people of God and have their place at the Lord's table and in the community of believers. (**Directory for Masses with Children**, n. 12.)
- d) An interview conducted in an atmosphere of warmth and hospitality, can often be helpful in assessing readiness for the sacrament. Because of the size of some parishes this interview is not always easy to arrange. It might be between a member of the pastoral or catechetical staff, (priest, D.R.E., sacrament coordinator, deacon, pastoral associate) the candidate, and the family. An experienced teacher can also get a good sense of a child's comprehension, whether or not he or she is verbalizing the "right answers." The interview should be pastoral. It should convey a tone that "because this

is an important moment in the family's life we are concerned," rather than "we are going to decide whether or not..." This is an occasion for joint decision-making, for exploring options and possibilities, and for fostering encouragement.

- e) Although a child is not to be refused the sacrament simply because the parents do not go to Church, it must be emphasized to parents how much family reinforcement counts toward the child's desire to celebrate the sacrament. At baptism parents committed themselves to the training of their children in the "ways of faith, to bring them up to keep God's commandments as Christ taught us, by loving God and neighbor." (cf. *Rite of Baptism for Children*, n. 39) Also, the Church prayed for parents making such a commitment as their children were baptized, that these parents would "be also the best of teachers, bearing witness to the faith by what they say and do, in Christ Jesus our Lord." (cf. *Rite of Baptism for Children*, n. 70) First communion is a welcome opportunity to review and deepen that commitment.
- f) General meetings with parents should be held to outline the parish program, give an adult catechesis on the Eucharist, and provide parents with the means of helping their children to prepare for the sacrament.

## 5. **The Judgment of Readiness**

Pastoral indication of the readiness for first Eucharist would include:

- a) The desire of the child for the Eucharist, freely expressed, and the desire of his or her parents to support the child, expressed early enough for full participation in the parish program.
- b) An ability to discern that the Eucharist is special as a child would express it, in accord with a catechesis suitable to his or her age. The age of seven years is not to be applied with rigidity as an absolute indication of readiness for Eucharist.

- c) A willingness to accept the responsibility of the Eucharist, chiefly the desire to participate in it regularly.
- d) A willingness to begin or continue responsible participation in the life of the church.

6. Delay

- a) As a baptized Christian, the child has a right to celebrate the sacraments. Because of family circumstances, the child needs family support to grow and fulfill the responsibilities of the sacrament. A lack of interest on their part is a signal to raise the question of a possible deferral. The basic decision, however, remains with and about the young person. Each case must be judged individually, and the whole context of the family must be considered.
- b) When a decision is made to defer the sacrament the parents may appeal through the procedure outlined in General Principle IX (cf. Introduction to the Sacraments section, above). Likewise, a priest is not to admit to first Eucharist a child from outside of the parish unless the provisions of General Principle X have been satisfied. (See also the section on First Penance/First Eucharist.)

7. The First Communion Liturgy

- a) First communion masses are celebrations by communities of faith-filled persons who have experienced the intimate love of Jesus Christ. As parish-based events rather than those limited to schools or religious education groups, these liturgies mark the forward movement of individuals in the initiation process.
- b) Further, first communion days are new beginnings and points of departure rather than milestones accomplished and put aside. These sacramental liturgies should be planned, celebrated and evaluated using sound liturgical principles.

- c) As there is no single officially- approved method for celebrating first communion, many parishes have developed particular customs. Communities which offer group communion only should consider introducing the option of family communion. This method can heighten the assembly's awareness of its responsibility to nurture young members.
  - d) Parish staffs which offer their candidates both options should continue to exercise keen sensitivity to the life situations of their candidates. Parents who are non-Catholic, non-practicing Catholics or invalidly married may be reluctant to accompany their child to a family communion when they themselves cannot receive. Parish staffs should approach these complex pastoral situations with true charity and encouragement.
  - e) Parishes may consider having an additional festive eucharistic gathering of all first communicants on or near Pentecost Sunday, especially when first communion masses occur on days other than Sunday.
8. Reception of the Eucharist by persons with developmental disabilities
- a) For administration of the Most Holy Eucharist to children, it is required that they have sufficient knowledge and careful preparation so as to understand the mystery of Christ according to their capacity, and receive the body of the Lord with faith and devotion (canon 913).
  - b) In the Canon Law Society of America's commentary on this canon concerning mentally handicapped persons, the Church makes some extremely compassionate and sensitive observations:

*Traditionally the use of reason has been viewed in terms of the acquisition of abstract, cognitive skills, but the law does not exclude the broader definition which places primacy on symbolic and intuitive ways of knowledge. For example, mentally handicapped persons may not be able to conceptualize and articulate the difference between the Body of Christ and ordinary food, but they can sometimes appreciate the sacredness of the Eucharistic food in the context of the reverence shown the sacrament by their families and the Christian community. Some dioceses and conferences of bishops have policies which permit the distribution of Communion to such persons. In the absence of a local policy, pastors should not arbitrarily deny the sacrament to the mentally handicapped who are suitably prepared and disposed: 'according to their capacity' (Canon 913, §1) and are supported by the faith of family or community." Parish communities should strive to integrate developmentally handicapped persons into the sacramental life of the Church, realizing that the Eucharist is for all baptized Catholics. Persons with mental retardation respond to Jesus in a simple, innocent, effective, and symbolic manner. These gifts can be treasured by the Church. These special persons will also be a cause of inspiration to many as they demonstrate their devotion to Jesus by their reverent and respectful attitudes when they participate in the Eucharist. They should never be denied this grace.*

**F. Penance**

1. Context

- a) At baptism, each member of the Christian community is called to proclaim and live the good news of Jesus Christ. We are called constantly to conversion, that is, "...a profound change of the whole person by which one begins to consider, judge, and arrange one's life according to the holiness and love of God." (*Rite of Penance*, n.6a) We all need reconciliation.
- b) In a particular way, we are awakened to the need for reconciliation through the preaching of Jesus in the gospel message and specific calls to conversion. It is the particular ministry of the priest--through his preaching, teaching, and liturgical celebration --to invite and strengthen the community and the individual to seek reconciliation. We are awakened to our need for reconciliation:
  - (1) by our fellow Christians whose works of mercy constantly challenge us to greater spiritual growth;
  - (2) by the expressions of forgiveness we offer and receive each day in our homes, at work, and among our neighbors;
  - (3) by regular celebrations of the Eucharist;
  - (4) by the celebration of parish penance services and parish missions;
  - (5) by personal confrontation with the presence of evil in our lives and in society.
- c) With God's grace, this recognition of sinfulness leads to contrition and the intent to lead a new life. Thus, we turn confidently to God's reconciliation through penitential practices which encompass the spirit of conversion. We experience forgiveness:
  - (1) during the penitential seasons of the church year;
  - (2) in works of mercy and acts of charity;
  - (3) at private and communal prayer;
  - (4) in the celebration of the sacraments of baptism, Eucharist, and penance.



- d) The sacrament of reconciliation is situated within this context and is most properly understood and celebrated here.
2. The Preparation of the Minister of the Sacrament
- a) The proper preparation of the priest will enable him to lead the penitent to a truly human healing experience of the forgiving love of God. Before leading any penitent in the celebration of this sacrament, a priest should prepare for this important role
    - (1) by embracing reconciliation as a way of life;
    - (2) by acts of repentance in his own life, including the celebration of the sacrament as a penitent;
    - (3) by praying for compassion toward sinners and for the discernment of God's presence in the penitent's life.
  - b) The manner of celebrating the sacrament of penance should indicate always that this is an act of prayer and worship of God. This can be accomplished through the liturgy, vestments, gestures, and the environment in which the sacrament is celebrated. The priest is especially a celebrant of the paschal mystery being revealed now in the concrete situation of the penitent, and not simply a judge or spiritual counselor. In each encounter with a confessor, the mystery of salvation should be individually experienced during the communal prayer of the priest and the individual penitent.
3. Adults and the Sacrament of Penance
- a) Within the format of individual confession, the ways in which adult penitents celebrate the sacrament of penance arise from varied responses to the call for conversion and the experience of forgiveness within the Church. Most frequently, this sacrament deals with the conquest of everyday evil that does not approach the level of serious sin.
  - b) Some celebrations of the sacrament involve an experience of conversion which is at the core of one's life. Many more celebrations involve adults seeking out the sacrament to enhance their ongoing conversion and strengthen them against future sinfulness. The celebration of the sacrament

provides also an opportunity for people to discern the direction in which God's Spirit is leading them, challenging them to grow beyond their current level of development and suggesting new ways to live the Gospel message.

- c) These different circumstances mean celebrating in a special way the infinite goodness of God who is merciful in our weaknesses and failures. Each celebration of the sacrament encourages the penitent to make a deeper commitment to serve the Lord with gladness. The response of the confessor to the penitents under his pastoral direction must be as subtly varied as are the reasons why people have come forward to celebrate reconciliation. Priests should be alert for factors inhibiting the full celebration of God's forgiveness, for example, a lack of serious preparation for the sacrament; routine celebration; the rote recitation of sins by the penitent. The scheduled times for the sacrament of penance should provide sufficient time for its reverent celebration.

#### 4. Children and the Sacrament of Penance

- a) For the fullest preparation for the sacrament, the child needs catechesis, an environment which offers on-going opportunities for penitential practice and in which families and neighbors forgive one another regularly, instruction about Jesus' victory over sinfulness, and the experience of his loving mercy. Initiating children into Christian reconciliation involves not merely the sacrament of penance but, more importantly, the wider context of a lifetime of forgiveness.
- b) A child's perspective of life is quite different from that of an adult. In experiences of reconciliation, priests should remember that the ways in which a child penitent approaches the sacrament will differ significantly from those of an adult.
- c) Although children tend to lack the verbal ability to express fully their awareness of their salvation from sin and do not have an adult's appreciation of the possibility for evil, any child who freely approaches a priest for reconciliation does truly sense some need for repentance and growth. Confessors should be readily available for the freely-made decision of even a young child to celebrate the sacrament frequently.

- d) The priest should accommodate himself to the child's limited ability by engaging in a simple dialogue on a specific fault rather than looking for a list of sins. Nothing should be done or said to arouse hesitation, much less fear, in the child.
- e) Emphasis should be placed on the child's closer union with God and the church rather than on past sinfulness. The focus of a child's confession is not an abstract catalogue of sins, but rather than an honest, personal awareness that God is forgiving and calls everyone to holiness and a life of charity. Children are invited to personalize the positive signs of God's love in their recent experiences and to find ways in which they can respond to that love.
- f) In addition to the communal celebrations of the sacrament for adults that each parish provides during the year, children should also be provided with similar opportunities. Simplified, non-sacramental communal celebrations with a priest prior to first penance can provide effective catechetical experiences. After first penance, regular communal celebrations should be part of the ongoing catechesis about the sacrament. The format of communal services will require great creativity by parish personnel, so that even children and teen-agers along with adults can frequently celebrate the sacramental experience of conversion.

5. Some Aspects of the Rite

- a) Great care should be taken to respect the penitent's option of celebrating the sacrament either facing the priest or anonymously.
- b) The Scripture reading is an important part of the rite of penance, enabling the penitent to situate his or her sins in the context of God's Word.
- c) Each act of penance or satisfaction should be an effective way of expressing one's willingness to live out a life of greater charity. Therefore, penances should never be haphazard or routine. Creativity in exploring more concrete and personal opportunities to do good is important, rather than always making use of prayer formulae.

- d) The prayer of absolution is never said while the penitent is praying any version of the act of contrition. During the absolution, priests are encouraged to extend their hands over the head of the penitent. This physical gesture enhances the prayer with that most ancient of Christian symbols for the invocation of God's Spirit.

## **G. First Penance and First Eucharist**

### **1. Background**

- a) Over the years, the pastoral practice surrounding first reception of the sacraments of penance and Eucharist has been a cause of concern for many. As was true in the first edition of *Readiness for the Sacraments*, it seems advisable to treat this matter separately, while recognizing that it is important to consider this issue within the context of all that has been said about these sacraments.
- b) When the *General Catechetical Directory* was issued in 1971, the Holy See expressed its desire that the introduction to first penance precede reception of first Eucharist. This has been expressly stated by Pope Paul VI and Pope John Paul II personally, and by communications from the Congregations for the Clergy and for Divine Worship. The revised Code of Canon Law (c. 914) states that first Eucharist is to be received "....having been preceded by sacramental penance." In addition, *Sharing the Light of Faith: The National Catechetical Directory* states the following:  
Catechesis for the sacrament of reconciliation is to precede first communion and must be kept distinct by a clear and unhurried separation. This is to be done so that specific identity of each sacrament is apparent and so that before receiving first communion the child will be familiar with the revised rite of reconciliation and will be at ease with the reception of first communion. (n. 126)
- c) The practice of delaying the reception of first penance until a later age developed in part from psychological insights about the structure of thinking which is characteristic of the young child, and from a concern that the close association of the two

sacraments at their first reception might cause the child to think that one is always obliged to receive penance before Eucharist throughout life. As is clear from the addendum to the *General Catechetical Directory* both considerations have validity.

It is praiseworthy to study by research in pastoral psychology and to describe the age of reason which develops gradually, is subject to various conditions, and which presents a peculiar nature in every child. (*General Catechetical Directory*, Addendum, n. 1)  
One must be very careful, however, that the children do not get the impression that confession is necessary before receiving the Eucharist even when one sincerely loves God and has not departed from the path of God's commandments in a serious way. (*General Catechetical Directory*, Addendum, n. 3)

- d) At the same time, several factors led the Holy See to reaffirm the practice in force since the Middle Ages. Among these principles are the right of all baptized persons to have access to the sacrament of penance before receiving Eucharist and the efficacy of the sacrament even when only venial sins are involved. While the insights of psychology cause many questions about the presence of even venial sin in the life of a young child, it would be well to remember that sin is a mystery. Psychologists would be the first to caution that the stages of thinking which many have identified are related to chronological age only in broad terms. Thus, while for some there is a conflict here between the findings of psychology and the decision of the Holy See, it would be well to look at the decision in the light of the Holy See's desire to protect the rights of the baptized person.
- e) Others have trouble with anyone who would say that children are not required to receive first penance before first Eucharist. It is important for them to realize that no baptized Catholic is ever required to receive penance unless the person is conscious of serious sin. Children who are about to receive first Eucharist should not be looked upon as a special exception to this general principle.

2. In March, 1985, Bishop John R. McGann issued a statement about this pastoral practice, containing the following points:
  - a) All children and their parents should be fully informed that the accepted pastoral practice of the Church is to celebrate first penance prior to first communion;
  - b) Children are to receive catechesis on penance and be given an opportunity to receive the sacrament before first communion. This should be the normal practice.
  - c) If, after this catechesis, opportunity and encouragement, children with their parents and pastor (and/or the pastoral team) decide individually to delay reception of first penance, they may choose to do so. But the preparation for and the opportunity to receive first penance is to be afforded to all children before they are admitted to first communion.
  
3. Pastoral Practice
  - a) While it is expected that catechesis is to be done in such a way as to awaken in both children and parents a realization of the value of receiving first penance before first Eucharist and thus lead in the normal course to the reception of the sacrament, it is also clear that a particular child's development may indicate the wisdom of delaying the reception of the sacrament. In this sense, first penance is not an absolute prerequisite for first Eucharist. Charity, as well as the statements of the Holy See, would demand that neither those children who receive first penance before first Eucharist nor those who choose to delay it be treated as somehow lacking in understanding or devotion.
  - b) Nor does the decision of the Holy See mean that a negative and fear-inducing catechesis on sin be among the first catechetical instructions the children receive. On this subject, the *General Catechetical Directory* is quite clear.

Without doubt children of this age should be told in the simplest possible way about God as our Lord and Father, about his love for us, about Jesus, the Son of God, who was made man for us, and who died and rose again. By thinking about the love of God, the child will be able gradually to perceive the malice of sin, which always offends God the Father and Jesus, and which is opposed to

the charity with which we must love our neighbor and ourselves. (*General Catechetical Directory*, n.2)

- c) A very practical question arises about the time needed to prepare children for both sacraments, especially if such preparation is to be distinct and unhurried. One help in answering this question is to recognize that the "age of reason" is not a rigid norm of seven years of age. Pope Pius X qualifies it as "the seventh year, more or less" (*Quam Singulari*). It is possible then to fulfill the decision of the Holy See by putting off first Eucharist as long as this does not extend the age too far. Another way would be to obtain even more active involvement of the parents in the preparation of one of the two sacraments as long as the parents are properly supported and the impression is not given that the sacrament so treated is somehow less important. Lastly, it hardly seems consistent for parents to be anxious for their children to receive first penance if penance is absent from the parents' own lives, and if they neglect to support their children in a proper understanding and regular reception of the sacrament in the years following the first reception.

#### 4. Norms

- a) A catechesis for penance is to precede first Eucharist which respects the distinction between the two sacraments and which is appropriate in content and method to the young child.
- b) Catechesis about penance and Eucharist is to be grounded in previous catechesis concerning God and God's love for us, and also the person of Jesus who became one of us and who died and rose again.
- c) Both children and parents are to be instructed in the value of the sacrament of penance and in the manner of celebrating it according to the revised rite of penance. It should be made clear that the directives of the Holy See and the *National Catechetical Directory* both look to the sacrament of penance normally being celebrated before first communion.
- d) First penance should not be treated as a prerequisite to first communion to make clear that confession is never a

prerequisite for Eucharist unless one is conscious of serious sin.

- e) To provide adequate time for a distinct catechesis, the date of first Eucharist may be postponed, but without over-extending the definition of the age of reason as “the seventh year, more or less.” An alternative method is to have more extensive parental involvement for one of the sacramental preparations, always with adequate support from the clergy, religious educators, and catechists of the parish.
- f) There must be ample opportunity for reception of the sacrament of penance before first Eucharist. One way to do this is through a penance service or series of them for all of the children. Such a format will not draw undue attention to whether a child celebrates penance sacramentally or not. Such services also remind the community of the role of reconciliation in its daily life.
- g) The sacrament cannot be celebrated without some form of the confession of sins. A child who judges himself or herself unready or who is judged unready by parents or catechists might benefit by conversation and prayer with a priest, apart from the penance service. However, the impression should not be given that sacrament has been celebrated.
- h) Penance should also be treated extensively when the children are older, and the impression should not be given that this later catechesis is the real preparation for first penance.

## **H. Anointing of the Sick**

### **1. Introduction**

- a) The sacrament of the anointing of the sick should be the subject of detailed catechesis for all the people of the parish. Having so often in the past been associated with imminent death, this sacrament has not always been able to take its rightful place within the context of the Church's total pastoral care of the sick. There are rites provided for reception of viaticum within Mass and for its reception outside of Mass. Viaticum is associated with a renewal of faith which the



Christian professed at baptism, which is to strengthen the person in the passage from this life to the Father.

- b) On the other hand, the anointing of the sick is available to "those who are seriously ill due to sickness or old age." It is the continuation of the Lord's own concern for the bodily and spiritual welfare of the sick. The Church has seen a greater realization of this aspect in recent years, as evidenced in particular by the appearance of communal celebrations of the sacrament. Such celebrations and preparations for them are important catechetical opportunities both for those being anointed and for the parish faith community. Nevertheless, it continues to be of importance that a proper catechesis be regularly presented about anointing and viaticum:

The faithful should clearly understand the meaning of the anointing of the sick so that the Church's sacraments may nourish, strengthen and express faith. It is most important for the faithful in general, and above all the sick, to be aided by suitable instructions in preparing for this celebration and in participating in it, especially if it is to be carried out communally. (*Rite of Anointing and Pastoral Care of the Sick*, n. 36)

## 2. Catechesis: Pastoral Norms

The following points are presented to aid this catechesis and guide the sacrament's celebration:

- a) Sickness and pain remain a mystery. Their very existence raises doubts and questions in the minds and hearts of all who suffer or see loved ones suffer. To these questions the Father gives not an answer but the Incarnation of his own Son, in whom is manifest an extraordinary love of the sick and also the acceptance of great personal suffering.
- b) Part of the mystery of suffering is its relationship to our sinful condition. But it must be made clear that sickness is not a punishment for personal sins. Sometimes, suffering can be accepted with hope and even joy because, like St. Paul, in our suffering we can "complete what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for the sake of his body, that is, the Church" (Col. 1:24). However, it is God's will that we should "struggle against all sickness and carefully seek the blessings of good

health (See *Rite*, n.3) so that in this way we can serve God in the Church and the world.

- c) As a result, medical attention and spiritual comfort should seek to restore to health those who are sick. This is a direct continuation of the Lord's compassion for those who are ill. As members of one body, we know that the suffering of one is the suffering of all. All baptized Christians share in the ministry of Christ to the ill by encouraging scientific endeavors to find cures for all forms of illness, by love shown to the sick and their families, and above all by encouraging the celebration of the sacrament of the sick. Such celebrations should sometimes be celebrated communally to express the solidarity of all the members of the body of Christ with each other.
- d) The relatives and friends of those who are ill should encourage them to celebrate the sacrament by their own faith, by gentle urgings, and by informing the pastor of the person's illness. At the same time, priests and those working with them in pastoral ministry (particularly special ministers of the Eucharist), should make known to parishioners their particular concern for the sick, and the meaning and availability of the sacrament of the sick.
- e) The rite speaks of all those who are dangerously ill due to sickness or old age appropriate subjects for reception of the sacrament. It also calls for the priest to make a "prudent and probable" judgment about the seriousness of the illness without scrupulosity, although a doctor may be consulted. Immediate danger of death is not necessary. Anointing may be repeated if the illness grows more serious. The sacrament should be administered before surgery when it is performed for serious illness and not minor or cosmetic reasons. Persons experiencing the debilitating effects of old age may be anointed. Also, children in need who have reached a sufficient use of reason to be comforted by the sacrament may be anointed. This should be a judgment made on an individual basis rather than simply on the basis of age. Those who are unconscious should be anointed if it is known that they are people who would ordinarily ask for the sacrament if

they were conscious. Mental illness is also a basis for celebrating the sacrament (See *Rite*, nn. 8-15).

- f) The rite refers to a misuse of the sacrament by delaying its reception (See *Rite*, n.13). For this reason, those who are ill and those caring for the sick should be catechized in the meaning of the sacrament so that anointing may be sought as soon as possible and be received with faith and devotion.
- g) When the priest is called to minister to a person who is certainly dead, he should respond by going to the home, praying for the deceased person, and comforting the family. He should not anoint the person.
- h) It is a misuse of the sacrament to celebrate it indiscriminately. For example, those who care for the sick or accompany them to a communal celebration of the sacrament but who are themselves in good health should not be anointed. The sacrament speaks to the needs of those who experience sickness and pain to some serious degree. An indiscriminate use of the sacrament will obscure its proper role in continuing the healing work of Christ as effectively as too restrictive a use.
- i) For those who are in danger of death, viaticum should be administered. Ideally this would be at a Mass with the sick person renewing baptismal promises and receiving the Eucharist under both kinds. "All baptized Christians who receive communion are bound to receive viaticum... Pastors must see that the administration of the sacrament is not delayed, but that the faithful are nourished by it while still in full possession of their faculties" (See *Rite*, n. 27).

## **I. Marriage**

### **1. Introduction**

- a) For the majority of Catholic people, the context of Christian life is the sacrament of marriage. Preparation for the celebration of the sacrament should deepen the understanding of Christian love binding persons together in mutual self-giving, leading them to a more profound understanding of themselves, each other, and the Church which they are.

- b) Preparation for marriage should start from the reality of the situation. This preparation should be one of the most positive decision-making processes of adult life. The couple ministers the sacrament to one another, as a sign signifying and effecting a union of persons at the very heart of human life in Christ. The life-giving principles of faith should permeate the very essence of this time of new beginnings. In marriage, the whole process of integrated personal maturation continues in a new perspective toward the completed humanity of two persons united in Christ. The couple presenting themselves for marriage have made a choice of each other. The Church respects this choice. The purpose of the preparation is to aid the couple in their spiritual and practical evaluation of that choice so that they may prudently improve and deepen the quality of their commitment. Marriage preparation is to be seen as a discernment process in which the irreversible life decision of the sacrament of matrimony may be clearly understood, maturely considered and freely chosen.

## **2. Contents**

Accordingly, preparation for marriage should include:

- a) development of a spirituality of marriage;
- b) examination of motives for marriage;
- c) consideration of the need to develop individual objectives into mutual goals;
- d) recognition of the responsibilities of married life;
- e) appreciation of interrelated love-giving and life-giving aspects of sexual relationships.
- f) reflection on the responsibilities involved in parenthood.

## **3. Norms for Marriage Preparation**

The teaching office of the Church insists on the importance of proper marriage preparation and pre-nuptial investigations. Indeed, the importance of this ministerial duty cannot be emphasized too often. The following norms are intended to give specific form to this duty.

- a) Parish-based preparation

- (1) The responsibility for marriage preparation rests primarily with the parish pastoral team. Marriage preparation should involve the cooperation of the parish clergy, informed Catholic married couples, medical doctors, psychologists and other professionals expert in areas related to family life.
  - (2) Every parish is strongly urged to begin or further develop a parish marriage preparation program in conjunction with the diocesan training for such programs. Participation in the Engaged Encounter Weekend is encouraged as an alternative or additional form of marriage preparation. The Diocese continues to provide marriage preparation programs for those couples unable to participate in their parish marriage preparation program. The Diocese also makes available special marriage preparation programs to assist interfaith couples, those entering second marriages, and the hearing impaired.
  - (3) Because of the importance of marriage preparation, the initial arrangements for a marriage should be done by the clergy assigned to the parish and not by priests assisting temporarily in the parish.
- b) Preparation is to begin as early as possible.
- (1) Persons considering marriage ought to be made aware that they should begin the spiritual preparation early so that it can assist them in deepening their commitment and not become simply one of the formalities prior to the wedding.
  - (2) The parish should indicate to its parishioners that couples who wish to marry should consult their parish clergy **at least six months** before their prospective wedding date and before they have made their social arrangements. When a couple approaches their parish priest, deacon or pastoral minister less than six months prior to the proposed wedding date, they should not simply be told that they are too late to set a date.
  - (3) Their individual circumstances should be assessed and a prudent judgment made by the priest or deacon about whether proper marriage preparation can be

completed prior to the proposed wedding. To avoid anything arbitrary, each parish should publish and regularly call attention to its marriage preparation policy. For example, couples should know that they will have an initial interview during which a pre-nuptial investigation will determine their freedom to marry, and that their acceptance of the basic elements of Christian marriage will be sought. Without such a pre-nuptial investigation, the date of the marriage cannot be set.

c) Faith level

- (1) When a couple comes to the Church to be married, this creates the presumption that some level of Catholic faith is alive in the persons and that the couple is capable of assuming the obligations of marriage. The couple should experience a welcoming and supportive attitude on the part of the Church.
- (2) The priest, deacon or pastoral minister should be especially sensitive to the complex relationship between faith and practice of the faith, particularly as it varies by cultural and ethnic background. At the same time, during the initial interview or at some point in the process of marriage preparation, the attitude of the couple may not support this presumption.
- (3) If a Catholic couple shows weakness in knowledge and practice of the faith, the marriage preparation should be viewed as a *form of catechesis* which can help make the couple's faith becoming "living, conscious and active under the light of instruction." (*General Catechetical Directory*, n.14) If the couple evidences a lack of faith, the marriage preparation should be undertaken as an opportunity for evangelization, calling the couple to a commitment to Christ in the community of the Church.
- (4) If both parties to the marriage give every indication that they neither believe nor are open to the moment of evangelization presented to them, the couple should be asked to reconsider marrying in the Church. If they persist, the matter is to be referred to

the office of the Chancellor at the Diocesan Pastoral Center. (See General Principle in the Introduction to the Sacraments section.)

d) Refusal to Participate

- (1) It may arise that either practicing or non-practicing Catholics wish to arrange a marriage but refuse to participate in any marriage preparation program. The priest should determine the reason for this, for example, previous marriage preparation in college, or conflict arising from work, school, or travel, and so on.
- (2) Flexibility within the parish marriage preparation program as well as opportunities to attend diocesan marriage preparation programs or for individual instruction by the priest should be sufficient to accommodate all couples. No couple is to be excused from some form of proximate marriage preparation.

e) Involvement of Clergy, Couples and Professionals

- (1) As mentioned previously, informed Catholic married couples and professionals in areas relative to family life should have an essential role in marriage preparation. At the same time, the role of the priest or deacon should not be diminished. Seminary training and formation experiences should take particular account of the clergy's role in marriage preparation. Besides his responsibility to determine freedom to marry and the absence of impediments, his theological expertise and pastoral training should prepare him to play the leading role in efforts at catechesis and evangelization that may accompany marriage preparation. Since the celebration of any sacrament is first of all an act of worship of God, the priest should bring his liturgical training to bear to help the couple see the wedding ceremony in this light.
- (2) By involving the couple in the preparation of their wedding liturgy through the selection of the scriptural readings and other approved options, the priest, deacon or pastoral minister can lead the couple to a greater involvement in an understanding of the liturgy of the Church than they have had

before. The planning of the wedding liturgy must be an integral part of the marriage preparation.

f) Eucharistic context

- (1) Except for interfaith marriages which are best celebrated outside Mass, the marriage of two Catholics should be celebrated in the context of the eucharist. For a man and a woman who understand the meaning of the sacrament which they are about to enter, matrimony is a profound revelation of Christ's love. The proper response to this reality of the love of Christ for the couple is the whole Christian community celebrating with the couple by participating in the eucharist.
- (2) Marriage and the eucharist point especially to the mystery of Christ's union with his Church. Emphasizing the relationship of these sacraments is one of the most effective ways to avoid an excessively privatized attitude toward their marriage on the part of the couple.
- (3) However, the motivation for arranging any nuptial Mass should be based on a couple's spiritual needs and capacity, and not on any desire to embellish the marriage ceremony or to bow to social customs or expectations.

g) Remote Preparation

- (1) While these guidelines are meant to deal specifically with proximate preparation for marriage, it must be said that such preparation can hardly be expected to be successful if it is not preceded by thorough family life programs.
- (2) Parishes should assist parents in educating their children in human sexuality. All marriage preparation, remote or proximate, should aim at developing that mixture of intellectual formation, faith commitment, spiritual depth and psychological well-being through which the grace of Christ operates to create that great mystery of two in one flesh, the symbol of his own love for us, the Church.



### **III. BAPTISM AND RCIA: GENERAL NORMS**

#### **A. Full initiation**

*The sacraments of baptism, confirmation, and the Most Holy Eucharist are so interrelated that they are required for full Christian initiation. (canon 842, §2).*

Note that full initiation is the normative way to enter the Catholic Church, even though infant baptism is celebrated more often than adult initiation.

#### **B. Validity**

1. Trinitarian formula and
2. pouring of water (or immersion)

#### **C. Rite of Baptism**

*Baptism should be administered in accord with the order prescribed in the approved liturgical books, except for the case of urgent necessity when only what is required for the validity of the sacrament must be observed. (canon 850)*

1. January 6, 1972: *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults*
2. November 11, 1986: *National Statutes for the Catechuminate*
3. rituals and emergency rites in the rituals

4. Dispensation for Adults

***Pastoral Faculty 3***

*To use the simple rite of adult initiation in extraordinary circumstances when the candidate cannot participate in all the usual rites of the catechumenate, or when you judge that the candidate is sincere in his or her conversion and in religious maturity and may be fully initiated without delay.*

**D. Minister**

1. Any person can validly baptize. However, the proper minister of baptism in the Diocese of Rockville Centre is the *priest or the deacon*.
2. Two ministers of baptism are not permitted. (E.g., one pours the water, one says the words -- such a baptism is *invalid*.)

**E. Water**

1. *Outside a case of necessity the water to be used in the conferral of baptism should be blessed in accord with the prescriptions of the liturgical books (canon 853).*
2. **Pouring and Immersing:** *Baptism is to be conferred either by immersion or by pouring, the prescriptions of the conference of bishops being observed (canon 854).* In the Diocese of Rockville Centre either method is permissible; no norms have been issued by NCCB.

**F. Baptismal Name**

1. *Parents, sponsors and the pastor are to see that a name foreign to a Christian mentality is not given (canon 855).*
2. A saint's name is not a requirement.

3. A baptismal name that is *offensive to Christians* is not permitted; a saint's name not necessary. Offensive names include Lucifer, Beelzebul, Hitler, etc.
4. Names from the Hebrew Scriptures are perfectly acceptable.

**G. Day**

Sunday is preferred but not required: Although baptism may be celebrated on any day, it is recommended that ordinarily it be celebrated on a Sunday or if possible at the Easter Vigil (canon 856). [Note: do not delay infants until the Easter Vigil.]

**H. Parish Church at the Font**

1. *Outside a case of necessity, the proper place for baptism is a church or oratory* (canon 857, §1).
  - a) The usual place is the parish church.
  - b) Cases of necessity are the exception; permission sought from the ordinary.
  - c) Therefore, in the Diocese of Rockville Centre baptisms do *not* take place in convent chapels, high school or college chapels,
  - d) nor in any other place – only at the *dedicated font* of a parish church.
2. **Parish of the adult or of one of the parents:** *As a rule adults are to be baptized in their own parish church and infants in the parish church proper to their parents, unless a just cause suggests otherwise* (canon 857, 2).
  - a) Usually the baptism takes place in the parish of the adult or the parents of the infant.
  - b) However, a “just cause” may suggest otherwise.
  - c) A pastor’s letter of permission is *not required* by church law. For example, a couple returns to the parish in which they were married to baptize their child, or to the parish where they grew up, or to where the grandparents are living. These places are certainly permissible. In such a case the parents

may be urged to contact the home parish and inform the pastor that they have celebrated the baptism of their child.

3. **At the font:**

*Every parish church is to have a baptismal font, with due regard for the cumulative right already acquired by other churches (canon 858, §1).*

*The local ordinary, after hearing the pastor of the place, may permit or order for the convenience of the faithful that there be a baptismal font in another church or oratory within the boundaries of the parish (canon 858, §2).*

4. **Outside the parish church:** *Outside the case of necessity, baptism is not to be conferred in private homes, unless the local ordinary has permitted this for a grave cause (canon 859, §1).*

- a) Baptisms are not to be done in the home.
- b) A grave cause needed for the permission to be granted.
- c) For example, one of the grandparents is ill and cannot attend the baptism in the church. However, a grave cause it not present should one of the parents be a non-Christian who prefers not to come to a Catholic Church.
- d) This permission can be sought from the Chancellor's Office.

**I. Proof of Baptism**

Besides the actual certificate, the statement of a person who was *physically present* at the baptism suffices as canonical proof of the baptism. The statement of the one baptized also suffices if he or she was *seven or older* at the time of the baptism.

**J. Baptism in Hospitals and Health Care Facilities**

1. Permitted

Emergency baptisms in hospitals, of course, do not require special permission. In the case of adults, and, if appropriate, they are fully initiated.

2. Record keeping
  - a) The record of any baptism is kept in the place where the baptism took place, e.g., the *local parish*. The pastor is to ensure that the baptism which occurred in the health care facility is entered in the parish baptismal register in which the health care facility is located (not in the “home parish” of the parents).
  - b) Notification is given to the parents. Parents or the responsible persons for the baptized person are to be given some form of notification that the baptism has taken place and that the record is in the local parish.

**K. “Supplying Ceremonies”**

1. The remaining baptismal ceremonies may be supplied at a later time (e.g., when the person baptized in the hospital is well and has returned home). At this time it is customary for sponsors to be present.
2. The official baptismal record remains the *parish in which the baptism took place*.
3. When ceremonies are supplied, the following information is to be placed into the baptismal register of the home parish where the ceremony took place:
  - a) date of the baptism in the health care facility
  - b) original minister of baptism
  - c) the names of the sponsors are added
  - d) in the remarks column write the name and location of the hospital with the notation “ceremonies supplied here on [date]”
4. The baptismal certificate is to be obtained from the parish where the baptism took place.

5. Sometimes a request is made that the *home parish keep the permanent record of the baptism*. The Chancellor's Office can assist in this request if the baptism in the health care facility occurred within the Diocese of Rockville Centre. The following procedure is to be followed:
- a) Send both the *new certificate* and the *notification* of the baptism in the health care facility to the Chancellor's Office.
  - b) The Chancellor's Office will request that the original baptismal entry be closed with a notation that the permanent record is kept at the home parish.
  - c) Baptismal certificates will then be issued from the home parish. The certificate always includes the date of the original baptism, the original minister, and the date of the supplied ceremonies.
6. Ceremonies *Not* Supplied
- If, for example, the parents do not choose to have the baptismal ceremonies supplied, the baptized person's original baptismal record remains the official baptismal record, and all future baptismal certificates are to be issued from the parish of the health care facility where the baptism took place.
- Such baptisms are to be recorded in the *baptismal register* of the parish in which the hospital is located.

## **L. Infants and Adults**

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For most Catholics, the "usual" way to be initiated is to be baptized at birth. Later on the child receives First Communion (usually at age 7) and finally is confirmed (the age in the diocese ranges from the ages usually associated with grades six through twelve, i.e., 11-17). Although Infant Baptism is the "usual" way to become Catholic, the Church considers Full Initiation (i.e., baptism, confirmation and the Eucharist at the same time) to be the *normative* way to enter the Church.

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1. Infants

An *exception* to full initiation is made for *infants*. Only infants are baptized without receiving the other sacraments. One is called an infant up to the age of seven. From seven years of age onwards, one is called an *adult* for the purposes of initiation (canon 852, §1). See section on “Infant Baptism” below.

a) Children (seven and older)

Therefore, from the perspective of RCIA, children seven years of age and older are considered “adults.” Note that there is only one ritual, the RCIA. A parallel ritual for children (e.g., Rite of Christian Initiation of Children) does *not exist*. The adult rituals can be modified when appropriate. See section on “RCIA” below.

2. Adults

The word “adult” in the RCIA process refers to anyone seven years or older. These persons have the right to experience the normative way of initiation into the Catholic Church. For example, if they are unbaptized, these persons are baptized, confirmed and receive the Eucharist (usually at the Easter Vigil). On the other hand, persons who are baptized non-Catholics are received into full communion of the Catholic Church and confirmed at the same time. See section on “RCIA” below.

- (1) In church law, the Bishop initiates those **over 14 years old**: *The baptism of adults, at least those who have completed fourteen years of age is to be referred to the bishop so that it may be conferred by him, if he judges it expedient* (canon 863).
- (2) However, in the Diocese of Rockville Centre, priests are granted the faculty to initiate these persons (deacons cannot administer the sacrament of confirmation).

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*To baptize or receive into full communion all persons, including those who have completed their fourteenth year (canon 863).*



## **IV. RITE OF CHRISTIAN INITIATION OF ADULTS (RCIA)**

### **A. Sources**

1. ***Code of Canon Law:*** This authoritative collection of 1,752 “canons” was promulgated by John Paul II on January 25, 1983.
2. ***Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults,*** January 6, 1972.
3. ***National Statutes for the Catechumenate,*** November 11, 1986.
4. ***Rite of Baptism***
5. ***Rite of Confirmation.***

### **B. Pre-Initiation Inventory**

The Office of Worship has published a tool which can assist those who serve in RCIA ministries. The “Pre-Initiation Inventory” is a worksheet which not only gathers the necessary information concerning an inquirer, but also alerts the Church minister to issues which call for further attention. The “PII” is not a required tool, but its use has proved to be most helpful to parishes and RCIA teams. This form can be ordered from the Office of Worship. It is also available in *Spanish*.

### **C. Infants and Adults**

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For most Catholics, the “usual” way to be initiated is to be baptized at birth. Later on the child receives First Communion (usually at age 7) and finally is confirmed. Although Infant Baptism is the “usual” way to become Catholic, the Church considers Full Initiation (i.e., baptism, confirmation and the Eucharist at the same time) to be the *normative* way to enter the Church.

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1. Infants

An *exception* to full initiation is made for *infants*. Only infants are baptized without receiving the other sacraments. One is called an infant up to the age of seven. From seven years of age onwards, one is called an *adult* for the purposes of initiation (canon 852, §1).

2. Children

Therefore, for the purposes of initiation (i.e., RCIA), children seven years of age and older are considered “adults.” Note that there is only one ritual, the RCIA. A parallel ritual for children (e.g., Rite of Christian Initiation of Children) does *not exist*. The adult rituals can be modified when appropriate.

3. Adults

The word “adult” in the RCIA process refers to anyone seven years or older. These persons have the right to experience the normative way of initiation into the Catholic Church. For example, if they are unbaptized, these persons are baptized, confirmed and receive the Eucharist (usually at the Easter Vigil). On the other hand, persons who are baptized non-Catholics may be received into full communion of the Catholic Church and confirmed at the same time.

**D. Types of Persons in the RCIA Process**

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The first step for the Church minister is to determine what *type* of person is inquiring about entering the Church. Canonically speaking, each person will fall into one of three categories: unbaptized, baptized non-Catholic, or a baptized Catholic. A good pastoral approach involves accurately ascertaining which “type” the inquirer is and explaining the steps which may be involved when entering the Church. It is not unusual for a *family* to inquire about initiation; in this case all three types may well be represented.

These three types will be generally described below. As we move through the stages of the RCIA process these types will form the focus of the canonical issues involved along the way.

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1. Unbaptized person
  - a) The inquirer who is unbaptized may or may not belong to a “religion.” The Church is concerned whether or not the *fact of baptism* exists. For example, a person may call themselves “Catholic” without ever being baptized. Such a person remains an *unbaptized person*.
  - b) Valid baptism involves two essential elements (i.e., matter and form):
    - (1) water (poured or immersion)
    - (2) use of the Trinitarian formula, “I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.”
  - c) Anyone with the right intention may validly baptize.
  - d) Examples of religions which do not baptize:
    - (1) Judaism
    - (2) Hinduism
    - (3) Islam
    - (4) Buddhism.
  - e) Some Christian communions do not baptize. Therefore, such persons, though “Christian” in name, are considered as *unbaptized persons* during their journey into the Catholic Church. For example,
    - (1) Unitarians
    - (2) Seventh Day Adventists
    - (3) Christian Scientists
    - (4) Jehovah’s Witnesses (however, some were validly baptized into a different Christian communion before they became a Jehovah Witness)
    - (5) Quakers
    - (6) Some Baptist Churches (check the certificate).

- f) If in doubt, ask to see the certificate of baptism. If you find there the Trinitarian formula, then you have certainty of a valid baptism. However, “dedication” to the name of God or other vague formulas are not what the Church understands to be valid baptism. It is helpful to question witnesses since some Protestant Churches are not accurate in keeping baptismal records and at times some ministers do not pour the water but only “touch” the person with a moist hand. If the water does not flow, the baptism is invalid.
- g) The unbaptized person will be called a *catechumen* and, after election, will be baptized, confirmed, and receive the Eucharist. More on this below.

2. Baptized non-Catholics

- a) Anyone who has been validly baptized into a Christian Communion other than the Catholic Church is in this group.
- b) Examples include:
  - (1) All Orthodox Churches (baptized, confirmed and received Eucharist when infants)
  - (2) Episcopalian
  - (3) Congregational Church (United Church of Christ)
  - (4) Lutheran
  - (5) Methodist
  - (6) Presbyterian
  - (7) Reformed (Dutch Reformed)
  - (8) Some Baptist Churches
- c) Orthodox Christians  
It is important to note that all Orthodox Christians are *fully initiated* when infants. These Churches did not sunder the unity of the sacraments of initiation as did the Western Church (e.g., Roman Catholicism). There will be a special section below concerning the reception into full communion of Orthodox candidates.

- d) Doubtfully Baptized
  - (1) If, after careful investigation, the fact of the baptism remains *doubtful*, these persons are still considered as *baptized Catholics*.
  - (2) However, as will be noted below, they are *privately and conditionally baptized* before the celebration of the sacraments of initiation. Because of our deep respect for the oneness of baptism, the Church insists that conditional baptism is done privately.

3. Baptized Catholics

- a) Once a person is baptized into the Catholic Church, they are considered Catholics: they have the rights of Catholics and are bound by the obligations and laws of the Church. Even if they have never put their faith into practice they are considered “Catholics.” Catholics have a right to the sacraments, even if they have never registered in the parish, never contributed, and never continued their Catholic education when younger.
- b) “Fallen away Catholics”: Some Catholics, through their own fault, did not complete their initiation into the Church. It is important to determine whether they have received their First Communion or were confirmed.
- c) Catholics who have “left the Church”: Some Catholics have formally joined another religion. You need to ascertain if this has happened by a *formal act* (e.g., they were “confirmed” in a non-Catholic Church, made a public profession, etc.). In these cases, these persons are considered to be a *baptized non-Catholic*. Therefore, they follow the journey back into the Church as non-Catholics (you’ll need to discover whether they received First Communion or were ever confirmed in the Catholic Church before they left the Church).
- d) Baptized Catholics raised in another religion: Some Catholics were baptized as infants and raised in a different religion by their parents or guardians. These persons are considered to be *baptized non-Catholics*.

4. Summary

Therefore, the first step is to determine which of three categories the inquirers fall into.

- a) Have they ever been baptized? If not, these persons will become **Catechumens** when they choose to proceed.
- b) Have they been baptized as a Christian? Are they Catholics who formally left the Church? Are they Catholics who were baptized as Catholics but raised in another religion and now want to “come back” to the Church? If the answer to any of these questions is yes, these persons will be **Candidates for Full Communion**.
- c) Are they Catholics who, for some reason or another, never “got Communion” and/or “got confirmed”? If so, these are **Catholics** who are candidates for Confirmation and/or Eucharist. These Catholics may or may not fit into the group of inquirers which are part of the parish RCIA process.

**E. Inquiry or Pre-Catechumenate**

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There is no “time span” for this period of the RCIA process. Lots of folks come to the rectory or approach parishioners with questions about the Church and about becoming Catholic. Many people come to Mass with their family for many years (and even receive Communion) and are, indeed, “inquirers.”

When an Inquirer takes more formal steps to learn about becoming Catholic (e.g., attends the parish Inquiry Sessions, maybe in the fall), it is important that the Church minister involved in the RCIA process determine *what type of person* is approaching the Church. The inquirer has a *right* to know his or her status vis à vis the Church. Remember, each person falls into one of three categories.

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1. Use the Pre-Initiation Inventory

A helpful tool is the Pre-Initiation Inventory prepared by the Office of Worship.

2. Determine which type of person is inquiring.  
Note: if a *family* is inquiring, it is not unusual that there are different types of persons in one family, with different “schedules” and needs for catechesis.
3. Appropriate catechesis is needed.  
All the sacraments call for appropriate catechesis. Because people are different, different types of catechesis may be necessary. Be careful of placing *everyone* in the same “RCIA group” which may or may not respect their individual needs.

**F. Acceptance into the Catechumenate or Candidacy for Full Communion**

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Every inquirer has the right to decide to make the first “official” step in entering the Church. The Church minister may recognize that there are many problems that need to be worked on (e.g., a former marriage), but this should not delay Entrance into the Catechumenate or Candidacy for Full Communion. This can be celebrated several times during the year.

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1. Unbaptized Persons
  - a) Celebrate the Rite of Acceptance into the Order of the Catechumenate.
  - b) The names of the Catechumens are entered into the ***Register of Catechumens***. This register is a canonical requirement and is not part of the liturgical action. The register is to be kept in a safe and fireproof place (usually in the rectory).
2. Baptized non-Catholics
  - a) These persons are accepted as Candidates for Full Communion.
  - b) There is no special register for their names to be entered.

3. Catholics
  - a) These persons are accepted as Candidates for Confirmation and/or the Eucharist.
  - b) There is no special register for their names to be entered.

#### **G. Rights of the Catechumen**

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Although catechumens are not yet Catholics, they do enjoy certain rights in the Catholic Church. They are already joined to the Church in a certain way; they are joined to the household of Christ and quite frequently are living a life of faith, hope and charity. For some, they may be catechumens for some time and need to be apprised of what they can expect from the Church.

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1. Marriage

Catechumens may marry in the Church. However, a dispensation from disparity of worship is still required.
2. Funeral

Catechumens have a right to be buried in the Catholic Church. See canon 1183.

#### **H. Period of Catechesis**

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All catechumens and candidates are to receive appropriate instruction. This is determined on the parish level by the pastor and his staff and assistants. This period usually lasts for at least one full year and may, in many cases, last for as long as needed. Sometimes it could mean that years will elapse before all the necessary catechesis is completed, the marriage is validated in the Church, etc. Note that before a person can proceed to be *elected* to the Easter Sacraments, all pastoral requirements need to be resolved.

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## **I. Election to the Easter Sacraments**

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Catechumens and candidates liturgically celebrate the fact that they are now called by the Church to be fully initiated into the Catholic community. For many persons this is celebrated in a central place by the diocesan bishop or an episcopal vicar. However, before this can occur, there can be no pastoral obstacles for the person. This is especially true concerning *prior marriage* for non-Catholics and Catholics alike. Below is a brief overview of each of the three types of persons as they approach the Easter Sacraments.

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1. Unbaptized persons = Catechumens
  - a) Appropriate catechesis has been completed.
  - b) There are no obstacles to entrance into the Church. For example, the catechumen may have been married before and divorced and re-married. This will be discussed in Part Two on Marriage Issues and RCIA.
2. Baptized non-Catholics = Candidates for Full Communion
  - a) Appropriate catechesis has been completed.
  - b) Ascertain that there are no obstacles to entrance into the Church. For example, the candidate may have been married before and divorced and re-married. This will be discussed in Part Two on Marriage Issues and RCIA.
3. Catholics = Candidates for Confirmation and/or Eucharist
  - a) Appropriate catechesis has been completed.
  - b) There are no obstacles to entrance into the Church. For example, the Catholic may have been married before and divorced and re-married. This will be discussed in Part Two on Marriage Issues and RCIA.
4. “Book of the Elect”

This is an element of the liturgy; the elect inscribe their names in a diocesan book provided for this purpose.

5. Status of Current Marriage

- a) The current marriage (or engagement) must be recognized by the Catholic Church as a valid marriage.
- b) If not, the current marriage must be validated (“blessed”) by a priest or deacon *before* the Easter sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and the Eucharist can be celebrated.

**J. Period of Enlightenment**

The forty days of Lent are traditionally a time of spiritual illumination and “retreat” for the Elect. The parish community shapes the form of this period of enlightenment. There are no canonical requirements to be met during this time of spiritual retreat. However, the Scrutinies are normally celebrated on the Third, Fourth and Fifth Sundays of Lent.

The sacrament of *Reconciliation* is celebrated by candidates for full communion and by Catholics preparing for Confirmation and/or Eucharist. Catechumens do *not* celebrate Reconciliation.

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**K. Celebration of the Easter Sacraments**

1. Unbaptized persons

- a) They receive baptism, confirmation and Eucharist. These initiation sacraments are celebrated at the Easter Vigil. Only for a serious reason should a catechumen be initiated outside of the Easter Vigil.
- b) The priest who baptizes has the *faculty* (empowerment) to confirm the newly baptized. No special permission is needed.
- c) Their name are entered into the following registers:
  - (1) ***Baptism Register*** (with notation of marriage, if this applies)
  - (2) ***Confirmation Register***
  - (3) ***Communion Register.***

2. Baptized non-Catholics

- a) When in *doubt* concerning the validity of the baptism, the person is baptized privately. This is done *before* the community celebration of the initiation sacraments and should be done by the same minister who will celebrate those sacraments (he will confirm them after receiving them into full communion).
- b) They make a profession of faith and are received into full communion.
- c) They are confirmed.
  - (1) The Orthodox are not confirmed. See special section below.
  - (2) Note: we do not accept as valid "confirmation" in mainline Protestant Churches. For example, confirmation in the Episcopal Church is not recognized as valid. Such persons are to be confirmed after they are received into full communion.
  - (3) The priest who receives these candidates into full communion has the *faculty* (empowerment) to confirm the candidates. No special permission is needed.

***Pastoral Faculty 2***

*To baptize or receive into full communion all persons, including those who have completed their fourteenth year (canon 863).*

- d) Their names are entered into the following registers:
  - (1) ***Register of Reception into Full Communion*** (with notation of a marriage). The facts of the valid non-Catholic baptism are entered into the appropriate columns along with the date of Reception and name of the Catholic minister.
  - (2) ***Confirmation Register***
  - (3) ***Communion Register.***

- e) Note that the Rite of Reception into Full Communion can be celebrated anytime during the year.
3. Catholics
- a) Catholics complete their initiation through reception of confirmation and/or Eucharist.
  - b) It is appropriate to celebrate these sacraments at the Easter Vigil.
  - c) Confirmation: Catholics are confirmed by a *bishop*. Should the priest wish to confirm them (at any time besides Pentecost Sunday, e.g., the Easter Vigil) he needs to request a special faculty from the Chancellor's Office. Without this faculty the confirmation is invalid.
4. *Pentecost Sunday*: A special faculty is customarily granted by the diocesan bishop to all priests to confirm baptized Catholics who have received appropriate catechesis and who are older than the usual parish age for confirmation. The priest may confirm at a parish Mass on Pentecost. A notation is made in the remarks column of the ***Confirmation Register***: “**canon 884.1**” Note: children of confirmation age cannot be confirmed by a priest at Pentecost Sunday. Special permission is still needed.
- a) Their names are entered into the following registers:
    - (1) ***Confirmation Register***
    - (2) ***Communion Register***.

**L. Members of Orthodox Churches and RCIA**

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The Catholic Church greatly desires to maintain as close a relationship as possible with our separated brothers and sisters in the Eastern Orthodox Churches. We recognize *all* their sacraments as valid. In case of difficulty, for example, a Catholic may receive the Eucharist, Penance or Anointing of the Sick in the Orthodox Church.

Church ministers involved in RCIA ministries need to exercise great pastoral sensitivity to members of the Orthodox Church. Although the following section outlines some of the issues involved, it is best to call the Chancellor's Office for further guidance when dealing with an Orthodox Christian.

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1. Who are they?
  - a) The Orthodox Churches are very close to the Catholic Church. In fact, we recognize *all their sacraments* as valid. Note that there are *Eastern Catholic Churches*, which are often parallel to non-Catholic, i.e., Orthodox Churches. The tip-off is the word *Orthodox*.
  - b) Obtain a baptismal certificate. You will see the word *Orthodox* on it, and therefore the person is *not a Catholic*.
2. Status of Initiation Sacraments
  - a) They have received baptism, confirmation, Eucharist when they were initiated into the Orthodox Church; these sacraments are considered valid. In the Orthodox churches (and Eastern Catholic churches) confirmation is called *chrismation*.
  - b) *Never confirm a fully-initiated Orthodox person!* He or she makes a profession of faith and is received into full communion.

3. Latin Catholic Church and Eastern Catholic Churches
  - a) Note: The Orthodox automatically become members of the corresponding **eastern Catholic Church**. It's best to consult the Chancellor's Office about these cases.
  - b) The procedure to become a member of the Latin rite is involved and, because of our great respect for these Eastern churches, a transfer into the Latin Church is not to be encouraged by a member of the Latin Church.
4. Marriage Issues

Once again, these matters may become a bit complex. See the section on Marriage below. Consult the Chancellor's Office concerning the validity of the marriage and, if necessary, the proper procedure in blessing (validating) the marriage in the Catholic Church.

## **M. Record-keeping**

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There are different registers used by Church ministers when recording various events during the RCIA process. It is important that a careful record be kept of the names and dates of what has occurred. The following section is an overview of the registers used and what needs to be entered into them.

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1. Registers Used

The following registers are necessary for recording the sacraments of adult converts. All may be obtained from a publisher (e.g., D.P. Murphy).

  - (1) *Register of Catechumens*
  - (2) *Baptism Register*
  - (3) *Confirmation Register*
  - (4) *Register of Reception into Full Communion*
  - (5) *Communion Register*
  - (6) Note: The "Book of the Elect" is a book used during the liturgy and is not considered a sacramental register.

2. Catechumens

Those who are *unbaptized* are enrolled as catechumens; this may occur at any time of the year. The name and required information for each catechumen are entered into the ***Register of Catechumens***. After they celebrate the Sacraments of Initiation (usually at the Easter Vigil), the following entries are made:

- a) **Baptism Register:** record all information, including Confirmation, and notation of any marriage.
- b) **Confirmation Register:** record all information.
- c) **Communion Register:** record all information.

3. Baptized non-Catholics

Those who have been validly baptized in a non-Catholic Church are received into full communion, confirmed (with the exception of Orthodox who have already been validly confirmed) and welcomed to the Eucharist. The following entries are to be made:

- a) **Register of Reception into Full Communion:** This is a recently published register which contains columns to note all pertinent information, including the original baptism and any marriage.
- b) **Confirmation Register:** record all information.
- c) **Communion Register:** record all information.
- d) Note: If the parish has not yet obtained the Reception into Full Communion Register, the back portion of the baptism register may be used temporarily to record receptions into full communion. E.g., use the back of the baptism register and work forward.

4. Catholics

- a) We encourage Adult Catholics to be confirmed on the Solemnity of Pentecost. Any priest who presides at a parish Mass in the Diocese of Rockville Centre on Pentecost is granted the faculty to confirm adult Catholics. No special request needs to be made.
- b) However, when Catholics are to be confirmed at the Easter Vigil, the *faculty to confirm* must be obtained from the

Chancellor's Office. The priest applies for the faculty by submitting the request in writing to the Chancellor's Office. The name of candidate, age, and reason for Confirmation should be included.

- c) In either case, the following entries and notations are made:
- (1) **Confirmation Register:** record all information. In the remarks column of each person, place the notation "c. 884.1." This denotes that the faculty to confirm has been granted.
  - (2) **Baptism Register:** notify Catholic church of baptism.
  - (3) **Communion Register:** if appropriate, record all information.



## V. INFANT BAPTISM

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Although infant baptism is not part of the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults, this section is included for the sake of the pastoral ministry who is dealing with the differing situations in families. Sometimes one of the members of a family seeking to enter the Church is six years old or younger. In these cases the norms for infant baptism are followed.

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### A. Definition

*One who is not of sound mind is equated with an infant so far as baptism is concerned (canon 852, §2).*

1. Those who are six years old and under are baptized, and the Eucharist and Confirmation are received later.
2. This also includes those who are “not of sound mind.”

### B. Role of the parents and sponsors

1. Canon 851, n.2: *the parents of an infant who is to be baptized and likewise those who are to undertake the office of sponsor are to be properly instructed in the meaning of this sacrament and the obligations which are attached to it; personally or through others the pastor is to see to it that the parents are properly formed by pastoral directions and by common prayer, gathering several families together and where possible visiting them.*
2. Parents and sponsors are instructed about the meaning and responsibilities by the pastor or others. This is a most appropriate lay ministry.
3. This includes practical directions, prayer, class, visitations.

**C. Minister**

1. Ordinary minister: *The ordinary minister of baptism is a bishop, presbyter or deacon, with due regard for the prescription of c. 530, n.1* (canon 861, §1).
2. In the Diocese of Rockville Centre, priests and deacons who have diocesan faculties may baptize in the place of their assignment or any parish in the diocese. With the presumed consent of the pastor, no special permission is needed.
3. In another territory: Outside the case of necessity, it is not lawful for anyone, without the required permission, to confer baptism in the territory of another, not even upon his own subjects (canon 862).
4. The Bishop usually initiates those over 14 years old: The baptism of adults, at least those who have completed fourteen years of age is to be referred to the bishop so that it may be conferred by him, if he judges it expedient (canon 863).

In the Diocese of Rockville Centre, priests are given the faculty to initiate these persons (deacons cannot administer the sacrament of confirmation).

**D. Requirement: founded hope**

Canon 868 states that there is a founded hope (*spes fundata*) that the child will be raised Catholic. This is a fundamental notion and needs to be understood well by those involved in administering the sacrament of baptism.

1. Parents (or at least one) consent to the baptism.
2. If the baptism is against the parents' wish the baptism is valid but unlawful: *The infant of Catholic parents, in fact of non-*

*Catholic parents also, is licitly baptized even against the will of the parents (canon 868, §2).*

**E. Catechesis**

See section on Catechesis in *Readiness for the Sacraments*. Note that parents usually participate in a parish preparation program.

**F. Time**

1. As soon as possible after the birth: Parents are obliged to see to it that infants are baptized within the first weeks after birth; as soon as possible after the birth or even before it parents are to go to the pastor to request the sacrament for their child and to be prepared for it properly (canon 867, §1).
2. Danger of death: *An infant in danger of death is to be baptized without any delay* (canon 867, §2).

**G. Baptismal name**

1. A saint's name is not a requirement.
2. A baptismal name that is offensive to Christians is not permitted; a saint's name not necessary. Offensive names include Lucifer, Beelzebul, Hitler, Kareem, etc.
3. Names from the Old Testament are perfectly acceptable.

**H. Special situations**

Some situations call for special pastoral care, but do not bar the child from receiving baptism, as long as there is a founded hope that the child will be raised Catholic.

1. Divorced and remarried outside the Church: do not presume there is a problem to baptize the child; you may gently discuss an annulment and urge them to be open.

2. Unwed mother and (unknown) father: use the information that is found on the birth certificate. Changes can be made in the register at a later date (as in the case of adoption).

## **I. Adoption**

1. Two canonical concerns:
  - a) Has the child already been baptized?
  - b) Is there a founded hope that child will be raised Catholic even if the child is returned to the birth parents?
2. Adopting parents need pastoral care; they may become tense or anxious when a "special procedure" is followed when they ask to have their new child baptized. Be sensitive to their nervousness and assure them that the Church has a special concern for their new child, especially that there will be no confusion in the future concerning the fact of the baptism.
3. When adopting parents seek to have their child baptized there are two possibilities:
  - # 1: **The adoption is not finalized by the court .**
  - OR
  - # 2: **The final court order of adoption has been issued.**
4. **First case: Adoption not yet finalized**

Obtain permission of the Chancellor's Office. The office will ensure that the child has not already been baptized and that there is an assurance that the child will be raised Catholic should the adoption not go through.

Send the following to the Chancellor's Office:

  - a) birth certificate
  - b) statement of the adoption agency that they are aware of the baptism
  - c) and the request for baptism in a cover letter.
  - d) You will receive permission to proceed with baptism in writing and be directed to send two baptismal certificates.
  - e) However, no certificate is issued until permitted by the Chancellor's Office once the adoption is *final*. This will

occur when the court issues its Order of Adoption and a copy is submitted to the Chancellor's Office.

- f) **Final Court Order of Adoption** is issued (usually issued after six months). Then,
  - (1) Send to Chancellor's Office.
  - (2) Follow instructions of Chancellor's Office.

5. **Second Case: Baptism after Final Adoption**

- a) Write and obtain permission from Chancellor's Office.
- b) Follow instructions in the letter which will follow: issue certificate immediately.

6. Note: In all cases, it is important that *the civil record match the church record*.

**J. Changes in the Baptismal Register**

The Chancellor's Office authorizes all changes in the register. These are *permanent records* and cannot be altered in any way.

- 1. White-out is never used. Erasures are never made. Simply *cross out* the original information and write in the new information. A notation is usually given to you to place in the remarks column to explain the alteration.
- 2. Procedure:
  - a) Send the birth certificate, baptismal certificate, court order, or other official document that includes the new information.
  - b) Request specific changes.
  - c) The Chancellor's Office will reply and include all instructions, notations, etc. about the requested change(s).
- 3. Examples of changes permitted by the Chancellor's Office:
  - a) Add or change to reflect the "new" legal father or mother
  - b) Change of last name
  - c) Correct the errors in original baptismal entry

4. Changes do not include a change in the sponsors. The names of the godparents are not erased or changed. You may wish to issue the “short form” of the baptismal certificate which does not include names of the parents or godparents.

**K. Other Notes on Baptism**

1. Baptism occurs in the parish church. No permission is needed to baptize an infant from another parish.
2. Baptism does not occur in chapels, school facilities, etc.
3. Home: The bishop must grant the exception in cases of serious emergency. E.g., serious illness of a family member and permission to baptize in the home so that the family member can be present.
4. Hospital: consult the Catholic chaplain so that the baptism is registered in the appropriate parish.
5. Two ministers of baptism are not permitted. (E.g., one pours the water, one says the words - such a baptism is invalid.)

## **VI. SPONSORS: RCIA, INFANT BAPTISM, AND CONFIRMATION**

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The role of *sponsor* is an important one for the sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation. The popular term is “godparent,” but the Church sees the *sponsor* as a fully-initiated Catholic who supports the parents and the new Catholic with example and instruction. Note that during the RCIA process a “sponsor” or “companion” travels the journey of initiation into the Church with the catechumen or the candidate. This “companion” is not necessarily the same as the canonical *sponsor* at full initiation, or baptism, or confirmation. The requirements for the sponsor are identical for RCIA, infant baptism, and confirmation. Practical notes regarding sponsors are given below, and the text of canon 874, §1 is also printed as a reference.

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### **A. Number**

1. There may be *one or two* sponsors. The custom in most parishes in the Diocese of Rockville Centre is that there are two sponsors at baptism, whereas candidates for Confirmation, adult catechumens or candidates for full communion have one sponsor. Nevertheless, only *one* sponsor is necessary.
2. If there are two sponsors, one sponsor is a male ("godfather"), and the other is female ("godmother"). Two “godmothers” or “godfathers” are not permissible in universal church law. Note that sponsoring is understood as “spiritual parenting,” though “spiritual relationship” as an impediment to marriage no longer exists in Church law.
3. When there is one sponsor, he or she must be a Catholic who meets all the requirements below.

**B. Requirements**

1. One sponsor must be Catholic.
2. **Requirements for the Catholic**
  - a) at least sixteen years old and
  - b) baptized and confirmed
  - c) living an upright life
  - d) no penalties (e.g., left the Church, etc.). Therefore, a Catholic who has left the Catholic Church cannot be a sponsor, and cannot be a "Christian witness" if they join another Christian communion.
  - e) cannot be either parent
3. Age - exception:
  - a) The minister may admit a Catholic who is younger than sixteen.
  - b) In this case, the Catholic who is younger than 16 must meet requirements above (i.e., full initiation, etc.).

**C. Christian Witness - baptized non-Catholic with Catholic sponsor**

1. The other sponsor may be a baptized Christian of a different faith. This person is a "Christian witness" (and not a "sponsor").
2. The other witness with a Catholic sponsor may never be non-baptized. For example, Jewish or Muslim godparents are not permitted by universal church law.
3. Requirements for the Christian Witness:
  - a) at least sixteen years old



- b) a validly baptized Christian
  - c) living an upright life
  - d) cannot be either parent
  - e) cannot be a Catholic who has left the Church.
4. The notation "Christian witness" is placed under the name of the non-Catholic Christian witness in the baptismal register.

**D. Canon 874, §1:**

*§1: To be admitted to the role of sponsors, a person must:*

- 1. be designated by the one to be baptized, by the parents or the one who takes their place or, in their absence, by the pastor or minister and is to have the qualifications and intention of performing this role.*
- 2. have completed their sixteenth year, unless a different age has been established by the diocesan bishop or it seems to the pastor or minister that an exception is to be made for a just cause;*
- 3. be a Catholic who has been confirmed and has already received the sacrament of the Most Holy Eucharist and leads a life in harmony with the faith and the role to be undertaken;*
- 4. not be bound by an canonical penalty legitimately imposed or declared.*
- 5. not be the father or the mother of the one to be baptized.*

**E. Special Questions**

**1. Can a Catholic ever be a "Christian Witness"?**

No.

The Catholic must meet all the requirements for Catholics, even if the other godparent is Catholic.

For example, the parents have, with difficulty, decided on one sponsor who is Catholic and meets all the requirements. The second sponsor is "hard to find," and may be a Catholic who

never was confirmed, or someone who has left the Church. In these cases, the Catholic cannot stand as the "Christian witness," i.e., someone who has *left* the Church cannot sponsor a person *into* the Church. A Catholic who has "left the Church" is still considered as a Catholic under the penalty of excommunication. (Such a person is no longer bound by the canonical form of marriage, however.)

2. **Can a Catholic be a "Christian witness" at a non-Catholic baptism?**

Yes.

Just as a baptized non-Catholic can be a witness with a Catholic at a Catholic baptism, a Catholic can be a witness with a baptized non-Catholic at a non-Catholic baptism.

3. **Can an unbaptized person be a godparent?**

No.

Because the sponsor or Christian witness renews the promises made at their own baptism, an unbaptized person cannot be permitted to be the godparent.

4. **Can a priest or deacon be a sponsor?**

Yes.

The former legislation requiring permission from the ordinary because of "spiritual relationship" is abrogated.

5. **Can a priest or deacon be the officiant *and* the sponsor?**

Yes.

When the priest or deacon is the officiant and the sponsor, he designates a proxy for the godparent during the rite of baptism.

6. **Can the godparents be changed at a later date?**

No.

Although other changes can be authorized for the baptismal register, this one is not permitted in the Diocese of Rockville Centre (somewhat analogous to changing the best man and maid of honor in the marriage register).

7. **Can there be a proxy for the godparent?**

Yes.

Proxies for the godparents are acceptable. The name of the designated sponsor is entered in the register. The name of the proxy is entered under the name of the sponsor with the remark “proxy.”

8. **Can a catechumen be a sponsor?**

No.

Those who are *unbaptized* may not sponsor a person into the Catholic Church.

## VII.EUCHARIST

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The Holy Eucharist is the source and summit of the sacramental life of the Church. This section of the *Pastoral Manual* attempts to summarize the practices of the Catholic Church and the specific policies of the Diocese of Rockville Centre. For further explanations consult other liturgical books, especially the introduction to the *Sacramentary*.

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### A. Eucharist and the Presbyter

1. For a valid Eucharist one must be a presbyter: ordination to the priesthood is required for validity (*sacerdos*, c. 900, §1).
2. **Stick to the Books:** He is to carefully observe the liturgical rituals when presiding at the Eucharist (canon 846, §1). The priest should know the distinctions between what is optional, what can be phrased in different words, and what is required for the lawful celebration of the Eucharist. The Christian faithful have a right to celebrate the sacraments according to their own rite and the proper use of the ritual is a source of their active participation in the celebration.
3. **Allow everyone their proper role:** The priest is attentive to active celebration of the Eucharist, and respect the various liturgical ministries.
4. **Those who cannot be in church:** Care for the sick and the dying: they are in special need of the Eucharist and are a particular concern for the priest (see canons 528, §2; 530, n. 3).
5. **Daily Mass:** Priests are urged to celebrate the Eucharist daily (canon 904).

6. **Before and After Mass:** The priest is to prepare properly for Mass and spend some time in thanksgiving afterwards (canon 909).
7. **Celebrate once a day:** except for certain instances, the priest is to celebrate only once a day. In our dioceses, these "certain instances" occur almost daily, and it is not unusual for a priest to say more than one Mass a day (see canon 905, §§1-2).
  - a) Consult pastoral faculties for the permission to celebrate twice daily or even three times, for serious reasons.
  - b) Trination is permitted on All Souls' Day and Christmas.
8. **Private Mass:**
  - a) A priest is to have at least one member of the faithful present when celebrating. However he may celebrate Mass alone for a just and reasonable cause (canon 906).
  - b) Recently the Holy Father has stated that even for devotional reasons a priest may celebrate Mass with no one present.

**B. Mass Intentions**

1. The priest has the freedom to offer a Mass intention: he may apply the Mass to anyone (c. 901).
  - a) In addition to the person or persons for whom the Mass is offered, every Mass benefits the entire Church.
  - b) Any appearance of "buying the Mass" should be avoided. The mention of the name of the deceased during the Eucharistic Prayer is forbidden, except for the Funeral Mass for a Catholic in full communion.
2. **Obligatory Mass Intentions:**
  - a) For the Bishop, Pastor or Administrator
    - (1) *Missa pro populo* (obligation of the bishop, pastor or administrator, cc. 388, 534).
    - (2) No offering may be taken for this Mass.
    - (3) It is to be celebrated on every Sunday and holyday of obligation.

- (4) Note: in the United States there are some occasions when a "holyday of obligation" is a "holyday" without the obligation. On these days, the *Missa pro populo* is not obligatory.

b) For any Priest:

- (1) When a Mass intention is accepted by a priest, he is obligated to offer Mass for that intention.
- (2) There does not need to be any "offering" made for a Mass. The priest remains free to offer Mass for a particular intention.
- (3) The priest is free to accept the intention or not, but once he accepts it, it is a moral and legal obligation.
- (4) Therefore:
  - (a) If a priest accepts the money, he has accepted the obligation to say the Mass for a particular intention.
  - (b) If he chooses to give the money away, he is free to do so. The obligation, however, remains.

3. **Mass Intention Register**

Each parish must maintain a careful record of the intentions accepted by the parish. These intentions must be fulfilled.

4. **Collective Intentions Masses**

The following requirements are followed in the Diocese of Rockville Centre

- (1) The intentions are remembered at one Mass by one priest.
- (2) Those who arrange for the intention must agree (a) *beforehand* and (b) *freely* to have his/her intention remembered with other intentions.

- (3) There can be *no more than two* collective Masses each week in the parish. This is the maximum set by the Holy See.
- (4) The collective intention Mass does not satisfy the pastor's obligation to offer the *Missa pro populo*.
- (5) The usual offering of \$10.00 may be asked for each intention.
- (6) The priest celebrant keeps the diocesan maximum of \$10.00 for himself. The other monies are given to the parish.

**5. Reducing Mass Intentions**

Consult the Chancellor's Office for advice concerning Mass intentions, e.g., when the number of parish Masses may be reduced.

**C. Mass Offerings: "Stipends"**

The term "stipends" was used in the past. However, the proper term is "*offerings*." The norms concerning Mass offerings are important for the priest, as they are drawn from centuries of experience in the Church (see cc. 945-952).

- 1. **Principle:** *In accord with the approved usage of the Church, it is lawful for any priest who celebrates or concelebrates Mass to receive an offering to apply the Mass according to a definite intention (canon 945, §1).*
- 2. **Recommendation Not to Take An Offering:** *It is strongly recommended that priests celebrate Mass for the intention of the Christian faithful, especially for the needy, even if no offering has been received (canon 945, §2).*

3. **Value:** support of the Church (c. 946) and support of the priest. The remuneration of the priest is still calculated to include Mass offerings; salary is adjusted accordingly.
4. **Trafficking:** The Church has had difficulties with priests who have made this a “business.” This is called *trafficking in Mass offerings*. The Church is careful to be sure that this does not happen, and that even a *hint* of this occurring is avoided. *Any appearance* of trafficking is strictly forbidden (c. 947; c. 1385 gives the penalty incurred).
5. **Practical Points:**

Therefore, it is incumbent on the priest to know how to “handle” Mass offerings, how the system works in the Church, and how to be especially responsible in this area. Below are a few practical points to offer the priest assistance in managing Mass offerings:

  - a) ***One a Day*** (c. 951, §1)  
Only one offering can be accepted for each day.
  - b) ***Give the Extra Ones Away***  
All extra Mass offerings are to be given away. The 1983 code says that extra offerings are given to the charitable purposes prescribed by the ordinary. In the Diocese of Rockville Centre the priest may choose his own charity.
  - c) ***Each offering gets its own Mass*** (c. 948)  
The priest cannot combine Mass intentions. Each offering gets its own Mass. The priest must respect the request that he has accepted to fulfill, and it is the Church’s understanding that the “most special fruits” for each Mass will be for one particular intention.
  - d) ***Even if the money is lost, the priest is bound to offer the Mass***  
Accepting a Mass offering is really a *binding contract*. If the priest loses the money, he must offer the Mass (c. 949).



- e) ***No more than a year***  
The priest can accept only what he can fulfill in a year (c. 953). He must be conscious of Masses that he is assigned to say which will have an intention, as well as the days when he is “free” to offer Masses for his own intentions.
  
- f) ***Keep a Mass Intention Book***  
Each priest must keep an accurate book (c. 955, §4), and the pastor keeps a careful record in the parish (c. 958, §1) which is examined every year by the ordinary (c. 958, §2). The purpose of the book is so that the priest won’t lose track of the Masses he is bound to offer. The easiest method is to have a little notebook with each day of the year listed, and the person for whom the Mass *was offered, is to be offered*, etc.

6. **Wills, Bequests and Mass Intentions**

- a) **Principle:** Great care is to be taken in fulfilling the will of the donor (canon 1300).
  
- b) In the Diocese of Rockville Centre, to assist attorneys and laity who inquire about leaving monies for Masses, the following guidelines are issued:
  - (1) An explicit provision in the will:
    - (a) should state the intention of the donor,
    - (b) the amount of the bequest,
    - (c) and the number of Masses being requested.
    - (d) The diocesan stipend for announced Masses is not to exceed \$10.00.
  - (2) Provision for perpetual Masses are strongly discouraged.
  - (3) Attorneys should avoid the use of the terms "in perpetuum" and "in aeternum."
  - (4) Provisions leaving monies for the general purpose of a parish or organization should clearly state the amount and intention.

- c) The parish cannot accept the bequest contained in a will, unless the parish can fulfill the obligations incurred. Oftentimes a will is worded poorly, or the deceased (while alive, of course) didn't understand how parish Mass intentions worked. This *does not excuse* the parish from the obligation. Do not accept money from an estate before it is certain that the will of the donor can be fulfilled.
- d) If no amount of the offering is given, the offering should be assumed to be for "\$10.00. When *clarification from the bishop* is needed, contact the Chancellor's Office.
- e) *Reduction of Mass obligations* is reserved to the Apostolic See (canon 1308).

**D. Admission to the Eucharist**

(also see the section on Catechesis taken from *Readiness for the Sacraments*)

- 1. Children: (canon 913)
  - a) sufficient use of reason (presumed by age seven)
  - b) *sufficient knowledge and careful preparation* so that they understand "according to their capacity."
  - c) *in danger of death*: if they are able to distinguish the Body of Christ from ordinary food and to receive Communion reverently.
- 2. Preparation of Children: (canon 914)
  - a) **responsibility of parents and the pastor**  
Note that the *parents* are primary here; the parish is to offer

the parents *assistance* in the preparation of their children.

b) **when children reach the age of reason**

The age of reason is *presumed* by the age of seven. This may be proven otherwise so that a child can receive earlier.

c) **preceded by sacramental confession**

In past years there had been much experimentation (approved by Rome) and discussion. The matter is settled now. All children are to be given the opportunity to celebrate Reconciliation before receiving the Eucharist. See the section above concerning First Penance and First Eucharist.

3. Those with Disabilities

Sometimes there is a person who has diminished use of their faculties, or who may be learning disabled. This person must receive appropriate catechesis and preparation. Though admission of the Eucharist may be delayed, it is very rare that it is denied. Consult the *Guidelines for Celebration of the Sacraments with Persons with Disabilities*, approved by the NCCB in June, 1995. Also, see the section above for further references.

**E. Non-Admission to the Eucharist**

1. There are cases when Catholics are not to be admitted to the Eucharist. The 1983 code lists them:

- a) those who have incurred church penalties
- b) those conscious of grave sin

2. if there is no opportunity for confession: *...in this case the person is to be mindful of the obligation to make an act of perfect contrition, including the intention of confessing as soon as possible* (canon 916).

3. Do not confuse non-admission with *refusal*. Normally those who approach the minister for reception of the Eucharist during Mass are not refused.

4. Cases of *grave scandal* are an exception. Advice should be sought from the Chancellor's Office.

**F. Frequency of Reception**

1. *No more than twice a day*: canon 917 says "again" which has been officially interpreted to mean "twice." Note: there is no longer a reason to attend a "special" liturgy. Whenever one attends Mass on the same day one can receive the Eucharist a second time.
2. *At least once a year*, especially during the Easter season (canon 920).

**G. Eucharistic Fast**

1. Value: as with every sacrament, the Eucharistic fast is preparation for reception of the sacrament.
2. The rules (canon 919, §1):
  - a) No food at least one hour before.
  - b) No drink at least one hour before.
3. Exceptions:
  - a) water
  - b) medicine
  - c) priests who binate or trinate may "take a little something" before the next Mass (canon 919, §2)
  - d) the elderly
  - e) the sick and those who take care of them.

## **H. Rites and Ceremonies**

### **1. Bread and Wine**

- a) For validity:
  - (1) wheat bread (canon 924, §2)
  - (2) natural wine made from the grape (canon 924, §3)
- b) For lawfulness:
  - (1) unleavened bread, according to ancient tradition (canon 926)
  - (2) small amount of water mixed with the wine (canon 924, §1).
- c) Exceptions:
  - (1) The bishop may grant permission for those with Celiac disease to consume a low-gluten host at Mass. Consult the Chancellor's Office for the proper procedure.
  - (2) Mustum can be used with the permission of the bishop (for priests) or the Holy See (laity). Again, consult the Chancellor's Office for the proper procedure.

### **2. Consecration Outside of Mass**

It is sinful (*nefas est*), even in extreme necessity. The bread is not to be consecrated without consecrating the wine. Care is therefore to be taken that there are enough hosts to be distributed to the faithful (canon 939).

### **3. Appropriate Vestments** (canon 929). This means alb, stole and chasuble. The Holy See has granted the exception to wear a "chasu-alb."

### **4. Use of the proper Mass of the day.**

The priest presider must be familiar with what Mass *must* be

celebrated, and when he has a choice. The ***Ordo*** (published by Paulist Press for the Dioceses of Brooklyn and Rockville Centre) is quite helpful in this regard.

- a) Obligatory (in descending order of importance)
  - (1) Sundays and Holydays of Obligation
  - (2) Solemnities
  - (3) Feasts
  - (4) Memorials
- b) Optional: Optional Memorials

**5. Time and Place**

- a) Any day, any hour (canon 931)
- b) Exceptions:
  - (1) Good Friday
  - (2) Holy Saturday before the Vigil

**6. Mass outside the parish church**

- a) Permission of the pastor is needed.
- b) Exception: priests are given the faculty in the Diocese of Rockville Centre to celebrate Mass at home or elsewhere *while on vacation or during illness*.
- c) Sunday Mass out of doors: permission of the ordinary is needed. This is obtained through the Chancellor's Office.
- d) Always celebrated in a sacred place or in a respectable place if necessity demands otherwise (canon 932, §2).
- e) On a dedicated altar or a suitable table, but always using a cloth and corporal (canon 932, §2)

**I. Reservation and Veneration**

- 1. The Eucharist must be reserved in every church (canon 934, §1, n.1).

2. *There must always be someone there to care for the Eucharist, and, as far as possible, a priest must celebrate Mass there at least twice a month* (canon 934, §2).
3. Reservation:
  - a) in only one tabernacle (canon 938, §1).
  - b) For general care, see canon 938.
  - c) The hosts are to be frequently renewed and the old hosts consumed (canon 939).
  - d) Sufficient quantity must be on hand (canon 939).
4. Exposition:
  - a) priest
  - b) deacon
  - c) acolyte
  - d) deputed Eucharistic minister or other deputed person (canon 943).
5. Carrying the Eucharist on one's person is permitted for urgent pastoral need (canon 935).

**J. “Perpetual Adoration”**

1. “Perpetual Eucharistic Adoration” is meant as prayer before the Blessed Sacrament in the tabernacle. If, however, by “Perpetual Eucharistic Adoration” is meant adoration of the Blessed Sacrament exposed in the ciborium or monstrance (Perpetual exposition), the permission of the bishop is required.
2. The bishop is responsible for all matters pertaining to the right ordering of the celebration of the Eucharist and adoration and devotion to the Eucharist outside Mass. It is his duty to promote and guide the liturgical life of the diocese. The bishop alone determines the pastoral appropriateness of perpetual exposition in the diocese and accordingly may

permit or it or not and may limit the number of places where it takes place.

3. Those groups or parishes given permission by the bishop to have perpetual exposition of the Blessed Sacrament are bound to follow the liturgical norms given in *Holy Communion and worship of the Eucharist Outside Mass*, nn. 82-100.
4. Under no circumstances may perpetual exposition take place during the Easter Triduum.
5. There should always be a sufficient number of people present for Eucharistic adoration before the Blessed Sacrament exposed. In the Diocese of Rockville Centre, the bishop wishes that least *three persons* are present. There may not be any periods when the Blessed Sacrament is exposed and there is no one present for adoration.
6. It may prove necessary to expose the Blessed Sacrament for adoration only at stated times when sufficient numbers of the faithful are present.

**K. Communion Services**

When necessary on a weekday, the celebration takes place within a Liturgy of the Word. For further notes see the service is outlined and explained in the *Directory for Sunday Celebrations in the Absence of a Priest*. Note that in the Diocese of Rockville Centre, *Sunday* Communion services are not permitted.



## VIII.CONFIRMATION

### A. Chrism

*The chrism to be used in the sacrament of confirmation must be consecrated by a bishop, even if the sacrament is administered by a presbyter (canon 880, §2).*

1. **Blessed by the Bishop:** *In the administration of sacraments in which the sacred oils are to be used, the minister must use oils pressed from olives or from other plants that have been recently consecrated or blessed by the bishop, with due regard for the prescription of c. 999, n. 2; he is not to use old oils unless there is some necessity (canon 847, §1).*
2. **Source of the Oils:** *The pastor is to obtain the sacred oils from his own bishop and keep them carefully in a fitting manner (canon 847, §2).* In the Diocese of Rockville Centre the holy oils are distributed to each parish or institution after the Chrism Mass, customarily celebrated on Holy Thursday morning. Each parish or institution is contacted by the Bishop's Office; a card is supplied and presented to the bishop when the oils are received by the pastor or a parish representative.
3. **Chrism Stock:** Should the chrism supply significantly diminish during the course of the year, more can be obtained by contacting the Office of Worship.
4. **Emergency:** In danger of death the priest may bless the oil and confirm.

**B. Age**

1. The faithful are obliged to receive the sacrament at the appropriate time (canon 890). **Canonical age:** *The sacrament of confirmation is to be conferred on the faithful at about the age of discretion unless the conference of bishops determines another age or there is danger of death or in the judgment of the minister a grave cause urges otherwise* (canon 891).
2. Bishop McGann accepted the recommendation of the Senate of Priests for the ***age of confirmation*** in the Diocese of Rockville Centre:  
Confirmation will be celebrated by baptized Catholic children of the ages usually associated with 6<sup>th</sup> - 12<sup>th</sup> grades, i.e., 11-17 years old.

**C. Change in the Age for the Parish**

When a parish considers a change in the age of confirmation, there are three steps to be followed: (1) consent of the diocesan bishop, (2) consultation, and (3) education.

1. Consent of the Diocesan Bishop  
When the parish is considering a change in the age of confirmation, prior consent of the diocesan bishop is to be obtained. This is initiated in writing through the Office of Worship.
2. Consultation  
This process involves further consultation in order to determine if such a change is desirable for the parish community. This consultation should include the following:
  - a) parish staff, including the Director of Religious Education, principal of the school, youth minister
  - b) candidates and their parents
  - c) appropriate advisory boards, e.g., Pastoral Council, School Board, Religious Education Board
  - d) Office of Catechesis

3. Education

When a parish changes the age at which its candidates receive Confirmation, the pastor and staff provides the candidates and their parents with education in the reasons for the change and give sufficient notice that the age will be changed.

4. For legitimate reasons, parishes may decide to celebrate Confirmation at a later age, but not later than the senior year of high school or the equivalent chronological age.

**D. Confirmation and Marriage**

1. Before Marriage:

- a) 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 (canon 1065, §1).
- b) This is not a marriage impediment.
- c) It is to be done if there is no *serious inconvenience*.
- d) The faculty is to be requested from the diocesan bishop through the Chancellor's Office (see section on the delegated faculty below).

**E. Place**

- 1. **Proper Parish:** Candidates are to be confirmed in their proper parish.
- 2. If a candidate seeks to be confirmed in another parish (e.g., the parish of the school attended by the candidates), this may be permitted only if the pastors agree.
- 3. Children who attend a regional school or a Catholic high school are to be confirmed in their proper parish. See the

norms for Reception of Sacraments for those in regional schools.

**F. Form**

*The sacrament of confirmation is conferred through anointing with chrism on the forehead, which is done by the imposition of the hand, and through the words prescribed in the approved liturgical books (canon 880, §1).*

The words used as the forehead is anointed are:

***Be sealed with the gift of the Holy Spirit.***

**G. During Mass**

*It is desirable that the sacrament of confirmation be celebrated in a church and during Mass, but for a just and reasonable cause it may be celebrated outside Mass and in any worthy place (canon 881).*

Consult the Chancellor's Office or the Office of Worship for advice.

**H. Minister**

1. General Principle: *The ordinary minister of confirmation is the bishop; a presbyter who has this faculty by virtue of either the common law or a special concession of competent authority also confers this sacrament validly (canon 882).*
2. The normal minister of confirmation is the *bishop*. In the Diocese of Rockville Centre the sacrament is usually conferred by the diocesan bishop and the episcopal vicars who are bishops. The bishop may, on occasion, choose to call on the priests to assist in conferring the sacrament.
3. *Priests* are given the faculty to confirm by the law itself in the following cases; no special faculty needs to be requested
  - a) Priests who baptize a catechumen may confirm at the same time.
  - b) Priests who receive baptized non-Catholics into full communion may confirm at the same time.

- c) Priests may confirm a baptized Catholic who, without fault, has been raised in a non-Catholic religion (i.e., reception into full communion and confirmation).
- d) He may also confirm a baptized Catholic who has left the Catholic Church and decides to re-enter the Catholic Church (i.e., reception into full communion and confirmation).
- e) Danger of death: with regard to those in danger of death, the pastor or indeed any presbyter may confirm (canon 883).

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*To confirm baptized persons in danger of death and to confirm those who, having completed at least their seventh year, are baptized or received into full communion by you (c. 883).*

- f) Priests may not confirm *baptized Catholics*. He must request the faculty to confirm through the Chancellor's Office.

**I. Delegated Faculty to Confirm**

- 1. Priests may request the faculty to confirm a *baptized Catholic* for pastoral reasons. These include preparation for marriage (a Catholic is to be confirmed before marriage unless seriously inconvenient), participation in the Easter Vigil, and other pastoral circumstances.
- 2. The request is usually made through the Chancellor's Office. However, the diocesan bishop and the episcopal vicars may be contacted as well.
- 3. Request the faculty in writing from the Chancellor's Office, including:
  - a) name of the Catholic to be confirmed

- b) his or her age
  - c) the reason for the request.
- 4. Notation: Once the confirmation has taken place, make a notation in remarks column of the ***Confirmation Register***:  
**“canon 884.1”**
- 5. **Pentecost Sunday:** A special faculty is customarily granted by the diocesan bishop to all priests to confirm baptized Catholics who have received appropriate catechesis and who are older than the usual parish age for confirmation. The priest may confirm at a parish Mass on Pentecost. A notation is made in the remarks column of the ***Confirmation Register***:  
**“canon 884.1”**

**J. Supplied Faculty**

- 1. In cases of common error the faculty may be supplied by the Church. See canon. 144, §§1,2).
- 2. Contact the Chancellor’s Office for assistance in ascertaining the applicability of this canon in concrete circumstances.

**K. Candidates**

- 1. Baptized: *All baptized persons who have not been confirmed and only they are capable of receiving confirmation* (canon 889, §1).
- 2. Qualifications: *Outside the danger of death, to be licitly confirmed it is required, if the person has the use of reason, that one be suitably instructed, properly disposed and able to renew one's baptismal promises* (canon 889, §2).
  - a) use of reason
  - b) suitably instructed

- c) properly disposed
- d) be able to renew one's own baptismal promises

#### **L. Confirmation Sponsors**

1. Responsibility: *...it is for the sponsor to see that the confirmed person acts as a true witness to Christ and faithfully fulfills the obligations connected with this sacrament (canon 892).*
2. Qualifications:
  - a) The requirements are the same as for baptismal sponsors (see above).
  - b) It is desirable that the sponsor is the one who was baptismal sponsor (c. 893, §2).
  - c) Sponsors may also be determined by the parish.

#### **M. Liturgical Norms**

(These are available in booklet form from the Bishop's Office. Note that most of these norms apply when a bishop celebrates the sacrament. For other rubrics, consult the Confirmation ritual.)

- a) Preliminary Notes
  - (1) It is important to note at the outset that **additions or interpolations** to the Rite of Confirmation are not permitted. The use of secondary symbols, personal testimonies or statements of intent are better suited to preparatory rites such as days of recollection, commitment ceremonies or robe (presentation) Sundays.

*The primary liturgical signs of the sacrament are the laying on of hands, with the accompanying prayer, and the anointing with the perfumed oil of chrism. These elements must stand out, and ought not to be obscured by secondary symbols which may have been useful as part of pre-sacramental catechesis.*

*(Readiness for the Sacraments, p. 18)*

- (2) In accordance with the Code of Canon Law, parents may not act as a sponsor for their child's confirmation. This should be stated well in advance of the time the sponsor's names must be submitted.

*To summarize the present discipline: parents cannot function as sponsors for the sacraments of initiation because persons cannot be both parents and godparents (sponsors) to their children. However, parents are permitted to present their children to the bishop at the time of the anointing with chrism. Confirmation liturgies which include both sponsor(s) [required] and presenter(s) [optional] should be celebrated with dignity.*

*(Readiness for the Sacraments, p. 18)*

- (3) It is inappropriate to announce the list of confirmandi by name, since the Bishop addresses each candidate during the anointing by a chosen name. Any duplication unduly lengthens the celebration. Further, it too often resembles a graduation ceremony.
- (4) Stoles are not appropriate **garb for confirmandi**, since the stole identifies those ordained for church ministry.
- (5) Confirmation is an episcopal liturgy. The **Master of Ceremony** ought coordinate the ministers for the celebration. A minimum of four to a maximum of seven altar servers are needed. If there are seven servers, they would be:
- crossbearer
  - two candle bearers
  - book bearer
  - miter bearer
  - crozier (pastoral staff) bearer
  - chrism bearer



- (6) If a Master of Ceremony does not accompany the Bishop, please consult the **Appendix** to these Liturgical and Pastoral Norms for additional notes.
- (7) It is helpful to print a **booklet** for the Confirmation liturgy, although this is not required. Two suggestions:
  - (a) Do not print **Scripture texts**; cite them with the one-line summary found in the Lectionary, e.g. Ephesians 4:1-6 (There is one body, one Spirit, and one baptism.)
  - (b) Obey the **copyright laws**. For most publishers, an acknowledgment page at the end of the booklet ***no longer suffices***. Additional information on copyright acknowledgments may be obtained from the Office of Catechesis and Office of Worship.
  - (c) A booklet is a participation aid, and not a script. As such, it is an instrument to help people follow the liturgy and join in it. The program booklet would include: an outline of the service, words and music to those parts which the assembly is expected to sing or say, directions and explanation of unfamiliar items, and an attractive appearance which contributes to the beauty of the prayer. The booklet would not include the texts of the prayers and scriptural readings which the ministers alone will say, and whatever may be distracting or unnecessary.
- (8) The **musical norms** that govern all our liturgical celebrations are operative in the celebration of the Rite of Confirmation. During rehearsals for the liturgy, there should be ample time to rehearse the music. There may also be a brief rehearsal before the actual liturgy begins. There should be a songleader to lead and animate the assembly's song. Music should be chosen that is appropriate to the unique occasion and assembly.

- (9) **Mass texts** are usually selected from the *Rite of Confirmation*. The preface of the Holy Spirit (I or II) is used. However, on the Sundays of Advent, Lent and Easter, and on Solemnities, the readings and prayers **must** be taken from the mass of the day. In all cases, the prayers are taken from the Sacramentary and may not be originally composed, with the exception of the General Intercessions.
- (10) The structure of the General Intercessions should follow the form that is given in the Sacramentary and/or Rite of Confirmation.

b) Before the Liturgy Begins

- (1) There should be a small table with a lemon (quartered), bread (sliced), water, towel, and bowl for the washing of the Bishop's hands after the anointing.
- (2) **Introductory remarks** (if any) prior to the scheduled starting of the liturgy should be brief, accurate and necessary. They should never prevent the liturgy from beginning on time.
- (3) If necessary, the location of **communion stations** should be announced prior to the entrance procession. Ushers should be prepared to direct the people. Communion under both kinds generally calls for two cup ministers for each Bread minister. If communion under both kinds is not a usual parish custom, the celebration of Confirmation is **not** the time to introduce this practice.

c) Introductory Rites

- (1) From the start of Mass to the presentation of the gifts, the **altar** is completely clear of books, stands, corporal, etc.

- (2) The **procession** moves toward the church and the entrance song begins. If desired the crossbearer may lead the confirmandi into the church, followed by those who will occupy the sanctuary.
- (3) **Deacons** sit on either side of the Bishop, or one deacon and the pastor. If no deacons are present, the pastor and an associate flank the bishop.
- (4) Mass proceeds with the Bishop's greeting, penitential rite, Gloria (when permitted) and opening prayer. The blessing and sprinkling of holy water may only be used as an option at weekend masses of precept.
- (5) The book, miter, crozier and chrism bearers should be seated with the Master of Ceremony, if possible on the sacristy side where he has access to the credence table. Servers **never** occupy seats flanking the Bishop.

d) Liturgy of the Word

- (1) The **lector(s)** come(s) to the ambo to proclaim the Word. The Word is proclaimed from the Lectionary, and not from loose sheets, missalettes, or hymnals. If more than one lector is employed, all come forward and return to their seats together. Those who proclaim the scriptures will have been carefully prepared.
- (2) It may be pastorally desirable for persons other than confirmandi (for example, catechists, youth ministers) to fulfill the ministry of lector.
- (3) The **scripture texts** are chosen from the lectionary (#763-767) for Confirmation, unless Confirmation is being celebrated at a regularly scheduled parish mass of precept. The psalm response should be sung whenever possible. The first reading is taken from the Old Testament. The second reading is taken from the New Testament writings. During the Easter

Season if the first reading is taken from the Acts of the Apostles, the second reading will be taken from one of the New Testament writings and not from the Hebrew Scriptures.

- (4) The **gospel acclamation** (alleluia) is *always* sung. During Lent, the alleluia is replaced by one of the Lenten acclamations. When the Gospel Acclamation is not sung, it is omitted.
- (5) The deacon, or in his absence the pastor, proclaims the Gospel. The pastor *briefly* welcomes the Bishop and introduces those to be confirmed. This introduction is precisely that, is never a homily, and should be no more than a minute or so.
- (6) The Bishop preaches the homily and instructs the confirmandi concerning the sacrament. He then proceeds to the renewal of baptismal promises. After a pause for silent prayer, the Bishop and concelebrating priests extend their hands over the confirmandi.

e) The Rite of Confirmation

- (1) The Bishop requests that the candidates be **standing** for the anointing, that they be rehearsed this way, and that they approach the sanctuary as smoothly and efficiently as possible. Please inform the Master of Ceremony as to precisely where the Bishop will stand for the anointing.
- (2) The pastor and clergy moderator of the Confirmation program stand with the Bishop at this time. During the anointing there should be ample opportunities for the assembly's song, choral or instrumental music, and silence.
- (3) The **general intercessions** found in the Rite may be used as is or as a model. The community's prayer is more important than the number of persons announcing the petitions. It is often better for **one**

person to accomplish this. The person or persons return to their seat(s) *after* the Bishop summarizes the intercessions with a closing prayer.

f) Liturgy of the Eucharist

- (1) The altar is prepared and the Bishop, with the other ministers, receives the gifts. Bread and wine alone are to be brought up in the procession. If communion under both kinds will occur, wine is consecrated in a pitcher or flagon(s). Additional chalices remain on a side table until the fraction rite. Sufficient bread for the celebration should be consecrated.
- (2) At the altar, the Master of Ceremony stands to the Bishop's left and turns the pages of the Sacramentary. A deacon stands to the Bishop's right and one step behind the Bishop. If there is a deacon of the Word, he stands near or behind the Master of Ceremony.
- (3) If needed, concelebration cards should be readily available. the priests selected by the Master of Ceremony for the first and second concelebrants' roles should do their parts as directed by the rubrics.
- (4) For the prayers surrounding and including the institution narrative, the Bishop's voice *alone* should be heard. The Bishop, not the deacon, invites the assembly: "Let us proclaim the mystery of faith." If there is a deacon, he elevates the chalice at the doxology; otherwise, the Bishop alone does this. Only the concelebrating priests join the Bishop in proclaiming the closing doxology.
- (5) For communion, the Bishop and concelebrating priests receive the Eucharist together. *After* the Bishop has received from the chalice, non-concelebrating priests, deacons, special ministers of the Eucharist and other ministers then receive from the Bishop or one of the priests.

- (6) In the distribution of communion, **ordinary ministers of the Eucharist** (bishop, priest, deacon) must be used first if present and able to minister.
- (7) When **communion is ministered under both kinds**, the cup ministers should arrive at their stations first, leaving space between themselves and the bread ministers to avoid a back-up.
- (8) By definition, a **sponsor** is a confirmed and practicing Catholic eligible to receive communion. When sponsors are seated in the same row with the candidates, it is preferable that they receive communion at the same time. This will eliminate unnecessary and cumbersome movement.

g) **Concluding Rites**

The confirmandi *never* precede the Bishop in the recessional, but *follow* him out. This enables the Bishop to efficiently move to the picture-taking location.

h) **After Confirmation**

If confirmation is scheduled for morning and afternoon sessions, the Bishop will stay for luncheon only. If confirmation is scheduled for the afternoon, the Bishop generally stays for dinner. Confirmation generally lasts for an hour and a quarter, and picture-taking is usually concluded within another twenty minutes. The Bishop requests that if a parish is hosting a dinner, the meal begin two hours after the start of the Confirmation liturgy (i.e., immediately after the picture taking. If you plan pre-prandials before sitting down for the meal, please limit the time to a half hour at most. Please plan to have the meal on the parish grounds (rectory, parish hall, convent, etc.). Since all the bishops frequently have additional commitments and obligations, your consideration in observing these requests is greatly appreciated.

i) Appendix

(1) Preparations

- (a) In addition to the necessary servers (see #5, p. 2), please have three lemon wedges for each ceremony and three pieces of bread. The lavabo dish ought to be larger than the one used for daily Mass, since more water is needed for the washing of hands after the anointing. Please have a separate lavabo dish for the washing of hands after the preparation of the gifts.
- (b) The Bishop will bring his own *Ritual* and chrism. The *Sacramentary* and the *Lectionary* should already be prepared. If there are to be additional ministers for the anointing, please arrange for additional oil stocks.
- (c) The preferred color option for the vestments is red or white. In the case of a Sunday or solemnity, the proper color of the day should be worn. All concelebrants and deacons should wear the same color.
- (d) A copy of the General Intercessions should be placed at the chair for the bishop if it is other than the version contained in the *Ritual*.

(2) Location of Action, Miter, Pastoral Staff

- (a) The Bishop wears the miter and carries the pastoral staff in procession. Before venerating the altar, he removes the miter and gives up the pastoral staff.

- (b) During the Liturgy of the Word, when the Bishop is seated, he wears the miter. As the Gospel Acclamation is begun, he removes the miter. At the beginning of the proclamation of the gospel, the Bishop takes the pastoral staff.
- (c) After the gospel, during the presentation of the candidates, the Bishop is seated, wearing the miter.
- (d) During the homily, which can be given from the chair or pulpit, the use of the miter and pastoral staff is optional.
- (e) The Renewal of Baptismal Promises takes place from the *chair*. The Bishop wears the miter and holds the pastoral staff.
- (f) During the Prayer and laying on of hands, the Bishop stands without the miter or pastoral staff.
- (g) Before receiving the chrism, the Bishop takes the miter. For the actual anointing, he also holds the pastoral staff.
- (h) After receiving the gifts of bread and wine, the Bishop removes the miter. He does not put it on again until after the prayer after communion.
- (i) As the preface dialogue begins, the Bishop removes the zucchetto. It is *not* placed on the altar, but may be placed on or near the chair.
- (j) After the prayer after communion, the Bishop once again puts on the miter. For the Trinitarian blessing at the conclusion of the liturgy, the Bishop takes the pastoral staff.



**N. Record Keeping**

1. Enter into the *Confirmation Register*.
2. Notify the church of baptism (canon 895).
3. In the case of a priest who has received the faculty to confirm make the notation “**canon 884.1.**”

**O. Faculty to Confirm: Sample Request Form**

**REQUEST TO CONFIRM ADULT BAPTIZED CATHOLICS**

Church of \_\_\_\_\_  
City/Town \_\_\_\_\_

I hereby petition the Diocesan Bishop to delegate me according to the provision of canon 884, §1 to administer the Sacrament of Confirmation to the following baptized Catholics adults who have asked to be confirmed and who are now ready to celebrate the sacrament:

NAME	AGE	REASON (e.g., impending marriage, participation in the Easter Vigil rather than Pentecost, etc.)
------	-----	--

_____	_____
Date	Signature of Confirming Priest

**N.B.** Enter the notation "c. 884, §1" in the Remarks column of the Confirmation Register.

---

**Completed by the Chancellor's Office**

_____	_____
<i>Date of Grant</i>	<i>Delegate of the Bishop</i>

*There is no need to complete this form for adult Catholics who are going to be confirmed on the Solemnity of Pentecost; priests who celebrate a parish Mass on Pentecost have already been granted the faculty to confirm at that Liturgy by Bishop McGann. Nor is there any need to request the faculty to confirm a catechumen whom you baptize or a baptized non-Catholic whom you receive into full communion since the celebrant of such rites already has the faculty to confirm the recipient.*

## **IX. PENANCE**

### **A. Minister**

Only a *bishop or priest* is a minister of the sacrament of penance (canon 965).

### **B. Faculty**

#### ***Pastoral Faculty 10***

*To hear confessions and grant sacramental absolution within the territory of this diocese.*

In the Diocese of Rockville Centre, the Pastoral Faculties grant priests the faculty to hear confession. Once this is granted it is valid everywhere in the world (unless restricted by a local ordinary). Visiting priests, when granted diocesan faculties, may validly hear confessions until the time their faculties expire. Note that only ordinaries (and their delegates) can grant this faculty.

1. **Faculty from the law itself** (canon 968): By virtue of their pastoral office in the Church, the following have the faculty to hear confessions:
  - a) Roman Pontiff
  - b) cardinals
  - c) all bishops (diocesan and auxiliary)
  - d) local ordinaries
  - e) canons penitentiary
  - f) pastors
  - g) those who take the place of a pastor (e.g., temporary administrator who is officially assigned)
  - h) major superiors of clerical institutes and societies of apostolic life of pontifical right (for members of their institutes and those who stay in their houses day and night).

2. **Delegated faculty** (canon 969)

All other priests need to be granted the faculty to hear confessions from an ordinary. Therefore, it is important to know the *specifics* of this delegated faculty (e.g., who granted it, for how long, in what place, etc.).

a) **Priests usually cannot grant the habitual faculty.**

The pastoral faculties of the Diocese of Rockville Centre grant priests the ability to grant *temporarily* the faculty to a visiting priest (for four days); the *habitual faculty* is only granted by an ordinary.

***Pastoral Faculty 11***

*To grant to any legitimate priest who does not otherwise possess it the faculty to hear confessions within this diocese for a period not to exceed four days when the Chancellor's Office cannot be reached and the priest is known by you to be in good standing.*

b) **From the local ordinary:**

If he is convinced that the priest is in good standing, the local ordinary can give the faculty to any priest whatsoever:

- (1) diocesan priest
- (2) priest in a religious institute, society of apostolic life, secular institute.
- (3) Once granted, the priest may validly hear confessions *anywhere in the world*.
- (4) When the faculty ceases or is removed, the priest *may not hear confessions anywhere*. (However, he may also have received the faculty from another ordinary which may not have been revoked.)
  - (a) For example, a visiting Franciscan helps in your parish for the summer, and the bishop has granted him faculties to hear confessions until September.
  - (b) After September, the diocesan faculty ceases, but he may *already* be granted the faculty to

hear confessions from another diocesan bishop.

- c) From a Major Superior
  - (1) A major superior can delegate any presbyter to hear the confessions *of his subjects*.
  - (2) This can be granted for a definite or an indefinite period of time (canon 972).
  - (3) Note that a major superior cannot grant the faculty to hear confessions outside his institute or beyond those who stay in houses of the institute.
- 3. **This should be granted in writing** (canon 973). Your diocesan faculties are granted in writing, as are the faculties granted for priests who are serving in the diocese temporarily. Pastors should be aware of the *termination date* of the faculties granted to a visiting priest and notify the Chancellor's Office if the visiting priest is still present in the diocese.
- 4. **In danger of death:**
  - a) Any priest can absolve, even if an approved priest is present (canon 976).
  - b) This includes a priest who is on a leave of absence, a priest who has been *suspended*, a *laicized priest*, etc.
  - c) In danger of death, a priest can absolve an accomplice in a sin against the sixth commandment (canon 977). In any other situation this is invalid *and* carries with it an ecclesiastical penalty.
- 5. **Once the diocesan faculty is granted, it is valid everywhere:** *Those who have the faculty can exercise it everywhere unless the local ordinary denies it in a particular case* (canon 967, §2).
  - a) Exception: unless the local ordinary denies it in a particular case.
  - b) Priests who are members of clerical institutes of pontifical right, when granted the faculty by their superior, can hear

confessions for members of their institute and for those who stay “day and night” in one of their houses (e.g., retreatants) (canon 967, §3).

6. **Supplied faculty** (canon 144)

There are various explanations in canonical commentaries (e.g., CLSA Commentary) which give good examples of how this faculty is *supplied by the Church*. Keep in mind that in the Diocese Rockville Centre a priest can grant another priest the faculty to hear confessions *for four days*. That gives enough time to reach the appropriate office to obtain faculties beyond four days. Questions should be directed to the Chancellor’s Office.

7. **Revocation of the faculty** (canon 974):

- a) The faculty is not to be revoked except for a serious reason (§1).
- b) When it is revoked by the local ordinary who **originally** granted him the faculty the presbyter loses that faculty *everywhere* (§2). For example, if the vicar general revokes your faculty, your confessions are invalid throughout the world.
- c) When revoked by *another* local ordinary, it is revoked for that *particular* territory.
- d) The faculty is also lost by loss of office, excardination or loss of domicile (canon 975).

**C. Formula**

*God, the Father of mercies, by the death and resurrection of his Son, has reconciled the world to himself and sent the Holy Spirit among us for the forgiveness of sins; through the ministry of the Church may God give you pardon and peace, and I absolve you from your sins, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, + and of the Holy Spirit. [Amen.]*

See section below on “penalties” for the formula for remission of penalties.

**D. Place**

1. Canon 964 states the place of confession is to be :
  - a) church or an oratory (§1)
  - b) place(s) designated by the norms used by conference of bishops concerning anonymous confession (§2)
  - c) normally, confessions are heard in the confessional, except for a just cause (§3).
2. In the Diocese of Rockville Centre, confessions are usually heard in the church (e.g., the confessional or reconciliation room). For a just cause, a priest may hear confessions outside of the confessional. He is to exercise prudence and discretion in choosing the place for such confessions.
3. Penitents should have the option to confess anonymously.

**E. Time of Confession**

1. *Priests are obliged provide for confessions of the faithful when they reasonably request it and opportunities be given to them on days and hours set for their convenience (canon 986, §1).*
2. This includes:
  - a) Regular weekly schedule
  - b) Availability by appointment
  - c) Urgent necessity
  - d) Danger of death.
3. In the Diocese of Rockville Centre, the bishop urges special times for confession throughout the Triduum, i.e., Holy Thursday, Good Friday, and Holy Saturday.

**F. Method for the Confessor**

1. Proceed with *prudence and discretion* in posing questions.
2. Be attentive to the *age and condition* of the penitent.
3. Refrain from asking the name of an accomplice. (See canon 979.)
4. If *doubtful* about the penitent's disposition, then do not refuse or delay the absolution (canon 980).
5. Those who cannot *offer* to hear confessions
  - a) director of novices
  - b) rector of the seminary
  - c) rector of any another institution
  - d) exception: unless members of the above entities, in particular cases, spontaneously request it.
  - e) See canon 985.

**G. Penances**

1. **Be appropriate to the confession:** in keeping with the quality and number of the sins.
2. **Be appropriate to the person:** with attention to the condition of the penitent.
3. **Be reasonable:** Therefore, the priest is not to impose a penance that cannot be performed within a reasonable amount of time; if it is imposed, the penitent is not obliged to perform it.



4. The penitent is obliged to perform them personally.
5. See canon 981.

## **H. Penitent**

1. Disposition (canon 987)
  - a) repudiate sins committed
  - b) have purpose of amendment
  - c) converted to God
2. The penitent is obliged to make an *integral confession* (canon 988, §1):
  - a) The penitent is to confess serious sins in kind and in number.
  - b) The penitent is to confess all serious sins committed after baptism (since the last confession).
  - c) The penitent is to be conscious of these sins after examination of conscience.
3. Frequency:
  - a) The faithful have the obligation to confess serious sins at least once a year, preferably during the Easter Season (canon 989).
  - b) All the faithful are urged to celebrate the sacrament frequently even if they are not conscious of serious sin (see devotional confession, canon 988, §2).
4. Choice of a confessor (canon 991): The faithful are free to choose a legitimate confessor, even one of another church *sui iuris* (e.g., Ruthenian, Ukrainian, etc.).

**I. Sacramental Seal**

1. *It is crime to betray a penitent by word or in any other manner or for any reason* (canon 983, §1).
  - a) Direct Violation of the Seal: The name of the person and the sin are revealed. Also forbidden is the revelation of details that *leads* to the discovery of the name of the person and the sin committed. This incurs an automatic excommunication reserved to the Holy See, canon 983, §1.
  - b) Indirect Violation of the Seal: The priest is forbidden to do or say things which give rise to the danger that the name of the person and the sin confession will be known.
2. It is forbidden to use knowledge acquired from confession when it might harm the penitent (canon 984, §1).
3. One in authority cannot use knowledge about sins which he has received in confession at any time (canon 984, §2).

**J. RCIA and Penance**

1. Catechumens do not celebrate the sacrament before baptism. However, appropriate catechesis should be given to catechumens before they become Catholics.
2. Those being received into full communion should celebrate the sacrament before entrance into the Church, and, if appropriate, reception of Confirmation.
3. Catholics who are candidates for Confirmation and/or Eucharist should celebrate this sacrament as part of their preparation.

**K. Three Forms of the Penance Rite**

1. ***The Rite for Reconciliation of Individual Penitents***

- a) To obtain the saving remedy of the Sacrament of Penance according to the plan of our merciful God, faithful must confess to a priest each and every grave sin which they remember upon examination of their conscience. (Rite No. 7)
- b) Individual, integral confession and absolution remain the only ordinary way for faithful to reconcile themselves with God and with the Church, unless physical or moral impossibility excuses from this kind of confession. (Rite No. 31)
- c) In an age which fosters many forms of impersonalism, the Sacrament of Reconciliation in Rite I protects personal encounter as the means of the penitent's contrition, confession and ultimate reconciliation with God and the Church. This celebration of reconciliation is the activity of the loving Father embracing the penitent through Christ, Our Savior, in the power of the Holy Spirit. This form remains the primary and ordinary means of the celebration of the Sacrament. The use of Rite I should strenuously avoid any mechanistic or magical tone which might interfere with the personal nature of the encounter.
- d) **Reception of the Penitent:** The priest warmly welcomes and kindly greets the penitent. Such a greeting initiates the peaceful and joyful atmosphere that should characterize the sacramental celebration. The priest should be a sign of the loving and merciful Father welcoming a repentant sinner. This moment of welcome is not the time for a friendly chat or an inquiry about family. It is a short proclamation of faith intended to direct a person toward the Sacrament of Reconciliation.  
The initial reception should include the Sign of the Cross by the penitent and priest and a brief invitation to the penitent to trust in God, using one of the texts in the ritual or similar words.  
"If the penitent is unknown to the priest, it is proper for the penitent to indicate a state in life, the time of last confession,

difficulties in leading the Christian life, and anything else which may help the confessor in exercising his ministry." (Rite No. 16). When welcoming penitents, priests should not discourage them from using formulas with which they customarily begin confession.

- e) **The Word of God:** The Word of God holds a pre-eminent place in every sacramental celebration. Although the Scripture reading is optional in the Rite of Penance, it should not ordinarily be omitted. The reading should deal with sin and reconciliation in such a way as to proclaim God's mercy and lead the penitent to conversion. The text may be read by the priest or the penitent. It is sometimes helpful for a priest to recite a text from memory or perhaps paraphrase a section of the Scriptures to assist the penitent's prayer of conversion.
- f) **Confession of sins:**
  - (1) With sincere contrition the penitent should confess all sins as clearly as possible and at the same time, seek the advice of the priest in regard to growth in conversion. This dialogue should not normally be considered a form of general spiritual direction. Rather it should pertain to conversion in light of this particular sacramental confession of sins. (Rite Nos. 6, 8, 44).
  - (2) The priest imposes a suitable penance which should never be extreme and should, if possible, relate to the sins confessed (Rite Nos. 6c, 18). Given the specific confession and the condition and needs of the penitent, the penance is meant "not only to make up for the past but also to help him begin a new life and provide him with the antidote to weakness" (Rite No. 18).
  - (3) The penitent may express sorrow for sin by using one of the many formulas in the ritual or by similar words. The most important characteristic is that the penitent's prayer be a sincere expression of inner contrition and sorrow.
- g) **Absolution:** While proclaiming the formula of absolution (Rite No. 46), the confessor either extends his hands above the head of the penitent or at least extends his right hand in the penitent's direction. The confessor may either sit or stand

while conferring absolution; the penitent may kneel, sit or stand, as the circumstances warrant.

- h) **Proclamation of Praise of God and Dismissal:** The penitent praises the mercy of God and gives Him thanks in a short versicle and response with the priest. Then the priest encourages the penitent to go in peace. The priest may also use other forms of dismissal, including the familiar intercessory prayer, "May the Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ..."
- i) **Short Rite:** "When pastoral need dictates it, the priest may shorten or omit some parts of the rite..." (Rite No. 21). This shortened form should not, however, become the ordinary way of celebrating the sacrament.

2. ***The Rite of Reconciliation of Several Penitents with Individual Confession and Absolution***

Most people in our Diocese are familiar with this type of celebration whose purpose is to show "more clearly the ecclesial nature of penance" (Rite No. 22). Although the ritual gives a wealth of readings, prayers and litanies for this form of the sacrament, it also affords the opportunity for those preparing the ceremony to use their own initiative in choosing selections more appropriate for a particular celebration, e.g. during Advent and Lent.

- a) **Introductory Rite:** As in the rite for individual reconciliation, the introduction sets a mood, which includes awareness of our sinfulness but also trust in a forgiving God. Appropriate liturgical music may be helpful in setting a proper mood. Any explanation of the order of service should be kept brief.
- b) **The Celebration of the Word of God:** "The sacrament of penance should begin with the hearing of God's word, because through His word God calls mankind to repentance and leads them to a true conversion of heart." (Rite No. 24). The number of readings chosen depends on the circumstances of the particular celebration, but they should always be concerned with sin, its effects and the process of conversion. "The homily, taking its theme from the scriptural text, should lead the penitents to examine their consciences and turn away

from sin and toward God. It should remind the faithful that sin works against God, against the community and one's neighbor, and against the sinner himself" (Rite No. 25). In the period of reflection that follows, a specific form of examination of conscience may be used. The ritual in Appendix III gives ample suggestions for such an examination.

c) **Rite for Reconciliation**

(1) *Expression of Sorrow:* The community first joins in a general confession of sins. The "I confess to almighty God" formula or one of those given in the ritual may be used. This is followed by an appropriate song or litany "to express confession of sins, heartfelt contrition, prayer for forgiveness and trust in God's mercy" (Rite No. 17). The Lord's Prayer always follows.

(2) *Individual Confession and Absolution:* After the Lord's Prayer, confession, counsel, imposition of a penance and absolution take place for each penitent individually. Note that the penitents are obliged to confess all serious sins in kind and number. Because of the common preparation, this will take less time than the full ritual outlined in the first form of the rite. It is very important, however, that individual confession not be rushed and that sufficient time be allotted for appropriate counsel and dialogue.

d) **Proclamation of Praise:** A psalm, hymn, or litany may be sung (Rite Nos. 56-57). Songs, readings and music may assist penitent to remain prayerful while other penitents avail themselves of the Sacrament.

e) **Concluding Rite and Dismissal:** (Rite No. 59). The celebration may conclude with the period set aside for individual confession and absolution when a large number of penitents make it difficult for all to remain for a special concluding prayer.

**3. *The Rite of Reconciliation of Several Penitents with General Confession and Absolution***

See section below on General Absolution.

**L. General Absolution**

1. Necessary Conditions (canon 961) which must be simultaneously present and verified:
  - a) The number of confessors available (compared to the number of penitents) renders it impossible to hear properly the confession of each penitent within a reasonable time (i.e., one month).
  - AND
  - b) The penitents through no fault of their own would be deprived of the grace of the sacrament or precluded from the reception of holy communion for a long period of time.
  - c) These necessary conditions for general confession and absolution are not presumed to exist ordinarily in the Diocese of Rockville Centre. Nevertheless, the possibility of the concurrence of these circumstances occasionally cannot be discounted.
  - d) Rite III should be used only when an extraordinary situation arises in which penitents would be deprived of the grace of the sacrament for a long period of time. In the above example, the phrase "for a long period of time" is interpreted flexibly to imply the importance of the reception of the sacrament prior to Christmas and Easter.
2. The Rite:
  - a) The Third Rite is to be celebrated in accord with the ritual. It should never imply a magical, mechanical or impersonal forgiveness of sin. A true catechesis must take place, calling for contrition and conversion. It should remind penitents of sorrow for sins, the ecclesial dimension of sin, instructing and exhorting contrition and a firm purpose of amendment, reparation of scandal, and resolve to confess individually in due time.

- b) *Prior opportunity for individual confession* and absolution must be provided for as many as possible. After general absolution is granted, opportunity for individual dialogue should be given (without a second absolution).
  - c) Penitents may not receive General Absolution on two successive occasions; individual confession must intervene.
  - d) Under no circumstances may the Rite receive advance publicity explicitly or implicitly. Where communities expect an announcement of a "penance vigil" to mean "general absolution" prior publicity should state that "individual confessions will be heard". Rite III is definitely not meant to provide a basis for convoking large gatherings of faithful for the purpose of imparting general absolution. To do so is contrary to the norms regulating the rite.
  - e) The priests and staff are obliged to discuss the situation which necessitated the use of Rite III and take adequate steps to address these circumstances so that future situations will be avoided.
3. However, an appropriate occasion may arise in a *nursing home* or a similar facility. Permission is to be granted by writing to the Chancellor's Office so that the diocesan bishop is apprised of the details of each situation.
4. In the Diocese of Rockville Centre, it is not appropriate that General Absolution be celebrated in the case of a *parish retreat* or a *parish mission*. The pastor has the responsibility to ensure that enough priests are available to hear individual confessions. Priests of the area are urged to be generous in participating in these celebrations.
5. Thus, at times priests may, for one reason or another, discover that, during a regularly scheduled celebration of Rites I or II, they are unable to hear the individual confessions of all those who desire to confess. On such occasions, the remaining penitents should be advised that confessions will no longer be heard and should be informed concerning other opportunities to receive the sacrament in the same or neighboring parishes.



They should also be advised that even those with serious sins may receive communion after praying a sincere act of contrition with a resolve to confess their sins at the first reasonable opportunity.

6. General Absolution may not be granted:
  - a) during Mass or in circumstances in which the Rite of Penance may be interpreted as part of the Mass;
  - b) as part of a charismatic healing service or Mass;
  - c) on Saturdays or other normally scheduled days and times during the year when confessions are regularly heard;
  - d) during a service or Mass in which the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick is celebrated;
  - e) when a large number of the faithful are gathered together for a special occasion, e.g., for marriage preparation, or education of parents prior to First communion, First penance, or Confirmation.
7. In any case, the Chancellor's Office is to be informed in writing each time the Third Rite is used, noting particulars and the plans of the parish to avoid recurrence. As a tool of planning, this documentation will enable the Diocese to understand the needs of the various parishes in this matter and to try to assist in developing effective pastoral solutions.

## **M. Church Penalties**

Church penalties are medicinal (i.e., the *censures* of excommunication, interdict and suspension of clerics which urge the offender to change and make amends), penitential, or expiatory.

1. Penalties are incurred in two ways:
  - a) automatic (*latae sententiae*)
  - b) inflicted (*ferendae sententiae*)
2. Penalties can also be **declared**. For example, the automatic excommunication for a physical attack on the Holy Father can

also be declared to the community. The automatic excommunication incurred by Archbishop Lefebvre, his bishops and priests was *declared* as such by the Holy Father.

3. **Penalties are to be interpreted strictly.** All the demands of the law must be met in order for them to take effect. Therefore, the exceptions noted below are most important and need to be carefully studied.
  - a) In general, however, a person incurs a church penalty when they *break the law which has established a church penalty*.
  - b) The offense must be *completed and not merely attempted* or half-done (see canon 1328, §§1-2).
  - c) The person must be *imputable*, that is punishable because of either malice or culpability.
  - d) *Accomplices* also incur the penalty if their participation is such that the act would not have been committed if they were not involved (canon 1329, §2).
4. **Those exempt from all penalties** (canon 1323):
  - a) under 16
  - b) inculpable ignorance
  - c) acting under physical force or accidentally
  - d) from grave fear, from necessity or serious inconvenience (unless the offense is intrinsically evil or brings harm to souls)
  - e) legitimate self-defense
  - f) one who lacks the use of reason
  - g) someone who without fault thought that they were acting from fear, necessity, serious inconvenience or in legitimate self-defense.
5. **Those exempt from automatic penalties** (canon 1324, §1):
  - a) imperfect use of reason
  - b) drunkenness or other mental disturbance
  - c) serious passion not deliberately aroused
  - d) anyone under 18

- e) self-defense without due moderation
- f) force, fear, necessity, inconvenience if the offense is evil or harmful
- g) acted against someone who gravely or unjustly provoked it
- h) if through error or culpability thought that #6g was present
- i) without fault did not know there was a penalty attached.  
Crass, supine or affected ignorance cannot be applied (canon 1325), nor deliberate drunkenness
- j) one who acted without full imputability

**6. Remission of Church Penalties**

- a) *Penalties whose remission is reserved to the Apostolic See:*  
These penalties cannot be remitted by the priest. Recourse must be made to the Holy See; consult the Chancellor's Office for the proper procedure:
  - (1) apostasy, heresy, schism (canon 1364, §1)
  - (2) violation of sacred species (canon 1367)
  - (3) physical attack on the pope (canon 1370, §1)
  - (4) absolution of an accomplice in a sin against the 6th commandment (canon 1378)
  - (5) unauthorized ordination of a bishop (canon 1382)
  - (6) direct violation by a confessor of the seal of confession (canon 1388)

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*To remit in the internal or external forum any latae sententiae excommunication established by law provided that it is not reserved to the Apostolic See and has not been juridically declared.*

- b) *Diocesan pastoral faculties* grant confessors the ability to remit censures reserved to the diocesan bishop. These include the following:
  - (1) Successfully procuring an abortion (canon 1398).

- (2) Apostasy, heresy or schism (canon 1364). Contact the Chancellor's Office for the proper procedure to be followed concerning record-keeping.
- c) The automatic penalties of excommunication and interdict which are not declared can be remitted by any **confessor** in confession if
  - (1) it would be hard on the penitent to remain in a state of serious sin for a long time.
  - (2) The confessor should tell the penitent to make recourse to the appropriate authority, or he himself can anonymously make the recourse (canon 1357, §§1-2).
  - (3) They can also be remitted in **danger of death**.
- d) Automatic suspension is reserved to the Holy See and cannot be remitted by the confessor. Contact the Chancellor's Office for the proper procedure:
  - (1) cleric attempting marriage (canon 1394, §1): reserved to Apostolic See
  - (2) cleric without dimissorials ordained (canon 1383): reserved to Apostolic See

7. **Formula for Remission:**

*By the power granted to me, I absolve you from the bond of excommunication [suspension, interdict]. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, + and of the Holy Spirit. [Amen.]*

N.B. It is enough that the confessor *intends to remit* the censure and absolve the sins. However, the above formula may be used.

## **X. MARRIAGE**

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The celebration of marriage is a joyful occasion for Catholics and the parish community. It affords a unique opportunity for the Church to support, guide, and evangelize the couples who come to the parish to make wedding arrangements. Priests, deacons and pastoral ministers also know that marriage is a point of convergence for Church teachings, disciplines and pastoral details which not only guide and challenge the couple, but can be a source of confusion or frustration. In order to assist in the celebration of Catholic marriage, the following section is a practical summary of pertinent canonical liturgical and diocesan norms which regulate marriage in the Diocese of Rockville Centre.

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### **A. Wedding Liturgy Guidelines**

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These guidelines were prepared by the Music Committee and the Liturgy Commission of the Diocese of Rockville Centre, and are published with the approval of the Most Reverend John R. McGann, Bishop of Rockville Centre, and should be regarded as policy in the diocese, September, 1990. A revision is planned for the fall of 1997.

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1. The Purpose of these guidelines
  - a) These guidelines are pastoral in their intent. They are intended to assist priests, deacons, pastoral staffs, and musicians in assisting couples plan the celebration of their wedding liturgy. Each parish should have a policy concerning the way a wedding will be celebrated in the parish church; these diocesan guidelines are intended to help in the formulation of parish guidelines.
  - b) The guidelines ought to be clear, but not rigid, and not go beyond the scope of local or universal law. In order for guidelines to be effective, they need to be thought out, published, and given to couples preparing for their marriage at the beginning of marriage preparations. These issues might be the subject of parish guidelines which could be offered to couples early in their contact with the parish. Many parishes have found this practice to be helpful in lessening these

difficulties and establishing a sense that the meaning of the Church's liturgy is not subject to whim or fancy (a.k.a. the "my wedding" syndrome). A sample of issues and related statements is given for your consideration.

- c) It is the all too frequent experience in many parishes that the details surrounding the wedding liturgy fall into the category of "things to do" for the couple, the church being one of the places to "hire out" for the occasion. There are numerous problems issuing from this attitude which make it difficult for the parish to maintain the integrity of the liturgy as a sacramental and ecclesial moment.

2. The Wedding Eucharist (Nuptial Mass) vs. Wedding Ceremony

You have come together in this  
Church so that the Lord may seal  
and strengthen your love in the  
presence of the Church's minister  
and this community....  
(*Rite of Marriage*, 23)

The marriage of two Christians is at the same time a personal and ecclesial event. The wedding liturgy is primarily a worship service -- the worship of the God of love who manifests his presence in the marriage covenant of a particular couple. All the elements of the liturgy should reflect in a tangible way what is taking place: a sacramental encounter with Christ in the midst of the assembly.

The celebration of the Eucharist stands at the center of our Catholic faith. The marriage of two Catholics is most fittingly celebrated within the context of the Eucharist.

For a man and woman who understand the meaning of the sacrament which they are about to enter, matrimony is a profound revelation of Christ's love. The proper response to this reality of the love of Christ for the couple is the whole Christian community celebrating with the couple by participating in the Eucharist. Marriage and the Eucharist point especially to the mystery of Christ's union with his Church. Emphasizing the relationship of these sacraments is one of the most effective ways to avoid an excessively privatized attitude toward their marriage on the part of the couple. However, the motivation for arranging any nuptial Mass should be based on a couple's spiritual needs and capacity, and not on any desire to embellish the marriage ceremony or to bow to social customs or expectations.

(from *Readiness for the Sacraments*)

There are couples who approach the Church for marriage who have not or do not participate in the Eucharistic life of the parish. While they should not be prohibited from having their marriage celebrated in the context of the Eucharist, it is often best to discourage such a practice. Certainly this would be an opportunity to question the relationship between their lack of participation at the Sunday Eucharist, and their wish for their marriage to be celebrated in the context of the Eucharist.

If a large number of persons present would not be members of the Catholic Church, a prayer service might be a more appropriate setting for the marriage liturgy. Since Sunday is the day for the gathering of the entire parish community for the Eucharist, a parish may wish to consider limiting additional celebrations of the Eucharist for other occasions, such as weddings on Sundays.

### 3. The Wedding Liturgy

Great care should be taken, especially at marriages, that all the people are involved at the important moments of the celebration, that the same general principles of planning worship and judging music are employed as at other liturgies, and above all, that the liturgy is a prayer for all present -- not a theatrical production.

*(Music in Catholic Worship, 82)*

#### a) The Gathering

- (1) The entrance procession can take several forms. The custom of the bride being escorted by her father, or another significant male relative and "given away" originated in an early practice where this gesture actually meant the transfer of ownership of the bride from the father to the husband. While many consider this "traditional" form desirable, couples should be encouraged to consider the other forms for the procession, which may appropriately signify the action of two adults freely pledging themselves in marriage.
- (2) The groom and his parent(s) as well as the bride and her parent(s) may be part of the entrance procession, along with the other ministers of the liturgy.
- (3) An opening hymn may be sung by all as a fitting way to gather the assembly for the celebration.

b) The Liturgy of the Word

- (1) The Lectionary for the *Rite of Marriage* provides a variety of scripture readings for use at weddings. Selecting the scripture readings can be done by the couple with careful reflection and discussion. It can be an opportunity for them to share with each other some of the deepest values they hold. All the readings during the Liturgy of the Word must be taken from the Scriptures. (cf. *Lectionary for Mass, Marriage*).
- (2) When persons who are guests at the wedding are invited to read one of the scripture readings, they should have the ability to read publicly, and be willing to prepare carefully for their ministry. At the time of the wedding rehearsal, persons who will read at the wedding liturgy should be prepared to practice their reading(s). The *Lectionary* should be used for the proclamation of all the scriptures, not loose sheets or program booklets. The *Gospel Book* may be used for the proclamation of the gospel.
- (3) The *Lectionary* provides several choices for Responsorial Psalms. The psalm ought to be sung, with the assembly joining in the antiphon. The Gospel Acclamation should be sung. When it is not sung, it is omitted. A cantor/songleader facilitates the assembly's participation in song.

4. The Rite of Marriage

- (1) The Rite of Marriage includes the statement of intent and the exchange of vows and rings. The statement of intent is done, as given in the *Rite of Marriage* in the form of questions addressed to the couple by the officiant. The *Rite of Marriage* provides several options for the exchange of vows. Individual couples are prohibited from composing their own vows. When a couple memorize and speak their vows to each other, there can be a spontaneous and powerful recognition of the sacramental moment.
- (2) The custom has arisen of using a "wedding candle" or "unity candle" in the context of the marriage rite. The *Rite of Marriage* does not prohibit the use of the



wedding candle, but it should be seen as a secondary symbol, not a primary symbol within the Rite of Marriage.

- (3) If the wedding candle, or another symbol is to be used, it should not be placed on the altar. The candle might be best placed in a free standing holder apart from the altar, or set up near the baptistery. The candle or other secondary symbols should not overshadow the primary action - the exchange of vows. Good symbols do not need extensive explanation. Allow the symbol to speak for itself.
- (4) The General Intercessions conclude the *Rite of Marriage*. These intentions should follow the same order as the intercessions at a regular Sunday Eucharist: the Church; the world; those in need; those intentions for this assembly. While it is the role of the deacon to proclaim the intercessions, in his absence, this may be done by someone else. The person who reads the intercessions should be comfortable reading in public, and practice at the wedding rehearsal.

5. The Liturgy of the Eucharist

- (1) The bread and wine may be brought forward by family members or guests. No other gifts are brought forward at this time.
- (2) During the Liturgy of the Eucharist, the attention of the assembly is focused on the eucharistic action. Members of the wedding party who are in the sanctuary should not obstruct the lines of sight to the altar. They should in no way appear to be "concelebrating" the Eucharist.
- (3) The acclamations surrounding the Eucharistic Prayer (Holy, holy; Memorial; Amen) should be sung at all liturgies.
- (4) If the Lord's Prayer is to be sung, it should be a setting that can be sung by the assembly.
- (5) Communion may be distributed under both forms to the bride and groom or to the entire assembly.

Sufficient ministers of the Eucharist should be available so as not to unduly prolong the rite.

6. Concluding Rites

The liturgy concludes with the final blessing and dismissal. The recession may include the wedding party, parents, and ministers of the liturgy, or the wedding party alone.

7. Music

Three judgments should be applied when choosing music for a wedding liturgy or any liturgy:

- a) **The Musical Judgment** This is a technical judgment, made by the musicians. Is the music technically, aesthetically, and expressively good, irrespective of musical idiom or style.

Only artistically sound music will be effective in the long run. To admit the cheap, the trite, the musical cliché often found in popular songs for the purpose of "instant liturgy" is to cheapen the liturgy, to expose it to ridicule, and to invite failure.

*(Music in Catholic Worship, 26)*

- b) **The Liturgical Judgment** Is the music's text, form, placement and style congruent with the nature of the liturgy?

The nature of the liturgy itself will help to determine what kind of music is called for, what parts are to be preferred for singing, and who is to sing them.

*(Music in Catholic Worship, 30)*

- (1) The acclamations should be sung, as at any liturgy. Additional opportunities should be given for congregational participation in song. The music proposed should suit the place in the rite and the liturgical season during which the celebration takes place.
- (2) While a role for a soloist is not excluded, it is important that the person not pre-empt the assembly's participation in song. The soloist may act as cantor or leader of song, enabling the

assembly to join in some of the music during the liturgy.

- c) **The Pastoral Judgment** Will this music help this assembly to pray and to celebrate what the church is celebrating?
- d) Rather than a list of permitted or prohibited music, a process of dialogue with the couple will be an effective catechetical tool, and will avoid the pastoral difficulties that listings of music could inevitably present.
- e) Most couples are unfamiliar with the wealth of musical possibilities that are available to them; often their experience is limited to what they may have heard at another wedding. The pastoral musician has a responsibility to acquaint the couple with the variety of music and musical styles. Parishes may wish to gather couples preparing for marriage for a liturgy planning session, during which the parish musicians could demonstrate some of the musical possibilities. Pastoral musicians may wish to provide a cassette tape of some of the suggested music appropriate for the wedding liturgy.
- f) The distinction between sacred and secular music at weddings most often leaves no one satisfied. Music, instrumental or vocal, by text or context that does not speak to the religious dimension, or even negates it, is inappropriate. The texts of songs used in the liturgy should support the meaning of the rite, and be grounded in scriptural themes. Of primary importance is what we are celebrating: the mystery of God's love and human love in a covenant relationship. For these reasons, popular songs are not permitted in the wedding liturgy. Often times a couple will request a song that is "their" song. After discussion, it may be determined that this song is best suited at the wedding reception.
- g) *Live music* should be used at every liturgical celebration. Recorded music is prohibited.

8. Liturgical Ministers and their Roles

- a) The wedding couple minister to the assembly by the witness of their consent. Often a couple may ask to have family members or friends act as lector or special minister of the

Eucharist for the wedding liturgy. Persons should exercise one ministerial role at each celebration.

- b) Care should be taken that the person or persons proclaiming the scriptures have the ability to read publicly and are prepared to read. Those who wish to serve as special ministers of the Eucharist who are not members of the parish where the wedding is taking place should seek permission from the local parish priest. A couple may wish to bring in their own musicians. A parish policy should be clearly stated, along with any necessary compensation for the regular parish musician(s).

9. Environment

The decoration of the church building should be in line with the nature of the building and the sacred action that takes place within in. The norms of good taste should always be operative. The times and season of the church year will dictate appropriate decorations.

- a) Seating arrangements: The diagrams indicate a variety of possible seating arrangements for the wedding party and ministers.
- b) diagram insert

10. Ecumenical Issues

See the section below, “Mixed Marriages,” as well as the chapter on “Ecumenical Issues.”

11. Other issues

- a) Wedding Rehearsals  
The wedding rehearsal is an opportunity for all those who will participate in the wedding liturgy to gather in the church building and rehearse those parts of the liturgy that warrant rehearsal. The members of the wedding party should be on time for the rehearsal, and maintain a decorum that befits the church.
- b) Still Photographers/Videos

Policies regarding photographers and videographers might make provision for recording the occasion without intruding on the participation of those present at the wedding. Some elements of a policy could include:

- (1) prohibition of artificial lights;
- (2) designating, by way of a diagram, where the photographer/videographer may stand;
- (3) a description of the liturgy, with suggestions of specific moments when pictures might be taken;
- (4) request that only the "official" photographer/videographer take pictures during the service;
- (5) couples may be asked to fill out a "request" form, naming the photographer/videographer, and giving them the task of presenting the guidelines to them.

c) Decorum

Couples should be reminded to be on time for their wedding liturgy. It is inconsiderate to their guests, to the ministers, and to the other activities that will take place in the church to be late. The couple ought to remind the limo driver, photographer/videographer that their wedding must begin on time.

d) Children in wedding party

If a couple wishes to include children in the wedding party, it should be suggested that they be at least of school age. Experience shows that younger children often find the wedding liturgy overwhelming and even frightening. A parish may wish to consider specifying a minimum age for these roles.

e) Role of Ushers and Bridesmaids

- (1) Ushers in the wedding party might be invited to function as ushers/ministers of hospitality to the assembly, greeting persons as they arrive and helping them to be seated. This gesture of

hospitality is especially important since a number of guests may not be familiar with the church building. At the wedding rehearsal, ushers should familiarize themselves with the layout of the church, find the location of the restrooms, exits, etc.

- (2) The Best Man and Maid/Matron of Honor are witnesses of the marriage, and with the bridal couple, are leaders of the assembly. They should be encouraged to participate as fully as possible in the liturgy. The attention and prayerful attitude of the wedding party set a tone for the quality of the participation of the other members of the assembly.

f) Other Customs

In an effort to "personalize" the liturgy, some couples request additions to the marriage rite such as the "unity candle;" giving gifts/flowers to their parents, placing flowers at the statue of the Blessed Mother, using multiple rings, etc. The popularity of these customs raises the question of how well the couples understand the primacy of the exchange of vows. Although these customs are not a part of the marriage rite, a parish may permit them, provided that they are identified as secondary in nature. If used, they should be carried out simply and without the necessity of lengthy explanations. These gestures should never eclipse the primary place of the exchange of vows, or the celebration of Word or Eucharist.

g) Church Offering/Fees for musicians

The offering for the church should be clearly stated to the couple when they begin their marriage preparations. If a couple is unable to afford the stated offering, they may not be prohibited from celebrating their marriage in the church. The fees for musicians ought to be separate from the church offering. Every parish should clearly state the fees for the various musicians, and the policy concerning visiting musicians. The parish

musician(s) ought to meet with the visiting musician(s) well in advance of the wedding.

h) Preparing a booklet

- (1) A special booklet for an individual wedding is an excellent participation aid, should an individual couple choose to prepare one. It is the responsibility of the couple to secure the necessary copyright permissions, unless the parish already has a reprint license and agrees to perform this service.
- (2) A participation aid is not a script, but an instrument to help people follow the liturgy and join in it. The program booklet would **include**: an outline of the service, words and music to those parts which the assembly is expected to sing or say, directions and explanations of unfamiliar items, and an attractive appearance which contributes to the beauty of the prayer. The booklet would **not** include the text of prayers and scriptural readings which the ministers alone will say, and whatever may be distracting or unnecessary.
- (3) Persons who wish to prepare such a booklet should contact the parish priest/deacon, musician, and/or liturgy director for assistance.

**B. Setting the Wedding Date**

In the Diocese of Rockville Centre, the proper use of the *Pre-Nuptial Investigation* ("PNI") form will greatly assist in discerning with the couple ascertaining if there are any areas which need to be examined before the wedding date is set. Before the wedding date is set, it is essential that the couple's *freedom to marry* is established.

Therefore, most priests, deacons and pastoral ministers find that it is best *not to pencil in a date* or to give any impression that a particular date and time is set until all the Pre-Nuptial Investigation is completed with the couple *and* all canonical and diocesan requirements are met. See sections below for further explanations.

**C. Pre-marital Inventories**

Many parishes find that the use of pre-marital inventories (e.g., “FOCCUS”) is a helpful way to assist the couple in understanding their relationship and preparing for the celebration of marriage. Various types of inventories are available through the Office of Family Ministry.

#### **D. Pre-Nuptial Investigation (PNI) and Walk-Through**

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Most Church ministers use this helpful tool in ascertaining whether or not there are any obstacles (*impediments*). The **Pre-Nuptial Investigation** is an interview form which is a simple and direct way to uncover canonical or diocesan requirements which will help the couple prepare for marriage. Other important pastoral concerns (e.g., compatibility, family backgrounds, etc.) are handled in an appropriate way by the parish through its own resources, methods, and programs. The PNI is designed to help “set the date,” and leaves these other pastoral concerns to the priest, deacon, or pastoral minister. Once this interview is complete, the church minister can be assured that the couple is free to be married in Church.

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##### **1. Interviewer**

- a) In the Diocese of Rockville Centre, the priest or deacon officiant usually interviews the couple.
- b) A trained pastoral minister can also conduct the interview. In this case the priest or deacon officiant needs to be assured that no impediments are present.
- c) The PNI is designed to assist the priest, deacon or pastoral minister who is familiar with Church teaching and canonical disciplines. Therefore, it is unfair to have the bride and groom complete the PNI without the priest, deacon or pastoral minister who, during a personal interview, can present each question in a pastoral manner which respects Church teaching and the ability of the parties to understand what is being asked. For example, the couple should not be asked to take the PNI home and complete it on their own.



**2. Personal Interview**

- a) In the Diocese of Rockville Centre, the interview takes place face-to-face to ensure openness, honesty and assist in manifesting the personal, pastoral concern of the Church.
- b) Telephone interviews are permissible when it is physically impossible for one of the parties to be present. The interviewer must ascertain that the person interviewed is indeed one of the parties (e.g., a question is posed which reveals detailed knowledge of the bride or groom). Telephone interviews are an exception.

**3. Method of the Interview**

- a) The bride and groom are interviewed *separately*. This allows the interviewer to discern, at times, matters in the internal forum which are unknown to the other party. It also affords the interviewer the occasion to encourage appropriate and open dialogue between the parties.
- b) The bride and groom are interviewed under *solemn oath*. They are informed that they must tell the complete truth to best of their knowledge.
- c) The interviewer and each party sign the form after the completion of the interview.

*A walk-through of the PNI form used  
in the Diocese of Rockville Centre is presented below.  
The Pre-Nuptial Investigation is examined line by line  
and each impediment or diocesan requirement is explained.*

<b>Lines 1-3 Name, Address, Date of Birth, etc. If under 19 at the time of marriage</b>
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**E. Age**

- 1. Concern of the Church: Because marriage calls for adequate maturity of both parties, age is an important consideration. (In Canon Law, the bride must be 14 at the time of the marriage.

The groom must be 16 at the time of the marriage. In New York State, the couple must be 18 at the time of the marriage.)

2. In the Diocese of Rockville Centre, the parties must be *at least nineteen (19) years old* at the time of the marriage.
  - a) When one of both of the parties are *under nineteen at the time of the marriage*, it is the duty of the Church to help the young couple make a good decision regarding marriage and to assist them with any preparations that may be needed.
  - b) Therefore, diocesan procedure calls for an *evaluation* of the couple arranged through Catholic Charities. This procedure is coordinated by the Chancellor's Office.
  - c) No date is to be set for the wedding until final approval is given through the Chancellor's Office.
3. Use the "Marriage Worksheet." Follow the instructions under "Teenager." The case is referred to the Chancellor's Office before a date can be set for the wedding.
4. Statements of Freedom to Marry:
  - a) Each party is to sign a statement in the presence of the priest, deacon or pastoral minister which attests to their freely consenting to the marriage.
  - b) Both sets of parents are to sign a statement which to their own free consent to the marriage of their children. They are to be given an opportunity to voice their own opinion as parents regarding the marriage (objections, recommendations, etc.)
5. Recommendations of the Interviewer:
  - a) Summarize the results of the interview with the couple and with the parents.
  - b) Offer any comments about the couple's freedom and maturity.
  - c) This statement will be sent by the Chancellor's Office to Catholic Charities. The statement greatly assists in the interview of the couple by the evaluator.

6. Psychological Release
  - a) The couple and parents are required to release confidential information from Catholic Charities to the Chancellor's Office.
  - b) The interviewer is to witness their signatures by signing the release form as well.
7. Catholic Charities will contact the couple directly and set up an appointment for the interview. The confidential evaluation will be sent to the Chancellor's Office for review.
8. The interviewer will be contacted in writing by the Chancellor's Office with the decision regarding further counseling (i.e., a delay in setting the wedding date) or approval to set a date for the wedding.

#### **4 and 5: Parental Information**

This information (i.e., father's name and mother's maiden name) will be entered into the marriage register after the wedding takes place.

#### **6. Baptism**

A recent baptismal certificate is to be obtained for the Catholic party. The notations on the back of the baptismal certificate furnished current sacramental information.

#### **7. First Communion**

A first communion certificate is not required. If the Catholic has not received the Eucharist, the interviewer should discuss the bride or groom's understanding of their status in the Church (e.g., should their initiation be completed before marriage, have they left the Church, etc.)

### **F. Confirmation and Marriage**

#### **8. Confirmation**

A certificate is not required. Normally the Catholic(s) has been *confirmed*. If not, the Catholic(s) must be confirmed before the marriage "*if there is no serious inconvenience.*"

Note: the lack of Confirmation is not an impediment.

The non-confirmed Catholic must receive doctrinal preparation before celebrating the sacrament of Confirmation. He or she can be prepared for this sacrament

in a group separate from the RCIA, though some of the dynamics of the RCIA process can be incorporated into their formation.

The bishop is the minister of confirmation. However, for a just reason a priest can request the *faculty to confirm* (contact the Chancellor's Office).

For further information see the section above, "Confirmation."

### **9. Parish**

Catholics have a right to be married in the parish church of the bride *or* the groom. The parish may be where the parties have domicile (permanent full-time residence) or quasi-domicile (e.g., summer home). Note that parish registration is not a canonical or diocesan requirement for determining one's proper parish. In the Diocese of Rockville Centre it is the custom that a bride or groom can be married in their "home parish" where their parents still live, even if the either party has moved away as young adults.

## **G. Previous Marriage (Prior Bond)**

<b>10. Has either of you ever been married before or attempted marriage to another person in Church, civilly, or in common law?</b>
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1. The Church teaches that all persons, Catholics and non-Catholics alike, can marry only once. As Catholics we believe that marriage is forever. This, we hold, is true for everyone, no matter what their faith or creed, because it is divine law, the law of God for all people. (This is true for our commitment to Life in all its stages.)
  - a) Catholics must get married by a priest or deacon (unless they received a dispensation). If, for example, they get married civilly, it is *invalid*.
  - b) All other people when they exchange consent, are validly married. With the exception of the Orthodox, no special "religious ceremony" is required for the valid marriage.
  - c) Pastoral ministers who work with engaged couples, especially inter-faith couple, need to be sensitive to this area. Has the former spouse died? Did the Catholic get married outside the Church? Did the person already seek an annulment? Will an

annulment be needed before a wedding date can be set? Sometimes even non-Catholics need an annulment to marry a Catholic! Even though the person is non-Catholic and may not understanding this teaching of the Catholic Church teaching, he or she will need to receive an annulment.

2. *Death of the former spouse:* enter the Death Certificate number on the back of the PNI.
3. *Annulment granted:* obtain the annulment decree and consult the Tribunal before setting a date for the wedding. There may be some psychological counseling needed before the arrangements for the new marriage in the church are made.
4. *Annulment needed:* Note that the Church **presumes** all marriages are valid ones. The annulment process is required so that anyone who is already validly married (and now civilly divorced) can proceed with a marriage in the Catholic Church.
  - a) The person should call the Tribunal to begin the process. It is recommended that the church minister does not allude to "how long the Tribunal takes to render a decision".
  - b) Have the person call the Tribunal for this information.
  - c) No date can be set until the decision is reached by the tribunal.
  - d) See the section below, "Tribunal."
5. *Defect of Form: A Catholic was married "outside the Church"*
  - a) Catholics are bound by the Catholic form (i.e., canonical form) of marriage: consent is exchanged in the presence of a priest or deacon and two witnesses. or at least have sought a dispensation from canonical form. If there is a "defect" of the Catholic form of marriage, it is invalid.
  - b) The former marriage will be *declared invalid* through this administrative procedure.
  - c) For further details, see the section below, "Defect of Form."

## **H. Sacred Orders or Vow**

**11. Are you aware of any impediments to marriage affecting either of you --  
For example, a private vow, religious profession, sacred orders?**

1. Deacons or priests who have *not* been laicized cannot be married without the permission of the Holy See. Anyone in perpetual solemn vows cannot be married without the same permission. Consult the Chancellor's Office for further guidance in this area.

## **I. Consanguinity**

**12. Are you related to your intended spouse by blood or by marriage?**

1. A dispensation is needed to marry a relative either by blood (consanguinity) or by affinity (related by marriage). No one can marry parents, grandparents, brothers or sisters (i.e., consanguinity in the direct line).
2. First cousins (collateral line, fourth degree) need a dispensation to marry. Use the petition for *consanguinity* available from the Chancellor's Office.
3. Affinity (relationship by valid marriage) in the direct line in any degree whatsoever invalidates marriage. Consult the Chancellor's Office.

## **J. Impotence**

**13. Are you aware of any physical problem that would prevent you from performing the marriage act?**

1. Concern of the Church: Marriage, of its very nature, demands the unity of the couple through sexual intimacy. Therefore, a physical problem that totally damages the possibility of full intimacy through sexual intercourse invalidates the marriage

2. Impotence must be both *absolute* and *perpetual*. This is very rare. For example, those who are paralyzed are not presumed to be impotent.
3. This is not the same as sterility (even when the result of surgical procedures).
4. If you have questions about this impediment, it is best to consult the Chancellor's Office.

**K. Professional Counseling**

<b>14. Have you ever received any form of professional counseling?</b>
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1. Concern of the Church:
  - a) Psychological factors may harm the consent of the couple and can be detrimental to the marriage relationship. The Church has the responsibility to help the couple prepare for marriage as best as possible. In the case of professional counseling, the counselor is asked to help the Church assist the couple in an appropriate manner, should it be deemed necessary.
  - b) Type of counseling
    - (1) It is the normal procedure in the Diocese of Rockville Centre for this process to be used in most cases of counseling. For example, a person *currently* in counseling is not to be exempted from this procedure. A person who has been *hospitalized* for psychological reasons (e.g., depression, addiction, substance abuse )is not to be exempted.
    - (2) The priest, deacon or pastoral minister may exempt in the following cases:
      - (a) non-professional counseling
      - (b) counseling during childhood or early adolescence
    - (3) If there is a question about the necessity of the procedure, please contact the Chancellor's Office.
  - c) Procedure: Use the "Marriage Worksheet."
    - (1) Call the Chancellor's Office for a Worksheet and for appropriate Release Forms (i.e., individual counseling, joint counseling, Catholic Charities evaluation).
    - (2) The party will need to release confidential information for the Chancellor's Office only. You will also sign the release as the witness of his/her signature.



- (3) The Chancellor's Office will contact the counselor or therapist.
- (4) The evaluation is confidential. The deacon/priest or the couple are never given the contents of the evaluation unless the doctor and client agree.
- (5) Wait for the approval to be given before setting the date.
- d) Sometimes further counseling is needed before proceeding with the wedding plans. You will be notified by the Chancellor's Office with the details.

**L. Pregnancy**

<p><b>15. Are you giving your consent to this marriage freely and of your own accord?</b></p>
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- 1. Concern of the Church: One of the factors that may seriously affect the consent of the couple is the pressure when a child is expected before the marriage. Does the pregnancy force the couple to marry? Were they seriously considering marriage before they were aware of the pregnancy?
- 2. In these situations the couple and parents are quite eager that a wedding date be set. Please be patient with the process; the Chancellor's Office will expedite the paperwork and also be attentive to the Church's concern for the couple. Communication is between the pastoral minister (not the couple or family) and the Chancellor's Office. It is important that the Church's pastoral care be offered directly and personally to the couple and family through the parish ministers.
- 3. Procedure: Use the Marriage Worksheet.
  - a) As above, interview the parents, the couple, and ascertain if *you* would recommend a psychological appraisal.
  - b) You'll need to send the following documents to the Chancellor's Office

- (1) *Medical statement* that attests to the pregnancy.
  - (2) Your *written evaluation* of the case. For example, has the couple ever discussed marriage before the pregnancy? How do their parents feel about the marriage? Do you feel there a need for a psychological appraisal?
  - (3) *Sworn statements* of the **couple** and their **parents** that the couple is freely getting married.
4. Sometimes a Pregnancy case is a “Teenage case,” too. You’ll need to combine both procedures so that the Church can best help the couple make a good decision.
  5. The date for the wedding is set after the approval is given by the Chancellor’s Office.

**M. Permanence, Openness to Children, Fidelity**

1. Permanence

<p><b>16. The Church teaches that marriage is a permanent commitment that can be dissolved only by death. Do you intend to enter such a marriage?</b></p>
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- a) Concern of the Church: The commitment of marriage is *permanent*; both parties must intend their marriage to last “until death do us part.”
- b) “Pre-Marital Agreements”: These are not be encouraged in the Diocese of Rockville Centre. Should such an agreement exist or be discussed by the couple, the pastoral minister is to remind them of the Church’s teaching on the permanence of marriage and discuss with them the repercussions of such an agreement for their marriage.
- c) For further assistance, consult the Chancellor’s Office.

2. Openness to Children

**17. The Church teaches that marriage and married love are by their nature ordained toward the procreation and education of children. Do you intend to enter such a marriage?**

- a) Concern of the Church: The Church understands that marriage is naturally open to the overflowing of the spouses' love into the creation of family, with the joys and responsibilities a family entails. The couple must see this as part of their own marriage and express their openness to children.
- b) Many pastoral ministers find this an opportunity to recall the positive nature of the Church's teaching on both responsible parenthood and natural family planning. Since artificial methods of birth control are not permitting by the Catholic Church, the couple may benefit from instruction about natural family planning. The Office of Family Ministry is ready to offer assistance.
- c) Should both or one of the parties feel that they cannot answer this question in the positive (e.g., they clearly and definitively refuse to be open to having children), it is best to consult the Chancellor's Office for advice.

3. Fidelity

**18. The Church teaches that husband and wife are to remain faithful to one another always. Do you intend to enter such a marriage?**

Concern of the Church: Marriage is a total and exclusive commitment to one person. Both parties must understand and intend fidelity to one another.

**N. Banns of Marriage**

<p><b>Affidavits of Freedom to Marry</b> <b>(back page of PNI)</b></p>
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1. Definition

The Catholic community is notified that a couple will celebrate marriage and be given an opportunity to state whether the couple is indeed free to be married. Usually this is done by printing the names and parishes of the couple in the church bulletin for the three weeks prior to the wedding. In practice, however, the banns serve as an *announcement* to the community of an upcoming marriage; rarely is a couple “reported” as having an impediment. However, banns remain part of the universal law of the Church.

2. Place of Publication

- a) The banns are published in the parish of the bride and the groom. They are *not* published in the parish where the wedding takes place, should that be a different parish than that of the bride and groom.
- b) A petition for dispensation from canonical form or request for delegation and permission for marriage outside a church edifice (the “green form”) must be submitted with *affidavits of freedom to marry*. In this case (e.g., wedding in non-Catholic church, interfaith chapel, the home, other chapel), use the convenient form printed on the back of the Pre-Nuptial Investigation. The completed PNI with supporting documentation will be submitted to the Chancellor’s Office with the mixed religion and canonical form petitions.

3. Dispensation from Banns

In the Diocese of Rockville Centre, priests with pastoral faculties may dispense from banns *in a particular case* when a just reason is present. (There are no general “parish policies” permitted for not publishing the banns.)

***Pastoral Faculty 16***

*To waive the publication of the matrimonial banns whenever you consider it inappropriate or unnecessary (canon 1067).*

**O. Eastern Catholics**

1. Brief description

- a) There are Catholic Churches who use a different rite (E.g., Byzantine) and have their own bishop (e.g., eparch), canon law and church government.
- b) For example: Ruthenian Catholics (Diocese of Passaic); Maronite Catholics (Diocese of St. Maron, Brooklyn); Ukrainian Catholics (Diocese of Stamford).
- c) For Eastern Orthodox Christians (i.e., non-Catholic), see the pertinent section below.

2. Procedure

- a) Latin priests and deacons can marry Latin Catholics in a Latin ceremony, even when a Latin Catholic marries an Eastern Catholic. No special permission is needed as long as the Latin Rite is used.
- b) A priest or deacon is not permitted to marry two Eastern Catholics in a Latin ceremony. Special permission as well as delegation must be obtained. Consult the Chancellor's Office.
- c) "Byzantine" Catholics (Catholics who use the Byzantine rite, e.g., Ruthenian, Ukrainian, Greek) and other Eastern Catholics (e.g., Melkite, Maronite, Syrian) are usually under the jurisdiction of another bishop. They can marry in the Latin Rite only if they are marrying a Latin Rite Catholic. If

an Eastern Catholic wishes to marry a Latin Catholic in a Latin church in the Latin rite, no special permission is needed. The marriage is celebrated in the Latin Rite.

- d) Consult the Chancellor's Office for the proper procedure to seek permission from the Nunciature in Washington or the Congregation for Eastern Churches in Rome.

**P. Defect of Form Petition: walk through**

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Catholics are bound by the Catholic form (“canonical form”) of marriage: consent is exchanged in the presence of a priest or deacon and two witnesses. If the marriage lacked canonical form, the party can be declared free to marry through this an administrative procedure. *No date can be set for the marriage* until the party is declared free to marry.

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1. The **Defect of Form Petition** can be obtained from the Chancellor’s Office.
2. **Personal Interview:** The priest, deacon or trained pastoral minister is to interview the person requesting the declaration of freedom, (i.e., the “petitioner”). A personal interview allows the pastoral minister to ensure that the petitioner understands the questions being asked, to clarify Church teaching, and to be certain that the proper facts are obtained. (The Defect of Form petition is not designed to be filled out by the petitioner outside of a personal interview.)
3. The processing fee is \$50.00. In order to facilitate the paperwork, the petitioner is asked to submit the fee with the Defect of Form Petition. (Checks may be payable to “Diocese of Rockville Centre.”) These fees are a subsidy to the Chancellor’s Office and assist in processing the petition.

4. **Defect of Form Petition: a walk-through**

a) Page 1

**Petitioner**

- (1) (the party requesting the declaration of freedom):
  - (a) Complete all information.
  - (b) If the petitioner is the Catholic party bound by canonical form, the *date and place of baptism* must be provided.
  - (c) Because the nature of the Defect of Form petition is to prove that one of the parties was bound to the Catholic form of marriage, the Catholic baptismal information and recent baptismal certificate are essential to the procedure.

**Respondent**

- (2) (the other party):
  - (a) Complete all information.
  - (b) The respondent will be contacted by the Chancellor's Office and asked if he or she has any information regarding whether the prior marriage took place in a Catholic Church or was ever validated at a later date.
  - (c) The respondent is *not* informed that the former spouse is being remarried.
  - (d) If the respondent is the Catholic party, the baptismal information *and recent certificate* are essential. (If the petitioner is also Catholic, only one certificate is necessary.)

**Date of Marriage**

- (3) Fill in information. The marriage certificate can be used to obtain accurate information.

**Place of Marriage**

- (4) Fill in information. If the marriage certificate does not supply the information, the petitioner can be asked where the marriage took place (e.g., catering hall, non-Catholic church, etc.)

**Official title of Officiant**

- (5) The *title* of the non-Catholic officiant will suffice (e.g., minister, judge, rabbi, etc.)

**Address of the Catholic party at the time of marriage**

- (6) The town and state of the Catholic party is necessary to determine which diocese the Catholic belonged to. If the prior marriage was a mixed marriage, the Chancellor's Office will contact the appropriate diocese and request a search for dispensation, validation or sanation. (If the Catholic party resided in the Diocese of Rockville Centre the search will, of course, be simpler.)

**Did the Catholic party at any time formally abandon the Catholic faith? \_\_\_\_  
If so, when and under what circumstances?**

- (7) Since the promulgation of the 1983 *Code of Canon Law*, Catholics who abandon the Catholic faith by a formal act are no longer bound by the Catholic form of marriage (and therefore would need to begin the annulment procedure).
- (a) A *formal act* would include the following: ritual of membership, "re-baptism," non-Catholic confirmation, etc.
- (b) In such a circumstance, you may wish to seek advice from the Chancellor's Office.

**Why were you never married by a Catholic priest?**

The reason which led the petitioner to be married outside the Church assists in determining the invalidity of the marriage.



**If you ever discussed having your marriage celebrated in Church, please indicate the results of that discussion.**

- (8) The petitioner is asked to recall whether or not having the marriage “blessed” by the Church at the beginning or at a later time. Sometimes a petitioner may not realize that a convalidation at a later time renders the marriage valid.

**When did you cease living together?**

- (9) The interviewer may wish to ascertain the nature of the former marriage, how recent it was, and its possible ramifications for the proposed marriage.

**Date of Divorce**

- (10) The date of the *Final Divorce decree* is to be entered. It is usually found in the top right-hand corner of the decree.

**Location of Court**

- (11) This can be found on the final divorce decree.

**Index Number of Divorce**

- (12) The index number ensures that the divorce decree has been granted by the court. It is usually found in the section below the upper right hand corner of the decree. It may also be located at the end of the decree.

**Does the petitioner have any legal or moral obligations toward the former spouse or toward any children born of this prior union? \_\_\_\_**

**Are these obligations being met?**

- (13) The interviewer needs to discuss issues such as alimony and child support. The Catholic, in justice, is obliged to fulfill these obligation which have arisen from the prior marriage.

b) Page 2

**Previous or Subsequent Marriages of Petitioner**

- (1) The party who is requesting the Declaration of Freedom to marry may have been married before *or* after the marriage being discussed. Each marriage must be examined separately. The interview needs to determine if another Defect of Form Petition is necessary; an annulment may be required. Note that, if the petitioner is currently married and seeks to have the marriage “blessed,” the information need not be entered (see “Intended Spouse of Petitioner” section below).

**Previous or Subsequent Marriages of Respondent**

- (2) The respondent may have been married before the marriage being discussed, thus affecting the status of that marriage. The respondent may also be remarried. Should that be the case, the Chancellor’s Office will check its records to see if the Declaration of Freedom has already been granted.

**Intended Spouse of the Petitioner**

- (3) Usually the Declaration of Freedom to Marry is requested because the petitioner intends to remarry. Enter the appropriate information. Note that there are no documents (e.g., baptismal certificate) required for the intended spouse. Do not include the Pre-Nuptial investigation form for the proposed marriage when the DF petition is submitted.

**Signature of Petitioner**

- (4) The petitioner is to sign after the following statement is read by the petitioner him/herself (or read aloud by the interviewer): *I, the undersigned Petitioner, solemnly swear before God that the Respondent and I never contracted marriage in the presence of a Catholic Priest or in any manner recognized by the Catholic Church. I solemnly swear that in answering the above questions I have told the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.*

**Signature of Interviewer**

- (5) The priest, deacon or pastoral minister who has interviewed the petitioner is to sign the petition, indicating that the petition is legitimate.

**Seal of the Parish**

- (6) Because this is a formal document of the Church, the parish seal indicates the veracity of the petition.

c) **Page 3: Testimony of the Interviewer**

The priest, deacon or trained pastoral minister is to fill out the final two pages.

**A. Documents**

The documents are essential for this documentary, administrative process. Originals or photocopies suffice.

**Recent Baptismal Certificate of the Catholic Party**

- (1) The recent certificate of the *petitioner* or the respondent is necessary. An updated certificate (on the back) may supply information regarding other sacraments, e.g., marriage. Because this is such an essential part of the process, you may wish to ask the Chancellor's Office for assistance in locating a recent baptismal certificate.

**Civil Marriage License Indicating Officiant**

- (2) A marriage certificate which states the *officiant* of the marriage also establishes that, indeed, a Catholic priest or deacon did not perform the ceremony. Note that a simple "marriage registration certificate" oftentimes does not indicate the officiant. A more complete certificate can be obtained from the civil authorities.

**Final Divorce Decree**

- (3) The final divorce decree indicates that the prior marriage is indeed recognized as ended by civil law.

It may also help the interviewer and the Chancellor's Office in determining the obligations incurred by the petitioner toward the former spouse and children. Note that other documents from the divorce process (e.g., "action for divorce") are not to be confused with the *final divorce decree*.

**Statement of Petitioner regarding Previous Marriage**

- (4) *Pages 5 and 6* are on a separate sheet contained in the Defect of Form Petition. The petitioner is asked to reflect on the prior marriage. The interviewer and the Chancellor's Office can help the couple prepare for the marriage by determining if aspects of the prior marriage may affect the future.

**B. Witnesses**

- (5) The interviewer to ascertain from two (2) witnesses if the prior marriage ever took place in a Catholic Church or was in any way recognized by the Church.
- (a) The witnesses are to know the petitioner before, during and after the marriage.
  - (b) The interview may be conducted personally, over the telephone or by written testimony.
  - (c) The witness must confirm their testimony by the following oath: *I solemnly swear before God, that the Petitioner and Respondent never contracted marriage in the presence of a Catholic Priest or in any other manner recognized by the Catholic Church.*
  - (d) The witnesses need not sign the petition. The interviewer can simply supply the information on the bottom of page 3.
  - (e) If there is a difficulty in obtaining the testimony of the two witnesses, consult the Chancellor's Office for further guidance.

d) Page 4

**The Intended Marriage**

- (1) The interviewer offers his or her assessment of the proposed marriage *and* any recommendations regarding counseling. The Chancellor's Office will follow up on the recommendations, if necessary.

**Summary by the Interviewer**

- e) The priest, deacon or pastoral minister, finally, states that he or she is morally certain that the marriage was never recognized by the Church at the time of the wedding or any time afterwards.

**Q. Marriage to a Non-Catholic (Mixed Religion)**

1. Concern of the Church

The prohibition for a Catholic to marry a non-Catholic remains in church law. The *value* fostered by the law is the Catholic's identity as a Catholic and his or her connection to the Church when preparing for a marriage with someone from outside the Catholic faith and community.

2. Marrying a Baptized Non-Catholic

- a) When a Catholic marries a baptized Christian, it is the *sacrament of marriage* (two baptized people exchange consent).
- b) The marriage should take place in a Catholic parish church. Submit the "mixed religion form (white form)" for the proper permission.
- c) Permission may be given to celebrate such a marriage in *church* of another Christian denomination. Submit the "green form." See below, "place of wedding."

3. Marrying an Unbaptized person

- a) The marriage should take place in a Catholic parish church. Submit the mixed religion petition (white form).
- b) The marriage can take place, with proper permission and dispensation, in the place of worship of the unbaptized person. Permission may also be granted to celebrate such a marriage in the home or even an interfaith chapel or a catering hall chapel. Submit the “green form.” See below, “place of wedding.”
- c) Marriage to a non-Catholic baptized *Christian* means that both parties share their faith in Christ. Therefore, a *permission* (for lawfulness, or liceity) to marry a baptized non-Catholic must be obtained. Marriage to an *unbaptized* person could place the Catholic’s identity and faith in greater jeopardy. Therefore, a *dispensation* (for validity) must be obtained.

4. Dispensations

- a) Definition: “A relaxation of a merely ecclesiastical law in a particular case.” When there is a just reason presented, a dispensation is usually granted. In the case of marriage, the prohibition to marry a baptized non-Catholic is “dispensed from” so that the Catholic is free to marry validly and licitly. Failure to obtain the required dispensation could invalidate the marriage. For further questions, consult the Chancellor’s Office.
- b) A dispensation is granted by the local ordinary: the diocesan bishop, vicar general, episcopal vicar. In the Diocese of Rockville Centre the *chancellor and vice-chancellors* have been delegated to grant marriage dispensations as well.

- c) Emergencies: there are certain situations when a priest who has been granted the pastoral faculties of the diocese may grant some dispensations. For a fuller explanation see “emergency faculty” in the section on Pastoral Faculty 15 (Priests) and also below. Note that deacons are not granted this “emergency faculty.”
  - d) Should the Catholic party reside in another diocese, he or she is under the jurisdiction of another bishop. In this case, use the forms for the Diocese of Rockville Centre and submit them to the Chancellor’s Office. The petition will be forwarded to the appropriate chancery and the rescript will be sent directly to you from that diocese.
  - e) The Chancellor’s Office maintains the records of all permissions and dispensations granted in the diocese. Requests from other dioceses, tribunals, or parishes concerning dispensations which have been granted can be directed to this office.
  - f) A dispensation must be requested for a particular marriage. Use the “mixed religion petition,” a small white form. The procedure is outlined below.
  - g) For proper forms, see two sections below.
5. Marriages of Catholics to non-Catholic Christians continue to call for special pastoral care. *The Ecumenical Directory* (1993) also suggests:
- a) contacting the priest or minister of the church of the other party to establish mutual consultation to support the marriage
  - b) encouraging the couple to learn more about each other’s Christian beliefs and practices and what they share in common
  - c) inviting the pastor of the non-Catholic Christian to take part in the marriage ceremony in accord with appropriate liturgical norms.

**R. “Emergency Faculty”**

***Pastoral Faculty 15***

*To dispense from canonical form and from all ecclesiastical matrimonial impediments from which the ordinary of the place may dispense, whenever everything has been prepared for the wedding (or convalidation) and the delay to obtain a dispensation from competent authority would most likely cause serious harm (canon 1080).*

1. In all cases, the applicable requirements of the law must be fulfilled before the dispensation is granted. Whenever you grant a dispensation, the Chancellor’s Office must be notified in writing as soon as possible so that the dispensation can be properly recorded in the external forum.
2. The faculty to dispense *does not extend* to
  - a) impediments arising from sacred orders
  - b) or from a public perpetual vow of chastity in a pontifical religious institute.
  - c) This pastoral faculty does not permit you to delegate yourself to officiate at a wedding outside the territory in which you have delegation.
3. It does, however, permit you to dispense from canonical form in the case of a mixed marriage. The marriages of two Catholics must always be celebrated in accord with canonical form.
4. Consult the Pastoral Faculties section of the Pastoral Manual for further details.

**S. Mixed Religion Petition (white form)**

1. This small white form is submitted whenever a Catholic marries a non-Catholic. Usually the date for the wedding can



be set once the form is completed and mailed to the Chancellor's Office.

2. The forms are obtained from the Chancellor's Office. Call and a supply will be sent to your parish.
3. Type (or print clearly) all information requested. This is important so that accurate records are maintained.
4. ***Front page***
  - a) Fill in all information for the church where the petition is completed and the place of the wedding, and for the groom and bride.
  - b) Give complete baptismal information for the non-Catholic. Check if the baptism of the non-Catholic has been proven to you by a certificate.
5. ***Back page***
  - a) canonical reasons: The permission or dispensation needs a reason for granting. You may choose an appropriate reason(s) from the list provided, or you may add your own.
  - b) Promise to Raise the Children Catholic:
    - (1) On the back of the petition, the Catholic is asked three things:
      - (a) to reaffirm their faith in Christ,
      - (b) in the Church,
      - (c) and to promise to share the faith with their children.
    - (2) This is signed only by the Catholic party in the presence of the non-Catholic. The interviewer instructs them about Church teaching and their responsibilities.
    - (3) The interviewer signs the petition as well.
    - (4) A key phrase in the declaration of the Catholic is:

- (a) **all in my power** to baptize and raise the children Catholic:
  - (b) *"The law mandates the Catholic to do no more and no less than what is feasible and fitting without doing violence to the right hierarchy of values which together make up the fabric of a happy union. The correct judgment can be made, and must be made, by the two spouses together. Therefore, when a Catholic wife is trying to fulfill her promise, she must not bring into peril the peace and harmony of the marriage; she must not violate her husband's freedom of conscience; she must not hamper him in practicing his religion and speaking of it to their children, and vice versa" (Ladislav Örsy, **Marriage in Canon Law**).*
  - (5) If the Catholic **refuses** to make the declarations and promise, the permission or dispensation cannot be granted. In such a case, advice can be sought from the Chancellor's Office.
  - c) Declaration of Priest, Deacon or Pastoral Minister: You attest to the fact that you have properly instructed the couple concerning Catholic marriage, that the Catholic has indeed made the declaration and promise in your presence, and that the non-Catholic has been informed of the promise and obligation of the Catholic party.
  - d) Address to send the Rescript: The Chancellor's Office will send the rescript (the written response to the petition) to the address you indicate.
  - e) For Chancery Use: The chancellor or vice chancellor will grant the appropriate permission (for marriage to a baptized non-Catholic) or dispensation (for marriage to an unbaptized person).
6. Catholic + baptized non-Catholic

- a) The mixed religion petition is used (white form).
- b) This marriage should be celebrated in a Catholic parish church. However, permission may be sought for the marriage to be celebrated in a church edifice. This may be the church of the non-Catholic's denomination or another Christian church. In this case, see below, "Marriage Outside a Catholic Church."
- c) When both parties are baptized, the marriage must take place in a *church edifice*. As baptized Christians, the couple share in the sacrament of marriage; the sacrament can be celebrated in a Catholic parish church or in another church. (It cannot be celebrated in a private home or a catering hall.)

**T. Marriage Outside a Church Edifice (green form)**

- a) Fill out first two pages. You will notice these pages are identical with the white form for "mixed religion." See above ("Mixed Religion, white form") for details.
- b) Page Three
  - (1) Marriage Information: Complete information for the marriage. (This may repeat some of the information already entered on pages 1 and 2. Sometimes this part of the form needs to be forwarded to another diocese who has jurisdiction for the marriage.)
  - (2) Clergy Assisting: Only one clergyperson can officiate and sign the license. However, complete all information about the clergy who will be present.
  - (3) Which Clergyperson will officiate? Check **one** box.

c) Page Four

**The petition is prompted by the following serious reasons:**

- (1) as above, there must a reason for the dispensation to be granted.

**With this petition I enclose the following:**

- (2) The wedding will be recorded by the Chancellor's Office and all documents are needed:
  - (a) recent baptismal certificate
  - (b) PNI form (Because the marriage is outside a church edifice the "affidavits of freedom to marry" on the back of the PNI form are to be completed.)
  - (c) declaration of doctrinal preparation (e.g., pre-cana).

**Future address of the couple:**

- (3) Once notified that the wedding has taken place, the Chancellor's Office will send a Catholic marriage certificate to the couple.

**Final Observations:**

- (4) As above, only special circumstances are to be noted here.

**Signature:**

- (5) Your signature indicates that you attest to the truth of the information supplied.

**For Chancery use:**

- (6) The appropriate permission or dispensation will be granted by the Chancellor's Office (i.e., permission

for a Catholic ceremony outside a church edifice and delegation or canonical form).

- d) You may also seek a dispensation from canonical form if not celebrated in a Catholic church by a deacon/priest.
- e) When the marriage takes place in a non-Catholic church the officiant should be the non-Catholic clergyperson.
  - (1) The Catholic priest or deacon can be present at the ceremony (but this is not necessary once the dispensation from canonical form is granted).
  - (2) Only ONE officiant takes the consent and signs the license. This is for the *validity* of the marriage. Be careful of “last minute changes” which may invalidate the marriage.
- f) Catholic + unbaptized
  - (1) The mixed religion petition is used (small white form).
  - (2) This marriage should be celebrated in a Catholic parish church.
  - (3) However, permission may be sought for the marriage to be celebrated in a church edifice. This may be the synagogue, temple, mosque, etc.
  - (4) “Canon 1118”: The officiant may be the priest or deacon.
    - (a) He will need to request *delegation* to officiate (as well as permission for the marriage to take place outside of a church edifice).
    - (b) Use the folded “green form” and complete all information. These steps are outlined below under “Canonical Form Dispensation.”

- (c) Don't forget to include the requested documents -- they are listed on the back of the green form and you simply check them off as you drop them in the envelope!
  
- (5) "Canonical Form Dispensation": the parties will be married in a *non-Catholic ceremony by a non-Catholic clergyperson* (use the green folded petition)
  - (a) Fill out first two pages. You will notice these pages are identical with the white mixed religion form.
  - (b) You may also seek a dispensation from canonical form if not celebrated in a Catholic church by a deacon/priest. This is valid only for the *place and date* of the wedding.
  - (c) When the marriage takes place in another church edifice Church the officiant may be either the other clergyperson or the Catholic priest or deacon.
  - (d) You must be granted *delegation* to officiate (as well as permission for the marriage to be outside a church edifice). You will be granted this by the Chancellor's Office for the *place and date* of the marriage.
  - (e) The *Catholic Rite of Marriage* must be used if the priest or deacon is the officiant.
  - (f) Only ONE officiant takes the consent and signs the license. This is for the *validity* of the marriage. Be careful of "last minute changes" which may invalidate the marriage. In an emergency, a priest with diocesan faculties can grant mixed religion and canonical form (but cannot delegate himself to take the consent).
  - (g) Other places for the wedding:
    - (i) in the home of the bride or the groom
    - (ii) never out-of-doors
    - (iii) as a last resort, the chapel of a catering facility.

2. Eucharistic Sharing

- a) This is usually not permitted by the Church at this time.
- b) In the cases of mixed religion a *wedding service* is more appropriate than a Nuptial Mass for the celebration. If there is a wedding Mass, the non-Catholics present are not permitted to receive the Eucharist. Discretion and prudence are advised in alerting those present about receiving Communion.

***Pastoral Faculty 14***

*To allow the celebration of a Nuptial Mass at the marriage of a Catholic with a baptized person who is not Catholic.*

- c) See canon 844 for further details.
  - (1) For example, the *Eastern Orthodox* may, if they freely request it *and* are morally or physically prevented from approaching their own priest, receive the Eucharist.
  - (2) Mainline Protestants (Episcopalians, Methodists, Presbyterians, etc.) are not permitted to receive the Eucharist in the Catholic Church except under exceptional circumstances. Consult the “Ecumenical Issues” section below for greater detail on Eucharistic sharing.

**U. Place of Marriage**

Catholics celebrate marriage in their parish churches. When the sacrament of marriage is celebrated between a Catholic and a baptized non-Catholic, the marriage takes place in the parish church or in a church edifice. When marrying an unbaptized person, the Catholic marries in the parish church, in the worship place of the unbaptized party, in the home, or in a catering hall chapel.

Below is a further explanation of the places where marriage is celebrated in the Diocese of Rockville Centre.

**1. Parish Church**

- a) Catholics are to celebrate marriage in a *parish church*.
- b) They may celebrate the wedding in the parish church of the bride or the parish church of the groom.
- c) If neither party belongs to the parish, permission must be sought from the proper pastor (e.g., in the form of a letter).
- d) In the Diocese of Rockville Centre, weddings usually do not take place in chapels (e.g., convent, high school, college, hospital). For exceptions please consult the Chancellor's Office.

**2. Non-Catholic church edifice**

Permission may be granted for the wedding to take place in a non-Catholic church edifice. When the Catholic is *dispensed from canonical form*, the non-Catholic clergyperson takes the consent and signs the license. When the *Catholic priest or deacon is delegated* to perform the wedding, the Catholic clergyperson takes the consent and signs the license.

In either case, the "green form" is submitted to obtain the proper permissions, dispensations, or delegation.

- a) **Marrying a Baptized Non-Catholic**  
The marriage of a Catholic and baptized non-Catholic is a *sacrament*. When the consent is exchanged it takes place in the parish church of the Catholic or in a non-Catholic church edifice.
  - (1) The marriage usually takes place in a Catholic parish church. In this case, submit the "mixed religion form" for the proper permission.
  - (2) Permission may be given to celebrate such a marriage in *church edifice* of another Christian denomination. Submit the "green form" (Mixed



religion *and* marriage outside a church edifice). The dispensation from canonical form will be granted so that the non-Catholic minister can perform the wedding. Usually the non-Catholic minister takes the consent. Should the priest or deacon wish to take the consent, consult the Chancellor's Office.

- (3) When the dispensation from canonical form is granted, it is not necessary that a Catholic priest or deacon be present. However, the presence of an ordained Church minister is usually very important to Catholics. Parishes are encouraged to be as accommodating as possible.
- (4) The marriage of a Catholic and a baptized non-Catholic does not take place in the home, in a catering hall chapel or out-of-doors.

b) **Marrying an Unbaptized person**

- (1) The marriage should take place in a Catholic parish church.
- (2) The marriage can take place, with proper permission and dispensation, in the place of worship of the unbaptized person.
- (3) Because there are non-Catholics who may be offended by Christian symbols and would refuse to enter a Catholic church, permission may be given to celebrate marriage between a Catholic and an unbaptized person (e.g., synagogue, mosque, or Hindu place of worship)

**3. Other places**

Permission may also be granted to celebrate such a marriage in the home or even an interfaith chapel or a catering hall chapel. In these cases the "green form" is submitted for the necessary permissions, dispensations or delegation.

Examples of appropriate places for weddings of Catholics to *unbaptized persons* in the Diocese of Rockville Centre:

- a) Indoors in the home
- b) Interfaith chapel
- c) Catering hall chapel

**4. Outdoor weddings not permitted**

Catholics are not permitted to be married out-of-doors. However, outdoor weddings are popular for many people -- priests, deacons and church ministers admit that it is challenging, in the face of “popular wedding culture,” to explain the reasons for this practice of the Church in most parts of the United States, including the Diocese of Rockville Centre.

It is the decision of the diocesan bishop and the bishops in our region that the *sanctity of the marriage ceremony* is best preserved by celebrating the marriage indoors. Even when permission is granted for a Catholic to be married outside a church edifice, the marriage takes place indoors. The place of the marriage must be a place of dignity, appropriate for the exchange of the wedding promises, e.g., a wedding chapel, a room set apart, etc. Tents, gazebos, bubbles, etc. are not permissible places for Catholics to be married in the Diocese of Rockville Centre.

Some non-Catholic clergypersons celebrate wedding out-of-doors. The assisting priest or deacon is to remind couples when they arrange for the marriage that outdoor weddings are not possible, even when a willing non-Catholic clergyperson takes the consent and signs the license.

**5. Emergency weddings**

Permission will be granted to celebrate a marriage in a hospital or in the sick room at home because of serious illness or danger of death.

Sometimes the couple wishes to have an infirm relative present at their marriage. In such cases, permission may be sought to

celebrate the marriage in a hospital room or the sick room at home. This celebration takes the place of the church celebration. In these cases, permission is to be sought from the Chancellor's Office.

**V. Marriages Occurring Outside the Diocese**

1. Out of State Wedding:
  - a) Dispensations for marriages which take place outside the diocese or for one of the parties who is a Catholic from another diocese can be submitted directly to the Chancellor's Office. The proper diocese will be contacted for the dispensation.
  - b) If the priest/deacon is officiating at an out-of-state wedding, he is to investigate whether or not he needs proper authorization/registration from the state or city government.
2. Weddings outside the USA
  - a) Submit all paperwork to the Chancellor's Office.
  - b) Include the place (church, town, country) of marriage and date.
  - c) The Chancellor's Office will *visum* the documents and send them to the proper diocese. It is the custom in other countries that the Chancellor's Offices of each diocese communicate directly with one another. The paperwork will be forwarded to the proper parish.
  - d) A copy of the documents (with the *visum*) will be sent to the priest or deacon.

**W. Marriage License**

1. The *marriage license* is necessary before performing any marriage. To officiate without the license is illegal.
2. Note that the civil Marriage License Bureau does not communicate with other civil entities. It is the responsibility of the married couple to notify appropriate agencies that the marriage has taken place.

3. A clergyperson who officiates at a wedding without a marriage license is liable for civil penalties. Consult the Chancellor's Office with any questions.

## **X. Eastern Orthodox and Marriage**

- a) Catholics are validly married to the Orthodox even if no dispensations were sought for the marriage to take place (since 1967). For the marriage to be **LAWFUL**, the permission for mixed religion must be sought.
- b) The Orthodox insist, for *validity*, that their faithful are validly married only by the Orthodox priest and receive the *priestly blessing*. The Orthodox do not dispense from canonical form, as does the Catholic Church. It is appropriate to inform the couple about this discipline of the Orthodox Church so that a dispensation from canonical form can be granted.
- c) You may wish to discuss this with the couple, so that they make an informed decision about the place of their wedding.

## **Y. Delegation**

1. Definition
  - a) Delegation is the empowerment to officiate at the wedding.
  - b) It can be general: e.g., all weddings in a particular parish.
  - c) It can be specific: for a particular wedding at a particular place.
  - d) This is, technically speaking, *witnessing the consent* of the couple. The couple give themselves the sacrament of marriage, and not the priest or deacon.
2. Where to Get Delegation

- a) Pastors, by virtue of church law, have the general faculty to officiate at weddings in their parish. Pastors may grant general delegation (*in writing*, for validity) and may grant *specific delegation* ( a particular marriage on a specific day). The delegation may be given orally or in writing. Specific delegation cannot be subdelegated.
- b) Priests and deacon are usually given the general faculty to officiate at marriages in the parish to which they are assigned. This can be found in the bishop's letter of assignment. In such cases, they may also grant *specific delegation* (a particular marriage on a specific day) to another priest or deacon. The delegation may be given orally or in writing. Specific delegation cannot be subdelegated (i.e., delegated again to another person).
- c) If the priest or deacon has been given general delegation, he may give specific delegation for a *particular* priest/deacon for a *particular* marriage.
- d) When performing a wedding outside of his parish, the deacon or priest needs to be delegated to officiate at the wedding.
- e) Out of State Wedding: If the priest/deacon is officiating at an out-of-state wedding, he is to investigate whether or not he needs proper authorization/registration from the state or city government.
- f) Diocesan pastoral faculties permit priests to officiate at a wedding once they are granted delegation. Note that this does not take the place of general or specific delegation:

***Pastoral Faculty 13***

*To assist at marriages within the parish or other territory in which you possess ordinary power or for which you are generally or specifically delegated by the local pastor or the ordinary of the place (canons 1109-1111).*

3. The *marriage license* is necessary before performing any marriage. To officiate without the license is illegal.

**Z. Convalidation** (blessing an invalid marriage)

1. Catholics who marry outside the Church often seek to have their marriage recognized by the Church.
2. Procedure
  - a) Complete the PNI and, if needed request any dispensations.
  - b) Judge whether marriage preparation is needed.
  - c) Have the couple obtain a marriage license “for a religious ceremony.” (You are then certain that the marriage you will witness is legal.)
  - d) Convalidate -- or “bless” -- the marriage in the parish church:
    - (1) The couple renews their consent (as in the marriage ritual).
    - (2) Before a deacon/priest and two witnesses (not necessarily their best man and maid of honor).
    - (3) In the church, usually a quiet ceremony.
    - (4) At any time, on any day.
  - e) Enter the marriage into the marriage register and inform the churches of baptism
  - f) Children of the marriage are considered legitimate.

**AA. Record-keeping**

1. The *Marriage Register* in your parish is where any wedding that takes place *in your parish church* is recorded.
2. The *baptismal registers* of the Catholic parties will be updated with the marriage information. The information (name of spouse, place of marriage, date of marriage) is placed in the remarks column.
3. If the Catholic party or parties were baptized in another parish, notify that church of baptism with the details. (Forms for this purpose can be purchased from church supply companies.)
4. In the Diocese of Rockville Centre, when a marriage occurs outside a church edifice, the Chancellor's Office assumes responsibility of recording the marriage in the marriage register maintained in that office.

**BB. Notification of a Marriage Outside the United States**

Sometimes a parish needs assistance in notifying the Catholic's church of baptism, especially when the church is located outside the country. The form below can be completed and sent to the Chancellor's Office, which will process the notification.

## *Sacraments*

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### **NOTIFICATION OF MARRIAGE**

*Please provide as much information as possible which will  
assist the Chancellor's Office in communicating with the proper diocese.*

#### **Groom Information**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date & Place of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_  
*date town/city country*

Church of Baptism: \_\_\_\_\_  
*name of church town/city diocese*

Date of Baptism: \_\_\_\_\_

#### **Bride Information**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date & Place of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_  
*date town/city country*

Church of Baptism: \_\_\_\_\_  
*name of church town/city diocese*

Date of Baptism: \_\_\_\_\_

#### **Marriage Information**

Church: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Marriage: \_\_\_\_\_

Officiant: \_\_\_\_\_

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This notification is requested by

\_\_\_\_\_ *name*

\_\_\_\_\_ *date*



## CC. Marriage Forms

*There are a number of marriage forms which are used in the Diocese of Rockville Centre. Below is a list of the form, its purpose, and where it can be obtained.*

<b><i>Name of Form</i></b>	<b><i>Purpose</i></b>	<b><i>How to Obtain</i></b>
<b>Pre-nuptial investigation (PNI)</b>	Tool for the personal interview with the couple in order to ascertain if they are free to marry.	The D.P. Murphy company sells these forms directly to parishes.
<b>Mixed Religion (white form)</b>	Two-sided form for use when a Catholic marries a non-Catholic.	Call the Chancellor's Office for a supply.
<b>Marriage Outside a Church Edifice (green form)</b>	Four-sided folded green form which includes the petition for mixed religion (pp. 1-2) as well as the petition for marriage outside a Catholic edifice.	Call the Chancellor's Office for a supply.
<b>Marriage Worksheets</b>	Information sheet which supplies general information for intended marriage needing special attention (i.e., pregnancy, counseling, under 19 years old, special evaluation).	Call the Chancellor's Office for a supply.
<b>Psychological Release Forms</b>	Signed release allowing the Chancellor's Office to communicate with a counselor or Catholic Charities.	Call the Chancellor's Office for a supply.
<b>Defect of Form Petition</b>	Four-sided petition for use in declaring a party free to marry when a former marriage took place without the "Catholic" form of marriage. One of the parties must be a Catholic.	Call the Chancellor's Office for a supply.

## **XI. ANOINTING OF THE SICK**

### **A. Doctrinal Canon**

*The anointing of the sick by which the Church commends to the suffering and glorified Lord the faithful who are dangerously sick so that He relieve and save them, is conferred by anointing them with oil and using the words prescribed in the liturgical books (canon 998).*

### **B. Communal Celebration**

*The communal celebration of the anointing of the sick for many of the sick at the same time who are duly prepared and rightly disposed can be performed according to the prescriptions of the diocesan bishop (canon 1002).*

It is recommended that the sacrament be celebrated before a person enters the hospital for any surgery or surgical procedures. Parishes may schedule a regular “Anointing Mass” to accommodate these persons in need of the sacrament.

### **C. Formula**

*Through this holy anointing may the Lord in His love and mercy help you with the grace of the Holy Spirit. May the Lord who frees you from sin save you and raise you up.*

### **D. Minister**

Only a priest or bishop may validly administer the sacrament.

### **E. Oil of the Sick**

1. It is usually blessed by the bishop (canon 999, 1°). In the Diocese of Rockville Centre this occurs at the Chrism Mass during Holy Week.
2. However, in the case of true necessity, any priest can bless oil within the celebration of the sacrament (canon 999, 2°).

3. The priest is permitted to carry the oil with him (canon 1003, §3).

**F. The Anointing**

1. The sick person is anointed by the priest on the forehead and the palms of the hands while the formula is said. It is appropriate to divide the sacramental form so that the first part is said while the forehead is anointed, the latter part while the hands are anointed (*Rite of Anointing*, n. 23).
2. The person may also be anointed on another appropriate part of the body (e.g., over the heart)
3. In case of necessity, the forehead is sufficient.
4. The anointing is usually performed with the priest's own hand, unless a serious reason persuades him to use an instrument (canon 1000, §2).

**G. The Sick Person to be Anointed**

1. **Requirements** (canon 1004, §1):
  - a) reached the age of reason
  - b) *begin to be in danger* due to sickness or old age.
  - c) Examples from the ritual (nn. 10-12):
    - (1) serious illness is a reason for surgery
    - (2) elderly people if they have become notably weakened even though no serious illness is present
    - (3) sick children if they have *sufficient use of reason*.
2. **Delay:** It is a serious mistake to wait too long, perhaps until the advanced stages of a disease, to anoint a sick person. As soon as the sick person *begins to be in danger* is the fitting

time for the anointing. Appropriate catechesis should be given so that people know when they can ask for the sacrament for themselves or for others.

3. **Implicit request:** if person is unconscious, they can be anointed if they would have implicitly asked for it (canon 1006).
  - a) This is presumed for all Catholics.
  - b) If a Catholic obstinately persists in manifest serious sin, and has both explicitly refused to see a priest and given no sign of repentance, the necessary intention may not be present for the sacrament to be administered. See canon 1007.
4. **In doubt, anoint** (canon 1005):
  - a) whether there is a doubt that the person reached the age of reason or
  - b) there is a doubt that the person is dangerously ill or
  - c) there is a doubt, when unconscious, the person implicitly asked for it,
  - d) or the person is doubtfully dead.
5. The **dead** are not anointed. Prayers for the deceased can be found in the *Rite*, nn. 223-231.
6. **Those not to be anointed:**
  - a) Those who obstinately persist in manifest serious sin are not to be anointed (canon 1007). Note the three simultaneous requirements:
    - (1) **obstinately persist:** a continuous, conscious state
    - (2) **manifest:** public, known
    - (3) serious sin.
7. **Repetition:** *The sacrament can be repeated whenever the sick person again falls into serious sickness after convalescence or whenever a more serious crisis develops during the same sickness* (canon 1004, §2):

- a) gets better but a danger begins again
- b) same illness, and a more serious crisis begins
- c) not a "pill" for those who are in the midst of convalescing.

#### **H. Record Keeping**

Parishes should have a "sick call" register or similar book in which a record is kept of those who have celebrated the sacrament of the sick. Many parishes use this register to record the names of all the sick who receive the Eucharist.

## **XII. FUNERALS AND BURIAL**

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These Guidelines are based on those written by the National Catholic Cemetery Conference; they are used in the Diocese of Rockville Centre. For further information, contact the Catholic Cemetery Office at Holy Rood Cemetery (334-7990).

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### **A. Death in the Christian Context**

1. Throughout the Church's history, Christian burial has been an important and integral part of Catholic life. Catholic dogmas and doctrines relating to death and resurrection have been reflected in the liturgy, devotions and customs surrounding the death and burial of the faithful, Catholic belief in death as the entrance into eternity, hope in the resurrection, recognition of the value of prayer for the deceased, reverence for the body which remains, a sense of the mystery and sacredness which surround death - all of these should be reflected in the ministry and rites that are part of the Church's pastoral response to death, the care of the body of the deceased and the consolation of the living.
2. The Christian response to death must stand as witness to the paschal mystery or a symbol of the central and pivotal Christian beliefs in the sacredness of human life, here and in the world to come. The private and liturgical prayers, the meditation and reflection, and the ceremonies and rites connected with the funeral and committal express our participation in the great paschal mystery and the hope it promises of eternal union with almighty God. The events which surround death also call for a community response.
3. The General Introduction of the *Order of Christian Funerals* teaches that  
when a member of Christ's Body dies, the faithful are called to a ministry of consolation to those who have

suffered the loss of one whom they love. Christian consolation is rooted in that hope that comes from faith in the saving death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. Christian hope faces the reality of death and the anguish of grief but trusts confidently that the power of sin and death has been vanquished by the risen Lord. The Church calls each member of Christ's Body -priest, deacon, layperson - to participate in the ministry of consolation to care for the dying, to pray for the dead, to comfort those who mourn (OCF, 8).

4. When possible, those who were part of the Catholic community are buried in a Catholic cemetery. Not only is the Catholic cemetery a sacred place, a place of prayer, and a place reflecting our beliefs and traditions; it also expresses the link of community between all the faithful living and dead. It is a recognition of the shared belief of the dead and the living who commit the bodies of their deceased to this holy place.
5. Because of these vital realities of Catholic life, Christian burial is a rite which the Church provides for her faithful departed and as a source of strength, hope and encouragement for the bereaved family and friends. This rite consists of three parts: the vigil, the funeral liturgy and the committal in a blessed grave or tomb. (cf. OCF, 44) Each part has its distinct role and each must reflect the circumstances of both the deceased and the mourners.
6. Church authority has the obligation and responsibility to determine what parts of the burial rite are appropriate to each person and what form these rites will take. The following guidelines and regulations for Christian burial have their foundation in the general law of the Church and the liturgical decrees. Adaptations in the funeral rites made by the episcopal conference are also to be observed in the dioceses of the United States. The revised *Order of Christian Funerals*, with the adaptations presented by the National Conference of Catholic Bishops and approved by the Holy See, is now in effect. its use has been mandatory in the dioceses of the United States of America since November 2, 1989.

Priests, as teachers of faith and ministers of comfort, preside at the funeral rites, especially the Mass; the celebration of the funeral liturgy is especially entrusted to pastors and associate pastors. When no priest is available, deacons, as ministers of the word, of the altar, and of charity, preside at funeral rites. When no priest or deacon is available for the vigil and related rites of committal, a layperson presides (OCF, 14).

7. These guidelines are prepared for the direction of all clergy who participate in the corporal work of mercy of burying the dead.

## **B. Right to Burial in the Catholic Church**

1. All baptized Catholics: *The Christian faithful departed are to be given ecclesiastical funeral rites according to the norm of law* (canon 1176, §1).
2. Catechumens: *As regards funeral rites catechumens are to be considered members of the Christian faithful* (canon 1183, §1).
3. Children: *The local ordinary can permit children to be given ecclesiastical funeral rites if their parents intended to baptize them but they died before their baptism* (canon 1183, §2; cf. OCF, 237). Therefore
  - a) if the child is baptized, use appropriate ritual
  - b) if the child is unbaptized, burial from the Catholic Church is permitted if the parents intended him or her to be baptized.
  - c) See special section below.
4. Non-Catholics:  
*In the prudent judgment of the local ordinary, ecclesiastical funeral rites can be granted to baptized members of some non-Catholic church or ecclesial community unless it is evidently contrary to their will and provided their own minister is unavailable.* (canon 1183, §3)



***Pastoral Faculty 18***

*To permit the celebration of the Rite of Christian Burial, including Mass, for a baptized member of a non-Catholic church or ecclesial community if the minister of the deceased is not available and provided that such an arrangement is not contrary to the will of the deceased (canon 1183).*

- a) A **baptized** member of non-Catholic Church can be buried from the Catholic Church under two simultaneous conditions:
  - (1) if not evidently contrary to their will AND
  - (2) their own minister is unavailable
- b) In this case the name is not used in the Eucharistic Prayer because they are not in *full communion* with the Church.
- c) The unbaptized cannot be buried from the Church. However, a prayer service in the funeral home is permitted. A Memorial Mass can be celebrated (and the name not inserted in the Eucharistic Prayer).

**C. Funerals of Children**

- 1. The Order of Christian Funerals provides a complete vigil service, funeral Mass with final commendation and a rite of committal for the funeral of a child (OCF, 247-249, 319-336). Various texts for a baptized child or a child who died before baptism make the rites fully adaptable to a given situation. The eloquent prayers and words of comfort of the rites for children offer special consolation in this extraordinary situation of bewilderment and pain.

***Pastoral Faculty 17***

*To permit the celebration of the Rite of Christian Burial, including Mass, for an unbaptized child if the parents had intended to have the child baptized (canon 1183).*

2. A complete funeral liturgy outside Mass for children (OCF, 295-315) and a rite of final commendation for an infant (OCF, 337-342) are also provided for those circumstances where such ritual prayer is appropriate.
3. *Non-baptized children* may given Christian funeral rites if the parents intended to have the child baptized (canon 1183, §2). The family of the deceased child and the parish priest should determine the appropriate funeral rites for the child.

**D. Vigil for the Deceased**

1. The goal of the Church's funeral rites is not only to commend the dead to God, but also to support her people in Christian hope. It has become customary, at some opportune time and place before burial, to have a gathering of the family and friends of the deceased. "The vigil for the deceased is the principal rite celebrated by the Christian community in the time following death and before the funeral liturgy. It may take the form either of a liturgy of the word or of some part of the office for the dead." (OCF, 54) "At the vigil the Christian community keeps watch with the family in prayer to the God of mercy and finds strength in Christ's presence." (OCF, 56)
2. "The vigil may be celebrated in the home of the deceased, in the funeral home, parlor or chapel of rest, or in some other suitable place. It may also be celebrated in the church, but at a time well before the funeral liturgy, so that the funeral liturgy will not be lengthy and the liturgy of the word repetitious." (OCF, 55)
3. The vigil service may be conducted by a priest, deacon, or lay person with the participation of other members of the community. (cf. OCF, 14-15)
4. The vigil "is the first occasion among the funeral rites for the solemn reading of the word of God. In this time of loss the family and community turn to God's word as the source of

faith and hope, as light and life in the face of darkness and death. Consoled by the redeeming word of God and by the abiding presence of Christ and his Spirit, the assembly at the vigil calls upon the Father of mercy to receive the deceased into the kingdom of light and peace.” (OCF, 56)

5. In addition, brief rites may be suitable, according to local custom, when the minister first meets with the family after death, when the family first gathers in the presence of the body, when the body has been prepared and placed in the coffin, when the coffin is closed, or before the body is taken to the church. (cf. OCF, 98 127)

## **E. The Funeral Mass**

1. “At the death of a Christian, whose life of faith was begun in the waters of baptism and strengthened at the eucharistic table, the Church intercedes, on behalf of the deceased because of its confident belief that death is not the end nor does it break the bonds forged in life.” (OCF, 5)
2. Place
  - a) As a rule the funeral rites for any of the faithful departed must be celebrated in his or her own parish church.” (canon 1177, ss1; cf. OCF, 155)

“However, any member of the Christian faithful or those commissioned to arrange for his or her funeral may choose another church for the funeral rites with the consent of its rector and after informing the departed person’s pastor.” (canon 1177, ss2)
  - b) “If death has occurred outside the person’s own parish, and the corpse has not been transferred to that parish and another church has not been legitimately chosen for the funeral, the funeral rites are to be celebrated in the church of the parish where death occurred unless another church has been designated by particular law.” (canon 1177, ss3)

3. Time  
The funeral liturgy traditionally has been conducted on the morning of the burial. However, if the family so requests and it is pastorally suitable, the funeral liturgy may be conducted at another appropriate time before the burial. In some cases an evening service may be more convenient for the family and may provide for a greater amount of community participation.
4. It should be noted that “Funeral Mass” is the correct title for the Mass celebrated prior to burial. “Mass for the Dead” is the correct title for any other celebration of the Eucharist for the deceased. (cf. *Bishops’ Committee on the Liturgy Newsletter*, April 1973, 371. This change is now reflected in the revised *Order of Christian Funerals*.)
5. The term “Memorial Mass” is used in some areas of the country for a Mass when the body is not present or for a special Mass celebrated between the time of death and burial in addition to the actual funeral Mass.
6. The funeral Mass (i.e., ritual Mass) may be celebrated on all days except on holy days of obligation; and on the Sundays of Advent, Lent and the Easter Season (cf. OCF 178). The funeral ritual Mass is not permitted but the *readings and prayers of the day* may be used.
7. Triduum: on Holy Thursday, Good Friday and Holy Saturday the funeral Mass is not permitted. A service of the Word can be celebrated. The Eucharist is not to be distributed during the service of the Word.
8. The body may be brought to the Church at a convenient time separate from the liturgy of the day for the funeral liturgy outside Mass (cf. OCF, 46 and 128).
9. “The priest is the ordinary presiding minister of the funeral liturgy. Except for Mass, a deacon may conduct the funeral

liturgy. If pastoral need requires, the conference of bishops, with the permission of the Apostolic See, may decide that laypersons also preside at the funeral liturgy outside Mass.” (OCF, 151) At the general meeting in November, 1990, the National Conference of Catholic Bishops decided not to seek permission for laypersons to preside at the rite in the Dioceses of the United States.

10. “Whenever possible, ministers should involve the family in the planning of the funeral liturgy: in the choice of readings, prayers, and music for the liturgy and in the designation of ushers, pallbearers, readers, acolytes, special ministers of the Eucharist, when needed, and musicians. The family should also be given the opportunity to designate persons who will place the pall or other Christian symbols on the coffin during the rite of reception of the body at the church and who will bring the gifts to the altar at Mass.” (OCF, 152)

**F. Funeral Masses and the Liturgical Year**

1. Funeral Masses may be celebrated at any time of the year.
2. Exceptions:
  - a) Sundays
  - b) Holydays of Obligation
  - c) Holydays when the obligation is not observed (e.g., when Mary the Mother of God (January 1), Assumption (August 15), and All Saints (November 1) fall on a Monday or Saturday.
  - d) Holy Thursday (service of the Word and no distribution of Communion)
  - e) Good Friday (service of the Word and no distribution of Communion)
  - f) Holy Saturday (service of the Word and no distribution of Communion)
3. Note: the *liturgy of the day* may be celebrated on Sundays and Holydays of Obligation, but not the funeral liturgy.

**G. Other Liturgical Notes**

1. Vestments

“The liturgical color chosen for funerals should express Christian hope but should not be offensive to human grief or sorrow. In the United States, white, violet, or black vestments may be worn at the funeral rites and at other offices and Masses for the dead.” (OCF, 39)
2. Easter Candle

“The Easter candle reminds the faithful of Christ’s undying presence among them, of his victory over sin and death, and of their share in that victory by virtue of their initiation...During the funeral liturgy and also during the vigil service, when celebrated in the church, the Easter candle may be placed beforehand near the position

the coffin will occupy, at the conclusion of the procession. According to local custom other candles may also be placed near the coffin during the funeral liturgy as a sign of reverence and solemnity. “(OCF, 35)

3. Holy Water

“Blessed or holy water reminds the assembly of the saving waters of baptism. In the rite of reception of the body at the church, its use calls to mind the deceased’s baptism and initiation into the community of faith. In the rite of final commendation the gesture of sprinkling may also signify farewell.” (OCF, 36) If the body was sprinkled with holy water during the rite of reception, the sprinkling is ordinarily omitted in the rite of final commendation. (cf. OCF, 173 & 200)

4. Incense

Incense is used during the funeral rites as a sign of honor to the body of the deceased which through baptism became the temple of the Holy Spirit. Incense is also used as a sign of the community’s prayers for the deceased rising to the throne of God and as a sign of farewell.” (OCF, 36, cf. nn, 173 & 200)

5. The custom of placing the body of the deceased in the position which he or she occupied in the liturgical assembly may be continued, namely, the faithful facing the altar and sacred ministers facing the people.

6. “If it is the custom in the local community, a pall may be placed over the coffin when it is received at the church. A reminder of the baptismal garment of the deceased, the pall is a sign of the Christian dignity of the person.. The use of the pall also signifies that all are equal in the eyes of God. (see James 2:1-9).” (OCF, 38a)

7. “A Book of the Gospels or a Bible may be placed on the coffin as a sign that Christians live by the word of God and that fidelity to that word leads to eternal life.” (OCF, 38b)

8. “A cross may be placed on the coffin as a reminder that the Christian is marked by the cross in baptism and through Jesus’

suffering on the cross is brought to the victory of his resurrection.” (OCF, 38c)

9. “Fresh flowers, used in moderation, can enhance the setting of the funeral rites.” (OCF, 38d)
10. “Only Christian symbols may rest on or be placed near the coffin during the funeral liturgy. Any other symbols, for example, national flags, or flags or insignia of associations, have no place in the funeral liturgy.” (OCF, 38c) “Any national flags or the flags or insignia of associations to which the deceased belonged are to be removed from the coffin at the entrance of the church. They may be replaced after the coffin has been taken from the church.” (OCF, 132)
11. “A brief homily based on the readings is always given after the gospel reading at the funeral liturgy and may also be given after the readings at the vigil service; but there is never to be a eulogy. Attentive to the grief of those present, the homilist should dwell on God’s compassionate love and on the paschal mystery of the Lord, as proclaimed in the scripture readings. The homilist should also help the members of the assembly to understand that the mystery of God’s love and the mystery of Jesus’ victorious death and resurrection were present in the life and death of the deceased and that these mysteries are active in their own lives as well. Through the homily members of the family and community should receive consolation and strength to face the death of one of their members with a hope nourished by the saving word of God.” (OCF, 27)
12. A brief eulogy may be given after Communion by a member of the congregation.
13. Non-Catholics may serve as pallbearers at the funerals of catholic family members and friends. However, according to general law, non-Catholics may not be readers at Mass [cf. *Secretariat for promoting the Unity of Christians; Directory Ad totam Ecclesiam Concerning Ecumenical Matters*, Part 1;



May 14, 1967; n. 56; **AAS** 59 (1967), 691]; nor may they receive holy communion (cf. canon 844).

14. “In the choice of music for the funeral Mass, preference should be given to the singing of the acclamations, the responsorial psalm, the entrance and communion songs, and especially the song of farewell at the final commendation.” (OCF, 157)

## **H. The Funeral Liturgy Outside Mass**

“In the funeral liturgy outside the Mass the community gathers to hear the message of Easter hope proclaimed in the liturgy of the word and to commend the deceased to God.” (OCF, 177)

1. This rite may be used for various reasons (cf, OCF, 178):
  - a) When the funeral Mass is not permitted (See paragraph D in the preceding section):
  - b) When in some places of circumstances it is not possible to celebrate the funeral Mass before the committal, for example, if a priest is not available;
  - c) When for pastoral reasons the pastor and the family judge that the funeral liturgy outside Mass is a more suitable form of celebration.
2. “The funeral liturgy outside Mass is ordinarily celebrated in the parish church, but may also be celebrated in the home of the deceased, a funeral home, parlor, chapel of rest, or cemetery chapel.” (OCF, 179)
3. The same principles apply to the use of ministers, liturgical colors, the Easter candle, holy water, incense, the pall. Christian symbols, the homily and the position of the deceased as at the funeral Mass. (See paragraph E-P in the preceding section.)

4. At the funeral liturgy outside Mass, non-Catholics may proclaim the readings before the gospel.
5. “In the choice of music for the funeral liturgy, preference should be given to the singing of the entrance song, the responsorial psalm, the gospel acclamation, and especially the song of farewell at the final commendation.” (OCF, 181)

**I. Final Commendation and Farewell, and Rite of Committal**

1. “At the conclusion of the funeral liturgy, the rite of final commendation and farewell is celebrated, unless it is to be celebrated later at the place of committal.” (OCF, 145)
2. “The final commendation is a final farewell by the members of the community, an act of respect for one of their members, whom they entrust to the tender and merciful embrace of God. This act of last farewell also acknowledges the reality of separation and affirms that the community and the deceased, baptized into the one Body, share the same destiny, resurrection on the last day. On that day the one Shepherd will call each by name and gather the faithful together in the new and eternal Jerusalem.” (OCF, 146)
3. If holy water and incense are not used prior to the final commendation, the body may be sprinkled or incensed after the introduction to this rite, or this may be done during or after the song of farewell. (cf, OCF, 147b; 173 and 200)
4. “At the conclusion of the funeral liturgy, the procession is formed and the body is accompanied to the place of committal. This final procession of the funeral rite mirrors the journey of human life as a pilgrimage to God’s kingdom of peace and light, the new and eternal Jerusalem” (OCF, 148)
5. “Especially when accompanied with music and singing, the procession can help or reinforce the bond of communion between the participants. Whenever possible, psalms or songs

may accompany the entire procession from the church to the place of committal. In situations where a solemn procession on foot from the church to the place of committal is not possible, an antiphon or song may be sung as the body is being taken to the entrance of the church. Psalms, hymns, or liturgical songs may also be sung by the participants as they gather at the place of committal.” (OCF, 149)

6. After the interment an entry is to be made in the death register of the church where the funeral rites were held (cf. canon 1182).

#### **J. Catholic’s Participation in Non-Catholic Funerals**

1. Out of friendship for the deceased or for their families, priests or deacons may attend the funerals of non-Catholics in their places of worship, vested in choir dress (cf. *Ad totam Ecclesiam*, 59-60) The lay faithful, too, may attend and participate actively. However, if the Lord’s Supper is celebrated as part of the funeral rite, a Catholic cleric or layperson may not act as a scripture reader, preach or receive communion (cf. *Ad totam Ecclesiam*, 55-56).
2. Catholics may serve as pallbearers at the funerals of non-Catholics.
3. The priest or deacon may accompany the remains of the deceased to the cemetery, where prayers taken from the Rite of Committal may be recited.

**K. Privation of Ecclesiastical Funeral Rites**

*Unless they have given some signs of repentance before their death, the following are to be deprived of ecclesiastical funeral rites* (cf. canon 1184, §1:

1. Notorious apostates, heretics and schismatics;
2. Persons who had chosen the cremation of their own bodies for reasons opposed to the Christian faith;
3. Other manifest sinners for whom ecclesiastical funeral rites cannot be granted without public scandal to the faithful.
  - a) The phrase “notorious apostates, schismatics and heretics: refers solely to those who have consciously and sinfully willed separation from the catholic Church. Moreover, their status must be evident beyond any doubt whatsoever in order to incur privation of funeral rites. Thus, non-Catholics from birth do not come under the restrictions of canon law and may be given some or all of the rites of ecclesiastical burial as previously cited.
  - b) “Manifest sinners” are those who have lost their good reputation with righteous and serious Catholics to the extent that the denial of funeral rites is necessary to avoid the appearance of indifferentism and real scandal.
4. The priest or deacon confronted with a case of denial of funeral rites should be inclined to leniency and mercy. Should he seriously believe that the funeral rites are to be denied, he is to consult the local ordinary whose judgment is to be followed. (cf. canon 1184, §2
5. “Any funeral mass whatsoever is also to be denied a person excluded from ecclesiastical funeral rites.” (canon 1185) A priest may say Mass privately, and the faithful may pray for such a person. Also, the priest is permitted to visit the funeral parlor privately and to recite a few informal prayers together with the faithful gathered there. (See **The Pastoral Companion**, 1976 edition, p. 188)
6. Other cases

- a) In *doubt*, funeral rites are not to be denied.
  - b) Suicide victims are usually not denied.
  - c) "Lapsed Catholics" are usually not denied.
7. The Chancellor's Office is available for questions and assistance in this area.

**L. Place of Burial**

For Catholics, the preferred place of burial is a Catholic cemetery. In the Diocese of Rockville Centre there are three diocesan cemeteries: Holy Rood (Westbury), Holy Sepulchre (Coram) and Queen of All Saints (Central Islip). There are eighteen active parish cemeteries. If not Catholic cemetery is available within a reasonable distance of where the deceased resided, then interment in a non-sectarian cemetery is permissible.

For further explanation, see below.

- 1. A Catholic cemetery is preferred, but another cemetery chosen by the deceased or family is permitted (canon 1180).
- 2. The Church is to have its own cemeteries (canon 1240, §1); the faithful can be buried in other cemeteries and the grave is to be properly blessed (canon 1240, §2).
- 3. Therefore Catholics, both by law and by tradition, have chosen to be buried in Catholic cemeteries and this preference should continue. In this way Catholics have the assurance that reverence and respect will be given to the remains of the deceased. Also, the Catholic cemetery, in reflecting the doctrines and liturgy of Catholic belief, maintains now in death the community of faith that was shared in life. Furthermore, the Catholic cemetery is a place of devotion and of prayer for the souls of the departed.

**M. Burial of Catholics in Non-Catholic Cemeteries**

1. As indicated above, the preferred place for the burial of Catholics is a Catholic cemetery. If, however, this cannot be achieved, individual graves are to be properly blessed. (cf. canon 1240, §2)
2. The following circumstances have for some time permitted burial of Catholics in a non-Catholic cemetery, even where Catholic cemeteries are available:
  - a) The following non-Catholics may be buried with a Catholic immediate family member in a Catholic cemetery:
    - (1) Spouse
    - (2) Children
    - (3) Parents
    - (4) Grandparents
    - (5) Brothers and sisters
    - (6) Aunts and uncles
    - (7) Grandchildren
  - b) Catholics may be buried in a non-Catholic cemetery with an immediate family member.
  - c) A convert whose family is interred in a non-Catholic cemetery;
  - d) A request to be buried in a national cemetery as a part of the military community;
  - e) A request to be buried in a plot which was purchased in a non-Catholic cemetery at a time when a catholic cemetery was not reasonably available.
  - f) Other circumstances of a pastoral nature may exist in various areas of the country.

**N. Burial of Non-Catholics in Catholic Cemeteries**

1. As a sign of the bonds of family unity, non-Catholics may be buried in a Catholic cemetery alongside the Catholic members of their family.
2. On those occasions when a non-Catholic is to be buried in a Catholic cemetery, the deceased person's minister may conduct the burial service according to his own ritual.
3. If the family of the non-Catholic deceased person requests a Catholic priest to conduct the burial service, the priest should provide a rite which is appropriate.

**O. Sacred Nature of the Catholic Cemetery**

1. The Church considers the cemetery to be a holy place and therefore wishes and urges that new cemeteries... be blessed and that a cross be erected as a sign to all of Christian hope in the resurrection" (**Book of Blessings**, 1418a). The rites provided in the **Roman Ritual** are to be used. (cf. canon 1205; **Book of Blessings**, 1418-1439)
2. "Sometimes either the civil government or a Christian community made up of both Catholic and other Christians separated from us may establish a cemetery specifically for the burial of the deceased members of the Christian communities. In such a case it is most desirable that the formal opening of the cemetery be marked by an ecumenical celebration, the parts of which are planned by all the parties involved. Everything in the celebration that relates to Catholics is regulated by the local Ordinary." (**Book of Blessings**, 1421)

**P. Procedural and Pastoral Considerations**

When the Church gathers to remember, mourn and pray for the dead, our faith reminds us that Christ is proclaimed in the action of the Church. In this moment of sorrow for an individual family and community, the whole Church stands in the name of Jesus in the midst of the world to proclaim the Gospel in a spirit of hope. The general instruction to the **Order of Christian Funerals** describes this ministry of evangelization as twofold, a proclamation of God's mercy and the encounter with human need in the midst of crisis:

“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.” (OCF, 7)

1. When confronted with death in the family, the survivors will usually contact a funeral director who will prepare the body for burial, provide a place for viewing, and handle the details of announcement and transportation. The pastor and other ministers are to ensure that the funeral directors appreciate the values and beliefs of the Christian community. (cf. OCF, 20)
2. The contact of the priest, deacon or lay minister with the bereaved family offers an opportunity to offer them pastoral condolences, as well as important empathic encouragement. “In planning and carrying out the funeral rites the pastor and all other ministers should keep in mind the life of the deceased and the circumstance of death. They should also take into consideration the spiritual and psychological needs of the family and friends of the deceased to express grief and their sense of loss, to accept the reality of death, and to comfort one another.” (OCF, 16)
3. “Whenever possible, ministers should involve the family in planning the funeral rites; in the choice of texts and rites



provided in the ritual, the selection of music for the rites, and in the designation of liturgical ministers.” (OCF, 17a)

4. “Planning of the funeral rites may take place during the visit of the pastor or another minister at some appropriate time after the death and before the vigil service. Ministers should explain to the family the meaning and significance of each of the funeral rites, especially the vigil, the funeral liturgy, and the rite of committal.” (OCF, 17b)
5. “Music is integral to the funeral rites. It allows the community to express convictions and feelings that words alone may fail to convey. It has the power to console and uplift the mourners and to strengthen the unity of the assembly in faith and love. The texts of the songs chosen for a particular celebration should express the paschal mystery of the Lord’s suffering, death, and triumph over death and should be related to the readings from Scripture.” (OCF, 30)
6. “Since music can evoke strong feelings, the music for the celebration of the funeral rites should be chosen with great care. The music at funerals should support, console, and uplift the participants and should help to create in them a spirit of hope in Christ’s victory over death and in the Christian’s share in that victory.” (OCF, 31)
7. “Music should be provided for the vigil and funeral liturgy and, whenever possible, for the funeral processions and the rite of committal. The specific notes that precede each of these rites suggest places in these rites where music is appropriate. Many musical settings used by the parish community during the liturgical year may be suitable for use at funerals. Efforts should be made to develop and expand the parish’s repertoire for use at funerals.” (OCF, 32)
8. “An organist or other instrumentalist, a cantor, and, whenever possible, even a choir should assist the assembly’s full participation in singing the songs, responses, and acclamations of these rites.” (OCF, 33)

9. Prearranging plans for one's funeral and cemetery needs made with the parish priest, funeral director, or cemetery representative is recommended as a way to ensure simplicity at time of death and alleviate the emotional stress on surviving family members. (cf. OCF, 17c)

**Q. Funeral Offerings**

1. The poor are to be given special consideration in regards to these offerings. (cf. canon 1181).
2. In the Diocese of Rockville, the limit of the offering for a funeral is \$175.00. Of that amount, \$75.00 is set aside for the support of the priests, and the remainder belongs to the parish. This amount does not include the fee for organist or singer.
3. Catholic cemeteries are non-profit charitable institutions, participating in the apostolic work of the Church. The essence of their activity is the corporal work of mercy of burying the dead. Therefore, cemeteries should make every effort to keep charges reasonable and within the reach of the varied financial means of those whom they are meant to serve. At the same time, they must provide financial resources to ensure their future care and maintenance.
4. Inability to meet the cost of burial is never to deter burial in a Catholic cemetery. In the case of financial hardship and the lack of public or other funds, the parish should cooperate with the cemetery in seeing to proper burial.

**R. Special Concerns**

1. Burial of Stillborn and Fetuses

The Church urges that stillborns and fetuses of Catholic parents be appropriately interred in a cemetery. The decision and procedure for the interment will be determined by the parents and their pastor. There should be consultation between officials of the Catholic cemeteries and local hospitals to insure proper respect for the remains of all infants whose lives end before birth for whatever reason.

2. Disposal of Amputated Limbs

It is recommended that amputated limbs be buried in a blessed place. However, hospital personnel may dispose of portions of bodies in a manner they deem most suitable and hygienic. Cremation is not excluded, but the presence of the individual or the family is not to be disregarded.

3. Organ Transplants and Donations of Bodies

- a) Because of the achievements of science and medicine, particularly in the matter of organ transplants, occasionally requests are made to donate organs or to donate one's body to science such requests are legitimate and not contrary to Christian principles.
- b) However, in keeping with Christian respect for the body, when it is possible and practical there should be reasonable assurance that the remains will be disposed of in a proper, reverent and dignified manner upon completion of the scientific research. Under these circumstances, when the body is not embalmed, a vigil or a funeral Mass is usually impossible.
- c) The family should be urged to schedule the celebration of a Mass for the dead as soon after death as is practical. The Mass texts should be those of the funeral Mass. The rite of committal is celebrated whenever interment takes place. (cf. OCF, 212b)

4. Disinterment/Disentombment

While interment is intended to be permanent, removal of a body from its place of burial may at times become necessary or appropriate. Besides being ordered by civil authority, examples of reasons for removal include the wish of family members to be joined together in a common lot; the availability of preferred burial facilities not previously available (including perhaps the establishment of a Catholic cemetery where none existed); and family relocation. For whatever reason, in addition to obtaining the required permission of the civil authorities, the permission of the cemetery office must be obtained to disinter a body from a Catholic cemetery. Reburial should also be carried out in accord with the above guidelines.

**S. Priest Lines**

1. A diocesan burial permit, popularly called “priest lines,” which is signed by a priest, deacon or authorized minister, must be presented to a Catholic cemetery for all burials. The document is to accurately identify the Church status of the deceased.
2. This requirement for Catholic cemeteries remains a great assistance in preserving the tax-exempt status of Catholic cemeteries. It remains a requirement in the Diocese of Rockville Centre.

**T. Cremation**

1. “Since in baptism the body was marked with the seal of the Trinity and became the temple of the Holy Spirit, Christians respect and honor the bodies of the dead and the places where the rest.” (OCF, 19) “For the final disposition of the body, it is the ancient Christian custom to bury or entomb the bodies of the dead” (OCF, 19) after the manner of Christ’s own burial. “The Church earnestly recommends that the pious custom of burying the dead be observed; it does not, however, forbid cremation unless it has been chosen for reasons which are contrary to Christian teaching.” (canon 1176, §3)
2. In addition to the requirements of culture or custom, the desire for cremation is generally the specific choice of an individual before death for a number of reasons that may be judged good or pastoral and, therefore, can be accommodated.
3. Cremation, however, may also be requested by the family of the deceased for what also may be judged good or pastoral reasons that can be accommodated.
4. It is to be presumed that the faithful who choose cremation have the proper motives and good intentions. However, when a doubt arises, consult the Chancellor’s Office.
5. When cremation has been chosen for acceptable reasons, the various elements of the funeral rite -- the vigil, the funeral liturgy and the final commendation and farewell - should be celebrated with the body present.
6. The rites ordinarily performed at the grave, crypt, or cemetery chapel may be performed in the crematory building. In the event there is no other suitable place for the committal rites, the hall itself can be used, provided always that the danger of scandal or religious indifferentism is avoided.

7. If the body has been cremated prior to the funeral liturgy, the cremated remains may be into the Church for the funeral liturgy. Funeral Mass texts have been revised to reflect this indult granted by the Holy See to diocesan bishops and should be used in this situation.
8. The cremated remains must always be treated with respect. They should be either interred or entombed, preferably in a Catholic cemetery. The cremated remains should not be scattered or disposed of in any manner other than a dignified interment or entombment.

## **XIII. ECUMENICAL ISSUES**

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The Church legislation regarding ecumenical matters is found in the *Code of Canon Law* and the *Ecumenical Directory*, revised in 1993. Further questions should be directed to the Office of Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs or to the Chancellor's Office.

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**A. Ecumenism in Parish Life**

*Thus a great task for the parish is to educate its members in the ecumenical spirit. This calls for care with the content and form of preaching...and with catechesis. It calls too for a pastoral program which involves someone charged with promoting and planning ecumenical activity, working in close harmony with the parish priest....Finally it demands that the parish not be torn apart by internal polemics or mutual recriminations...(Ecumenical Directory, 16).*

**B. Sharing of Spiritual Activities and Resources**

Common prayer, including non-sacramental liturgical worship, is recommended (*Directory*, 108ff).

So also, with proper care and direction, are common days of recollection, study groups and “more stable associations for a deeper exploration of a common spiritual life.” (*Directory*, 114).

**C. Sacramental Sharing: *Communicatio in sacris***

Canon 844 states the principles for the sharing the sacraments of Eucharist, Penance and Anointing under certain circumstances:

1. **Principle 1:** Catholics may receive Eucharist, Penance, Anointing from non-Catholic ministers if:
  - a) sacraments are valid
  - b) necessity or genuine spiritual advantage
  - c) danger of error or indifferentism is avoided
  - d) physically or morally impossible to approach RC minister (*Directory*, 123)..

In practice, this means the Orthodox Churches and the Polish Catholic Church, and the Old Catholic Church. Note that the Orthodox are forbidden to offer these sacraments to Catholics. There is no reciprocity in Orthodox law. The *Directory* notes that Catholics should respect the canonical legislation of most Orthodox churches which do not allow intercommunion even in limited circumstances (*Directory*, 124)..

2. **Principle 2:** Orthodox Christians may receive Eucharist, Penance and Anointing if:
- a) manifest Catholic faith
  - b) properly disposed
  - c) freely request them.

N.B. Most Orthodox churches forbid their members to receive these sacraments in the Catholic Church. There is no reciprocity in Orthodox law (*Directory*, 125).

3. **Principle 3:** Other Christians
- a) manifest Catholic faith in the sacrament
  - b) properly disposed
  - c) grave and pressing need
  - d) unable to have recourse for the sacrament desired to a minister of their own church.

“Grace and pressing need” should be interpreted neither too strictly nor too leniently. Consult the Chancellor’s Office or the Office of Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs for further discussions (*Directory*, 130 and 131)..

4. **Principle 4:** The non-baptized are not to receive Catholic sacraments. They can, however, receive sacramentals and blessings.



**D. Celebration of Eucharist**

1. **Use of non-Catholic Christian Church for Eucharist:**  
Permission of the bishop is needed (canon 933). It is obtained through the Chancellor's Office.
2. Similarly, sharing of consecrated or blessed building on a temporary or permanent basis needs the permission of the bishop.
3. Concelebration with non-Catholics is prohibited (and vice versa) (canon 908).

**E. Reading Scripture and Preaching**

1. Catholics may read a lesson or preach in liturgical celebration (i.e., non-Eucharistic liturgy) of other churches. We may invite other Christians to fulfill the same roles in our liturgies.
2. However, at *Eucharistic* liturgy, the homily is reserved to a Catholic priest or deacon. Likewise, the bishop's permission must be obtained for a member of another communion to read the Scripture at a Eucharistic liturgy.

**F. Baptism**

1. We recognize Orthodox and mainline Protestant baptisms as valid and do not rebaptize when receiving one of their members unto full communion. See the section on RCIA for further information about *conditional baptism*.
2. Catholic baptism is celebrated in the parish church at the dedicated baptismal font. In the case of a Catholic parent and a non-Catholic parent, it should be made clear through catechesis as well as during the celebration of baptism, that the

child is being *baptized into the Catholic Church*. It is forbidden to celebrate baptism in private homes without permission of the bishop.

**G. Sponsors**

1. Orthodox Christians may, be sponsors at a Catholic baptism. A baptized member of another Christian denomination (e.g., Anglican or Protestant) may be a “Christian witness” with a Catholic sponsor. A notation should be placed in the baptismal register (e.g., “Christian witness” under the name of the baptized non-Catholic).
2. A Catholic may be a witness with the non-Catholic sponsor in a non-Catholic baptism.
3. These same norms apply for *Confirmation sponsors*.

**H. Confirmation**

1. See the norms which apply for baptism.
2. Only Orthodox confirmation is recognized as valid. N.B. Orthodox fully initiate new members (i.e., baptism, confirmation and Eucharist). We do not at this time see ourselves able to recognize the validity of Anglican (i.e., Episcopalian) or Protestant confirmation. Therefore, such Christians are to be confirmed when being received into full communion with the Catholic Church.
3. At this time, the Catholic Church does not recognize the confirmations celebrated in the other Christian communions as valid. There is no such reality as "confirming conditionally." See norms for the faculty to confirm when receiving a baptized Christian into full communion with the Catholic Church.

**I. Funeral Rites**

***Pastoral Faculty 18***

*To permit the celebration of the Rite of Christian Burial, including Mass, for a baptized member of a non-Catholic church or ecclesial community if the minister of the deceased is not available and provided that such an arrangement is not contrary to the will of the deceased (canon 1183).*

1. Baptized non-Catholics can be granted Catholic funeral rites if:
  - a) not contrary to their will
  - b) their own minister cannot be present
  - c) name is not used in the Eucharistic prayer.
2. Unbaptized persons cannot be granted Catholic funeral rites. A Memorial Mass (not a funeral Mass) could be said (without mention of the name in the Eucharistic prayer).

**J. Marriage**

1. All Christians who exchange consent have contracted the sacrament of marriage (c. 1055, §2). All others have a valid marriage. Catholics are required to observe canonical form (priest or deacon present with two witnesses, c. 1108, §1).
2. Because of the special closeness between the Orthodox and Catholic churches, special considerations apply. The Catholic Church recognizes as valid, but not licit, a marriage of a Catholic to an Orthodox in an Orthodox church *even if* the proper dispensations have not been granted by the Catholic's ordinary. On the other hand, Orthodox Canon Law will recognize the validity of the marriage of an Orthodox Christian only if it is performed by an Orthodox priest.

3. For a fuller explanation of the marriage of Catholics and non-Catholics, see the section on Mixed Marriage in the Marriage section of the manual.

**K. Procedures**

Anyone can be brought into an ecclesiastical court (canon 1408). For example, anyone can begin the annulment process; he or she does not have to be Catholic.

**L. Blessings**

*Blessings, to be imparted especially to Catholics, can also be given to catechumens and even to non-Catholics unless a church prohibition precludes this (canon 1170).*

**M. Penalties**

Non-Catholics are not subjects of church penalties.

**N. Interfaith Matters**

1. Vatican and NCCB statements call for great sensitivity in our preaching regarding Jews and Judaism. These papal and episcopal statements are available from the Office of Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs.

## **XIV.REGIONAL SCHOOLS: SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION & CELEBRATION**

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These norms were issued for the Diocese of Rockville Centre on June 29, 1992. They were prepared by the Office of Catechesis and Worship, in collaboration with the Department of Education and the Office of Regional School Planning. Questions can be directed to any of these offices.

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### **A. Theological Foundation**

A diocese constitutes a particular church in which the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church of Christ is truly present and operative. This particular church is constituted by the union of local parish churches with the diocesan bishop. Sacramental preparation is the task of the entire local Church, that is, the Diocese and its parishes.

As a general rule, a parish is to be territorial, that is, it embraces all the Christian faithful within a certain territory. the parish is the center of the spiritual and sacramental life, and the parish community is the natural community setting for initiation into the sacraments, upbringing in the faith, and the development of the Christian personality. In fulfilling this task, the local Church makes use of the elements of prayer, worship, education and Christian service.

Our children belong to various communities which educate and initiate them, including their family or household, school and parish. while the family is the primary teacher, and the Catholic school religious education program may offer additional religious instruction, it is the parish worshipping community which is the appropriate setting for sacramental initiation and celebration. First Penance, First Eucharist and Confirmation are to be celebrated in the parish. The parish community ought to lead the children and their parents/guardians through a special sacramental catechesis and celebration.

[References: *The Code of Canon Law* (canon 518); *Congregation for Divine Worship* (August, 1970); *Readiness for the Sacraments* (Diocese of Rockville Centre, 1989).]

**B. Guidelines**

**1. Remote Preparation**

For our children preparing for the reception of First Penance, First Eucharist, or Confirmation, their religious instruction within either a Catholic school religious education program or a parish religious education program will follow the curriculum and educational materials approved for either setting. There is no need for the parish to duplicate this instruction.

Considerations: In the catechesis in preparation for the reception of a particular sacrament, there is no need for the use of identical educational materials.

**2. Immediate Preparation**

In addition, a parish sacramental preparation program of a least several sessions ought to bring together the Catholic school, private school, and public school children with their parents/guardians.

Considerations:

- a) The parish based sacramental preparation program ought to involve such things as liturgical celebrations, parent meetings, days of prayer, acts of service, and so on.
- b) Great care should be taken to ensure that these sessions do not conflict with the regular Catholic school religious education program or the parish religious education program. This may call for collaboration on the part of pastors, principals, and directors of religious education/catechetical leaders.
- c) The parish preparation program for the reception of a sacrament should be clearly communicated by the parish to families, school, and religious education program.

**3. Celebration**

The children's first reception of a sacrament is to take place in their parish.

Considerations

- a) The actual celebration of First Penance, First Eucharist, or Confirmation takes place in the individual's parish.
- b) Later celebrations of Penance or Eucharist may take place within the Catholic school religious education program or the parish religious education program.

## **XV.SACRAMENTAL REGISTERS**

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This section is an overview on sacramental registers which are to be maintained in every parish. For further details, consult the section on “Record-keeping” for each sacrament.

---

### **A. Required Registers**

Each parish is to have the following registers (see canon 535, §1):

1. Register of Catechumens
2. Baptism Register
3. Register of Reception into Full Communion
4. Confirmation Register
5. First Communion Register
6. Marriage Register
7. Sick Call Register
8. Death Register

### **B. Entering Information**

1. The information should be printed clearly and accurately.
2. It should be entered in a timely fashion (e.g., soon after the celebration of the sacrament).
3. The minister who celebrates the sacrament is to ensure that the information has been entered. The minister does not have to do this personally.
4. The *signature* of the minister ensures that the information has indeed been entered. However, the signature is not a canonical requirement.



**C. Confidentiality**

1. The sacramental registers are to be used by the pastor and those to whom he gives permission to enter information or create certificates.
2. Others do not have access to the registers (see canon 535, §4); they are confidential. For example, the original baptismal information may have been changed by a member of the family who has not shared the change with the person. When in doubt, consult the Chancellor's Office.

**D. Changes in the Register**

1. With the permission of the pastor, simple changes may be made. For example, the correct spelling of a name.
2. All other changes are facilitated by the Chancellor's Office. Consult the section of the manual which pertains to the change to be made (e.g., for Adoptions, Legal Change of Name, see General Norms for Baptism and RCIA).
3. The change is made by first *crossing out* the information to be changed. **White-out** is not used. The new information is placed above the old.

**E. Storage**

The registers are to be stored in a safe place, e.g., locked safe. The place should be protected from fire.

**F. Duplicate**

A duplicate of the register should be maintained in case of disaster. Usually this takes the form of a *card file*. A microfilm copy could be stored in another building (as disaster protection). Consult the

Chancellor's Office and Diocesan Archivist for suggestions about duplicate copies.

However, when issuing a sacramental certificate, information should be taken from the entry as found in the register.

**G. Computer Records**

Parishes may keep sacramental records on computer. However, a *written register* is also to be maintained.

**H. Visitation of the Dean and *Visum* Stamp**

Each year the dean visits the parish and checks the registers, marking each page with a *visum* stamp (see canons 535, §4 and 555, §1, 3°). The parish will be furnished with a questionnaire before the dean visits.

**I. Baptism: Required Information**

1. person's last name, first and middle names
2. date and place of birth
3. date of baptism
4. parents:
  - a) father's first and last name
  - b) mother's first and maiden name
  - c) if there is a question of paternity or the proper name of the child, acquire a birth certificate so that the civil and church records agree
  - d) consult section on Adoption, if necessary.
5. maximum of two sponsors of diverse sexes
6. notation of "Christian witness" placed under the godparent's name when appropriate
7. officiant's name
8. Remarks Column: protocol number for adoption case, when appropriate. Later, other sacramental information will be entered

**J. Confirmation: Required Information**

1. first and last name of person
2. names of parents
3. church of baptism with complete date
4. sponsor(s)
5. name of officiant and date
6. notation “c. 884.1” if a priest has been granted the faculty to confirm

**K. Marriage: Required Information**

1. names of bride and groom: first and last, middle initial
2. addresses: number, street, town, state
3. date of marriage
4. parents’ names (father’s full name and mother’s maiden name)
5. the religion of information for both parties. If unbaptized, note religion, e.g., Jewish, Moslem, etc.)
6. names of both witnesses
7. officiant
8. Remark’s Column: protocol numbers of dispensations, permissions, annulments, defect of form, validation or sanation
9. The Catholic’s church of baptism is to be notified.



# SECTION II

## CHURCH MINISTRIES

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## **I. GUIDELINES FOR PARISH CATECHETICAL LEADERS**

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These guidelines may be obtained in pamphlet form from the Office of Catechesis.

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### **A. Introductory Letter of Bishop McGann**

Pastoral conditions in the Church today demand our renewed efforts in catechesis. We are in need of re-evangelization; we are in need of a faith that is conscious, living and active; we need to hear God's word and respond with generous hearts. Catechesis challenges us as individuals and as a community to lead lives that witness to the Gospel and our Lord Jesus Christ. Catechesis leads us to worship and service. Involving initiation, education and formation, catechesis is a lifelong process touching God's people at all stages of life: the young and the old; children and adult; single or married; male or female. Catechesis is a primary task of the Church. All the baptized have a right to catechesis and we have a sacred duty to provide it.

These guidelines reflect our concern for quality catechesis which is at the heart of a parish's formation efforts. We ask that no effort be spared to give catechesis the resources necessary to accomplish its important mission. It is our hope that these guidelines will assist parishes in the selection of catechetical leaders with outstanding human and Christian qualities and that catechetical leaders will find in them a recognition and affirmation of their important and necessary role in the mission of the Church.

We are grateful for all that you have done and continue to do to make our Lord Jesus known and loved. Together let us reaffirm our belief in the excellence of the Christian message and its power to transform lives.

### **B. Introduction**

*The future of humanity lies in the hands of those who are strong enough to provide coming generations with reasons for living and hoping.*  
(*Gaudium et spes*, n. 31)

1. In its 1980 statement on DREs, the National Conference of Diocesan Directors (NCDD) describes the DRE as the following:

*Someone with a master's degree in theology, religious education, or an approved equivalent, and at least*

*three years of administrative or teaching experience, who has demonstrated skills in organization, and who is a professional, salaried, full-time member of the parish staff.*

2. “This remains an accurate vision for DREs, setting a standard for professional competence. The title ‘director of religious education’ is itself descriptive, indicating knowledge and skills in administration and education, with specific expertise in the religious and theological resources necessary for handing on the Catholic Christian tradition.” (*DRE Yesterday Today Tomorrow*, NCEA/NCDD)
3. **The Nature of the Profession of Catechetical Leader**  
God speaks to the human community through God's word and through the events of daily life. Catechesis is a form of the ministry of the Word, the art of mediating God's meaning to human experiences. Catechesis as a ministry of the word is the action by which God's Word is proclaimed and interpreted. The catechetical leader seeks to find ways to draw attention to this dialogue and shed light upon it in an effort to foster the formation and transformation of persons. Each of us is called to develop programs and processes which aim to teach as Jesus taught, summoning forth fundamental experiences and showing the relationship between them and the message of salvation. We must always keep before us the fundamental tasks of catechesis: to proclaim Christ's message; to participate in efforts to develop community; to lead people to worship and prayer; and to motivate them to serve others.
4. **Philosophy of Parish Religious Education**  
In order for a catechetical leader to effectively function, he or she must know the philosophy of religious education of the parish. Where none exists, it is the responsibility of the pastor, the catechetical leader, the pastoral council and/or the religious education board to formulate a philosophy which clearly sets up goals and priorities which may guide a catechetical leader in developing programs. Having such a philosophy enables a parish to select the person best suited to carry out its vision of religious



education - whether that be a master teacher, a scholarly theologian, an adult educator, an administrator, etc.

### **C. Qualifications of a Catechetical Leader**

Below are some qualities which the ideal catechetical leader would possess. We are aware that no one person can fully possess all of these areas of competency. Yet all are necessary to some degree. Most people will have strength in one or more of these areas. The qualifications which a person needs depend upon the assigned responsibilities. Each parish will therefore look for a catechetical leader with slightly differing qualifications, depending upon what that parish has determined as its needs.

#### **1. Attitudinal and Spiritual Qualities**

- a) *Living Faith:* a person of living faith convinced of the importance of the Gospel and committed to the Roman Catholic Church and her teaching mission.
- b) *Community Builder:* the ability to help form a faith community which can guide the Christian community along the way of mature Christian faith.
- c) *Balanced:* in one's personal life, possessing maturity, prudence, patience and tact.
- d) *Dedicated:* to the value of excellence in catechetics and sincerely desirous of engaging in this type of parish ministry.
- e) *Open:* committed to participation in programs of ongoing professional and spiritual formation.
- f) *Pastoral:* sensitive to the "total parish," an approach which includes a unique pastoral attitude to all.
- g) *Global:* committed to further developing in the parish community an awareness of its role in the global community.
- h) *Relational:* capable of relating to people in a relaxed and confident manner, respecting differences, flexible, open to new insights and directions.
- i) *Communicator:* able to express his/her ideas in a creative and enthusiastic way.
- j) *Collaborator:* able to work with and support parish staff members and other catechetical leaders on deanery and vicariate levels.

**D. Titles and Qualifications of Catechetical Leaders**

1. **DRE** - Director of Religious Education
  - a) A graduate degree in Theology or Religious Education; and responsibility for the administration of the entire program or a significant segment of the program.
  - b) DREs are to remain aware of current trends and emphases in religious education by pursuing theological studies, in-service education, workshops and seminars.
2. **CRE** - Coordinator of Religious Education
  - a) A Bachelor's degree in Religious Studies or Theology; and responsibility for administration of entire program or for particular areas and/or levels.
  - b) CREs are to remain aware of current trends and emphases in religious education by pursuing theological studies, in-service education, workshops and seminars.
3. **ARE** - Administrator of Religious Education
  - a) A non-degreed person, responsible for the administration of a religious education program or a segment thereof. Experience in volunteer teaching and/or general parish work will be helpful.
  - b) AREs are expected to have Basic certification and are encouraged to continue their education and formation through such programs as our Diocesan Religious Studies Program (advanced and specialist certification), Pastoral Formation Institute, the Pastoral Institute of the Diocese of Brooklyn, etc. Where possible, AREs are urged to obtain a B.A. in theology or religious studies.

**E. Educational Competence**

1. **DRE** -possesses the educational competence to teach basic and advanced courses, and provide adult education, parent education and catechist formation.
2. **CRE** -possesses the educational competence to teach the basic course, and provide some adult education, parent education and catechist formation.
3. **ARE** -possesses the educational background to seek out qualified persons to teach basic and advanced courses, catechist formation, parent education and adult education.

**F. Administrative Competence**

Catechetical leaders are administrators competent to:

1. Make decisions and assume responsibilities
2. Plan and conduct meetings
3. Develop reports, policies and goals
4. \*Recruit and train personnel for programs
5. Organize and maintain a religious education office
6. Develop and monitor a budget
7. See that curricula and activities are implemented for adults, adolescents and children
8. \*Implement, adapt and infuse approved diocesan guidelines (for example - sacraments, peace and justice, family perspective.)
9. Help to create a spirit of collaboration among Catholic school faculty and religious education personnel
10. \*Plan and implement evaluation procedures
11. Oversee record keeping as required by the diocese and parish
12. Assess abilities of personnel and delegate tasks accordingly
13. Work in cooperation with the pastor, the deanery, the vicariate and the Offices of Catechesis

14. Manage conflicts

(\* NOTE: In these areas, an ARE will need to seek the assistance of a qualified DRE/CRE or staff member.)

**G. Diocesan Guidelines for Employment**

1. Duties and Obligations of the Catechetical Leader

As stated previously, a parish should be clear about its goal in hiring a catechetical leader. It is important that the parish, the pastor and the catechetical leader are each aware of the others' expectations and what may reasonably be accomplished. This should take the form of a written job description which states the specific responsibilities of the catechetical leader, e.g., grade level(s), catechist formation, sacramental preparation, parent education, adult education, etc. Matters of daily administration which are for the catechetical leader's professional discretion, e.g., the number of catechist's meetings, are not part of this written statement.

2. Contract

To foster a good working relationship, it is important that the catechetical leader and the pastor negotiate and arrive at a mutual agreement concerning the terms of employment including responsibilities, salaries and benefits. This agreement should be set down in a written contract and signed by both parties. The following sections, #3 and #4, list areas to be negotiated at the local level. For your convenience, these guidelines also include sample contracts for Lay and Religious employees (cf. Appendices A and B). The pastor, the catechetical leader, and the Office of Catechesis is each to retain a copy.

3. Compensation

- a) *Religious Cash Compensation and Benefits:* as set by inter-diocesan stipend which is approved by the Dioceses of Brooklyn and Rockville Centre. Contact Vicars for Religious regarding partial stipend policy.
- b) *Lay Cash Compensation:* suggested salary ranges are published each year by Office of Catechesis.

The following *criteria* should be considered for negotiation in the original employment process, for yearly increments, and for contract renewal:

- (1) **Cost of Living:** refers to an increase based on the rate of inflation.
  - (2) **Merit:** in view of the catechetical leader's capability, creativity, and effectiveness.
  - (3) **Supervisory Responsibility:** the implementation of catechetical programs may require other salaried professionals, para-professionals and volunteers to be accountable to the catechetical leader. The number of such personnel is to be considered as part of the criteria in determining salary.
  - (4) **Additional Skills:** it is becoming increasingly helpful to speak a second language, to be computer literate, to possess musical or artistic abilities, etc. Such skills should be considered in salary determinations.
  - (5) **Years of Experience:** refers to the number of years of service.
  - (6) **Education and Formation:** formal preparation, degrees in preparation for ministry.
- c) *Lay Noncash Benefits:* all employees working 20 or more hours a week are entitled to the diocesan benefits: pension, health care, \$1,000,000 major medical wraparound, dental and life insurance. All employees receive mandated benefits of disability and worker's compensation.

#### 4. Conditions of Employment

The following areas should be discussed and agreed upon. Where appropriate, the policy for diocesan employees is stated as an example.

- a) *Number of Hours of Employment:* at the Pastoral Center, the professional work week is thirty-five hours.
- b) *Number of Sick Days:* Pastoral Center employees receive 12 sick days per year. These are accumulated at the rate of one per month with a maximum accumulation of 60 days.

- c) *Vacation and Days Off for Holy Days and Holidays:* The professional staff of the Pastoral Center receive, on the average, four weeks vacation. The number of holidays varies each year due to changes in the calendar. A list may be obtained from the Office of Catechesis.
- d) *Equivalent Time Off (ETO):* At the Pastoral Center, overtime is not compensated in cash but equivalent time off is given for work which exceeds the minimum work week.
- e) *Conferences and Other Meetings:* Catechetical leaders are expected to update themselves by attendance at diocesan-sponsored conferences, workshops and study days. Some parishes include conference and travel expenses in their religious education budget; others provide a specific amount for the continuing education of their staffs or both.
- f) *Travel expenses:* If there is occasion for extraordinary travel, consideration might be given to the reimbursement of travel in fulfillment of professional responsibilities, i.e., a mileage allowance. The Pastoral Center uses the mileage allowance permitted by the I.R.S. This does not include ordinary travel to and from work.

## **H. Procedures**

### **1. Applying for Employment**

- a) Prospective catechetical leaders must have completed an application for employment with the Diocesan Office of Catechesis. In order to provide some standard of competence, parishes should not hire until an applicant's professional qualifications have been approved.
- b) A resume should accompany the application and include the following:

- (1) present status
- (2) education, theology and religious education background
- (3) teaching experience
- (4) administrative experience
- (5) special areas of competence
- (6) experience related to parish ministry
- (7) references
- (8) other pertinent information

- c) An interview conducted by the Office of Catechesis is required before a catechetical leader will be recommended to parishes for employment.
- d) Catechetical leaders and pastors should be familiar with diocesan guidelines when negotiating a contract or work agreement.
- e) Upon completion of the above, the Office of Catechesis will make referrals to parishes and applicants.

2. Contract Renegotiation and Renewal

The line of accountability of the catechetical leader is to be clearly specified, and the criteria upon which an evaluation will be made are to be stated in the light of the general purpose and specific responsibilities for which the catechetical leader has been employed. Annual evaluations are to be maintained in the employee's personnel file. The timeline below is based on the fact that the usual contract period is from September to August.

November	evaluation
	opportunity for corrective steps if necessary.
February/March	contract and salary negotiation
April/May	contract signed

3. Resolution of Conflicts

Disagreements will arise in human relationships. The Office of Catechesis is available to assist in the resolution of conflicts. If a resolution is not possible, the conciliation and arbitration service of the diocesan Due Process Committee may be helpful.

4. Termination Notice

The employment agreement may be terminated, by either party, on giving thirty days' notice in writing. This protects the "employment-at-will" status of the agreement as provided by New York State law. Either party, employer or employee, can terminate the Agreement at any time without having to state the reasons for termination. If the employer terminates, it will not be legally necessary (although it may be pastorally advisable) to continue paying the employee's salary; if the employee terminates, it will not be necessary to find a replacement.



**I. Sample Form: *Evaluation Form of the Catechetical Leader by the Pastor***

<b>SAMPLE</b> - after completion, discuss with Catechetical Leader
--

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Parish:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Town:** \_\_\_\_\_

*Please comment on the effectiveness of the Catechetical Leader as one who:*

1. Fosters spiritual growth within the parish community

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. Demonstrates positive skills in interpersonal relationships

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. Communicates with and supports the pastor and other staff members

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

4. Fulfills responsibilities as outlined in job description, please be specific

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

5. Areas of strength

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

6. Areas needing growth

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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/S/ \_\_\_\_\_  
Catechetical Leader (date)

/S/ \_\_\_\_\_  
Pastor (date)

**J. Sample Form: *Self-evaluation Form by Catechetical Leader***

<b>SAMPLE</b> - after completion, discuss with Pastor
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**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Parish:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Town:** \_\_\_\_\_

*Please comment on your effectiveness as a catechetical leader as one who:*

1. Fosters spiritual growth within the parish community

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2. Demonstrates positive skills in interpersonal relationships

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3. Communicates with and supports the pastor and other staff members

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4. Fulfills responsibilities as outlined in job description, please be specific

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5. Areas of strength

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6. Areas needing growth

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7. Receives good communications and support from parish staff

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/S/ \_\_\_\_\_  
Catechetical Leader (date)

/S/ \_\_\_\_\_  
Pastor (date)

**K. Sample Contracts**

Contract samples for *Lay Catechetical Leader*, *Religious Catechetical Leader* are available from the Office of Catechesis.

## **II. CATECHETICAL SERVICE AWARDS**

### **A. Requirements**

#### **1. Pope John XXIII Award**

The **Pope John XXIII Award** was instituted in 1991 by the Most Reverend John R. McGann, Bishop of Rockville Centre, in honor of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the closing of the Second Vatican Council. It honors those who have contributed **twenty-five years** of outstanding volunteer service in the catechetical ministry.

#### **2. St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Award**

The **St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Award** was instituted in 1982 by the Most Reverend John R. McGann, Bishop of Rockville Centre, in honor of the silver anniversary of the diocese. It honors those who have contributed **twenty years** of outstanding volunteer service in the catechetical ministry.

#### **3. St. Pius X Award**

The **St. Pius X Award** was adopted by the National Diocesan Directors of Religious Education. It is awarded by the Most Reverend John R. McGann, Bishop of Rockville Centre, to those who have contributed **ten years** of outstanding volunteer service in the catechetical ministry.

#### **4. Kerygma Award**

The **Kerygma Award** is granted by the Most Reverend John R. McGann, Bishop of Rockville Centre, to those who have served in the catechetical ministry for a least **three years after receiving the diocesan Advanced Theology Certificate**.

#### **5. Distinguished Service Award**

The **Distinguished Service Award**, instituted in 1991, is presented by the Office of Catechesis to professional catechetical leaders in recognition of ten, twenty, and twenty-five years of service in the catechetical ministry.

**B. Religious Studies Program Certification Requirements**

1. **Basic Theology Certification** will be granted upon completion of the Basic Theology Course. This course provides an introduction to and a survey of recent developments in Scripture, Christology, Ecclesiology (Church), Liturgy and Morality. In its entirety, it consists of sixty hours of study to be completed in one to three years. Each of the six units is ten hours (usually 5 sessions, 2 hours each session) and a minimum attendance of eight hours is required for each unit. Formal registration is required.
2. **Advanced Theology Certification** will be granted to those who:
  - a) fulfill requirements for admission to the advanced program by having obtained the Basic Theology Certificate or its equivalent to be determined by the diocesan Religious Studies Program Coordinator.
  - b) complete six advanced courses of ten hours each, offered or approved by the Office of Catechesis. Of the six courses, three must be in the areas of *Christology, Ecclesiology, and Psychology*.
  - c) Formal registration, at least eight hours attendance, and satisfactory completion of assignments are required.
3. **Catechetical Specialist Certification** will be granted to those who:
  - a) fulfill requirements for admission to the specialist program by having obtained the Basic Theology and Advanced Theology Certificates or their equivalents, to be determined by the diocesan Religious Studies Program Coordinator.
  - b) complete six advanced courses of ten hours each, offered or approved by the Office of Catechesis. Of the six courses, three must be in the areas of *Morality, Liturgy and Methodology*.

- c) Formal registration, at least eight hours attendance, and satisfactory completion of assignments are required.
- 4. remain active in parish catechetical programs for at least two years after having received the Advanced Theology Certificate.

**C. Religious Studies Program Instructor Credentials**

- 1. **Basic courses:** Instructor must have a bachelor's degree in theology or religious studies, and follow Basic Theology Course outlines issued by the Office of Catechesis.
- 2. **Advanced courses:** Instructor must have a graduate degree or its equivalent in theology, religious studies, or subject area, and submit an Advanced Course Outline and bibliography to the Office of Catechesis.
- 3. All instructors must file an Instructor Data Sheet with the Office of Catechesis.

### **III. COORDINATOR OF PARISH SOCIAL MINISTRY**

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Some parishes maintain an *Office of the Parish Outreach Coordinator*. For a job description of the Outreach Coordinator, please consult **The Parish Outreach Commentary** available at Catholic Charities, 90 Cherry Lane, Hicksville, NY 11801. See also the “Catholic Charities” section of the manual below.

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A. Vision of the Ministry:

Rooted in the servant ministry of Jesus, the Coordinator of Parish Social Ministry values and supports the inherent dignity and interdependence of all people. This is an opportunity to minister to the needs of the most vulnerable in our society while developing parish leadership in an effort to move beyond charity to justice. The primary responsibility of this portion is to **coordinate** the various aspects of this ministry from direct service and public policy advocacy through empowerment/community organizing.

B. Responsibilities and Tasks:

1. Collaborates with the Pastor, under his supervision, and with members of the parish staff, integrating his or her area of responsibility with the overall mission of the parish.
2. Prepares short and long-term PSM plans by conducting a social analysis and goal-setting plan for parish-based social ministry.
3. Identifies, trains and supports leaders who form core groups for components of PSM, namely; the Public Policy Education Network, Long Island Congregations, Campaign for Human Development, Justice and Peace and Outreach at the parish level.
4. Administers funds and contributions related to PSM.
5. Collaborates with appropriate ministers in parish to provide an opportunity to integrate PSM in the liturgical and educational life of the parish and keep PSM consistently rooted in the Eucharist and Gospel.
6. Develops a cooperative partnership with Catholic Charities Parish Social Ministry Center and the direct service

components of Catholic Charities; and attends trainings and convenings offered by Catholic Charities.

7. Maintains contact with peers through Diocesan, Vicariate, Deanery and cluster structures.
8. Assists Parish Catechetical Leader in educating parish staff and parishioners about developments in Catholic Social Teaching.
9. Serves as a liaison to and collaborates with civic/community, legislative groups and other religious organizations.
10. Is visibly present to other parish groups and at major parish events, and is attuned to the living faith and real concerns of the parishioners.
11. Evaluates and revises PSM efforts when needed.
12. In addition, effective functioning in this ministry requires “street smarts”, empathy for those in need, an attitude of respect for their dignity, and a firm personal commitment to justice.

**C. Qualifications:**

1. BA in Social Services (Human Relations, Social Work, Psychology or Sociology)
2. Practical knowledge of Human Services agencies and programs
3. Knowledge of Catholic Social Teachings
4. Knowledge of Institutional Catholic Church
5. Knowledge of the dynamics of parish life
6. Ability to identify and train leaders
7. Good communication skills
8. Clear understanding of the difference between direct service and social action
9. Community organizing background is a plus



#### **IV. GUIDE FOR PASTORAL ASSOCIATES/PASTORAL MINISTERS**

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The Senate of Priests reviewed this Guide in the spring of 1996, and recommends that it be available to pastors and parish staffs for their planning and consideration of parish pastoral ministries. Bishop McGann accepted the Senate of Priests' recommendation regarding the *nomenclature* used in parishes in the Diocese of Rockville Centre:

“Associate Pastor” is used solely for *priests* who have been assigned to the office of parochial vicar by the bishop.

“Associate pastor” has been the title used in this diocese, rather than the canonical term “parochial vicar.” The office of parochial vicar “entails the full care of souls, for whose fulfillment the exercise of the priestly order is required” (canon 150). In order to avoid confusion among our people, “associate pastor” will continue to designate a *priest* assigned to this particular office.

Other appropriate nomenclature is to be used to describe those who work in parish ministries, to be determined by the pastor with the parish staff.

In its discussion, the Senate of Priests urged that nomenclature be as specific as possible. Examples in the Diocese of Rockville Centre include “Pastoral Minister for Small Communities,” “Pastoral Minister for the Bereaved,” “Pastoral Associate for Liturgy,” “Pastoral Associate for Prayer and Spirituality.” Generic phrases are also used such as “Pastoral Associate” or “Pastoral Minister.”

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##### **A. Preamble**

This Guide was developed by a group of pastoral ministers/pastoral associates. It is meant to provide assistance in developing a specific role description for a pastoral associate/pastoral minister, taking into consideration the gifts of the minister and the needs of the parish.

##### **B. General Profile**

A person who serves the parish faith community as a pastoral minister/pastoral associate and who by formation, education and experience is qualified for this role, may be lay or religious, a deacon, single or married. The pastoral minister/pastoral associate brings to the parish competence and expertise which find expression in a wide range of services which are both pastoral and professional.

He/she should be a person of strong faith, a witness to the Good News of Jesus Christ, blessed with a deep love of the Catholic Church, knowledgeable in Church teachings and committed to the Church's mission. By his/her life, attitude and ministry the minister can enrich the parish community even as the minister is enriched through the gifts of those with and for whom the minister works and serves.

**C. Role Description**

As an integral member of the parish staff, the pastoral minister/pastoral associate appropriately participates in needs assessment, decision-making, planning and the implementation of parish ministries and operations. The pastoral minister/pastoral associate has responsibility for broad pastoral care in the parish. The details of these duties are determined by the pastor with the parish staff.

**D. Personal and Spiritual Qualities**

1. Personal

- a) has a healthy self-image, accepting gifts and limitations
- b) possesses leadership ability
- c) is cooperative and flexible
- d) takes initiative
- e) is mature, emotionally stable, and self-confident
- f) manifests hospitality, compassion, sensitivity and justice
- g) communicates well with a wide spectrum of people
- h) possesses a sense of humor
- i) evokes the potential of others
- j) takes responsible care of self, personally and professionally.

2. Spiritual

- a) deep faith in the Lord and openness to the Spirit
- b) evident witness of a Catholic way of life
- c) a commitment to ongoing personal conversion, discipleship, and continuing formation

- d) having a well-developed sense of Church, recognizing its human and divine elements

## **E. Skills and Competencies**

### **1. Pastoral Skills**

- a) recognizes, addresses, and assists in shaping the parish vision
- b) understands and respects the cultural identity, milieu, language and differences of the parish/neighborhood
- c) recognizes and works to dispel prejudices within the community
- d) ministers to the sick, dying and bereaved
- e) recognizes social justice issues and local community systems
- f) preaches effectively when canonically and pastorally appropriate and leads communal prayer

### **2. Administrative Skills**

- a) acts collaboratively
- b) makes decisions and assumes responsibility for delegated tasks
- c) effectively communicates and is skilled in public relations
- d) facilitates long-range planning and supervises personnel
- e) is informed about finances and sensitive to budgetary concerns

### **3. Academic Competence**

The pastoral minister/pastoral associate should have the level of education considered necessary for effectiveness in the general and specific aspects of ministry. Ordinarily this would include a Master's degree in Catholic theology, pastoral ministry, or a related field, or studying for such a degree. These academic requirements should not be seen to impact negatively on a pastoral minister/pastoral associate currently serving effectively and involved in ongoing education relative to ministry.

**F. Responsibilities and Tasks**

The work of the pastoral minister/pastoral associate will embrace a wide variety of needs of the parish community. The specific ministry of the pastoral minister/pastoral associate will be determined by changing situations, personal qualification, and unexpected events. The ministry may include some of the following:

1. Administration
  - a) collaborates closely with the pastor and with the other members of the parish staff; when appropriately delegated, may represent the pastor.
  - b) collaborates in the overall process of parish administration, including needs assessment, pastoral planning, decision-making, implementation, financial management, etc.
  - c) administers delegated parish programs
  - d) acts as director of one or more of the parish ministries as needed
  - e) serves as a pastoral generalist, able to function in a variety of specific ministries when appropriate, e.g., supervises ministry interns, serves a mentor for part-time ministries, etc.
  - f) relates to cluster, deanery, vicariate, and diocesan structures
  - g) participates in civic and ecumenical activities
2. Worship
  - a) leads communal prayer, e.g., Communion services, wake and cemetery services, ecumenical gatherings, etc.
  - b) preaches when pastorally and canonically appropriate
  - c) assists in the preparation for sacraments
  - d) assists in planning parish sacramental and liturgical celebrations in collaboration with other appropriate parish personnel
3. Education/Formation
  - a) fosters the faith growth of all members of the parish.
  - b) contributes to the initial formation and ongoing development of various ministers and parish groups

- c) interprets authentic Church teaching and Church discipline in a responsible manner
  - d) collaborates with other staff members (e.g., DRE, principal, youth minister) in assisting the ministry of children, youth and adult religious education
4. Pastoral Services
- a) provides personal presence at parish events, e.g., at the Church during the hours of Sunday Masses and spends time with parishioners, especially at important moments of their lives
  - b) participates in the pastoral care of the sick in homes and/or hospitals in collaboration with other appropriate personnel
  - c) provides spiritual leadership, with appropriate training, within the parish for individuals and groups, e.g., renewal programs, small Christian communities, retreats, spiritual direction, pastoral counseling
  - d) assists in ministering to persons in crisis, e.g., the sick and the grieving, the divorced and separated, widows and widowers, and emergency requests for assistance
  - e) facilitates the application and/or dispensation process for couples regarding marriage and annulment procedures to the Tribunal and Chancellor's Office
  - f) assists in developing social consciousness among the staff and parishioners, and responds to the needs of the poor and victimized in community

**G. On-going Formation**

- a) commitment to ongoing formation and education
- b) continuing education and training, appropriate for the ministry needs of the specific parish
- c) involvement in spiritual direction, annual retreat, and other on-going formation opportunities
- d) participation in appropriate workshops, seminars and programs.

## **V. PASTORAL FORMATION INSTITUTE**

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The chief work of the Office of Pastoral Formation is the creation and ongoing administration of the two-to-three-year process of leadership training called the *Pastoral Formation Institute*. The second major work of the office is the creation, administration, and evaluation of a wide variety of training and formation programs, called *Collaborative Courses* because they are formed in collaboration with many diocesan offices and agencies. These are offered in a short-term format of one day workshops, or five, six, or ten week courses, for parish ministers and other interested adults. The recently designed Leadership Training for Marriage Preparation is an example of such a collaborative project.

The PFI is a three-year educational and formational process which emphasizes the inner journey of faith as well as the study of theology and psychology, with skill training for particular ministries. The intention is to train volunteer ministers, but in some cases graduates have been hired as staff members in the parishes.

By June, 1996, nearly one thousand lay men and women were graduates of the Pastoral Formation Institute, coming from 124 parishes of the diocese and 10 parishes of the Diocese of Brooklyn. In addition, the Sisters of St. Joseph, the Sisters of St. Dominic, and the Sisters of Mercy send women in initial formation to the Pastoral Formation Institute, as well as sponsoring older sisters to complete the PFI as a renewal experience. Men considering the diaconate apply to Pastoral Formation first and complete two years before being screened for admission to diaconal studies.

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### **A. Admission to the Pastoral Formation Institute**

1. Once a year in January a letter requesting nominations of laypersons to the Pastoral Formation Institute is mailed to each pastor, associate pastor, deacon, Director of Religious Education, Director of Parish Outreach, Diocesan Department Head, religious residence, etc., requesting that these leadership people nominate lay people in their parishes or agencies to the Pastoral Formation Institute.

Pastors and parish staff persons are encouraged to meet together to discuss possible nominees. It is also recommended that parish staff persons meet with selected parishioners to discuss the possibility of their applying to the Institute for formation and skill training, so that they may minister effectively in the parishes on completion of the Pastoral Formation Institute.

All current PFI participants and graduates are also asked to nominate people in writing.

Nominating someone to the PFI does not obligate the pastor to pay tuition from parish funds for that person. That is an individual decision made by a pastor. See #5 under "Tuition" for further comments.

2. The director of the office writes to invite each nominated person to apply to the PFI, naming the person who made the recommendation, and sending an Information Packet about the PFI. The application form found in the packet must be completed and returned, usually by April 1.
3. Individuals may apply on their own without being nominated, and many do, but they still have to obtain a reference from the pastor and one other parish staff person in order to be considered for the Pastoral Formation Institute. All applicants, whether invited by the pastor to apply or not, must have these references. If invited by a diocesan staff person to apply, the references must be from the department head and one other staff person.

In the case where a pastor does not know the applicant, the obtaining of the reference is a good opportunity to become acquainted. It is not necessary that there be an enthusiastic recommendation from the pastor, though such is certainly desirable. It is sufficient if the pastor simply indicates that he has no serious objection to the candidate and will wait and see how he/she develops in the PFI. The reference is often a source of worthwhile information about the applicant which can be used to guide the staff in helping him/her with the process of formation. If a pastor is reluctant to write certain comments, a telephone call to the director will be handled as are all references, in confidence.
4. An interview is scheduled with a member of the interviewing team at a time and place that is convenient to both parties. Interview is conducted, and the interviewer completes the report form which is submitted to the Office of Pastoral Formation.



5. When the individual's file is complete with the written application form, two references, and written report of interview, the screening committee (diocesan staff) reviews each file and decides to :
  - a) accept the candidate
  - b) recommend the candidate re-apply after some basic theological study
  - c) not accept the candidate due to serious deficiencies in more than one of the criteria listed below.
6. Applicants and pastors are informed of the decision of the staff.
7. Persons desiring acceptance to diaconal studies must first satisfactorily complete the two-year process of the Pastoral Formation Institute.

**B. Criteria for Selection of Participants**

Pastors and others who give references to applicants should look for these qualities in the candidates:

1. integrated Christian faith
2. prayer life
3. regular participation in the sacramental life of the Church
4. evidence of respected involvement in Church service
5. readiness for study of scripture and tradition of the Church
6. personal integrity
7. emotional stability
8. stable family life
9. stable employment
10. ability to work collaboratively
11. openness to growth and change
12. tolerance of other points of view than one's own

**C. Admission to Third Year Ministry Leadership Tracks**

1. Screening takes place during a person's second year in the PFI. Consultation is held with the individual, the individual's pastors, instructors and diocesan staff, who together discern the appropriate track for the participant's third year of formation. The choice of track must take into account the needs of the parish and the talents of the individual. A Third Year Track includes course work, three formation weekend, mentoring, a practicum, and intensive communications skills work.
2. Some of the Ministry Leadership Tracks offered at present or in the past are:
  - Small Christian communities
  - Evangelization
  - Youth Ministry
  - Tribunal Associate
  - Pastoral Care of the Sick
  - Prayer Leadership
  - Parish Social Ministry
  - RCIA
  - Prison Ministry
  - Family Ministries
  - Ministry to the Third Age
3. Requests from parishes and the interest of PFI participants determine which tracks are offered each year.

**D. Policies of the Pastoral Formation Institute**

**1. Attendance**

- a) Participants are expected to attend all sessions of the Institute. Excused absences (for work, sickness, extreme weather conditions, extraordinary events) must be made up by attendance at class at another regional center, or by written work assigned by the instructor.
- b) Each participant must attend three formation weekends each year. The office runs approximately 30 weekends each year in order to accommodate conveniently all participants on three weekends.

**2. Participation**

Participants are expected to be active, cooperative, learning members in each session. All are expected to participate, but no one may dominate a class. All written assignments must be completed satisfactorily.

**3. Process for Dismissal**

A person who is a frequent problem in class, who is unable to cooperate with policies and meet standards, may be asked to withdraw. This is done after two warnings and meetings with staff members and the director, and after consultation with the pastor.

**4. Consultation**

- a) Participants must try to maintain a working relationship and ongoing conversation with their pastors, in order to share their formation experience, and to gain advice and direction of future ministry. The Office of Pastoral Formation will hold periodic gatherings to facilitate this process.
- b) *Advisory Boards of Pastors* meet three times a year with the staff of the Office of Pastoral Formation for consultation on matters of importance. The input of these boards is a vital

factor in planning and administration of the work of the office.

**5. Tuition**

- a) Each participant is responsible for payment of tuition. Many parishes choose to share in the cost of tuition with the participant, especially if the pastor expects the participant to minister in the parish upon completion of the Pastoral Formation Institute. Tuition may be paid monthly or twice yearly. Tuition is \$950.00 per year in 1996.
- b) It is recommended that the *parish establish a budget line* for adult formation so that each year a stipulated amount of money is available for tuition for Pastoral Formation participants *who request it*. The money should be divided among a number of participants rather than being given entirely to one person, unless there is only one candidate that year. It is further recommended that the participant pay part of the tuition if possible.

6. **Screening** for admission to *Year III Ministry Training Tracks* takes place during the second year of the Institute. Consultation includes pastors, participants, instructors, and diocesan staff, who together will decide on the appropriate track for the participant's third year of formation. Consult the Office of Pastoral Formation for the updated list and description of the tracks offered for the current year.

**7. Graduation**

Upon completion of the Institute, the participant will receive a certificate from the bishop of the diocese in a Eucharistic Celebration at St. Agnes Cathedral. Pastors present their graduates to the bishop.

**E. Other Offerings of the Office of Pastoral Formation**

**1. Collaborative Formation Programs**

are short term courses developed with other diocesan offices to give further training to graduates of the PFI who are now in ministry in the parishes. These graduates bring other persons on their ministry teams, and also there is considerable interest in these courses from persons who have had no connection

with PFI. Admission is by registration; no screening is required. The Collaborative Courses are becoming a larger part of the office's work as more graduates are in the field.

Since 1989 collaborative courses have been attended by more than 2000 persons, on such subjects as

Compassionate Care (pastoral care of the sick)

Youth Ministry

Prison ministry

Discernment

Scripture Study

Pastoral Council Training

Working with Groups

Ministry of Consolation

Ministering to Persons with AIDS

Spiritual Growth

Medical Ethics

Listening Skills for Ministers

Small Christian Communities Team Workshops

Understanding the Addictive Process

Canonical Issues for Ministers

Understanding the Annulment Process

Marriage Preparation

2. ***InFORMATION*** is the title of the office's magazine published three times yearly, and also the title of the television show hosted by the director of the office and broadcast on Tuesday and Thursday evenings on TeLicare's Channel 25.
3. A **Pastoral Formation Handbook** will be available from the Office of Pastoral Formation.

## **VI. SPECIAL MINISTERS OF THE EUCHARIST**

### **A. Introduction**

#### **1. Documentation:**

The appointment and functioning of Special Ministers of the Eucharist is governed by liturgical law and other ecclesial laws. The principal sources to be consulted are *Eucharisticum Mysterium* (1967), *Immensae Caritatis* (1973), *Dominicae Coenae* (1980), *Inaestimabile Donum* (1980), *Pastoral Care of the Sick* (1984), *This Holy and Living Sacrifice* (1985), and *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* (rev. 1985). Within these laws, in the Diocese of Rockville Centre, the appointment and functioning of Special Ministers of the Eucharist shall be governed by these guidelines which supersede all previous guidelines, and are published with the approval and by the authority of the Most Reverend John R. McGann, Bishop of Rockville Centre, effective 1 October 1986, revised 1 September 1991.

- #### **2.**
- These guidelines describe the procedure to be followed in parishes, and are so worded. Unless otherwise indicated herein or in liturgical or canon law, these policies apply also to other pastoral entities, for example, hospital chaplaincies, religious houses, retreat houses. Thus for the term "pastor," the following may also be substituted, administrator, chaplain, priest-in-charge.

### **B. Selection, Nomination, Training**

#### **1. Selection:**

- ##### **a)**
- Special Ministers of the Eucharist may be used whenever the ordinary ministers of the Eucharist (bishop, priest or deacon) are not available or when the number of communicants demands. In accord with the norms of the instruction *Inaestimabile Donum* (3 April 1980), special ministers are not to be used at a celebration at which a sufficient number of ordinary ministers are present and are able to function.

- b) A determination is to be made in each parish as to the number of ministers needed on a standing basis in order to provide for the liturgical needs of weekend and weekday Masses as well as the pastoral needs of communion to the sick. The pastor is to receive input from the parish staff and appropriate groups, for example, the parish council and the parish liturgy committee, in order to make this determination.
  - c) Factors to be considered in determining the number of ministers include: a sufficient number so that the ministers are not overburdened or impeded from their family obligations; a sufficient number so that communion can be distributed under both kinds; not so many ministers that they rarely have the chance to exercise their ministry. A determination should also be made as to whether ministers will function both in the liturgical setting and in bringing communion to the sick or in only one of these areas.
2. Qualifications:
- a) A suitable candidate for Eucharistic ministry is a practicing Catholic in good standing (e.g. one whose marital status is canonically valid). This person should have a devotion to the Eucharist, and possess the time, health and willingness to serve in this capacity. The candidate must be of good reputation, and his or her appointment should not cause wonderment among the people. Ordinarily, the candidate should be eighteen years of age (or a high school senior) and a resident of the parish. Exceptions to the requirement of residency include someone who has a ministry within the parish, for example, a teacher or religious educator.
  - b) Names of prospective candidates are surfaced by members of the parish staff, by a committee appointed for this purpose, or by an application process. If the latter method is used, it should be clear that screening and approval must take place. This might take the form of a letter of application (in which the candidate expresses the reasons for seeking this ministry and the qualities which recommend him or her) followed by an interview with the pastor or a member of his staff.

3. Nomination:
  - a) When a list of approved candidates is finalized, the *pastor* writes a nominating letter to the bishop. In this letter, he states that there is a need for Special Ministers of the Eucharist and that he judges the candidates to be suitable. This letter must bear the signature of the pastor or administrator. It should also include the formal names of the candidates.
  - b) When the bishop has approved the candidates, the pastor's letter is forwarded to the Diocesan Office of Worship. The Worship Office will notify the pastor by return mail of the next available training day and confirm reservations for the nominees. Reservations cannot be made until the pastor's letter has been approved by the bishop.
4. Training days are scheduled at regular intervals throughout the year. The candidates are required to attend the diocesan training program in order to receive their mandates.

The training program involves two days: the first, required of all those who wish to serve as Special Ministers of the Eucharist includes presentations on the theology of the Eucharist, Eucharistic Spirituality, the liturgical norms which govern the distribution of the sacrament, and a practice session. The second day is designed for those who will be engaged in a ministry to the sick and homebound, and includes presentations on the theology of human sickness, hospital procedures, and visiting the homebound.

5. Commissioning:

After attending the training day the candidates are to be publicly commissioned in their parishes. The ID cards, which serve as a rescript of the mandate are forwarded to the pastor to be presented to the minister. On the appointed day, the ministers are commissioned at Mass using an appropriate rite.



6. Jurisdiction and Transfers:

- a) A special minister is permitted to distribute communion only in the specific place designated on the mandate card. The commission is not universal; it is designed to serve the needs of a particular community. If an extension of jurisdiction or transfer to a different jurisdiction is needed, the pastor can request this by writing to the bishop in the usual way. If the service of a minister is requested outside of his or her place of mandate for a single instance or a short period (for example, the occasion of a wedding), this can be arranged between the two pastors involved. The special minister is *not* to presume this permission.
- b) In cases of emergency, any priest may designate a qualified person to act as a special minister for a single occasion. The minister is to be instructed in the procedure for distributing communion, and normally receives a blessing from the presider.

7. Administration:

- a) A moderator is to be appointed by the pastor to coordinate the work of the ministers. This may be one of the priests, a staff member, or one of the ministers themselves. The moderator should see that the roster of special ministers is kept current, that schedules are arranged and published, and that opportunities are given on a regular basis for ongoing formation in spirituality and theology.
- b) The rescript of the mandate for special ministers states that the commission is valid for a term of three years, until revoked, or unless the minister leaves the parish. Ministers may resign by notifying the pastor. The pastor may terminate the service of the minister for a just cause (for example, scandal, uncooperativeness, failure to fulfill assignments on a habitual basis, etc.).

- c) Parishes should determine a local policy of recommitment to the ministry each year. Under such a plan, the ministers would be asked on an annual basis to indicate their intention to continue serving. This would also allow a natural opportunity for those who wish to discontinue their service to do so, or for the pastor to approach people whose service may have become problematic.
8. Terms:
- a) Special Ministers of the Eucharist are appointed for a term of three years. While parishes are strongly encouraged to provide a yearly recommitment of ministers, each year one vicariate will be involved in the diocesan renewal of terms. The Office of Worship will provide each pastor with a list of those parishioners who are serving as Special Ministers of the Eucharist. Each pastor will be asked to update this list, and discuss with the ministers their renewal for another three year term. Each pastor will be asked to return this amended list to the Office of Worship. Inclusion on the list sent by the pastor will be considered a renewal of the minister's term for another three years.
  - b) If someone fails to participate in the renewal ceremony for one reason or another, this does not mean that they cease to be ministers. Only the completion of the three year term without inclusion on the pastor's list or actual removal causes the minister's appointment to cease.

**C. Liturgical Norms for Special Ministers**

The frequency and scope of the activity of the special minister are to be determined by the pastor (with input from the parish staff) and in light of particular needs.

1. Liturgical Role:

The Special Minister of the Eucharist has a distinct role within the liturgical assembly. This role should not be confused with that of others in the celebration. Thus the special minister may never assist the priest at the altar in the manner of a deacon, and ordinarily should

not act as lector, server, cantor, usher, etc. in the same Mass at which he or she distributes communion.

2. Proper Attire:

- a) Special Ministers of the Eucharist should not wear the liturgical garb of the ordained minister, (that is, the stole). They should be dressed neatly in a way consonant with the dignity of their role (for example coat and tie for a man, suit or dress for a woman.). Good taste and common sense are the best guides in this area. Proper dress should be monitored on the parish level.
- b) In the past, special robes have been worn by ministers, but an inconsistency arises when some members of the laity are vested to perform liturgical ministries while others are not. The diocesan preference is that appropriate street attire be worn by Special Ministers of the Eucharist, as persons who serve the local assembly in one of many ministries.

3. The Minister's Communion:

- a) The ministers may receive communion under both kinds when they participate at a Mass at which they distribute communion. At the breaking of the bread (Lamb of God) they come to the altar and stand in the designated place (alongside or behind the altar). If it is necessary to distribute communion from the reserved sacrament, they may take ciboria from the tabernacle and place them on the altar at this time.
- b) After the communion of the priest, they are communicated by him. Special ministers are not to be given hosts at the breaking of the bread as concelebrants are. They are not to self-communicate, except in the case where communion is distributed outside of Mass and no priest or deacon is present.
- c) At Masses where a minister does not participate in the entire celebration, he or she enters the sanctuary at the breaking of the bread but does not receive the sacrament. Generally, it is

preferable for ministers to attend the Mass in which they distribute communion, and to be given no more than one assignment on a given day.

4. **The Eucharistic Bread:** The minister takes the ciborium and goes to the communicants. Communion stations are arranged according to the layout of the church and the number of people attending the Mass. The minister should be thoroughly familiar with the local practice. As the communicant approaches, the minister takes a host, raises it slightly, and showing it says "The Body of Christ." The communicant replies: "Amen." The communicant will extend either hands or tongue and the host is given accordingly.
  - a) The choice of how one receives the Eucharist, whether in the hand or on the tongue, belongs to the communicant.
  - b) **Communion Under Both Kinds From The Chalice:**  
If there are a number of chalices to be filled during the breaking of the bread, the ministers may assist the deacon or priest in preparing them with consecrated wine from the flagon(s). After their communion the ministers of the cup proceed to their designated places. The minister holds the chalice slightly raised and says, "The Blood of Christ." The communicant answers: "Amen," and taking the chalice drinks from it. The minister should deliver the cup into the communicant's hands and not attempt to tip it. After the communicant has returned the cup, the minister wipes it with the purificator and turns it slightly before presenting it to the next communicant.
  - c) At the end of communion, or if the chalice should run out, the minister returns it to the credence table or the sacristy, according to local practice.
  - d) **Communion Under Both Kinds By Intinction:**

- (1) In this method the host is dipped into the Precious Blood. The minister says, "The Body and Blood of Christ," and places the intincted host onto the communicant's tongue. The intincted host may not be placed in the hands, nor may communicants intinct the host themselves.
- (2) Communion by intinction is accomplished by use of a special vessel which contains both consecrated bread and wine, or by using a separate chalice and ciborium or paten.

5. Purifications:

- a) Due reverence is to be shown to what remains of the sacred species. Any hosts left over are consumed or returned to the tabernacle. Any of the precious blood that remains must be consumed. It may not be poured down the sacrarium or into the ground. Regular monitoring will insure that an overabundance will be a rare occurrence. It will be less likely where communion under both kinds is a normal practice and has been carefully thought out.
- b) At the end of the communion period the altar is cleared. The vessels are purified at the credence table or in the sacristy. It is preferable that this be done after Mass, and responsibility for it should be clearly assigned.
- c) If a fragment of the host adheres to their fingers, the ministers may cleanse them in the ablution cup or in a vessel of water set aside for this purpose. The paten or ciborium is ordinarily wiped with the purificator. The chalices are washed with a small quantity of water which is consumed.
- d) If a host or particle should fall, it is to be picked up reverently. If any of the precious blood spills, the area should be washed and the water poured into the sacrarium.

**D. Pastoral Norms for Communion to the Sick**

1. Organization:
  - a) There should be a parish plan for visiting the sick and bringing them communion. The details of this are arranged at the local level, including referral of incoming communion calls, assignment of a priest and/or minister, when visits are normally made, and a sick- call register which accurately records visits. The sick person should also be informed that the visit of a priest on a regular basis for anointing can be arranged.
2. Pastoral Procedure:
  - a) Prior to beginning eucharistic visits, special ministers might be introduced to sick persons by a priest, religious or other minister who may already know them. The ministers should prepare carefully for their visits. They should familiarize themselves with the rite for communion to the sick *Pastoral Care of the Sick*, revised edition 1983, chapter three.
  - b) Due reverence should be shown to the Eucharist. The *Rite of Pastoral Care of the Sick* (n.74) describes the procedures to be followed. The Eucharist should be carried in a pyx or small container provided by the parish. If possible, a table covered by a cloth should be near the bed or chair of the sick person, where the Eucharist may be placed.
  - c) The minister should obtain the Eucharist from the parish church just prior to the visit and return any remaining hosts just after. To engage in other activities or errands "on the way" to or from a visit while carrying the Eucharist is inappropriate.
  - d) It is most fitting for the minister to bring communion to the sick directly from Mass, especially on Sunday. The host is not to be taken from the tabernacle beforehand, but after communion or after Mass. A recommended procedure is for

the ministers to hand in their pyxes beforehand and have them filled at the altar at communion time, or even after Mass. It is appropriate to have some form of dismissal for the ministers going to their communion calls.

- e) The visitor brings the presence of Christ in his or her person as well as in the eucharistic species. Therefore, it is appropriate to take time to converse with the sick person so that Christ's love and concern may be made known through the human experience of the visit. The minister should listen carefully to the concerns of the sick person. These can later be incorporated into the prayer they share together.
  - f) Since the visit of the minister is an extension of the parish's celebration of the Eucharist, it is desirable that family members or others in the home participate in the prayer when possible. On weekdays, others present can receive the Eucharist with the sick person. On Sundays, however, they should participate in the parish celebration unless it is necessary for them to care for the sick person.
  - g) The sick and the aged are not obligated by the eucharistic fast. This applies also to those who care for them. (Canon 919, §3) When necessary the host may be broken to facilitate the communion of a sick person. Remaining fragments should be consumed by the minister.
  - h) Communion may be given under both kinds or, in extreme circumstances, even under the form of wine only. The directions found in *Pastoral Care of the Sick* (n. 74) are to be followed. The danger of spilling the sacred species will be eliminated by the use of a sick call set constructed for this purpose.
3. Hospitals and Nursing Homes:
- a) Health care institutions such as these will need to develop additional procedures. Eucharistic ministers who are specially appointed or who attend from the local parish or

from another parish by prior arrangement are to follow the directions of the chaplain and the pastoral care staff. They will need to familiarize themselves with the institution's schedule, cooperate with the medical and nursing staff and observe such other procedures as may be appropriate (for example, sterile technique, procedures for patients who are not to take solid food, etc.)

- b) In nursing homes it is necessary to develop a pastoral sense in dealing with senile patients, persons of other faiths, and other cases where the giving of communion is not appropriate. In these cases a friendly word and a short prayer are often the best substitute.
- c) Provision can be made for communal services of the Word with Holy Communion. The ritual for this prayer is to be used, suitably adapted to the pastoral condition of the patients.



# SECTION III

## PRIESTS

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## **I. THE MINISTERIAL INTERNSHIP PROGRAM**

In order to accompany the young priests in this first delicate phase of their life and ministry, it is very opportune, and perhaps even absolutely necessary nowadays, to create a suitable support structure, with appropriate guides and teachers. Here priests can find, in an organized way that continues through their first years of ministry, the help they need to make a good start in their priestly service. Through frequent and regular meetings -- of sufficient duration and held within a community setting, if possible -- they will be assured of having times for rest, prayer, reflection and fraternal exchange. It will then be easier for them, right from the beginning, to give a balanced approach, based on the Gospel, to their priestly life (*Pastores Dabo Vobis*, no. 76)

The first assignment of a Newly Ordained priest is critical, representing the new minister's entrance into full responsibility for God's people and his first experience of himself in this new capacity. Great care is exercised in selecting this first assignment for the Newly Ordained priest.

Beyond the support which is anticipated from the personnel of the parish to which the Newly Ordained has been assigned, the Diocese also requires participation for a two-year period in the Ministerial Internship Program. This Internship Program is supervised by the Director of Priest Personnel. The purpose of this program is to meet the transitional needs of men entering the full time active ministry of Priesthood. Some of these needs are related to issues concerning priestly identity, personal authority, the spiritual and pastoral leadership of others, and ongoing formation and education. The Internship Program is seen as a vehicle wherein the Newly Ordained priest can reflect upon his experience, integrate this experience and further refine and grow in the priesthood. To this purpose there are three components to the Ministerial Internship Program.

These three components are:

### **A. The Mentor**

1. The diocesan bishop assigns to every Newly Ordained priest a Mentor. Input from the Newly Ordained on which priests might serve in this capacity is ordinarily sought. Qualities sought for a priest who is acting as a Mentor are that he is experienced and happy in the priesthood, not a member of the parish staff, that he is willing to companion another as he moves from being a seminarian to a priest, and that he can serve in certain ways as a role model.

2. This assignment lasts for the two years of the Internship Program and entails two components:
3. Regular meetings between the Newly Ordained and his Mentor every six weeks from September to June.
4. Regular meetings (described below) with the parish staff, the Mentor and the Newly Ordained for at least the first year of the Internship Program.
5. The Priest-mentor is seen as a sounding board for the Newly Ordained priest. He actively listens to the issues of adjustment which are experienced after one is ordained. He is a resource for the Newly Ordained, not afraid to share his own personal stories of transitions. While he is not to be seen as a Spiritual Director, he will encourage Gospel conviction, self awareness, deeper intimacy skills with the Lord and greater ministerial competence. The Mentor will assist the new priest to theologically reflect upon his experience.
6. Confidentiality is a governing principle in conversations between the Mentor and the New Priest. No reporting is expected from the Mentor, although the Newly Ordained may invite the Mentor to speak for him in a given instance, such as representing his needs to other appropriate personnel.

**B. Regular Meetings with One's Ordination Class**

1. The New Priest, together with members of his ordination class, will participate in three overnight meetings and one Day of Prayer every year. The overnight meetings begin in the late afternoon of the first day and conclude in the mid-afternoon of the following day. They are a means wherein the Newly Ordained can receive from, as well as be a source of, support from his classmates.
2. Topics for these days will be based on the needs of individual classes. These topics will generally be in the areas of ministerial skills and/or personal and spiritual growth.
3. Participation in these days is not to be seen as a New Priest's

**C. Regular Staff Meetings with Newly Ordained and Mentor**

1. For at least the first year of the New Priest's participation in the Internship Program, regular meetings are to take place between the parish staff, the Newly Ordained and his Mentor. "Regular meetings" is to be generally understood as every six weeks from September to May. Because of differences in parish staffs, determination of who should be considered part of the "parish staff" for the purpose of these meetings should be made by the Newly Ordained and his Pastor, after consultation with one's Mentor. Determination as to whether there would be merit in continuing these meetings into the second year of the Internship Program should be made by the Newly Ordained, his Pastor and his Mentor.
2. The purpose of these meetings is to be seen as providing a forum in which the Newly Ordained can reflect upon issues which he is currently facing in his ministry. The agenda for each meeting will be arrived at by the Newly Ordained and his Mentor. At each meeting, the staff will be asked for its input on concerns relating to the Newly Ordained. Staff members might help a man, in this manner, through a personal sharing of their own journey and ministry, to develop some short and long range goals, offer tentative solutions to pastoral difficulties, and reflect theologically on everyday ministry. The meeting performs the function of being an information and insight-gathering session.
3. It is the personal responsibility of each Newly Ordained, then, to reflect on what he has heard, evaluate the suggestions and insights offered, and apply them to his own life. In addition to sharing his own experiences and insights when appropriate, the priestly Mentor will serve as a listening person, helping to keep the discussion focused and moving.
4. The follow-up session between the Mentor and the Newly Ordained is extremely important. Whether this occurs

immediately after the staff meeting or at a later time, it will provide an opportunity to order, evaluate, and apply what has taken place at the large staff session.

## **II. TO SERVE THE PEOPLE PASTORAL FACULTIES**

### **A. Preaching**

#### **Pastoral Faculty 1**

**To preach the word of God, including the homily at the Sacred Liturgy.**

This faculty has been granted to you by the universal law of the Church and is to be exercised with at least the presumed permission of the pastor or rector of the church in which you preach or the permission of the proper superior when you preach to religious in a church or oratory of their institute (canons 764,765). This faculty permits you to preach throughout the world unless it has been explicitly restricted by your local ordinary or a particular diocese has required that a priest receive expressed permission to preach there. Preaching the homily is reserved to bishop, priest and deacon. It is pre-eminent among the forms of preaching and is an integral part of the Sacred Liturgy (cf. *General Instruction on the Roman Missal*, n. 41). At Masses with a congregation, a homily is to be given on all Sundays and holydays of obligation; it cannot be omitted without a serious reason. A homily is strongly recommended for weekday Masses, especially during the seasons of Advent and Lent, on feast days, and on special occasions (canon 767).

### **B. Baptism and Confirmation**

#### **Pastoral Faculty 2**

**To baptize or receive into full communion all persons, including those who have completed their fourteenth year (canon 863).**

When a person who has reached the age of reason (i.e., presumed when a person has completed his or her seventh year) is baptized, he or she should also be confirmed and receive the Eucharist unless a grave reason prevents this full initiation (canons 852,866). Confer Faculties 3 and 4.

**Pastoral Faculty 3**

**To use the simple rite of adult initiation in extraordinary circumstances when the candidate cannot participate in all the usual rites of the catechumenate, or when you judge that the candidate is sincere in his or her conversion and in religious maturity and may be fully initiated without delay.**

Outside of such extraordinary circumstances, the entire *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults* is to be celebrated, culminating in the celebration of the sacraments during the Easter Vigil (cf. RCIA, nn. 58, 66b). Programs of catechesis should be arranged in such a way that the Christian initiation of candidates can be properly celebrated at the Easter Vigil.

When a candidate is in danger of death, the *Rite of Christian Initiation for the Dying* is to be followed (cf. *Pastoral Care of the Sick*, n. 281).

**Pastoral Faculty 4**

**To confirm baptized persons in danger of death and to confirm those who, having completed at least their seventh year, are baptized or received into full communion by you (c. 883).**

By the law itself, any priest has the faculty of confirming a person in danger of death (canon 833). In such cases, consult *Pastoral Care of the Sick*, n. 31. Also, the law itself provides that a priest who baptizes or receives into full communion one who has reached the age of reason (seven years old) enjoys the faculty to confirm the newly-initiated person (canon 883). In such cases, proper catechesis must precede the celebration of these sacraments (cf. canons 889,890 and the comments under Faculties 2 and 3).

A baptized, though not yet confirmed, *Catholic* who formally abandoned the faith by joining another church is to be regarded as a baptized non-Catholic and received back unto the Church through the celebration of the *Rite of Admission to Full Communion with the Catholic Church*, including the sacrament of confirmation. (Their admission is to be duly recorded in the *Register of Reception into Full Communion* and a notation made in the person's baptismal record.)

At times, those who have been baptized at birth as Catholics never formally abandoned the Church and yet they were never raised in the faith. Later, they may be catechized as adults and seek to complete their initiation through confirmation and Eucharist. Some, for example, may be enrolled in a "modified catechumenate"; others may seek the sacraments when preparing for marriage in the Catholic Church. Your faculty to confirm does *not* extend to these cases although, if necessity warrants it, you may petition the diocesan bishop through the Chancellor's Office in accord with canon 884, for the special faculty to confirm a particular Catholic in such circumstances.



The diocesan bishop will continue to inform priests when he grants them the faculty to confirm baptized adult Catholics, i.e., at a parish Mass on *Pentecost Sunday*. This faculty is not a habitual pastoral faculty in the Diocese of Rockville Centre.

**C. Eucharist**

**Pastoral Faculty 5**

**To celebrate the Eucharistic liturgy twice on weekdays and three times on Sundays and holydays of obligation and their eves (canon 905).**

As a general rule, a priest should celebrate the Eucharistic liturgy only once a day. This faculty permits you to celebrate additional Masses in order to meet legitimate pastoral needs such as the celebration of Masses of Christian Burial, Nuptial Masses, and regularly-scheduled parish Masses when another priest is not available. Although this faculty may be used whenever the need arises, its frequent use to meet a parish Mass schedule should lead to an evaluation of that schedule in light of the spiritual needs of the parishioners.

When you celebrate more than one Mass on a particular day, you may retain for your personal use only one stipend. Any stipends which were accepted for the celebration of the additional Masses must be disposed of in accord with diocesan policy (canon 951) for charitable purposes.

**Pastoral Faculty 6**

**To celebrate Mass on a weekday outside a church edifice provided that there is a legitimate pastoral reason, the place is liturgically suitable, and the local pastor has no objections.**

Without prejudice to Faculty 7, on Sundays or Holydays permission to celebrate Mass outside a church edifice must be obtained from the diocesan bishop. Requests for such permission should be sent to the Chancellor's Office in writing and with sufficient advance notice.

**Pastoral Faculty 7**

**To celebrate Mass in a suitable place outside a church edifice any day of the week if you are ill, convalescing, retired, or on vacation.**

The Christian faithful who participate in such a Mass on a Sunday or holyday fulfill their obligation in accord with canon 1248. Sick or elderly priests who have difficulty standing

may celebrate the Eucharistic liturgy while seated, though not in public without the permission of the local ordinary (canon 930).

**Pastoral Faculty 8**

**To celebrate Sunday or holyday Eucharistic liturgy from 4:00 p.m. the evening before, provided that the liturgical norms for the following day are properly observed.**

When the solemnities of Christmas and Immaculate Conception fall on a Saturday or Monday, the Christian faithful are required to fulfill two separate obligations. The obligation for each day can be fulfilled by participation at Mass the evening before or on the day itself (canon 1248). When the solemnities of Mary, the Mother of the Lord, the Assumption of Mary and All Saints' occur on a Saturday or Monday, there is no obligation to attend Mass. However, the faithful are urged to participate in the Eucharist on these days.

**Pastoral Faculty 9**

**To dispense individuals from the Eucharistic fast in a particular case and for a just reason (canon 919).**

The principal intent of the Eucharistic fast is to enable those who partake of the Body and Blood of Christ to have a certain special hunger for that divine nourishment. The Christian faithful should be knowledgeable about the spirit behind this ecclesiastical regulation and should be conscious of their obligation to observe it. Thus, the faculty to dispense individuals from the fast should not be exercised generally or indiscriminately. The elderly, the ill, and those who care for them, are not bound by the Eucharistic fast (canon 919).

**D. Reconciliation**

**Pastoral Faculty 10**

**To hear confessions and grant sacramental absolution within the territory of this diocese.**

If you are an incardinated priest of this diocese or have established canonical domicile here (canon 102), this concession of habitual faculties to hear confession authorizes you to hear confessions validly and licitly throughout the world -- unless you are individually prohibited from doing so in a particular diocese by an ordinary of the place (canon 967). Any priest, even without confessional faculties, may validly and licitly absolve any penitent who is in danger of death (canon 976).

**Pastoral Faculty 11**

**To grant to any legitimate priest who does not otherwise possess it the faculty to hear confessions within this diocese for a period not to exceed four days when the Chancellor's Office cannot be reached and the priest is known by you to be in good standing.**

Generally, most priests possess the habitual faculty to hear confessions in a manner which permits them to exercise the faculty through the world unless explicitly prohibited from doing so (cf. Faculty 10).

A visiting priest who is a member of an institute of consecrated life or society of apostolic life may have been granted confessional faculties by his superior. He could hear the confessions of the member of his institute or of those who are staying in a house of his institute (canon 967). Such a faculty, however, is not reciprocal through the world; the priest in question must be explicitly granted the faculty to hear confessions within this diocese.

If you grant a particular priest the faculty to hear confessions, this faculty may not be extended beyond four days, at which time more stable faculties should be sought from the Chancellor's Office. Priests who reside in the diocese and exercise their priestly ministry here for more than a week are to register at the Chancellor's Office, even if they possess the faculty to hear confessions by the law itself (canon 967). Priests who intend to exercise their priestly ministry for any extended period of time are to follow the prescriptions of the diocesan priest personnel policy which are applicable to their situation. Consult the Priest Personnel Policy manual.

**Pastoral Faculty 12**

**To remit in the internal or external forum any *latae sententiae* excommunication established by law provided that it is not reserved to the Apostolic See and has not been declared.**

This faculty may be exercised anywhere on behalf of the members of this diocese or those who incurred the penalty in this diocese, and it may be exercised within the diocese on behalf of anyone present here (canon 1355). The formula for “absolution from censures” can be found in the *Rite of Penance*, Appendix I. The confessor may also remit the censure while absolving the penitent in the usual manner if he has the *intention*, at the time, to do so.

The following excommunication’s are reserved to the Apostolic See: desecration of the Sacred Species (canon 1367); violence against the Roman Pontiff (canon 1370); attempted absolution of one’s accomplice of a sexual sin (canon 1378); consecration of a bishop without pontifical mandate (canon 1382); direct violation of the seal of confession (canon 1388).

By this faculty you may remit the excommunication attached to the procurement of abortion (canon 1398) or that attached to apostasy, heresy or schism (canon 1364). In the latter case (canon 1364), the remission should occur in the external forum so that some record is kept of the penitent’s reconciliation and subsequent ecclesial rights and obligations, such as the need to marry in accord with canonical form (canon 1117). In such cases, consult the Chancellor’s Office for the proper procedure to be followed concerning record-keeping.

**E. Marriage**

**Pastoral Faculty 13**

**To assist at marriages within the parish or other territory in which you possess ordinary power or for which you are generally or specifically delegated by the local pastor or the ordinary of the place (canons 1109-1111).**

Pastors enjoy jurisdiction to assist at all marriages within their territory by virtue of the law itself (canon 1109). They can delegate this faculty to any priest or deacon, either for a particular marriage or in general. General delegation is to be in writing with a copy sent to the Chancellor’s Office for inclusion in the delegated priest’s file (canon 1111).

Parochial vicars are usually granted general delegation for their parishes by the diocesan bishop. They may subdelegate a priest or deacon only for a particular marriage, not in general (canon 137).

**Pastoral Faculty 14**

**To allow the celebration of a Nuptial Mass at the marriage of a Catholic with a baptized person who is not Catholic.**

The motivation for arranging a Nuptial Mass should be based on the couple's spiritual needs, not on any desire to embellish the marriage ceremony or observe simply social conventions.

At a Nuptial Mass a non-Catholic spouse or other non-Catholics attending the ceremony may not receive Holy Communion.

The ritual (n. 8) does not permit a Nuptial Mass when a Catholic is marrying an unbaptized person. A dispensation must be obtained through the Chancellor's Office.

**Pastoral Faculty 15**

**To dispense from canonical form and from all ecclesiastical matrimonial impediments from which the ordinary of the place may dispense, whenever everything has been prepared for the wedding (or convalidation) and the delay to obtain a dispensation from competent authority would most likely cause serious harm (canon 1080).**

In all cases, the applicable requirements of the law must be fulfilled before the dispensation is granted. Whenever you grant a dispensation, the Chancellor's Office must be notified in writing as soon as possible so that the dispensation can be properly recorded in the external forum.

The faculty to dispense does not extend to impediments arising from sacred orders or from a public perpetual vow of chastity in a pontifical religious institute. This pastoral faculty does not permit you to delegate yourself to officiate at a wedding outside the territory in which you have delegation. It does, however, permit you to dispense from canonical form in the case of a mixed marriage. The marriages of two Catholics must always be celebrated in accord with canonical form.

Care should be exercised in granting permission in such circumstances for the licit celebration of the marriage of a Catholic and a validly baptized non-Catholic (canon 1124). If there is any prudent doubt about the fact or the validity of the non-Catholic's baptism, a dispensation from the possible impediment of disparity of worship should be granted as a caution (*ad cautelam*). Furthermore, such permissions and/or dispensations for mixed marriages may not be granted unless the declaration and promises have been made by the Catholic in accord with canons 1124-1226.

In cases of danger of death, when the local ordinary cannot be reached, the priest or deacon witnessing the marriage may dispense from all impediments of ecclesiastical law,

whether public or occult, except the impediment arising from the sacred order of presbyterate (canon 1079 and 1116).

**Pastoral Faculty 16**

**To waive the publication of the matrimonial banns whenever you consider it inappropriate or unnecessary (canon 1067).**

The publication of matrimonial banns remains an accepted customary practice in the Catholic community. It has become a way of announcing to the entire parish the joyful news of an upcoming marriage. Banns, therefore, should normally be published for all weddings, including mixed marriages. If, in a particular case, however, you consider the publication to be inappropriate or unnecessary, you may refrain from announcing the banns. No special dispensation is needed. A parish may not make a policy that dispenses from announcing all matrimonial banns; the priest remains free to dispense in individual cases.

The free state of the parties is to be proven through sworn declarations of competent persons, preferably their parents or close relatives.

**F. Funerals**

**Pastoral Faculty 17**

**To permit the celebration of the Rite of Christian Burial, including Mass, for an unbaptized child if the parents had intended to have the child baptized (canon 1183).**

**Pastoral Faculty 18**

**To permit the celebration of the Rite of Christian Burial, including Mass, for a baptized member of a non-Catholic church or ecclesial community if the minister of the deceased is not available and provided that such an arrangement is not contrary to the will of the deceased (canon 1183).**

In such celebrations the Rite of Christian Burial should be appropriately accommodated to the special ecumenical situation. For example, in the Eucharistic Prayer itself the name of the deceased non-Catholic is not mentioned. Non-Catholics participating in the celebration may not receive Holy Communion.

**G. Sacramentals and Blessings**

**Pastoral Faculty 19**

**To administer the sacramentals of the Church, especially blessings, in accord with the liturgical books (cf. Book of Blessings and canons 1166-1170).**

**H. Sacred Triduum**

**Pastoral Faculty 20**

**On Holy Thursday, to celebrate, for pastoral reasons, a second Mass of the Lord's Supper in the evening or, in cases of genuine necessity, in the morning for those who cannot participate in the principal evening liturgy.**

Such additional liturgies may include the distribution of Communion under both kinds and the ceremony of the washing of the feet. An additional Mass on Holy Thursday may not be celebrated solely for the advantage of private persons nor may the celebration of an additional Mass prejudice the prior place of the principal evening liturgy.

It is fitting that all priests concelebrate the principal evening liturgy, with the option of renewing their priestly commitment with the customary ceremony, especially if they have not already done so at the Chrism Mass. If you concelebrate the Chrism Mass or an additional Mass for the convenience of the faithful, you may also celebrate or concelebrate the principal evening Mass of the Lord's Supper.

**Pastoral Faculty 21**

**On Good Friday, to celebrate a second liturgical service if the size or nature of your parish or community makes this a pastoral need.**

Such a need should be determined in accord with the best interests of the community's liturgical life and should never be based on the convenience of an individual group. Although Communion is to be distributed to the faithful only at the liturgical celebration of the Lord's Passion, Communion may be brought at any hour of the day to the sick who are unable to take part in the liturgical service (*Roman Missal*, n.3). Communion may not be distributed on Good Friday at other services. There are to be no other Masses celebrated before the Easter Vigil takes place. Confessions are to be scheduled during the Triduum.

**I. Other Dispensations**

**Pastoral Faculty 22**

**To dispense persons, in individual cases and for a just cause, from the obligation of observing a day of precept or a day of penance, or to commute such obligations into other religious acts (canon 1245).**

You may exercise this faculty, on an individual basis, on behalf of those committed to your pastoral care wherever they may be at the time, as well as those who are visiting your parish or ecclesiastical institution (canon 91).



**Pastoral Faculty 23**

**To suspend, dispense, or commute a private vow or promissory oath on behalf of a member of this diocese or anyone visiting it, provided that this action does no injury to the acquired rights of others nor prejudices others who refuse to remit the obligation (cf. canon 1191-1204, especially canons 1195, 1196, 1203).**

### **III. THE RENEWAL OF TERM PASTORATES**

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The following procedure will be initiated by the Office of Priest Personnel. A copy of all reports should be sent to that office for filing.

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#### **A. Parish Assessment:**

1. After completing his first two years in the parish, the Pastor shall prepare a written assessment of the parish situation. The suggested length of this report is no more than five-to-seven pages. This written assessment will identify the strengths of the parish and the potential for growth and development. This assessment will be based upon four general categories evaluating the parish as:
  - a) a community for Christian witness and service
  - b) a community for worship and prayer
  - c) a community for education
  - d) a community of stewardship: responsibility for finances and administration of parish resources
2. On the basis of this assessment, the Pastor shall establish goals for the remainder of his term and objectives for each year, along with an indication of what steps will be taken to achieve them.
3. The pastor will draw up the assessment and establish the goals in consultation with:
  - a) associate pastors
  - b) deacons
  - c) religious serving in the parish
  - d) parish staff (all those in full time ministry)
  - e) pastoral council
  - f) school board

- g) religious education board
  - h) parish trustees and finance committee
4. Upon their completion, a copy of the written assessment, goals and objectives should be sent to the Episcopal Vicar.

**B. Parish Visitation By Episcopal Vicar**

During the pastor's six-year term the Episcopal Vicar should make at least one pastoral visitation of the parish subsequent to the pastor's assessment and establishment of goals and prior to the conclusion of the fifth year. This visit will provide an opportunity to focus on the life of the parish in light of the stated goals and objectives. After this visit, the Episcopal Vicar will send to the Pastor a report of his observations on the parish and recommendations for future direction.

**C. Report And Recommendation At Conclusion Of Fifth Year**

At the end of the fifth year of the pastors' term, whether or not he has decided to seek renewal, the Pastor shall present to the Episcopal Vicar a "state of the parish" report. This report, which should be drawn up in consultation with those listed in paragraph "1c" of this document, should contain three sections:

1. The *first* section should be an assessment both of the parish's strengths and of the areas in need of improvement and change.
2. The *second* section should be a response to the observations and recommendations made by the Episcopal Vicar in the report of his most recent pastoral visitation of the parish.
3. The *third* section will vary depending on whether the Pastor is seeking renewal:
  - a) If the Pastor is seeking renewal, this section should state the pastor's desire for renewal, specify his reasons for this

request, and offer a summary of proposed goals and objectives for the new term.

- b) If the Pastor is not seeking renewal, this section should state the pastor's desire to complete his service to the parish at the end of his sixth year, specify his reasons for this request, and offer an "exit summary" about possible goals and objectives his successor may wish to consider.

Upon receipt of this report, the Episcopal Vicar shall meet with the Pastor to discuss the contents of the report and his reasons for seeking or not seeking a subsequent term. After this meeting and such other consultation as he may consider appropriate, including consultation with the local dean, the Episcopal Vicar shall forward the pastor's report to the Diocesan Bishop along with his own recommendation about appointment to the Pastor to a second term or to some other pastoral ministry.

#### **D. Subsequent Renewals**

Paragraphs "2" and "3" of this process shall apply to any Pastor seeking a subsequent renewal of his term of office.

#### **IV. PROCEDURE FOR THE TRANSFER OF ASSOCIATES**

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The following procedure is established to allow the associate to have significant input into his future assignment while allowing the Personnel Assignment Board to consider the needs of the parish and the diocese at large.

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1. The priest to be transferred completes a questionnaire that will eventually be distributed to all members of the Personnel Assignment Board. The information includes health: education beyond seminary; previous assignments; previous experiences in ministry; and preferences for new assignment, including size and location of parish, styles of ministry in the new parish, as well as hoped for experiences. Additional statements of philosophy of ministry, living conditions, etc., that the priest feels are important to him might be included.
2. The priest is free to request an interview or telephone conversation with any of the members of the Assignment Board.
3. The pastor of a parish with an opening may submit in writing a profile of his parish, its present needs as he and his staff see them and the qualities needed in the new associate.
4. When the list of parishes with an opening for an associate becomes available, pastors and possible associates meet to determine if that assignment would be mutually suitable for both. The pastor then submits to the personnel director a list of three associates he would find acceptable. The associate submits a list of three parishes, each of which we would find acceptable.
5. This procedure is reviewed at least every three years.

Approved by Bishop McGann, March, 1995

## **V. VISITING PRIESTS**

### **A. Occasional Ministry**

1. Description
  - a) Many parishes and other ecclesiastical institutions call upon religious priests or priests incardinated in other dioceses to assist them for a specific occasion or even on a regular basis
  - b) Occasional Ministry includes, for example, priests who visit on Sunday to celebrate the Eucharist, priests who visit to conduct a retreat, a mission or a renewal program.
  - c) Occasional Ministry encompasses priests who assist for *less than a week*. (For longer periods of time, see below, “Short Term Ministry” or “Temporary Diocesan Assignment.”)
2. Requirements
  - a) The pastor or administrator of the ecclesiastical institution is to make certain that the priest is in good standing. This may be done by obtaining a *celebret* or a letter from his bishop or superior.
  - b) The priest is to possess the pastoral faculties needed to exercise his priestly ministry. If his ministry is limited to the celebration of Mass and the Sacrament of Reconciliation, he will normally possess such faculties from the universal law and his diocese of incardination (or domicile). Once a priest is granted the faculties to hear confession by a local ordinary, that faculty is valid throughout the world, providing that it has not been denied in a particular case (see canon 967).
3. Permission or Registration
  - a) If the above requirements are met, there is no special diocesan authorization or registration needed.
  - b) In case of questions or difficulties, contact the Chancellor’s Office.

**B. Short Term Ministry  
Summer Visitors**

1. Description

- a) A priest may be invited to reside in the diocese and to exercise his priestly ministry here for a brief period of time while one of the regularly assigned priests is away because of vacation, sabbatical, convalescence, or some other type of temporary absence.
- b) Short Term Ministry includes priests who assist for *more than a week and less than four months*. (For longer periods of time, see “Temporary Diocesan Assignment” below.)
- c) Priests who assist for less than a week are described above under “Occasional Ministry.”

2. Requirements

- a) A priest of the Archdiocese of New York and the Diocese of Brooklyn enjoys *reciprocal faculties* with the Diocese of Rockville Centre. Although he does not need pastoral faculties granted to him, he is to be registered with the Chancellor’s Office (see below “Permission and Registration).
- b) The ***Testimonial of Suitability for Priestly Ministry*** must be obtained from the priest’s ordinary or his religious superior. The pastor of the parish cannot complete and sign this testimonial.
- c) Health insurance must be arranged for the priest during his stay in the parish or institution. The priest may have his own insurance. The diocesan Insurance Office will assist with any questions or insurance arrangements.

3. Permission or Registration

- a) The request is to be submitted in writing to the Chancellor’s Office.
- b) The written request is to include the following

- (1) Name of the priest
    - (2) His diocese or religious institute
    - (3) Length of his stay (up to four months)
    - (4) Testimonial of Suitability
    - (5) Statement concerning health insurance coverage.
  - c) During the winter, a request form for Summer Assistants and a Testimonial of Suitability for Ministry are mailed to all pastors and administrators. More copies can be obtained from the Chancellor's Office.
  - d) The priest will be granted the pastoral faculties of the Diocese of Rockville Centre (*To Serve the People*). Note that the priest is not granted general delegation to officiate at marriages. The pastor or associate pastors may grant *specific delegation* for an individual wedding. The pastor may grant *general delegation* to the priest and that must be *in writing* (see canon 1111, §2). A copy of the grant of general delegation is to be submitted to the Chancellor's Office.
4. After Four Months:
- Short term ministry in the Diocese of Rockville Centre may not extend beyond four months. Before the priest's pastoral faculties can be extended, he is to be interviewed by the Director of Priest Personnel in accord with the provision of Temporary Diocesan Assignment (see below).

### **C. Temporary Diocesan Assignment**

1. Description
  - a) A priest may wish to serve in the Diocese of Rockville Centre temporarily. For example, he may be pursuing graduate studies in the area. An assignment by the diocesan bishop is required for all priests who serve for *more than four months*.
  - b) A priest may have the desire to apply to the Diocese with the intent of transferring permanently. Temporary diocesan



assignment is not to be confused as an agreement to incardinate the priest. Cf. “Incardination” below.

2. Requirements

- a) The priest must demonstrate facility in English, especially preaching and conversational skills. This is an essential requirement for priestly ministry in the Diocese of Rockville Centre.
- b) The priest must be competent in liturgical and pastoral matters.
- c) He must have good physical and psychological health.
- d) Written documentation must be submitted to the Director of Priest Personnel from the priest’s bishop or superior:
  - (1) a letter of permission for temporary assignment in the Diocese of Rockville Centre
  - (2) the *Testimonial of Suitability for Priestly Ministry* for a temporary assignment.
- e) If applicable, the Director of Priest Personnel will obtain letters of recommendations from other dioceses where the priest has served.
- f) If a pastor or administrator of the parish or institution is requesting the Temporary Diocesan Assignment of a visiting priest, he is to submit a written request to the Director of Priest Personnel.
- g) The priest will be interviewed by the Director of Priest Personnel.
- h) The Chancellor’s Office will review all documentation to ensure that canonical and legal requirements are met for a temporary diocesan assignment.

3. Assignment by the Diocesan Bishop

- a) The priest will receive an appointment letter from the diocesan bishop.
- b) The Chancellor’s Office will ensure that pastoral faculties are granted to the priest.

- c) The priest is entitled to the remuneration and benefits for priests established by diocesan policy.
- d) He is subject to transfer in accord with diocesan needs and regular personnel practices.

4. Beyond Four Years

- a) After four years, should the priest continue to serve in the Diocese of Rockville Centre, he priest is to write to the diocesan bishop and state his intentions about remaining in the diocese with particular regard to his desire for incardination.
- b) See “Incardination” below.
- c) If the visiting priest indicates that he does *not* wish to begin the process of incardination, his request will be reviewed by the Director of Priest Personnel and the Priest Personnel Assignment Board.

## **VI. EVALUATION OF THE LANGUAGE FACILITY OF PRIESTS ENTERING THE DIOCESE FROM COUNTRIES OUTSIDE THE UNITED STATES**

Among the many responsibilities that are carried out by priests in fulfillment of their ministry, the duty to preach the gospel and evangelize the People of God are at the core of priestly ministry. It falls upon the bishop as shepherd of the local Church to determine that this mandate of Christ, to preach the good news of salvation, is being carried out effectively by the priests of his diocese. One particular concern that arises is the language facility of priests who come into the diocese from countries outside the United States. The Council document *Presbyterorum Ordinis* states: "At the same time it will be quite advantageous if those priests who go to work in a nation new to them not only know well the language of that place but also the psychological and social milieu peculiar to the people they go to serve, so that they may communicate with them easily." *Presbyterorum Ordinis*, 10. Therefore, the following policy has been established in order to assist the Bishop and the Office of Priest Personnel to make determinations that the priestly work of preaching and evangelization are being effectively carried out for the edification of the People of God.

Because of the increasing shortage of native-born priests and the ever-increasing demands of priestly ministry on Long Island, including its multi-ethnic composition, the diocese in the past has been assisted by the priestly ministry of men from other countries. While always thankful for the assistance they provide, especially to the hospital apostolate of the diocese, there is the concern that there be a proficiency in English commensurate to the responsibilities and tasks they are assigned to perform in fulfillment of their priestly duties. Therefore, the following policies are to be established.

In the case of a priest who enters this diocese from outside the United States for a short-term period of time (particularly for the purpose of providing service to a parish or diocesan institution in the absence of a priest on retreat, vacation, or study sabbatical **not in excess of four months**), the local pastoral staff is encouraged to make determinations as to the ability of the visiting priest to be able to communicate the English language effectively. Obviously, it is difficult for a local pastor or head of institution to make these determinations prior to meeting the visiting priest; nevertheless, we encourage that there be some effort made to insure that the visiting priest possesses a language proficiency commensurate with the responsibilities and tasks which he will be called to assume. Such determinations may be made in various ways: through a phone interview with the

visiting priest, a recommendation given by someone knowledgeable of the visiting priest's language abilities (for example, someone who comes from that native priest's native diocese), etc. Once the visiting priest has arrived, it may be the case that the pastor determines that the visiting priest does not possess an adequate facility in English. In such cases where there is an obvious deficiency in the use of English, the pastor may find it necessary to make certain accommodations or adjustments so that the people may be adequately served.

1. A priest who enters this diocese from outside the United States and intends to serve beyond a short-term assignment (that is, in excess of four months), must receive the approval of the priest personnel director in order to receive a diocesan appointment. Before such approval is granted, the personnel director will arrange for an evaluation of the priest's ability to communicate in the English language. Since the question of language facility revolves around the specific priestly task of preaching and evangelization, the evaluation is to measure the ability of the priest in question to communicate effectively in the public arena.
2. The director of priest personnel is to rely on an *ad hoc* board composed of three persons which will be established for the purposes of conducting the evaluation of the priest's proficiency in the English language. This *ad hoc* board will regularly evaluate the priest in question every six months, as is deemed necessary, until that time comes when the priest will be considered for incardination into the diocese. This *ad hoc* board shall be composed of the following members:
  - a) a member of the presbyterate from the Deanery of the priest to be evaluated who will be appointed by the director of priest personnel. The priest so appointed, while from the same deanery, is not to be from the same parish or institution as the priest to be evaluated.
  - b) a religious or layperson, appointed by the pastor or head of the institution where the priest to be evaluated is presently ministering.
  - c) a religious or layperson appointed by the diocesan Office of Worship.

- d) The people so appointed by both the director of priest personnel and the Office of Worship may work on several ad-hoc boards for a designated period of time.
- 3. The board will be present at several Sunday homilies of the priest to be evaluated. They will be provided with a specially designed instrument of evaluation that will facilitate this part of the process. The instrument will evaluate such areas of proficiency as: diction, pronunciation, clarity, pace, and use of English idioms. In addition, the board will meet with the priest for a brief interview which will enable the members of the board to determine the priest's facility to speak English conversationally in a non-public situation.
- 4. Following the meeting with the priest to be evaluated, the board will make a written recommendation to the director of priest personnel. This written recommendation is to reflect the consensus of the board. The recommendation will state whether some program of language development be: (a) strongly recommended, (b) recommended, (c) suggested, (d) not necessary. The director of priest personnel will then communicate this consensus opinion to the priest who was evaluated and, when necessary, direct this priest to a program of language development which is mutually agreeable to both the director and the priest evaluated. Additional evaluations will take place every six months in order to guarantee the progress of the priest in question. Such evaluations will take place until that time when it is demonstrable that the priest possesses a proficiency in English. Such proficiency is a prerequisite for the priest to be considered for incardination into the diocese. Any language-program costs (tuition, private tutor, etc.) are to be assumed by the pastor of the parish or the director of the institution in which the priest is presently serving.

## **VII. SABBATICAL POLICY**

Continuing theological study is necessary if the priest is to faithfully carry out the ministry of the word, proclaiming it clearly and without ambiguity, distinguishing it from mere human opinions, no matter how renowned and widespread these might be. Thus he will be able to stand at the service of the people of God, helping them to give an account, to all who ask, of their Christian hope (cf. 1 Pt. 3:15) (*Pastores Dabo Vobis*, 72).

Both the diocesan bishop and the Office of Priest Personnel recognize and endorse the vital importance of continuing personal and professional growth for priests as well as the benefit of an extended time during which a priest, relieved of his ordinary ministerial responsibilities, may more leisurely address his own spiritual, intellectual, and personal growth.

### **A. Definition**

1. The American Bishops stated in *The Priest and Stress*, "Opportunities for priests to participate in Sabbatical programs should be planned in every diocese. Holistic programs of continuing education are highly encouraged, if not required."  
(2.2) A Sabbatical is, therefore, an extended period of time (normally three to six months) away from a priest's normal assignment for the purpose of constructive growth, through participation in an approved program which will enable the priest to become more effective in his ministry, more skilled, more knowledgeable, more prayerful, and more satisfied.
2. A Sabbatical is part of the normal pattern of growth in a priest's ministry. Sabbaticals are meant not for the few but for everyone.
3. Sabbatical leaves may be requested for any of the following purposes:
  - a) Participation in one of the formal renewal programs offered specifically for the clergy;
  - b) Participation in a lengthy period of time devoted exclusively to prayer and spiritual renewal;
  - c) Participation in a self-initiated, personally designed period of intense self-renewal and revitalization;
  - d) Participation in a self-designed program of study.

**B. Eligibility**

1. Every incardinated priest of the Diocese of Rockville Centre shall be strongly encouraged to apply for a sabbatical leave, after a minimum of at least seven years of service to the Diocese.
2. Each academic year, no more than 5 incardinated priests will have the opportunity to participate in a Sabbatical leave, provided the number of priest personnel in the Diocese remains stable. However, should there be a significant decline in the number of priest personnel, then 1% of the clergy shall be eligible each year for a Sabbatical.
3. A priest who has availed himself of this opportunity may normally apply again for a second Sabbatical after another seven years of service, if all eligible priests have had the opportunity to take a Sabbatical leave.

**C. Selection**

Recommendations for Sabbatical leave shall be based on the following:

1. The recognized benefit of the experience for the man and the Diocese;
2. The availability of resources: Program openings and funding.

**D. Funding**

1. The Diocese shall cover the expense of tuition, room and board for a man on Sabbatical. The Diocese shall establish a fund based on the projected Sabbaticals of the coming year.
2. The priest himself will pay living expenses beyond room and board, book fees, and all incidental expenses.
3. During his Sabbatical leave, the individual priest's parish, agency or institution shall continue to pay his monthly salary and other benefits to which he is normally entitled, e.g. car allowance, health insurance, and retirement fund. If a priest is being transferred and will not have yet been reassigned at the

time of the Sabbatical, the parish, agency, or institution from which he is being transferred continues paying his monthly salary and benefits. The individual parish, agency, or institution shall also pay the salary and car allowance for the priest who acts as a replacement during this time. If, for any reason, an individual priest, parish, agency, or institution is unable to assume the financial obligation associated with a Sabbatical leave, the priest should consult with the Director of the Office of Ministry to Priests and the Diocesan Bishop to arrange alternative financing.

**E. Coverage**

1. The concern for maintaining coverage in the absence of a priest on Sabbatical leave is the joint responsibility of the Office of Priest Personnel, the Office of Ministry to Priests, the priest himself who is applying for a Sabbatical, and the staff of the parish/institution which he normally serves. A priest planning to participate in a Sabbatical leave should also meet with the pastoral staff where he is assigned to consider the questions of funding, coverage and replacement. Since continued priestly presence and ministry is essential for a parish/institution, and since priest-replacements are not always readily available, every effort at obtaining a replacement should be made by all involved as early as possible.
2. In the case of a pastor going on Sabbatical, the appointment of a temporary Administrator is arranged in conjunction with the Director of Priest Personnel. In the case of priests other than pastors, coverage is arranged by the priest himself and others on the parish staff.

**F. Application**

1. A priest interested in a Sabbatical leave should first contact the Director of the Office of Ministry to Priests to discuss his own interests as well as receive information on and evaluation of the various programs and space allotments which are available.



2. The Diocesan Bishop, directly or through the Office of Ministry to Priests, may also assume the initiative and encourage certain priests to strongly consider a Sabbatical leave because of the nature of their ministry, their number of years in service to the Diocese, or for some other special considerations.
3. Throughout the entire process, a priest considering a Sabbatical leave should discuss his intentions and progress with the other priests and staff members who will be affected by his absence.
4. With their knowledge and support, he shall then formally apply for a Sabbatical to the Diocesan Bishop. Such an application should ideally be made a year, but not less than six months, in advance of September 1st of any year. The request shall be accompanied by a reasonably detailed proposal, mentioning the type of Sabbatical that is sought (its length, location and cost), the reasons for the application, and the anticipated benefits a man will derive from such an experience for his future ministry in the Diocese of Rockville Centre.
5. The Diocesan Bishop shall then forward this request to the Director, Office of Ministry to Priests, for consideration and recommendation by the Director of Priest Personnel and Director of Ministry to Priests. All such discussions shall be kept strictly confidential.
6. The Diocesan Bishop will then notify the applicant and, if his request has been approved, ask that he contact the Director of Ministry to Priests for further and necessary planning.

**G. Following the sabbatical**

When a Sabbatical is completed, each priest will be requested to submit a written evaluation of his experience (concerning the quality of the program in which he participated, its effects on his future ministry, etc.) and consult

with the Director of the Office of Ministry to Priests concerning ways to continue the renewal and growth experienced during the Sabbatical. This Sabbatical policy for the Diocese of Rockville Centre shall be subject to review every three years from the date of enactment.

## **VIII. CONTINUING EDUCATION**

### **A. Introduction**

In his Apostolic Exhortation, *PASTORES DABO VOBIS*, Pope John Paul II enunciates very clearly the place of ongoing education in the life of the priest: “The intellectual dimension of formation likewise needs to be continually fostered through the priest’s entire life, especially by a commitment to study and serious and disciplined familiarity with modern culture (no. 72).

The Diocesan Bishop recognizes and encourages the importance of theological and ministerial education. The importance is underlined in the following continuing education policy.

Every priest of the diocese is required to participate in regular Diocesan Priest Conferences. These conferences serve to update the Presbyterate in areas judged to be of general concern to all and provide an opportunity for the Presbyterate to gather socially.

In addition, every priest is annually given one week off from his regular diocesan assignment as well as a continuing education stipend in order to participate in other educational offerings. Every priest is required to participate in some type of concentrated updating in theology or ministerially-related discipline, at least once every three years. Such updating may involve taking a course during an academic semester at an institution of higher learning or participating in one of the many study weeks which are offered throughout the country.

The diocese offers financial help for those who wish to audit courses, take an occasional course or pursue an academic degree or professional certificate in a ministry-related area of study. The procedure is outlined below.

### **B. Application And Procedure**

If an incardinated priest of the diocese wishes to audit a course, take the course for credit, or wishes to begin work on an advanced study, he may apply for tuition assistance. To do so, he should first make his intention known to the Director of Priest Personnel by July 15th for the Fall semester and by December 31st for the Spring semester. He should offer and explanation of the field of study, the name of the course(s) and the amount of the tuition due to the university. Photocopies of relevant information from the school’s catalogue should be included. The Director of Priest Personnel will consult with a committee of priests to evaluate the requests in light of established policies so that such requests do not exceed the budget for the fiscal year. If approved, the diocese will pay

one-third, the parish one-third and the priest will pay one-third. A check from the diocese payable to the school will be forwarded to the priest for his transmittal to the school. A notice of successful completion of the course should be submitted to the Director of Priest Personnel at the end of the semester.

effective September 1, 1997

## **IX. MILITARY CHAPLAINS**

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As the Diocese of Rockville Centre experiences a lessening in the number of priests available to serve the pastoral needs of such a large Diocese, it is important that careful discernment be part of the assignment of each priest. At the same time, we recognize that we are part of the Universal Church and we wish to preserve our long-standing commitment to serve the Church. It is within this perspective that we present this policy regarding diocesan priests serving as Military chaplains. This was approved by Bishop McGann in February, 1995.

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A seminarian or priest who wishes to serve as a chaplain in any branch of the military services of the United States must write for permission of the Bishop of the Diocese. His request should include the specific details and requirements of the category of chaplaincy he is seeking. These include:

**A. Active Duty**

This is a full-time commitment of three years active service which allows for an indefinite extension and a regular Military commission.

**B. Inactive Duty**

This is a commitment to attend two days, monthly (one weekend) of drills and two full weeks of annual training. Acceptance into this program requires a seven-week training period that can be split over two years into two sessions, one four weeks and the other three weeks.

**C. Chaplain Candidates**

This program is seasoned for seminarians and requires annual training that takes place during the summer months. Upon ordination, the seminarian is offered an appointment in the Chaplain Corps for active or inactive duty. There is no service requirement until an appointment is accepted.

**D. Procedure**

The following clarification has been provided by the Archdiocese for the Military Services, USA:

1. Basically, when any officer, including a priest chaplain, is commissioned in the military he is commissioned initially as a Reserve officer.
2. As a Reserve officer, the priest is identified as being in the Inactive Reserve (a misused term, since generally there will be activities taking some of his time). Usually he will be expected initially to complete a course of basic instruction at chaplain school. This could mean two to four weeks.
3. His ongoing obligation subsequently would be to serve with a Reserve unit in his home area, generally a weekend a month plus a couple of weeks of summer training. He could also opt to be in a really Inactive Reserve category with no assignment to a unit and no summer training, relying on correspondence courses to keep him eligible for promotion in grade. Training periods, etc., are needed to earn points to qualify for retirement.
4. With his Bishop's permission, a priest in the Inactive Reserve, with at least three years of experience in parish ministry, can report for active duty for an initial tour of duty of three years. If the military likes him and he likes the military, with his Bishop's renewed permission, he can continue on active duty for another three years or for an indefinite period, until he completes twenty years, reaches age 62 or fails twice to be selected for promotion to a higher grade.
5. Congress funds a nucleus force of military personnel maintained as regular officers, guaranteeing them a full career of at least twenty years and guaranteeing the country a basic core of professional personnel on which to build the nation's armed forces.
6. During his career, a priest Reserve chaplain on active duty may be offered such a regular commission, guaranteeing a twenty-year career if the Bishop gives permission.

7. Very important to note is that any Inactive Reserve officer is subject to call-up to active duty in a national emergency or mobilization such as for Desert Storm. They can be called to active duty for 90 days or, as in WWII, for the duration.
8. The Bishop will grant permission in writing. Conditions of the permission should be clearly stated in detail. These details should contain the following:
  - a) The seminarian/priest is considered an Inactive Reserve officer. Any change in the military status of the seminarian/priest must have the permission in writing of the Bishop of the Diocese.
  - b) It is to be clearly understood that the position of chaplain is NOT a diocesan assignment.
  - c) Since it is not a diocesan assignment, any time required to fulfill a chaplain's responsibilities must be arranged by the seminarian/priest chaplain. It is NOT the responsibility of the diocese, parish or institution to which the seminarian/priest is assigned to provide time off, personnel coverage, financial remuneration or support during time necessary to fulfill the chaplain's military obligations.
9. Since those on Inactive Reserve can be called up to active duty in a National emergency, it is important to limit the number of priests serving in the Inactive Reserve.

## **X. THE OFFICE OF DEAN**

The office of dean (vicar forane, archpriest) is provided for in the law of the Church in order to assist the diocesan bishop in the fulfillment of his pastoral responsibilities and, through the exercise of subsidiarity, to render his diocesan ministry more effective and his presence more visible in local situations.

Since the Diocese of Rockville Centre is divided into both vicariates and deaneries, the deans of a particular vicariate are coordinated by the episcopal vicar with whom they work closely and to whom they are directly accountable. Consultation with the deans is extremely important, particularly in matters affecting priests and pastoral life, since, as ministers on the local scene, they possess invaluable experience and close familiarity with the complexities of the concrete situation.

The office of dean is governed by the Code of Canon Law (cc.553- 555) and by the norms found in this document. Another important source for guidance about deans is the *Directory on the Pastoral Ministry of Bishops* (nn. 184-188).

### **A. Jurisdiction**

??The parishes of the Diocese of Rockville Centre are divided into fourteen geographical deaneries, with approximately the same number of parishes in each deanery. There are four deaneries in the Western Vicariate, five in the Central Vicariate, and five in the Eastern Vicariate.

### **B. Accountability**

1. The dean is directly accountable to the respective episcopal vicar.
2. The vicar will hold a meeting of the deans of his vicariate at least once a year to coordinate and promote their pastoral activity in the vicariate.
3. At times, the dean may need help in fulfilling specific responsibilities. He is authorized in such circumstances to delegate a suitable priest of his deanery to assist him in



carrying out his duties. For example, he may delegate a priest to assist him in the annual parish visitations.

**C. Appointment**

1. Since the dean, as the representative of the diocesan bishop, works closely with his respective episcopal vicar, he is to be appointed by the diocesan bishop from a slate drawn up by the episcopal vicar after appropriate consultation.
2. The dean's term of office is three years. His term is renewable at the discretion of the diocesan bishop after consultation with the respective episcopal vicar. Normally, his term will commence on September 1 and expire on August 31.

**D. Qualifications**

1. The dean must be an ordained priest serving within the Diocese of Rockville Centre.
2. Normally, the dean will be a pastor. If he is not a pastor, he should be a priest who has the stability of office to complete his term and who is in a position to carry out effectively the duties assigned to the dean.
3. Since the duties of the dean revolve primarily about his brother priests, he should be highly esteemed by his peers, intelligent, prayerful, experienced, theologically sound, and a man noted for his pastoral commitment.

**E. Duties**

1. *Coordinate Pastoral Activity*

The dean should look for ways to promote and coordinate common pastoral activity within his deanery, to avoid wasteful duplication of effort, and to facilitate the sharing of resources whenever possible.

2. *Convoke Meetings*

The dean should convoke at least two meetings of the priests of his deanery each year. The meetings should follow a written agenda, sent in advance to all the members of the deanery.

3. *Content of the Meetings*

The meetings should involve some form of continuing education and formation for priests and provide an opportunity for priests to socialize.

4. *Promote Attendance*

One of the principal duties of the dean is to promote attendance at such meetings by as many priests as are available. This will be accomplished if the meetings have a solid spiritual dimension, are well-prepared, and are attractive in both content and format. If certain priests regularly absent themselves from such meetings, the dean should not hesitate to speak with them in an encouraging manner about the importance of joining with their brother priests on a regular basis.

5. *Episcopal Vicar*

The episcopal vicar should be invited each year to attend at least one of the meetings in each deanery.

6. *Death of a Priest*

Upon learning of the death of a priest or deacon serving in the diocese, the dean should immediately alert the priests and deacons of his deanery about the death, inform them about the funeral

arrangements, and seek their prayers for the deceased minister and his surviving loved ones.

7. *Preside at the Mass of Transferral*

Unless, in a particular case, another priest or bishop is more appropriate, the dean will serve as the principal celebrant of the Mass of Transferral, the evening before the Mass of Christian Burial. He should also concelebrate the Mass of Christian Burial.

8. *Pastoral Visitation*

The dean should make at least one pastoral visitation each year to each of the parishes and other liturgical centers within his deanery. The Chancellor's Office will supply each parish with a Visitation Report form which the dean will use as a guide for a discussion with the pastor. The visitation includes:

- a) discuss and assess the condition of the church and the other parish buildings and their interior furnishings;
- b) examine the parish sacramental registers and *visum* each page of the register;
- c) discuss the most recent parish census;
- d) alert the Chancellor's Office if there is need for follow-up from any diocesan entities.

9. *Episcopal Vicar's Visitation*

When the episcopal vicar makes a pastoral visitation to a parish, he should share his impressions with the local dean and instruct him about any matters that pertain to his duties.

10. *Installation of New Pastors*

The dean is to preside at the liturgical installation of new pastors in his deanery.

11. *Appointment of New Pastors*

When a pastor is appointed or re-appointed to a parish, the episcopal vicar should consult with the local dean about the needs of the parish and about the candidates under consideration. The dean's advice and recommendation will be reported by the episcopal vicar to the diocesan bishop and the personnel assignment board.

12. On occasion, the episcopal vicar the diocesan bishop or the Senate of Priests may call on the dean to serve on a committee commissioned to address questions concerning priest personnel or other pastoral matters pertinent to his deanery.

**XI. DEANERIES AND PARISHES**

**A. Western Vicariate**

**1 Rockville Centre**

Baldwin, St. Christopher  
Freeport, Our Holy Redeemer  
Garden City, St. Joseph  
Hempstead, Our Lady of Loretto  
Rockville Centre, St. Agnes  
Roosevelt, Queen of the Most Holy Rosary  
Uniondale, St. Martha

**2 North Hempstead**

Great Neck, St. Aloysius  
Manhasset, St. Mary  
Manorhaven, Our Lady of Fatima  
Mineola, Corpus Christi  
New Hyde Park, Holy Spirit  
New Hyde Park, Notre Dame  
Port Washington, St. Peter of Alcantara  
Williston Park, St. Aidan

**3 Oyster Bay**

Bayville, St. Gertrude  
Glen Head, St. Hyacinth  
Glen Cove, St. Patrick  
Glen Cove, St. Rocco  
Glen Head, St. Paul the Apostle  
Oyster Bay, St. Dominic  
Roslyn, St. Mary  
Sea Cliff, St. Boniface Martyr  
Syosset, St. Edward the Confessor  
Woodbury, Holy Name of Jesus

**4 Belmont**

Elmont, St. Boniface  
Elmont, St. Vincent de Paul  
Floral Park, St. Hedwig  
Floral Park, Our Lady of Victory  
Franklin Square, St. Catherine of Siena  
Garden City, St. Anne  
Lynbrook, Our Lady of Peace  
Malverne, Our Lady of Lourdes  
Valley Stream, Blessed Sacrament  
Valley Stream, Holy Name of Mary

**6 Five Towns**

Cedarhurst, St. Joachim  
East Rockaway, St. Raymond  
Hewlett, St. Joseph  
Inwood, Our Lady of Good Counsel  
Island Park, Sacred Heart  
Long Beach, St. Ignatius Martyr  
Long Beach, St. Mary of the Isle  
Oceanside, St. Anthony  
Point Lookout, Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal

**B. Central Vicariate**

**5 Hicksville**

Bethpage, St. Martin of Tours  
Carle Place, Our Lady of Hope  
East Meadow, St. Raphael  
Farmingdale, St. Kilian  
Hicksville, St. Ignatius Loyola  
Hicksville, Our Lady of Mercy  
Levittown, St. Bernard  
Plainview, St. Pius X  
Seaford, St. James

Westbury, St. Brigid.

**7 Seaford**

Bellmore, St. Barnabas the Apostle  
Massapequa, St. Rose of Lima  
Massapequa Park, Our Lady of Lourdes  
Merrick, Curé of Ars  
North Merrick, Sacred Heart  
Seaford, Maria Regina  
Seaford, St. William the Abbot  
Wantagh, St. Frances de Chantal

**8 Huntington**

Centerport, Our Lady Queen of Martyrs  
Commack, Christ the King  
Dix Hills, St. Matthew  
East Northport, St. Anthony of Padua  
Greenlawn, St. Francis of Assisi  
Huntington, St. Patrick  
Huntington Station, St. Hugh of Lincoln  
Kings Park, St. Joseph  
Melville, St. Elizabeth  
Northport, St. Philip Neri

**9 Babylon**

Amityville, St. Martin of Tours  
Babylon, St. Joseph  
Copaigue, Our Lady of Assumption  
Deer Park, SS. Cyril and Methodius  
Lindenhurst, Our Lady of Perpetual Help  
West Babylon, Our Lady of Grace  
West Islip, Our Lady of Lourdes  
Wyandanch, Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal

**14 Smithhaven**

Centereach, Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary



Hauppauge, St. Thomas More  
Nesconset, Holy Cross  
Lake Ronkonkoma, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton  
Ronkonkoma, St. Joseph  
St. James, SS. Philip and James  
Setauket, St. James  
Smithtown, St. Patrick

**C. Eastern Vicariate**

**10 Islip**

Bayshore, St. Patrick  
Bohemia, St. John Nepomucene  
Brentwood, St. Anne  
Brentwood, St. Luke  
Central Islip, St. John of God  
East Islip, St. Mary  
Islip Terrace, St. Peter the Apostle  
Sayville, St. Lawrence the Martyr

**11 North Brookhaven**

Coram, St. Frances Cabrini  
Port Jefferson, Infant Jesus  
Pt. Jefferson Station, St. Gerard Majella  
Rocky Point, St. Anthony of Padua  
Selden, St. Margaret of Scotland  
Shoreham, St. Mark  
Sound Beach, St. Louis de Montfort  
Wading River, St. John the Baptist

**12 South Brookhaven**

Bellport, Mary Immaculate  
Bleu Point, Our Lady of the Snow  
Center Moriches, St. John the Evangelist  
East Patchogue, St. Joseph the Worker  
Farmingville, Resurrection

Holbrook, Good Shepherd  
Manorville, SS. Peter and Paul  
Mastic Beach, St. Jude  
Medford, St. Sylvester  
Patchogue, Our Lady of Mount Carmel  
Patchogue, St. Frances de Sales

**13 Peconic**

Bridgehampton, Queen of the Most Holy Rosary  
Cutchogue, Our Lady of Ostrabrama  
Cutchogue, Sacred Heart  
East Hampton, Most Holy Trinity  
Greenport, St. Agnes  
Hampton Bays, St. Rosalie  
Montauk, St. Therese of Lisieux  
Riverhead, St. Isidore  
Riverhead, St. John the Evangelist  
Sag Harbor, St. Andrew  
Shelter Island Heights, Our Lady of the Isle  
Southampton, Our Lady of Poland  
Southampton, Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary  
Southold, St. Patrick  
Westhampton Beach, Immaculate Conception

## **XII. INCARDINATION**

The process of incardination is based on canons 265-272 of the 1983 *Code of Canon Law*. Below is an outline of the process followed in the Diocese of Rockville Centre.

### **A. Requirements**

1. The priest (*Temporary Diocesan Assignment*) must work in the diocese for four years.
2. The priest must have been assigned in at least *two parishes* before he can begin the process for incardination.
3. He is to write to the diocesan bishop and state his intention to seek incardination.
4. He is to obtain from his own diocesan bishop or religious a letter which indicates that his bishop or superior is supportive of the priest's request to begin the process of incardination into the Diocese of Rockville Centre, and that he is willing to excardinate the priest should the priest's request be accepted.
5. If the visiting priest's first language is not English, he will be expected to demonstrate linguistic facility in English commensurate to his priestly ministry, especially preaching and conversational skills.
6. The diocesan bishop will bring the request to the Priests Personnel Assignment Board for consideration. The Incardination Committee will review the case and arrange for an interview.

### **B. Evaluations and Examinations**

1. The Director of Priest Personnel will arrange that evaluations will be sought from the following persons:
  - a) the appropriate episcopal vicar
  - b) the pastors and associate pastors s with whom he has served
  - c) other responsible persons with whom he has worked or been associated.
2. The Director of Priest Personnel will arrange for a psychological evaluation. The results will be make available to the diocesan bishop and the Incardination Committee.

3. The priest will undergo a physical examination.

**C. Interviews**

1. The priest will meet with the Director of Priest Personnel to discuss his request and review the process of incardination.
2. Once request of the priest has been accepted and all evaluations have been received, the Incardination Committee will interview the priest. The results of the interview will be shared with the Priest Personnel Assignment Board for its consideration. The Priest Personnel Assignment Board will make its recommendations to the diocesan bishop.

**D. Formal Incardination**

1. The decree of excardination must be obtained from the priest's bishop in response to his written request to excardinate and to incardinate into the Diocese of Rockville Centre. In the case of the religious priest, the documents necessary to incardinate him must be obtained.
2. The priest will be invited to a meeting of the Priest Personnel Assignment Board. At this meeting, the priest will swear and sign the Oath of Fidelity in the presence of the diocesan bishop and a canonical notary (chancellor or vice-chancellor). The diocesan bishop will sign the Decree of Incardination, which is also notarized.
3. On Holy Thursday at the Chrism Mass, the priests incardinated during the previous year are publicly welcomed by the presbyterate of the diocese.

### **XIII. CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION**

#### **FUNERAL RITES AND BURIAL OF A PRIEST**

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When completed, this form (and any attachments a priest wishes to include) will be placed in his personnel file in the Chancellor's Office in a sealed envelope. It will remain unopened until after the priest's death. His wishes will be followed to the fullest extent possible.

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Name of the Priest: \_\_\_\_\_

#### **A. Family Members and Friends**

*When making arrangements, your family will be consulted as to their wishes and suggestions for the funeral arrangements. Your own wishes will be communicated to them and coordinated with what your family desires.*

1. Principal Family Contact:

Name:

Address:

Telephone (Home):

(Work):

2. Names of Parents:

3. Names of Brothers and Sisters: (**addresses and phone are helpful**)

4. Other relatives:

5. Close Friends

#### **B. Funeral Arrangements**

1. Funeral Director:

Name:

Phone:

2. Place of Funeral:

*The customary church of the funeral is the current or the last parish assignment of the priest. Should you wish to have the funeral rites celebrated in another church, please indicate the church:*

Church of Funeral rites:

3. Mass of Transferral:

*The Mass of Transferral is the first of two customary funeral liturgies. It is a parish Mass celebrated the evening before the Funeral Mass, usually with the dean as the presider. Bishop McGann will invite whom you select as the homilist for this Mass; the other arrangements are made by the parish community. Please indicate your wishes below, and they will be shared with the appropriate persons in the parish.*

a) Possible Homilists: (to be invited by Bishop McGann)

b) Readings:

c) Music:

d) Other wishes:

4. Mass of Christian Burial:

*The Mass of Christian Burial is a diocesan liturgy celebrated in the parish church; usually Bishop McGann is the presider. The arrangements are coordinated by diocesan offices (e.g., funeral booklets, music ministers, etc.). Please indicate your own wishes below.*

a) Possible Homilists:

b) Possible Vested Concelebrants:

c) Other wishes for the Funeral Mass:

5. Other Special Requests concerning Liturgical Arrangements:

**C. Burial Information**

1. Cemetery Plot:
2. Location of the Deed:

**D. Will**

*Each **pastor** is required to have his Will on file in the Chancellor's Office. All other priests are encouraged to do so. Your Will should be mailed to the Chancellor's Office by 'Return Receipt Request.' If you send a copy, please indicate where the original is located. Should the Will be amended, the new Will can be mailed to the Chancellor's Office and the old copy will be destroyed.*

1. Location of the Will:

2. Executor/Executrix:

---

*Please keep one copy of this information among your personal papers. The original should be sent to the Chancellor's Office in a sealed envelope, not to be opened until the event of death. If you wish to amend any information given above, send the amended information in a sealed envelope and the former sealed envelope will be returned. All information is confidential.*

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*signature of the priest*

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*date*



## SECTION IV

### DEACONS

#### POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

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## **I. INTRODUCTION: THEOLOGY OF THE DIACONATE**

The diaconate is an ordained ministry. The deacon makes a commitment and with the help of the gifts of the Spirit, he takes up his particular role of leadership. In that way he is a "unique sign and instrument of what Jesus Christ is for the Church and what the Church must be for the sake of Jesus Christ." The diaconate is a distinct order involving service in three areas of Church life:

1. proclamation of the Word
2. celebration of the sacraments
3. active love in the community through a broad social ministry with a particular concern for the marginalized.

Service is the task of all the baptized but the deacon, as an ordained minister, has the special duty "to be a representative person in the Church." Not only a sign of Christian service, the deacon must also be a promoter of service.

"The deacon's distinctiveness is sacramental." He makes visible by his ordination and empowerment what all are called to be and do.

The deacon's identity, then, can be said to be found in the idea of a sacramental symbol. The deacon does not deprive others of ministry, nor is what he does exclusive to the deacon. The deacon in his person is called to be a sign of what the Church says and believes, a sign of the "link between Word, sacrament and love." By diaconal ordination, the Church ratifies the call to ministry "for which the man has already demonstrated his ability and his gifts."

(summarized from  
*Deacons in the United States:  
Guidelines in their Formation and Ministry*  
Bishops' Committee on the Diaconate, 1984)

## **II. ADMISSIONS PROCEDURE**

### **A. Qualifications for Acceptance into the Diaconate Program**

1. At least 35 years of age by ordination and under 69 by ordination
2. If the applicant is married, explicit written consent and support from the applicant's wife, as well as consultation with children
3. High school graduation
4. Successful completion of the first two years in the Pastoral Formation Institute
5. Good physical and mental health
6. Demonstration, in a structured interview, of possession of those talents considered requisite for the deacon
7. Sponsorship by a pastor, usually the local pastor, or sponsorship by an institution
8. Involvement in parochial and/or pastoral activities
9. Recommendations of colleagues

### **B. Marital Considerations**

1. A married deacon who has been widowed may not enter a new marriage (canon 1087)
2. Unmarried men, upon ordination, make a lifetime commitment to celibacy.

### **C. Procedure for Admission to Diaconal Candidacy Program**

The Admission Procedure for the Diaconal Candidacy Program is comprised of three phases:

- I. Discernment and Pastoral Formation
- II. Application for Diaconal Formation
- III. Evaluation of Candidate

#### **1. Phase I - Discernment and Pastoral Formation**

- a) After an initial discussion and with the support of the pastor or sponsor, the applicant will apply for admission to the Pastoral Formation Institute. Upon acceptance in the Institute, the applicant will enter into a two year pastoral formation process with other lay leadership candidates. For all those in this formation process, it is to be entered into with an openness to growth and to exploration of the numerous ways that persons are called to minister in the Church today; this is also true for a man discerning a call to Diaconate.
- b) In Year II of the Institute, the discernment process includes a meeting of the Institute participants and their pastors or sponsors. If the pastor or sponsor supports the participant considering diaconate, the following procedure should be followed:
- c) During the interview the pastor or sponsor and participant will discuss:
  - (1) the ministerial needs of the parish at present, and into the future, as they both see them.
  - (2) the qualities and talents of this participant as the pastor or sponsor and he view them.
  - (3) the experience in the Pastoral Formation Institute.
  - (4) the ministry that the participant currently pursues in the parish/institution and the understanding of priorities for the deacons: first, the family, second the job; and third, the diaconate.
  - (5) the area of responsibility that they both agree will be the participant's if ordained a deacon.
- d) These last two are requirements which must be specifically identified and detailed on the Description of Ministry form. (See Appendix A)
- e) The pastor or sponsor will discuss with the staff, including any deacons, the possibility of proposing the participant for candidacy for the diaconate.
- f) The applicant and his wife, if he is married, will meet with the Parish Staff, including any deacons, to explore the question of candidacy for the diaconate.

- g) The pastor or sponsor will communicate to the applicant the decision as to whether or not he/she will sponsor him as a diaconal candidate.

2. **Phase II - Application for Diaconal Formation**

- a) The applicant writes to the director of the Office of Deacons with a report of his meetings with the pastor or sponsor and the parish staff; at this time he requests admittance to the Diaconal Formation Program.
- b) The pastor or sponsor writes to the director of the Office of Deacons to support the applicant's request to enter the Diaconal Formation Program and includes the form which describes the applicant's proposed ministry.
- c) After the letters required from the pastor or sponsor and applicant have been submitted to the director of the Office of Deacons, the applicant will fulfill the following requirements:
  - (1) Interview by the director of the Office of Deacons which will include completing an application form, taking the Deacon Perceiver Interview and instructions for completing the application.
  - (2) Submission of an autobiographical essay describing his views of the diaconate, and how he will integrate family, work and ministry.
  - (3) Three letters of recommendation: one from a (parish) staff member, one from a fellow worker in current ministry, and one from a person of his own choosing.
  - (4) Home (family) interview by a trained married couple.
  - (5) Psychological examination.
- d) The director of the Office of Deacons requests a written report on the applicant from the director of the Pastoral Formation Institute.

3. **Phase III - Evaluation of Applicant**

- a) The Board of Admissions currently consists of 23 members: a bishop, deacon couples, deacons, pastors, associate pastors, staff members, as well as the director of the Office of Deacons and the director of the Pastoral Formation Institute. This group is divided into four teams of five members,

excluding the directors of the Office of Deacons and of the Pastoral Formation Institute. Each applicant is thoroughly evaluated by one of the four teams.

- b) The process for the teams evaluating the applicants is:
  - (1) Review all the materials that have been received during the application process. (See Phase II - #1-4)
  - (2) Arrange an interview for each applicant with at least two members of the evaluation team present.
  - (3) Review each applicant assigned to their team.
  - (4) Prepare a report of their recommendations for each of the assigned applicants for the entire Board of Admissions.
  - (5) Outline in detail the reasons for the decision when they are not recommending the applicant.
  - (6) The Board of Admissions will meet. Each applicant will be presented by the appropriate team. When an applicant has not been recommended, the entire board will receive his application materials and carefully review his case.
  
- c) The director of the Office of Deacons will:
  - (1) communicate with the applicant who has been accepted and his pastor or sponsor.
  - (2) call or meet with the pastor or sponsor when an applicant has not been accepted.
  - (3) after speaking with the pastor or sponsor, will arrange to meet with the applicant who has not been accepted and outline the reasons for the decision.

### **III. THE OFFICE OF DEACONS**

#### **A. Communication**

- 1. Encourage pastors or sponsors to include deacons in staff meetings on a regular basis.
- 2. Encourage parishes or institutions to make public reference to the diverse ministries of the deacon.
- 3. Find opportunities to educate about the diaconal ministry, e.g., deacons' participation in TeLicare programs, and use of The Long Island Catholic for publicity and education.

4. Make certain that the Description of Ministry required of each deacon make provision for a well-balanced ministry of (1) liturgical participation, (2) ministry of the Word, and (3) ministries of service in accord with the deacon's abilities.

**B. Admissions**

1. Make certain that each applicant be involved in ministry in the parish or institution and fulfill a definite need in the parish or institution.
2. Assist the applicant, his wife, if he is married, and the pastor or sponsor in preparing the Description of Ministry which is submitted to the Office of Deacons for approval.
3. Coordinate the work of the Board of Admissions according to the Admissions procedures, e.g., preparing records and documentation for review, overseeing the interviewing process etc.
4. Distribute guidelines for the Admissions procedures to assist pastors or sponsors, applicants and other interested parties. Guidelines will include prerequisites, questions for discussion, and expectations for ministry.
5. These procedures will be reviewed periodically.

**C. Formation**

1. Cooperate closely with the Pastoral Formation Institute through regular meetings. In particular, include discussion of the preparation and formation of candidates.
2. Monitor the content of the formation program to assure that adequate Scriptural, sacramental, liturgical, pastoral and canonical preparation be offered to the candidates, especially regarding the sacraments of marriage and baptism.
3. Assist the pastor or sponsor in clarifying the preaching ministry of the deacon after ordination.
4. Help engender a sense of community and identity among the diaconal candidates.
5. Coordinate the supervised ministry internship during the formation process. An advisor will be selected by the Office



of Deacons to provide advice, direction and support in the specific ministry of the candidate, if one is not already available in the parish.

**D. Ministry**

1. Assist the deacon wishing to transfer from one assignment to another. Initial contact is to be made with the Office of Deacons, which will instruct the deacon as to proper procedure.
2. Assist the deacon experiencing personal difficulties, including the need for a leave of absence from the ministry.
3. Assist the deacon who is moving permanently from the Diocese of Rockville Centre, and advise him concerning exercising his diaconal ministry in another diocese. The Office of Deacons will work with the Chancellor's Office regarding excardination and incardination.

**E. Family and Personal Support**

1. Coordinate the interview of each married applicant and his wife, evaluating yearly the extent to which they have considered the impact of diaconal ministry on the marriage and family.
2. Offer support structures and activities for the deacon, his wife, if he is married, and family, including opportunities for continuing education and spiritual development.

**F. Coordinator of Diaconate Formation**

The duties include:

1. supervision of the overall diaconate training program
2. obtaining of qualified faculty
3. collaboration with the faculty and the Director of the Office of Deacons in developing and evaluating curriculum and programs of formation
4. liaison with the Office of Pastoral Formation
5. liaison with the Seminary of the Immaculate Conception

6. preparation of regular evaluative reports on the candidates
7. written recommendation for ordination at the successful completion of the candidate's studies.

**G. Coordinator of Diaconate Wives**

The duties include:

1. minister to the needs of the wives and families of deacons
2. offer counseling and support
3. offer programs that will assist the wives in family, spiritual and support matters
4. interview applicants wives during their screening process
5. support candidate's wives throughout their formation period by coordinating the following:
  - a) small support groups
  - b) days of recollection
  - c) annual retreat days
  - d) marriage enrichment days
  - e) support families with young children with activities that encourage their participation
  - f) support widows of deceased deacons
6. attend national deactivate conferences to learn and exchange ideas how best to minister to the deacon's wife and family.

**IV. PASTORS AND SPONSORS**

**A. The Applicant**

1. Meet with the applicant and his wife, if he is married, together with the pastoral staff and deacons to discuss the role of the deacon in the Church and his specific ministry in the parish or institution.
2. Recognize and implement the fact of diaconal ministry that no deacon is to function solely in a liturgical role. He must also

be actively involved in the ministry of the Word and ministries of service.

3. Dialogue with the married applicant, his wife, and family concerning the impact of the Diaconal ministry on their lives.
4. Submit the Description of Ministry to the Office of Deacons signed by the pastor or sponsor, the applicant and his wife, if he is married, which specifies the applicant's active role in service ministries.
5. Assist in developing the Description of Ministry is available from the Office of Deacons.

## **B. Formation**

1. Support and encourage the supervised internship in the candidate's active service ministries.
2. Establish during the period of formation the extent of the preaching ministry of the deacon after ordination.
3. The priests of the parish should especially be consulted about their attitudes in this matter.
4. Inform the Office of Deacons of any changes in the Description of Ministry. The modifications are to be submitted to the Office of Deacons for approval.
5. When a new pastor or sponsor is appointed while the candidate is in formation, the Description of Ministry is to be reviewed then resubmitted to the Office of Deacons.
6. Assist the parish or institution in understanding the role of the deacon in the Church and the parish or institution by regular public reference to and education about diaconal ministries, e.g., during homilies and in parish or institutional publications.

## **C. Ministry**

1. Schedule staff meetings so that the deacon can attend on a regular basis. Evening and/or weekend meetings may be planned for this purpose. The role and ministries of the deacon may be discussed and evaluated at staff meetings.
2. Encourage opportunities for the deacon and his wife, if he is married, to interact socially with the staff.

3. Continue to educate the parish or institution concerning diaconal ministries.
4. Offer special assistance to the deacon when he administers and preaches at celebrations of the sacraments of baptism and marriage. This is especially important at the beginning of his diaconal ministry.
5. Evaluate annually the Description of ministry, including review of ministries and revision of the Description of Ministry. The Office of Deacons is available for assistance, especially when a new pastor or sponsor is assigned.
6. When a new pastor or sponsor is appointed, the Description of Ministry is to be reviewed then resubmitted to the Office of Deacons.

## **V. DIACONATE ADVISORY BOARD**

### **A. Membership**

1. The diaconate Advisory Board will consist of between 10 and 20 members appointed by the Diocesan Bishop.
2. The members of the board will include deacons and their wives, pastors, associate pastors, parish pastoral staff members.
3. The Director of the Office of Deacons and a representative of the Office of Pastoral Formation will serve as ex officio members.

### **B. Advice and Consultation**

The Diaconate Advisory Board will serve as advisor and consultant to the Diocesan Bishop and the Director of the Office of Deacons in all matters pertaining to the diaconate.

### **C. Guidelines**

The Diaconate Advisory Board will develop guidelines for the length of membership and the replacement of members.

## **VI. PASTORAL FACULTIES**

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The following faculties of the Diocese of Rockville Centre are granted to a deacon who serves in a diocesan assignment. The Chancellor's Office sends the document which states the list of pastoral faculties for each deacon in his diocesan assignment. Questions about a deacon's pastoral faculties can be directed to the Chancellor's Office.

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### **A. Baptism**

1. Administer the sacrament of baptism solemnly to adults and infants.
2. Celebrate the rites of the catechumenate.
3. Receive baptized Christians into full communion with the Catholic Church.
4. Supply ceremonies which may have been omitted when baptism was conferred.

### **B. Eucharist**

1. Distribute Holy Communion at Mass.
2. Celebrate the rite of Holy Communion outside of Mass.
3. Serve as the minister of Viaticum and Holy Communion to the sick (anointing of the sick is not a function of the Deacon).
4. Impart the blessing at Eucharistic worship outside of Mass.

### **C. Marriage**

Officiate at marriages in his parish assignment, provided that he has been granted general delegation for marriage within the territory of the parish, or is otherwise delegated for the marriage by the pastor of the parish or an officially assigned parochial vicar.

### **D. Scripture**

1. Proclaim the Gospel at Mass.
2. Conduct Scripture services on appropriate occasions.

**E. Preaching**

1. Preach the homily at Mass if he has received appropriate training.
2. Preach according to the norms of the Rite of Baptism.
3. Preach outside of Mass (e.g., Eucharistic worship, Liturgies of the Word).
4. Preach according to the norms of the Rite of Marriage.
5. Preach according to the norms of the Rite of Funerals.

**F. Funerals**

Celebrate the wake service, and funeral and burial rites in accord with the Rite of Funerals.

**G. Sacramentals**

1. Administer sacramentals within the context of rites in which he serves as celebrant, or when he is authorized to so by the rituals.
2. He may bless persons and objects in accord with the prescriptions of the *Book of Blessings*.

## **VII. DESCRIPTION OF MINISTRY: SAMPLE**

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Each deacon, with the pastor or head of the institution, must discuss and sign the Description of Ministry. This document should be the basis of a yearly discussion so that any changes can be made. A copy of the document is to be submitted to the Office of Deacons. Below is a sample of what the Description of Ministry may include.

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### **A. Social Ministry**

1. Deacon Ephrem has been a Core Worker for many years. He will continue his current time commitment to the Outreach Program.
2. As an ordained deacon he will bring a spiritual dimension to social service ministry, seek ways to pray with the other workers, and offer spiritual counseling.

### **B. Liturgy**

1. Deacon Ephrem will proclaim the Gospel and assist as deacon at Sunday Mass on a weekly basis. Assignments to Masses will be rotated as much as possible.
2. He will proclaim the Gospel and assist as deacon at weekday Mass when possible.

### **C. Baptism**

1. Deacon Ephrem will continue to coordinate the monthly baptism class with his wife, Mary. This is usually every other month.
2. Deacon Ephrem and Mary will act as greeters and organizers for the baptism ceremony which follows the weekend after the class.
3. Deacon Ephrem will continue to conduct baptism interviews, usually one evening a month.
4. When needed, Deacon Ephrem will minister the sacrament of baptism.

**D. Marriage**

During his first year of diaconate, Deacon Ephrem will not be scheduled on a regular basis for weddings. He is open to officiate at weddings when needed.

**E. Wakes**

Deacon Ephrem is open to conduct wake services, particularly when he has known the deceased. During the first year of diaconate this will not be on a regular basis.

**F. Eucharist**

He will continue to bring the Eucharist to the sick on a weekly or monthly basis. He will also give Viaticum when needed.

**G. RCIA**

Deacon Ephrem will continue his current level of involvement in RCIA: i.e., meetings on Wednesdays and assisting with catechesis on Sundays.

**H. Evaluation**

This *Description of Ministry* will be reviewed and updated at this time next year. A copy will be submitted annually to the Office of Deacons.

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*signature of pastor*

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*signature of deacon*

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*date*

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*signature of wife*

**parish seal –**

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*signature of Director of Deacons*

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*date*



## **VIII. OCCASIONAL MINISTRY OUTSIDE THE PARISH**

### **A. Other Parishes in Rockville Centre**

1. The pastoral faculties granted to deacons apply throughout the Diocese of Rockville Centre.
2. It is the custom in the Diocese of Rockville Centre that a visiting priest or deacon speak to the pastor before his visit. Not only is this a matter of courtesy, but it allows the pastor and the parish to make any arrangements that may be necessary.
3. **Baptism**  
When visiting another parish for a baptism, arrangements should be made beforehand with the pastor.
4. **Marriage**  
In the Diocese of Rockville Centre, the engaged couple makes arrangements for marriage with the local parish priest or deacon. Although a deacon may visit another parish and officiate at the wedding, the necessary paperwork is completed at the Catholic's parish. Delegation to perform a marriage must be obtained from the pastor or associate pastor.

### **B. Brooklyn and New York**

1. **Reciprocal Faculties**  
Deacons who are granted pastoral faculties of the Diocese of Rockville Centre also enjoy these faculties in the Diocese of Brooklyn and the Archdiocese of New York.
2. **Weddings in New York City**  
Deacons are registered with New York City so that they may

officiate at weddings there. Delegation from the parish is still needed.

**C. Other States and Countries**

No special permission is needed when visiting another parish in the State of New York. There are some states that require special registration (e.g., Virginia, Washington, DC). The parish may require a statement of the diocese regarding the deacon's status; this may be obtained from the Office of Deacons. When visiting another country, consult the Chancellor's Office which will assist in any necessary paperwork or permissions.

## D. Overview of Ministry Outside the Parish

	Comment	Your own assignment	Another parish	Outside state/country
<b>Marriage</b>	The ability to officiate at a wedding is called <b>delegation</b> . Delegation is granted to you by a cleric with <i>general delegation</i> . In RVC, deacons don't receive general delegation as part of diocesan faculties.	General delegation can be granted <i>in writing</i> by the pastor, or any of the parish priests can grant you delegation for an individual wedding. Remember, you cannot later <i>subdelegate</i> to another priest or deacon.	Delegation for the wedding can be given by a parish priest or deacon with general delegation. This can be done orally. (If you can't make it, remember you cannot <i>subdelegate</i> to another priest or deacon.)	Check <i>state law</i> about the power to officiate. You may perform weddings in NYS and NYC. Delegation from the local priest or deacon (with general delegation) is, of course, required.
<b>Baptism</b>	The <b>faculty</b> to baptize is granted to you with ordination. Be sure that the baptism is <i>registered</i> (you don't have to sign the book yourself, but it helps).	Work with the other priests and deacons as part of the sacramental life of the parish.	Inform the pastor you are coming. If you are a deacon in good standing, you can presume his permission.. He may wish you to give him a statement to that effect.	Same as "another parish."
<b>Preaching</b>	Deacons have the faculty to preach everywhere throughout the world with the presumed permission of the rector (pastor) of the church. However, your own faculties may be limited by the diocesan bishop.	Work with the priest presider.	Work with the priest presider.	Work with the priest presider.
<b>Deacon at Mass</b>	The deacon has a ministry of service, of the Word, and of liturgical presence. Deacons follow the liturgical discipline of the Church and any diocesan directives.	Work with the priest presider.	Work with the priest presider.	Work with the priest presider.
<b>Wake Service</b>		Work with the other priests and deacons.	Make arrangements with the parish.	Make arrangements with the parish.

*Note: This chart represents a brief overview of ministry outside your parish or institutional assignment. Call the Chancellor's Office if you have any questions.*

## **IX. TRANSFER OF ASSIGNMENT**

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The deacon is assigned by the diocesan bishop to a particular parish or ecclesiastical institution. In the Diocese of Rockville Centre, most deacons serve in their home parish. However, the deacon may wish to transfer his assignment for personal reasons or for other reasons. The deacon may find himself participating in the liturgical life of another parish, or feel called to a different type of ministry. Should he desire to serve as a deacon in another assignment, it is important that the deacon follow the diocesan procedure explained below.

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### **A. Discernment**

1. The deacon should speak with the Director of the Office of Deacons concerning his intentions. The Director will assist the deacon in making a good decision about petitioning the bishop for a transfer. The Director may also suggest possible new assignments for the deacon to consider. The deacon states his desire to transfer in a letter to the bishop.
2. The deacon should speak with his current pastor concerning his intentions to seek a transfer of assignment.
3. The deacon is to contact the new pastor or head of the ecclesiastical institution. Possible ministries and areas of service can be discussed, as well as the pastor's openness to accept a deacon in the parish or institution.

### **B. New *Description of Ministry***

1. The Director of the Office of Deacons will contact the pastor of the deacon's current assignment and the new pastor. If both pastors are in agreement, the Director will make his recommendations to the diocesan bishop.

2. If the diocesan bishop agrees, the Director will ensure that a new *Description of Ministry* is discussed and finalized between the new pastor and the deacon.
3. The new *Description of Ministry* is submitted to the Office of Deacons.

**C. Appointment Letter**

The diocesan bishop will write to the deacon and the pastor, informing them of the deacon's change in assignment. The diocesan pastoral faculties remain in effect so that the deacon can exercise his ministry in the new assignment.

## **X. MOVE TO ANOTHER DIOCESE**

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A deacon may move away from the Diocese of Rockville Centre due to retirement, job transfer or another reason. There are dioceses in the United States which have deacons who minister; there are some which do not. The diocese to which he moves may or may not have deacons and may not be willing to assign a deacon from another diocese. An assignment as a deacon in the new diocese is not automatic, nor is incardination in the new diocese (and therefore excardination from the Diocese of Rockville Centre).

It is important that the deacon speak with the Director of the Office of Deacons of the Diocese of Rockville Centre before he moves away in order to learn more about the diaconate in his new diocese.

The guidelines below are based on the procedure outlined by the National Catholic Conference of Bishops and followed in the Diocese of Rockville Centre.

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**A. Inform the Dioceses**

1. When the decision has been made to move to a new diocese, the deacon will inform the Director of the Office for Deacons of the Diocese of Rockville Centre. In like manner, the deacon will write to the bishop of the new diocese to inform the bishop of his move, and should he wish, of his desire to serve as a deacon in the new diocese.

2. The Director of the Office of Deacons will explain the procedure more fully to the deacon and assist him with sample letters, suggestions for ministry, and explanations of other issues. When requested, the Director will send appropriate documentation (letters, evaluations, etc.) to the new diocese. The National Conference of Catholic Bishops suggests that this documentation include:
  - a) A letter informing the receiving bishop of the impending move with a statement of the just cause of the deacon's move (e.g. employment, retirement or health conditions) together with letters of recommendation and evaluation.
  - b) A resume of the deacon's personal history, which will be the basis for a character reference together with the recently adapted protocol between bishops and religious superiors testifying to the deacon's record of conduct and moral integrity.
  - c) A written record of the deacon's academic, spiritual and pastoral formation, to include notation of academic degrees awarded or citations earned.
  - d) An evaluation of the deacon's ministry.

**B. Ministry in the New Diocese**

1. Upon arrival in the host diocese, the deacon may wish to call upon the bishop or his new director of the diaconate to make his presence known as well as state his desire for diaconal faculties and a diaconal assignment.
2. The new bishop or his director of the diaconate will evaluate the deacon's resume and examine the needs of the diocese. After favorable review, the bishop may choose to give the deacon faculties and a temporary assignment. The bishop may choose to appoint a supervisor to the deacon and indicate that evaluations will take place at six and twelve month intervals.

## **XI. INCARDINATION AND EXCARDINATION**

### **A. Incardination**

1. Incardination is the juridic bond which perpetually and absolutely unites a cleric to the service of a particular church (e.g., diocese).
2. Incardination occurs at *ordination to the diaconate*.
3. Incardination gives him his proper ordinary (e.g., the diocesan bishop).
4. "Wandering clerics" (*vagi*), those detached from a particular church, are not permitted in the Church.
5. Upon ordination to the diaconate, a deacon is bound permanently and absolutely to serve the Church of Rockville Centre.

### **B. Excardination**

The cleric is released from his bond of service to his own diocese so he can be incardinated into another diocese. The deacon must carefully follow the process outlined below in order to be excardinated from Rockville Centre and incardinated into another diocese. This happens simultaneously so that he is always part of a particular church.

### **C. Process of Incardination/Excardination**

1. Deacon's Petition
  - a) After due and prayerful consideration, the deacon will write to his new diocesan bishop to advise him of his intent to seek incardination in the diocese in which he is now resident and excardination from his diocese of incardination.
  - b) This is usually done after a minimum of two years of service in the new diocese.
  - c) The deacon must intend to remain permanently in the new diocese.

- d) The Director of the Office of Deacons can supply the deacon with sample letters.
- 2. Bishop's Response

After receiving letters of suitable evaluation and the recommendation of his deacon director and having weighed the relative merits of the deacon's petition and the needs of the diocese, the bishop will respond to the petition and indicate his willingness regarding incardination.
- 3. Petition for Excardination

If the bishop expresses a willingness to incardinate the deacon, the deacon will write to his bishop of incardination for a decree of excardination which will include an explanation of the just cause(s) for the request.
- 4. Decrees
  - a) The excardinating bishop executes a decree of excardination. In accord with Canon 267 the letter must be signed by the diocesan bishop and in view of Canon 270 include the declaration that the excardination is being given for just cause.
  - b) After receiving the legitimately executed decree of excardination, the new diocesan bishop issues a decree of incardination within one month and notifies the diocese of excardination of the incardination of the deacon.
  - c) Incardination to the receiving diocese is not completed until both documents have been executed and the bishops (*a quo* and *ad quem*) have been duly notified.

## **XII. LEAVE OF ABSENCE**

This request is made to the bishop through the Office of Deacons. It is usually for at least six months to a year, and can be renewed. Each case is different and the details of the Leave of Absence are tailored to the needs of the individual deacon. Usually his faculties are removed during the time of the Leave. Should a deacon choose to re-marry after the death of his spouse, a *laicization* is needed from the Holy Father (e.g., request to be returned to the lay state and to be



dispensed from celibacy). The current practice of the Holy See is not to permit deacons to re-marry after the death of a spouse. Therefore, a laicization is required.

### **XIII. DEATH OF A DEACON**

#### **A. Notification**

1. The Office of Deacons is to be notified when a deacon dies.
2. The Office of Deacons will notify the diocesan bishop, episcopal vicars and the parishes. *The Long Island Catholic* will receive the burial information.
3. The family or parish may choose to publish obituaries in appropriate newspapers.

#### **B. Arrangements**

1. The deacon's family is to make the funeral arrangements according to the wishes of the deceased and the family's own needs and wishes.
2. The parish can assist the family in planning the liturgies and the other details of the funeral arrangements.
3. Consultation with the pastor is important so that the needs of the family are coordinated with those of the parish community.

#### **C. Wake**

1. *Option One:* The deacon may be waked as is customary for Catholics, i.e., dressed as a lay person. The casket may be open or closed. The body may be moved from family or funeral home on the day of Christian burial.
2. *Option Two:* The deacon may be waked and buried as a cleric, i.e., in alb and stole. There may be a full open casket with lid removed.

**D. Mass of Transferal**

1. If the deacon is waked and buried in alb and stole, the Mass of Transferal may be held on the evening preceding Mass of Christian Burial.
2. The casket may be left open and remain in the church overnight.

**E. Funeral Mass**

1. The liturgy is planned by the family and the parish community.
2. If the deacon is waked and buried in alb and stole, the casket may remain open during the Funeral Mass.
3. Deacons who attend are to be vested in alb and stole.
4. One or two deacons may be selected to assist the presider during the Mass.
5. Celebrants and/or homilists for either Mass may be arranged by the family and the parish.

**F. Notes**

1. As stated above, there are two basic options available. There are some variations on the second option (i.e., waked and buried in alb and stole). For example, the Mass of Transferal may be eliminated. The Mass of Transferal allows fellow deacons an opportunity to pay their fullest respect to their departed brother deacon. For many, time off from their work can be difficult, if not impossible, during the week.
2. Those involved in the final arrangements should be particularly sensitive to the feelings of the immediate family even to the point of altering written instructions. Consultation with the pastor in these matters is a necessary element. The Office of Deacons is available for advice, assistance, and any help needed.

**G. Death of a Deacon's Wife**

1. The Office of Deacons, upon learning of the death of a deacon's wife, will send the burial information to the diocesan bishop, the episcopal vicars and the parishes.
2. The family makes the funeral arrangements with the parish. The Office of Deacons can offer assistance.

**XIV. GUIDELINES FOR DEACONS AT MASS**

*Note: Several paragraphs in these guidelines are printed in italic type. These are spiritual commentaries designed to explain or expand on particular rubrics.*

**A. Liturgical Role of the Deacon**

1. While the Eucharist does not exhaust the prayer or activity of deacons or any member of the assembly, it is important that ministers called to serve the faithful at liturgical celebrations be knowledgeable and competent servants of the sacred mysteries.
2. "Among ministers, the deacon, whose order has been held in high honor since the early church, has first place. At Mass he has his own functions: he proclaims the gospel, sometimes preaches God's Word, leads the general intercessions, assists the priest, gives communion to the people (in particular, ministering the chalice), and sometimes gives directions regarding the assembly's moving, standing, kneeling or sitting" (GI 61). "In the absence of lesser ministers, he carries out their functions as necessary." (CE 25).

**B. Before the Celebration**

1. The deacon should see to it that the necessary liturgical books, vessels and vestments are properly arranged for the

celebration (ST 47). Neither the Sacramentary nor vessels appear on the altar at this time.

2. The deacon vests in alb and stole (where deemed appropriate he may add the dalmatic) for the Eucharist (GI 81, 200). The deacon wears the stole over his left shoulder, across the body and fastened at the right side (GI 302).
3. The order of procession is as follows:
  - a) thurifer (if incense is used)
  - b) cross
  - c) acolytes (with candles)
  - d) other ministers
  - e) reader(s)
  - f) deacon
  - g) priest (GI 82.)

### **C. Introductory Rites**

1. Carrying the gospel book so that it is visible to the assembly, the deacon walks immediately before the priest in the procession. Otherwise, he walks at the right hand side of the priest (GI 128).

*The meaning of a deacon carrying the gospel book in procession is to be found in what he has been doing in the week since this church last solemnly gathered: carrying the Word to the workplace, to the sick and elderly and to those celebrating life as well as those preparing to enter life eternal (SS 105).*

2. The desired norm is that the gospel book be carried in procession. In the deacon's absence, the reader carries the gospel book (GI 82). If there is no gospel book available, the deacon (or the reader) carries the Lectionary so that it is visible to the assembly. In no case would both books be carried in procession. The Sacramentary is never carried in procession.

3. On reaching the altar, the priest and ministers make the proper reverence which is a low bow or, if there is a tabernacle containing the blessed sacrament on the line of processional movement, a genuflection (GI 84, CE 128).
4. After placing the gospel book on the altar, the deacon together with the priest kisses the altar (GI 129).

*This intimate gesture of respect for the Book of the Gospels and the holy table, both symbols of Christ, should be performed slowly and reverently, LMD 27).*

5. If incense is used, the deacon assists the priest as necessary. Then the deacon goes to his chair, either at the priest's right side or where he might assist the priest most effectively (GLI 129-130). Both chairs face the assembly.
6. The priest blesses himself and greets those who have gathered for worship. The priest, deacon, or other suitable minister may very briefly introduce the mass of the day (GI 86). As a general rule it should be done by the one who will later preach the homily (ST 48).
7. If penitential Rite "C" is used, the priest or deacon announces or sings the petitions to which the congregation responds. Sample invocations are found in the Sacramentary or they may be newly-composed (OM 359).

*Since Form "C" is not simply a public confession of faults but a profession of praise and trust in Christ's power to save us, invocations such as "For the times we failed to..." are usually not the best formulation.*

8. If the rite of blessing and sprinkling holy water is used the deacon assists the priest (CE 133).

9. If a server is not present, the deacon assists the priest with the Sacramentary during the opening prayer (CE 25). At its conclusion, he sits.

**D. Liturgy of the Word**

1. The deacon remains seated at his place during the entire liturgy of the word until the gospel acclamation (ST 48).

*If the gospel book is used, the Lectionary needs to be reverently moved following the reading which precedes the gospel acclamation.*

2. When the Alleluia or other chant is intoned, the deacon bows before the priest and asks for the blessing, saying in a low voice, "Father, give me your blessing." The priest blesses him: "The Lord be in your heart and on your lips that you may worthily proclaim his gospel. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." The deacon makes the sign of the cross and answers "Amen" (CE 140, GIL 131).

*This blessing helps the deacon to focus on the important task of proclaiming the gospel, but should not be distracting to the assembly. The timing of the deacon's movement to the altar and pulpit is in relation to the size of the sanctuary. The deacon should be at the pulpit ready to proclaim the gospel before the gospel acclamation ends.*

3. The deacon goes before the altar accompanied by the ministers and bows. He takes the gospel book, and raising it high carries it to the pulpit. There with hands joined he greets the people and introduces the reading. He first signs the book, then he signs his forehead, lips and breast. The deacon then proclaims the gospel, announcing at its conclusion: "The gospel of the Lord." After the reading, he kisses the book, saying silently: "May the words of the gospel wipe away our sins" (GI 131, CE 140- 41).

4. If incense is used, the following procedure is observed:
  - a) Before asking the blessing, the deacon assists the priest in preparing the censer.
  - b) Then he asks the blessing and goes to the altar to take the gospel book. The ministers (acolytes and thurifer) accompany the deacon to the pulpit. There he greets the people, announces the reading, incenses the book, and proclaims the gospel. He then proceeds as above.

*"The deacon who is the sacramental expression of servant proclaims the message of the servant Jesus to those who believe in that Jesus" (SS 106).*

*After the Gospel is proclaimed, the gospel book receives the same reverent treatment it received at the beginning of Mass (CE 141).*

5. The deacons who have been granted the preaching faculty may be designated by the pastor to deliver the homily. "Otherwise, after the proclamation of the gospel, the deacon goes to his place and remains there for the homily and profession of faith" (ST 48).
6. After the priest introduces the intercessions by exhorting the people to prayer, the deacon announces or sings the petitions. He accomplishes this from the pulpit or another suitable place. Extending his hands, the priest says the concluding prayer (CE 144).

*The deacon's ministry within and outside the liturgy makes him the logical minister to lead these prayers. Serving the people in a ministry of charity as one who ought to know their needs, his voice becomes the voice of the assembly. If the parish so desires, it is fitting for the deacon to compose the petitions for use at weekend liturgies.*

*SUMMARY: "The deacons' service in the Liturgy of the Word, both in proclaiming the gospel and leading the general intercessions, reveals him as messenger and bearer of good*

*news to the poor, as servant and intercessor in the image of Christ" (LMD 41).*

**E. Liturgy of the Eucharist**

1. While the priest remains at the chair, the deacon prepares the altar with the corporal, Sacramentary, chalice, paten and purificator. He is assisted by the acolytes. When everything is ready, the deacon bows to the priest as a signal and assists the priest in receiving the assembly's gifts. (GI 133).
2. At the altar the deacon hands the paten with the bread to the priest (GI 133).
3. The deacon prepares the chalice. If there are flagons of wine on the altar with the chalice, the deacon pours a little water into the chalice and into each flagon (TH 39-42). Otherwise he prepares the chalice by pouring wine and a little water into it. In pouring the water he says silently: "By the mystery of this water and wine may we come to share in the divinity of Christ, who humbled himself to share in our humanity." He then hands the chalice to the priest (GI 133).
4. If incense is used, this occurs before the priest washes his hands. The deacon assists the priest in the preparation of the censer and as he incenses the offerings and altar. The deacon or another minister may incense the priest and then the people (GI 133).
5. After assisting the priest in washing his hands (unless a server is present to do this), the deacon stands near the altar. If he is to assist with the Sacramentary, he stands close to the left side of the priest. Otherwise he stands a little behind the priest. Concelebrants should leave room for the deacon when he ministers at the altar (GI 167).
6. After the words of consecration, the deacon makes a low bow when the priest genuflects. The Sacramentary assigns the



invitation "Let us proclaim the mystery of faith " to the priest (CE 155).

*As the one charged with giving directions to the assembly, it has been customary until now for the deacon to announce this invitation. The Bishops' Committee on the Liturgy will ask the Holy See to re-examine this directive. However, with concern for the integral proclamation of the Eucharistic prayer, the invitation now has been assigned to the priest as one of his duties.*

7. During the singing or recitation of the doxology, the deacon stands beside the priest. The deacon elevates the cup as the priest raises up the paten with the Eucharistic bread, until the assembly has responded "Amen" (GI 135). Since the one bread and one cup constitute the primary Eucharistic symbol, concelebrants do not lift up ciboria or chalice. Because the doxology is part of the Eucharistic prayer, only the priest (and concelebrants) sing or say it (CE 158).
8. After the Lord's Prayer and the prayer which follows it ("Deliver us, Lord, from every evil"), the priest says the prayer for peace and greets the people with the peace of Christ. The deacon invites all to exchange the sign of peace in these or similar words. "Let us offer each other the sign of peace." He himself receives the sign of peace from the priest and may offer it to other ministers near him (GI 136).

*In the role of reconciler, the deacon reminds the church that if we are truly in communion with the God of peace and truly an incarnation of the Prince of peace, we stand for peace in all life situations. The deacon's invitation to us is also a challenge to himself (SS 109).*

9. While the Lamb of God is being sung or spoken, the deacon assists the priest in breaking the hosts and in pouring the consecrated wine into other chalices in preparation for communion under both kinds. If concelebrants are present, the deacon brings the consecrated bread to them (ST 50).

*The ideal situation is that a sufficient number of hosts should be consecrated for each mass. However, if it is necessary to bring additional Eucharistic bread from the tabernacle to the altar, it is appropriate that the deacon or special minister of the Eucharist do so before the priest says "This is the lamb of God..."*)

10. "After the priest's communion, the deacon receives under both kinds, and he then assists the priest in distributing communion to the people...." (GI 137).

*After the priest has received the blood of Christ, he distributes communion to the deacons, the ministers and the faithful (CE 164).*

*After the priests and concelebrants have received, the deacon is the first to receive communion from the priest.*

*The deacon is also an ordinary minister of the Eucharist, one called to bring Christ to people and people to Christ. If multiple ciboria are used, it is appropriate for the deacon to distribute the Eucharist under the form of bread. Therefore, the deacon is not limited to distributing the precious blood.*

11. Intinction is a less preferable but legitimate method of ministering the consecrated wine. However, the communicant may never dip the Eucharistic bread into the chalice, that is, self- intinction (TH 50-52). The invitation which accompanies communion given by intinction is: "The body and blood of Christ," to which the communicant responds: "Amen" (GI 247).
12. After communion, the priest returns to his chair immediately. The consecrated bread and wine are collected at the altar or at a side table. The deacon gathers the remaining hosts into ciboria, which are reserved in the tabernacle. What remains of the precious blood after the celebration is consumed by the deacon and special ministers of communion. It is permissible for all communion vessels to be cleansed after Mass (GI 138). It is fitting for the deacon to do this.

**F. Concluding Rites**

1. As with the opening prayer, if a server is not present the deacon assists with the Sacramentary while the priest says the prayer after communion.
2. If there are any brief and necessary announcements, the deacon may make them unless the priest prefers to do so himself (GI 139). In general, these announcements should not be made from the pulpit from which the scripture readings were proclaimed (ST 50).
3. If the solemn blessing is given, the deacon directs the people: "Bow your heads and pray for God's blessing." after the priest has greeted them: "The Lord be with you."
4. When the priest has given the blessing, the deacon dismisses the people, saying, "The Mass is ended. Go in peace, " or one of the other formularies in the Sacramentary (GI 140). During the Easter octave and on Pentecost, "Alleluia, Alleluia" is added (OM 211, 273).

*The dismissal is the deacon's final invitation to the gathered church: to follow him out into homes, neighborhoods and workplaces. We are called to be reconcilers, peacemakers, deacons, symbols of a servant Church and a servant Christ to the world (SS 109).*

5. Ordinarily, the deacon kisses the altar with the priest. After making the customary reverence to the altar (a low bow), they leave the sanctuary in the order in which they entered (GI 141). They process out and greet the people at the church doors.

*Neither the Lectionary nor the gospel book is carried in the recessional.*

## **G. Key to Sources**

### **1. Documents**

- a) Caeremoniale Episcoporum (1986)==CE
- b) General Instruction on the Roman Missal (1985)==GI
- c) Ordo Missae (1985)==OM
- d) This Holy and Living Sacrifice (1985)==TH

### **2. Studies**

- a) Bishops' Committee on the Liturgy. Study Text VI: *The Deacon, Minister of Word and Sacrament*. Washington: USCC, 1979.==ST
- b) Kwatera, Michael. *The Liturgical Ministry of Deacons*. Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1985.--LMD
- c) McCaslin, Patrick and Lawler, Michael. *Sacrament of Service: A Vision of the Diaconate Today*. New York: Paulist Press, 1986, especially pp. 104-110.==SS

## **XV. OTHER POLICIES**

### **A. Retreat expenses**

In the Diocese of Rockville Centre, the deacon's yearly retreat expenses are reimbursed by the parish or institution up to the amount designated for priests. Remember that the deacon has the obligation to make a retreat each year.

### **B. Continuing Education**

In the Diocese of Rockville Centre, the deacon's yearly expenses for some continuing education are reimbursed by the parish or institution up to the amount designated for priests. The details should be worked out with the pastor or the head of the institution and written in the Description of Ministry. Remember that the deacon has the obligation to update himself through reading, workshops, courses and meetings throughout the year.

**C. Expenses for Ministry**

The deacon can expect that the incidental expenses he incurs while engaged in an ecclesiastical ministry will be paid. In the Diocese of Rockville Centre, most deacons are part-time and are not paid by the parish or institution. A full-time deacon may be a salaried employee of the Church. In either case these matters should be specified in the Description of Ministry. Financial matters are important for the deacon to discuss with the pastor or the head of the institution for appropriate reimbursement.

**D. Full-time Deacon**

1. The full-time deacon who is dedicated to an ecclesiastical ministry in the Church can also expect the following from the Church:
2. Adequate remuneration (c. 281)  
The full-time deacon has a right to be paid adequately for his work. Other benefits should be worked out in the contract with the pastor or the head of the church institution. The Church is obliged to pay a just family wage to the full-time deacon which includes benefits and pension.
3. Annual vacation (c. 283)  
As a cleric dedicated to full-time ecclesiastical ministry, the full-time deacon is entitled to an annual vacation. The details are to be specified in his Description of Ministry.

**E. Dress**

In the Diocese of Rockville Centre, the deacon cannot wear the Roman collar on any occasion, nor can he wear the clerical black garb. When appropriate at Mass and other liturgical events, he wears an alb and stole. Some deacons prefer to wear an alb and stole when presiding at wake services.

**F. Mode of Address and Titles**

In the Diocese of Rockville Centre, deacons are not to use "Rev. Mr." as the title of address. For example, an envelope may be addressed "Mr. Smith" or even "Deacon Smith." Some deacons prefer to be called "Deacon Stephen," but others are called "Mr. Smith" or "Steve." It is up to the deacon himself.

## SECTION V

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## **I. BISHOP'S OFFICE**

### **A. Correspondence**

1. The Bishop's Office receives correspondence directed to the Diocesan Bishop and is responsible for following through to see that appropriate response has been made. Such effort is frequently concluded via consultation with various departments or department heads, with clergy or religious or lay persons who are knowledgeable of or involved in the topic being presented for consideration.
2. Any envelope received which is directed to Bishop McGann and marked "Personal" and/or "Confidential" is given unopened to the Bishop.
3. To ensure that each letter receives a response, there is in place a logging procedure which enables the Bishop's Secretary to be certain that a particular letter has been answered or that appropriate inquiry has been launched within the Diocese so that a resolution of the matter might be effected. This procedure permits the Office to respond to anyone who has directed a written communication to the Office but who has yet to receive an answer, since the log will provide insight as to who has the material at a given moment. Thus, the Pastor who, in any way, is involved in such a communication can inquire as to the status of an unresolved matter if he finds it necessary. Such unresolved subjects are brought to the attention of those whose insight has been sought a fortnight after receipt of the initial letter.

### **B. Calendar**

1. The Bishop's Office coordinates the Episcopal Calendar as well as that of the Diocesan Bishop himself. The majority of commitments assumed and included in these calendars are



brought to the fore twice a year, since the overview must be that of six months, January through June and July through December. Accordingly, letters are directed to each Pastor twice a year; that is, at the end of August for the January-June calendar and at the end of January for the July-December schedule.

2. Requests submitted by Pastors for date(s) for Confirmations, dedications and so forth are considered in light of the whole, and letters are then directed to the Pastors informing them of the precise date and time being set aside for each need.

**C. Appointments with the Bishop**

1. Requests for appointments with Bishop McGann should be put into writing.
2. Should a priest find it helpful in a given situation to talk personally with the Bishop, he should call the Bishop's Office and the Priest Secretary will set up a meeting as soon as possible.

## **II. VOCATION OFFICE PROCEDURES**

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The Vocations Office of the Diocese of Rockville Centre is responsible for processing applications for men considering a vocation to the priesthood. The following procedure is used. Applicants should contact the Vocations Office for details (678-5800, ext. 586).

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### **A. Application to the Seminary and/or Candidates for the Priesthood**

1. Initial Interviews with the Vocation Director
2. Formal, written Application to the Diocese
3. Formal, written Interview of the Candidate by the Vocation Director
4. Interview with members of the Seminary Admissions Board
5. Receipt of the following documentation:
  - a) Baptismal Certificate issued within six months of the date of application.
  - b) A copy of applicant's Confirmation Certificate (photocopy acceptable).
  - c) A copy of applicant's parents' marriage certificate (photocopy acceptable).
  - d) Official transcripts of all high school (college and graduate school) records, and, if applicable, a copy of GRE scores.
  - e) Letters of recommendation from applicant's Pastor and at least two priests who know him well. These letters should give concrete examples of qualities possessed by the applicant which would help to make him a good priest.
  - f) Two photographs of applicant.
  - g) The completed medical form.
  - h) Signed Psychological Release Form authorizing the Director and Admissions Board to review one's file.
  - i) Psychological Evaluation Report.
  - j) A typed autobiography. The applicant is asked to take himself and the Board of Admissions on the journey of his life: the kind of family he was born into, what it was like

growing up, his educational experience, his military experiences, his family, friends, people who had a major influence on his life, all the things and people that have brought him to this moment and led him to seek admission to the seminary. (One is asked to limit oneself to *no more than five pages*, double-spaced.)

6. The Cathedral Residence in Douglaston, New York, is a residence for men who are studying at the college level or who are completing philosophy requirements before entrance into the Theologate (i.e., Pre-Theology). The Cathedral Residence has the following requirements:
  - a) For the undergraduate candidate, acceptance into the program is contingent on the applicant's attendance at a Catholic College or University in the Metropolitan Area.
  - b) For the Pre-Theologian studying Philosophy and Theology, the successful completion of a B.A. degree or its equivalent.
7. The Seminary of the Immaculate Conception in Huntington is the diocesan major seminary. *Academic requirements:*
  - a) A general requirement is that an applicant hold a B.A. degree or its equivalent, from an accredited institution.
  - b) Any undergraduate major will be accepted, but the final college average must be at least "C", including twenty-four credits in Philosophy and Theology, with the stress on Philosophy. Previous study of the History of Philosophy, Contemporary Philosophy and Metaphysics is regarded as essential to the successful completion of the academic program.
  - c) According to the standards of the American Association of Theological Schools, a normative pattern of pre-seminary education.
  - d) An applicant deficient in philosophical study may be able to overcome this by participation in the *pre-theology year*.
  - e) Each applicant is expected to have taken the Graduate Record Examination, and to provide the Academic Dean with official scores.

**B. Board of Admissions**

The Board of Admissions is comprised of:

1. Vicar General - Head of the Board of Admissions
2. Ex-Officio Members
  - a) Chancellor or Vice-Chancellor of the Diocese
  - b) Director of Priest Personnel
  - c) Vocation Director
  - d) Representative from the Cathedral Residence, Douglaston, N.Y. (when application is being made to the Cathedral Residence) -
  - e) Rector of the Cathedral Residence.
  - f) Representatives from the Seminary of the Immaculate Conception
    - (1) Rector of the Seminary
    - (2) two members of the Seminary faculty.
3. Members by Episcopal Appointment
  - a) Two Pastors
  - b) One Parochial Vicar
  - c) Two additional members

**C. Tuition**

1. Cathedral Residence

\$1000 per year for room and board plus tuition of the College/University one is attending (several schools in the Metropolitan Area give a 50% tuition scholarship to seminarians).
2. Immaculate Conception Seminary
  - a) \$5500 per year (includes room and board)
  - b) \$50 registration fee per semester
  - c) \$1,100 - medical coverage

3. Diocesan Tuition Reimbursement

If a student has taken out a Guaranteed Student Loan to cover the costs of tuition at the Major Seminary, upon Ordination the Diocese will assume payment of this loan.

### **III. CATHOLIC CHARITIES POLICIES**

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As a ministry of the Roman Catholic Church, Catholic Charities assists in serving basic needs of the poor, troubled, weak and oppressed and is committed to addressing the causes of injustice. It aims to organize and empower people to secure participation of all in the life of the community. Catholic Charities works with the parishes to fulfill its mission by offering the following programs and services. For further information, please contact

**Catholic Charities,  
90 Cherry Lane,  
Hicksville, NY 11801-6299  
General Information - (516)733-7000**

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#### **A. Alcohol and Substance Abuse**

1. Fully-licensed treatment facilities staffed by teams of qualified health professionals serve the problem drinker/chemically dependent person and his or her family. These programs assist individuals and families who desire to maintain a chemical-free lifestyle and ongoing recovery from the disease of chemical dependency.
2. Contacts
  - a) Director of Health Services, 733-7008
  - b) Alcoholism/Substance Abuse Services  
Bridgehampton 537-1159
  - c) Alcoholism/Substance Abuse Services Commack  
543-6200
3. Talbot House Alcohol Crisis Center  
24-hour Residential Crisis Center  
Bohemia 589-4144

**B. Disabilities**

**1. Physically Disabled:**

- a) Catholic Charities Office for Persons with Disabilities provides for the needs of the blind and visually impaired, the deaf and hard of hearing, the physically challenged and all other disabled by providing direct service, referrals and education. Services offered include rehabilitation teaching, orientation and mobility instruction, counseling and vision screenings.
- b) Contacts
  - (1) Director of Human Services, 733-7060
  - (2) Blind and Visually Impaired 789-5213
  - (3) Deaf and Hard of Hearing 789-5219
  - (4) Persons with Disabilities 789-5219

**2. Developmentally Disabled:**

- a) Program provides residences for adults who are mentally retarded or developmentally disabled where their full potential can be realized. Ongoing individualized residential, habilitative, recreational and medical support services are also provided.
- b) Contacts
  - (1) Director of Human Services, 733-7060
  - (2) Residential Services Bay Shore 635-3434  
*After normal business hours, in Nassau, call 825-8282 or in Suffolk, call 829-8125*

**C. Employment**

1. The Employment Project is a partnership between parishes and businesses on Long Island to help unemployed find jobs. Trained parish volunteers, through the Employment Project provide assistance in resume writing, interview skills development, job listings, financial and credit assistance, office and phone support, counseling and support groups. Catholic Charities maintains relationships with businesses and available job information is disseminated through the parish network.
2. Contacts
  - a) Director of Parish Social Ministry, 789-5230
  - b) Employment Project Information, 789-5200

**D. Food and Nutrition**

1. In a joint effort with the New York State Health Department and the United States Department of Agriculture, Catholic Charities through FAN, its food and nutrition program, distributes free monthly supplementary food to New York State residents in low-income families. Those who are pregnant, one year postpartum, under the age of six or 60 years of age or older and who meet financial eligibility requirements can participate in this program. Fan has seven permanent sites and 55 mobile sites for the distribution of food. Mobile sites will be considered for locations where at least thirty will be served.
2. Contacts
  - a) Director of Human Services, 733-7060
  - b) Food Center Location      Central Islip,      232-2797
  - c) Food Center Location      Hempstead      489-9660
  - d) Food Center Location      Huntington Station      549-5606



- |    |                             |                               |          |
|----|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|----------|
| e) | Food Center Location        | Inwood                        | 371-5640 |
| f) | Food Center Location        | Mastic Beach                  | 399-5141 |
| g) | Food Center Location        | Riverhead                     | 369-9246 |
| h) | Food Center Location        | Wyandanch                     | 491-4166 |
| i) | Mobile Location Information |                               | 733-4051 |
| j) | Meals-on-Wheels             | (See Senior Services Listing) |          |
| k) | Senior Nutrition            | (See Senior Services Listing) |          |

**E. HIV/AIDS**

1. These programs offer continuing community education and training to volunteers who serve persons with AIDS and their families, as well as providing financial assistance in emergencies. Program maintains a cooperative referral relationship with other AIDS agencies that includes, but is not limited to, housing assistance, meal deliveries and medical aid.
2. Contacts
  - a) Director of Health Services, 733-7008
  - b) AIDS Day Treatment Center Freeport 623-7400
  - c) Dental Services Program Freeport 623-7400
  - d) Meals-on-Wheels (See Meals-on-Wheels Listing)

*Note: Confidential and anonymous testing is available through any County Health Department clinic.*

**F. Housing**

1. Catholic Charities has been designated by the Diocese to develop and operate housing facilities designed to help alleviate critical housing shortages on Long Island. In addition, when requested, Catholic Charities provides technical support to pastors and religious congregations to assist them in converting available parish facilities into affordable housing opportunities in order to further alleviate these housing needs.

2. Working with the diocese, Catholic Charities' Office of Housing strives to provide housing for three population segments that have been determined to have the greatest need, namely, senior citizens, low-income families, and those with special needs (such as the frail elderly, developmentally or physically disabled and persons with HIV/AIDS).
3. The Housing Office of Catholic Charities oversees the operation of 800+ units of low-income, senior citizen housing within the eight Diocesan-sponsored senior citizen villages, ensuring that the 900+ senior residents are aware of and utilize all of the various services available through Catholic Charities.
4. The Long Island region continues to have the highest incidence of HIV/AIDS among all suburban areas nationwide. In response to this need, Catholic Charities has developed independent housing with support services for HIV+ families with children.
5. Contacts
  - a) Director of Housing 733-7075
  - b) Office of Housing 733-7075

*Note: **Emergency housing is not provided through this program.** For immediate housing emergencies, in Nassau, call the Department of Social Services at 571-4817 or in Suffolk, call the Department of Social Services at one of the following numbers: Coram - 854-2100; Islip - 854-0400; Mastic - 852-1080; Riverhead - 852-1400; Smithtown - 853-8714; or Wyandanch - 854-1800. After normal business hours, call these Department of Social Service emergency numbers: Nassau - 542-3143 or Suffolk - 854-9100. These agencies are required by law to provide emergency facilities.*

## **G. Immigrant Services**

Catholic Charities Immigrant Services responds to the needs of the growing immigrant populations, a response that includes community outreach and public education.

### **1. Migration Services:**

- a) Catholic Charities is an accredited agency, approved by the Board of Immigration Appeals, to process, file and represent clients before the Immigration and Naturalization Services (INS). Accredited counselors advocate on behalf of clients and work closely with the Catholic Legal Immigration Network, Inc., who provides INS court representation. Services include: relative petitions for family reunification, citizenship and naturalization, political asylum - change of venues, visa extensions, work authorizations, appeals, H - I visas, and special immigrant visas.
- b) Contacts
  - (1) Director of Parish Social Ministry, 789-5230
  - (2) Migration Services, 789-5200

### **2. New Neighbor Outreach and Education:**

- a) Accredited paralegal immigration counselors and outreach workers support a parish-based response to immediate social and legal needs of the immigrant and refugee populations.
- b) Contacts
  - (1) Director of Parish Social Ministry, 789-5230
  - (2) New Neighbor Program, 654-0385

### **3. Refugee Resettlement:**

- a) Under a cooperative agreement with the United States Catholic Conference Migration and Resettlement Services,

Catholic Charities Resettlement Services offers a comprehensive program for the reception and placement of refugees being resettled in the Diocese of Rockville Centre. Services include: arranging sponsorships, greeting refugees at the airport, finding housing, collecting household furnishings, introducing refugees to their new communities, providing employment counseling, referral to job training, providing transcultural counseling, and training bilingual volunteers.

b) Contacts

- (1) Director of Parish Social Ministry, 789-5230
- (2) Resettlement Services, 789-5200

**H. Management Information System Resources**

1. Catholic Charities is creating a Management Information System (MIS) that will be able to track clients, services and needs on a parish basis. The system will support parish activities in five Parish Social Ministry components: Campaign for Human Development, Public Policy Education Network, Parish Outreach, Community Organizing, and Justice and Peace. The system also incorporates an information and referral system that lists providers by service categories. It is anticipated that the system will be capable of supporting workstations for all parishes that wish to participate.
2. Contacts
  - a) Director of Administrative Services, 733-7040
  - b) Management Information System (MIS) Department 733-7003

**I. Mental Health Services**

**1. Residences for Emotionally Disturbed Children:**

- a) The Teaching Family Homes provide residential care to seriously emotionally disturbed children between the ages of 5 and 17. Services include individual and family counseling, as well as family support groups, behavior management, case management, counseling, daily living skills, education/vocational support services, family support services, health services, independent living skills, training, medication monitoring and socialization.
- b) Contacts
  - (1) Director of Health Services, 733-7008
  - (2) Teaching Family Home Program, 665-5902

**2. Mental Health Clinics:**

- a) Catholic Charities operates four outpatient mental health clinics that serve the population of Nassau and Suffolk Counties. Services include individual, group and family therapy, medication management, psychological and psychiatric services, crisis intervention, case management, information and referral and in-home services for the frail and elderly. (Nassau County only)
- b) Contacts
  - (1) Director of Health Services, 733-7008
  - (2) Mental Health Clinic Bay Shore 665-6707
  - (3) Mental Health Clinic Hempstead 292-8280
  - (4) Mental Health Clinic Medford 654-1919
  - (5) Mental Health Clinic Mineola 248-7100

*In case of emergency, refer patients to the Emergency Room at Mercy Medical Center, Nassau County Medical Center, Stony Brook Medical Center or Southside Hospital.*

**3. Case Management Services for Mentally Ill:**

- a) Staff provide emotional support, transportation, and counseling to the recently discharged psychiatric patients who reside in the Towns of Islip and Brookhaven. Clients are also assisted in finding services to which they are entitled, including adequate housing, job training, etc.
- b) Contacts
  - (1) Director of Health Services, 733-7008
  - (2) Community Support Services Bay Shore, 665-5320
  - (3) Community Support Services Medford, 654-2944

**4. Community Residence:**

- a) Siena Residence is a supervised residence designed to serve psychiatrically impaired adults. Residents receive individualized support services including Activities of Daily Living (ADL) training, medication monitoring, counseling, socialization opportunities and assistance in procuring necessary community services.
- b) Contacts
  - (1) Director of Health Services, 733-7008
  - (2) Mental Health Services, 665-5902

**J. Parish Social Ministry**

Parish Social Ministry (PSM) in the Diocese of Rockville Centre is a partnership between Catholic Charities and the Parishes of the Diocese that develops an organized response to the social mission of the church.

Parishes are grouped into Deaneries, and each group is assigned a Parish Social Ministry developer. There are five components to this ministry:

**1. Parish Outreach:**

Parish Outreach is the service component of Parish Social Ministry responding to all the needs in the parish community. A parish outreach coordinator and a team of trained core workers provide the structure to assess needs and a large number of volunteers provide direct services.

**2. Public Policy Education Network (PPEN):**

The Public Policy Education Network is a parish-based program designed to inform and educate Catholics about a broad range of public policy issues and to view them through the perspective of the gospel and Catholic Social Teaching. The network aims to establish visible, knowledgeable groups in legislative districts, to inform legislators about the public policy priorities of the church.

**3. Campaign for Human Development (CHD):**

The Campaign for Human Development funds low income community groups that seek to empower poor people to become self sufficient. Through the Journey to Justice Retreats, poor and non-poor come to a greater understanding of each other and develop relationships that help to bridge differences. This effort to end poverty and economic injustice is accomplished through parish collections, grant distributions and education.

**4. Community Organizing:**

Long Island Congregations is an independent organization being formed in Nassau and Suffolk Counties, bringing together churches, synagogues, mosques and other voluntary associations to form a powerful voice for families in the public decisions that affect their futures.

**5. Justice and Peace:**

The Justice and Peace Commission of the Diocese of Rockville Centre, through its parish committees, is the focal point in the diocese for efforts to promote education and action for issues of international peace, the promotion of human rights at home and abroad, celebrating diversity in our community and our world and caring for the environment.

**6. Contacts:**

- a) Director of Parish Social Ministry, 789-5230
- b) Parish Social Ministry Developers, 789-5200

**K. Coordinator of Parish Social Ministry**

Some parishes maintain an Office of the Parish Outreach Coordinator. For a job description of the Outreach Coordinator, please see *The Parish Outreach Commentary* available at Catholic Charities, 90 Cherry Lane, Hicksville, NY 11801.

**1. Vision of the Ministry:**

Rooted in the servant ministry of Jesus, the Coordinator of Parish Social Ministry values and supports the inherent dignity and interdependence of all people. This is an opportunity to minister to the needs of the most vulnerable in our society while developing parish leadership in an effort to move beyond charity to justice. The primary responsibility of this portion is to **coordinate** the various aspects of this ministry from direct service and public policy advocacy through empowerment/community organizing.

**2. Responsibilities and Tasks:**

- a) Collaborates with the Pastor, under his supervision, and with members of the parish staff, integrating his or her area of responsibility with the overall mission of the parish.
- b) Prepares short and long-term PSM plans by conducting a social analysis and goal-setting plan for parish-based social ministry.
- c) Identifies, trains and supports leaders who form core groups for components of PSM, namely; the Public Policy Education Network, Long Island Congregations, Campaign for Human Development, Justice and Peace and Outreach at the parish level.
- d) Administers funds and contributions related to PSM.
- e) Collaborates with appropriate ministers in parish to provide an opportunity to integrate PSM in the liturgical and



educational life of the parish and keep PSM consistently rooted in the Eucharist and Gospel.

- f) Develops a cooperative partnership with Catholic Charities Parish Social Ministry Center and the direct service components of Catholic Charities; and attends trainings and convenings offered by Catholic Charities.
- g) Maintains contact with peers through Diocesan, Vicariate, Deanery and cluster structures.
- h) Assists Parish Catechetical Leader in educating parish staff and parishioners about developments in Catholic Social Teaching.
- i) Serves as a liaison to and collaborates with civic/community, legislative groups and other religious organizations.
- j) Is visibly present to other parish groups and at major parish events, and is attuned to the living faith and real concerns of the parishioners.
- k) Evaluates and revises PSM efforts when needed.
- l) In addition, effective functioning in this ministry requires “street smarts”, empathy for those in need, an attitude of respect for their dignity, and a firm personal commitment to justice.

3. Qualifications:

- a) BA in Social Services (Human Relations, Social Work, Psychology or Sociology)
- b) Practical knowledge of Human Services agencies and programs
- c) Knowledge of Catholic Social Teachings
- d) Knowledge of Institutional Catholic Church
- e) Knowledge of the dynamics of parish life
- f) Ability to identify and train leaders
- g) Good communication skills
- h) Clear understanding of the difference between direct service and social action
- i) Community organizing background is a plus

**L. Parish-Based Health Programs**

1. Catholic Charities Ministry of Health assists parishes in setting up programs that provide information/referral, advocacy, and support services to caregivers of the sick, particularly the elderly and homebound. Also offered are free medical and cardiac screenings in conjunction with two Catholic hospitals, and an annual, free children's dental clinic.
2. Contacts
  - a) Director of Health Services, 733-7008
  - b) Ministry of Health, 789-5207

**M. Pregnancy and Maternity Services**

1. Program provides care, support, counseling and assistance to single mothers and infants. Regina Residence offers single, pregnant young women a life saving alternative to abortion. The program also provides housing, counseling, education and child care to single mothers and infants. Mentoring of Moms, an outreach program, offers services to any single mother on Long Island, including support, referrals, some transportation and socialization. Peer leadership and AIDS peer leadership training is provided. Case Management and home visitations are offered to families with developmental disabilities and who have children under six years of age.
2. Contacts
  - a) Director of Human Services, 733-7060
  - b) Regina Residence, Merrick, 223-7888
  - c) Mentoring of Moms Program Bay Shore/Merrick, 968-9164
  - d) 24-Hour Teen Pregnancy Hotline, 1-800-287-BABY

**N. Senior Services**

**1. Senior Clubs:**

- a) The Bi-County Alliance of Senior Clubs, through its network of 100 clubs, provides services to their peers. Meetings, generally held in parish or community halls, provide a setting for socialization, educational and advocacy efforts.
- b) Contacts
  - (1) Director of Human Services, 733-7060
  - (2) Bi-County Alliance of Senior Clubs, 733-7074

**2. Community Service Centers:**

- a) Seven Senior Community Service Centers provide noon-time meals, recreation, entertainment, nutrition education, socialization and transportation to and from centers for persons over sixty years of age. Counseling and case management services are available for assistance with entitlement applications and problem solving.
- b) Contacts
  - (1) Director of Human Services, 733-7060
  - (2) Senior Community Center, Amityville, 842-7331
  - (3) Senior Community Center, Franklin Square, 481-3322
  - (4) Senior Community Center, Island Park, 432-3388
  - (5) Senior Community Center, Massapequa Park, 797-5357
  - (6) Senior Community Center, Medford, 475-6501
  - (7) Senior Community Center, Oceanside, 764-9792
  - (8) Senior Community Center, Seaford, 679-8373

**3. Link-Age (Linking Seniors to Services):**

- a) The Link-Age Program provides information and referrals regarding support services provided by Catholic Charities and other agencies. Ancillary services, such as shopping assistance, visitation and the provision of needed household items, are supplied through Parish Outreach Centers. Medical program provides transportation to medical appointments for seniors who cannot use public transportation.
- b) Contacts
  - (1) Director of Human Services, 733-7060
  - (2) Link-Age Case Management, 733-7064

**4. Meals-on-Wheels:**

- a) Catholic Charities Meals-on-Wheels program delivers nutritious meals to the homes of the frail elderly and to persons with AIDS who are incapacitated and unable to prepare meals for themselves.
- b) Contacts
  - (1) Director of Human Services, 733-7060
  - (2) Nassau Meals-on-Wheels, Hempstead 485-7555
  - (3) Suffolk Meals-on-Wheels, Amityville 842-4123

#### **IV. PASTORAL SERVICES FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES**

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The coordinator of Pastoral Ministries for Persons with Disabilities is a staff member of the Office of Catechesis. Sr. Sally Ryan, R.S.M., may be contacted at 678-5800, ext. 540.

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The coordinator is available and is responsible to facilitate and strengthen existing religious education programs and to develop new services that would insure appropriate religious education and pastoral care with/for persons who are disabled. Inherent with the position is the capacity to provide training and assistance to parish leadership and formation to catechists who minister with persons who are disabled. The pastoral minister provides support and advocacy to insure the inclusion of persons who are disabled into the life and service of the Church and the community at large.

#### **V. PASTORAL SERVICES WITH THE DEAF**

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The Coordinator of Pastoral Ministry with the Deaf is a staff member of the Office of Catechesis. Sr. Joan Finn, O.P., may be contacted at 678-5800, ext. 205.

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The coordinator is available and is responsible to create and develop pastoral programs to insure the full participation of the deaf community in the life of the Church. These programs include religious education, training of catechists in methods of teaching deaf children, organization of Sign Language Liturgies, Pre-Cana for deaf couples, sacramental preparation, pastoral counseling, home and hospital visitation, wake and funeral services, and other pastoral services as needed. The deaf community of Long Island is the parish of the Pastoral Minister of the Deaf.

## **VI. ACQUIRED IMMUNE DEFICIENCY SYNDROME (AIDS) POLICY**

This policy was approved by Bishop McGann, May, 1989.

### **A. Introduction**

*Lord, when did we ever see you hungry and feed you?  
Or thirsty and give you anything to drink? Or a stranger and help you?  
Or naked and clothe you? When did we ever seek you sick or in prison, and visit  
you? And the King will answer, "I tell you solemnly, in so far as you did this to  
one of the least of my people you did it for me."  
(Mt. 25: 38-40)*

The policies and practices of a diocese should bear witness to the Gospel and the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church. They should also assist the people of the diocese in living out their call to be faithful followers of Jesus Christ. The policy statements which follow are intended to give clear guidance to the administrators and employees of the Diocese of Rockville Centre, its agencies and parishes, in responding to persons infected with the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) or the Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS).

It is important to recognize that AIDS is a human disease and that those who have it deserve the same concern, care and compassion as those with any other serious illness. That is the context in which this policy was developed and should be understood and implemented.

The Catholic Church has a long and rich tradition of taking seriously the words of the Gospel and the example of Jesus Christ that call us to be people of compassion, justice, and love. The church's history is filled with persons, religious congregations, and institutions devoted to caring for the needs of the sick.

The challenge of the Gospel confronts us just as much today as we face the AIDS epidemic as it did in mysterious illnesses in the past.

The present crisis calls us to continue to remember that each human being is made in God's image. Each is of inestimable worth and should be treated as sacred and as having a dignity that must be respected. As followers of Jesus we should see the AIDS crisis as both a challenge to respond in a Christlike way to persons who are in dire need and as an opportunity to work with others in our society to respond to that need.

During his visit to the United States in September, 1987, Pope John Paul II articulated our Christian call to care for persons with AIDS: "Besides your professional contribution and your human sensitivities toward all affected by this disease, you are called to show the compassion of Christ and his Church. As you courageously affirm and implement your moral obligation and social responsibility to help those who suffer you are, individually

and collectively, living out the Parable of the Good Samaritan. How beautifully the Lord speaks of the Samaritan! He 'was neighbor to the man who fell in with the robbers.' To be 'neighbor' is to express love, solidarity, and service and to exclude selfishness, discrimination and neglect."

In addition to the faithful and consistent implementation of the following policy, the diocese is called upon to serve the needs of those with AIDS and their families in other ways. These include: programs in education and counseling; advocacy at all levels of government for intensified efforts to respond to the many human needs caused by AIDS; and extension of programs of care and support services.

The lives of ever increasing numbers of our sisters and brothers are being affected by this disease. It is our opportunity now as the Church of Rockville Centre to tend to their needs as Jesus would have us do, in his name and in a spirit of understanding, compassion, reconciliation, openness, justice, and love.

We pray that God's grace and healing presence in our midst will enable us to meet this challenge.

## **B. Pastoral Ministry**

### **1. Policy Statement**

*HIV-infected persons retain all of their canonical rights to participate in the life of the Church, particularly in regard to the celebration of the sacraments and sacramental of the Church.*

### **2. Implementation**

- a) HIV-infected persons are welcome to participate in all diocesan, parish and other Church-related meetings, celebrations and activities.
- b) Priests are bound by strict secrecy and confidentiality in the sacramental as well as the extra-sacramental internal forum. HIV-infected persons should have complete confidence that they can reveal their medical condition to a priest in the confessional or in the parish office and receive pastoral guidance and advice without any danger that such information would be repeated to others.
- c) There is no evidence that the virus can be transmitted by the usual method of distributing and receiving Holy Communion, even when this involves drinking from the same cup. Nonetheless, as with any communicable disease, when HIV-infected persons become aware that their particular condition may, under some circumstances, present a danger of

communicating a disease to others, they are morally obliged to refrain from receiving from the cup or distributing Holy Communion.

- d) In the pre-marriage preparation process, couples should be educated about the various way one may contract HIV-infection. Since New York State does not, as yet, require blood testing, persons who suspect they may have been in a situation of possible infection (casual sexual encounter, questionable blood transfusion, sharing o a needle) should be encouraged by those preparing them for marriage to arrange to be professionally counseled as part of their preparation for a happy, healthy, and holy married life.
- e) An HIV-infected person must ponder carefully his or her desire to exercise the right to marry. In many cases the exercise of such a fundamental right may be restrained by moral obligations arising from justice and charity. Priests and other counselors should be sympathetic to their plight and help them to understand and accept this additional hardship in a spirit of Christian self-sacrifice for the good of others.
- f) When both parties to a proposed marriage are aware of the presence of the infection and still desire to marry, the priest should discuss with them the moral difficulties presented by their situation. Each case should be examined separately. Canon 1098 invalidates a marriage contracted by fraud. If a priest becomes aware than an HIV-infected person is keeping such information from the prospective spouse, he must address the situation in a manner similar to that of a case involving any invalidating impediment. In this cases, consultation should take place with the Chancellor's Office before the priest sets a definite wedding date to make certain that all canonical requirements have been met.
- g) A married person who discovers that he or she is HIV-infected has the moral obligation to inform his or her spouse of this condition and to use every morally licit means to prevent the spread of the infection. Priests should be knowledgeable about the Church's authentic moral teaching in this area so that they are equipped pastorally to counsel couples in the fulfillment of their responsibilities.



- h) HIV-infection does not of itself constitute an irregularity to exercise or receive orders. Nonetheless, a priest, seminarian or applicant for the seminary has the responsibility of informing the diocesan bishop, either directly or through his immediate superior, about the presence of the infection so that he can receive proper medical and pastoral care.
- i) HIV-infected persons are in danger of death. Even those who have not yet developed serious symptoms may receive the anointing of the sick. Anointing may be repeated at reasonable intervals as normally occurs with a terminal illness.
- j) The normal procedure for anointing the sick present no danger of infection. If the priest should have any questions in this regard, he should consult with a competent physician.
- k) Persons who die from AIDS-related causes have the right to Christian burial possessed by all Catholics. If at all possible, the usual stations of the Rite of Christian Burial ending with burial of the body in blessed ground should be followed. Sometimes, for personal or practical reasons, the body of a person who has died from AIDS-related causes may be cremated. In such cases, the Mass of Christian Burial should be celebrated with the body in the Church and then the body should be brought to the crematorium. If cremation occurs immediately (e.g., because of transport from one local to another), a memorial funeral Mass should be arranged as soon as possible.

## **C. Employment**

### **1. Policy Statement**

*Persons seeking employment or already employed in the diocese, its parishes, or agencies shall not be discriminated against on the basis of HIV-infection.*

### **2. Implementation**

- a) No person shall be denied employment, increase in salary, promotion or benefits on the basis of having HIV-infection.

- b) Efforts should be made to provide for the continued employment of an HIV-infected person in consultation with his/her supervisor and primary-care physician.
- c) Spiritual, psychological, and social counseling should be made available to those affected by the illness of an HIV-infected person.
- d) As with an other communicable disease, it is imperative that all precautions recommended for the particular work placed by public health professionals be taken so as to reduce the risk of transmission.
- e) HIV-infected persons have an obligation as with any other communicable disease, to refrain from an activity which presents a danger of communicating disease to others in the work place.
- f) Education about particular procedures and precautions to reduce job-related exposure to HIV-infection should be provided for employees whose work is hazardous in this regard.
- g) Employees should treat a co-worker who is HIV-infected with the dignity and respect that is due each person created in God's image.

#### **D. Employment Benefits**

##### **1. Policy Statement**

*If a person is unable to continue his or her duties as a result of the deterioration due to HIV-infection, benefits shall be continued in accord with diocesan policy pertaining to employees with an other handicap or illness.*

##### **2. Implementation**

Conversion privileges to employees afflicted with AIDS are the same as any other terminating employee. Details of those options may be obtained by contacting the diocesan Insurance Department.

**E. Social and Health Care Services**

1. Policy Statement

*There shall be no adverse discrimination in accepting and serving HIV-infected persons as patients/clients by any health care or social service agency or by its employees.*

*Clients/patients who are later discovered to be HIV-infected shall continue to be offered the services of the agency.*

*Employees of any health care or social service agency who refuse to provide service to HIV-infected patients/clients shall be treated in accordance with that agency's personnel policy concerning failure to observe agency policy.*

2. Implementation

*Each individual diocesan health care facility and social service provider should have policies and procedures in place for responding to HIV-infected patients/clients. They should be in line with diocesan policy and should reflect the Church's compassion to all people who are afflicted with or affected by illness.*

**F. School and Religious Education Programs**

1. Policy Statement

*Students seeking admission to school or religious education programs shall not be denied admission solely because they are HIV-infected. Students enrolled in grades pre-kindergarten through 12 in such programs shall normally attend in an unrestricted setting. If an HIV-infected student must be excluded from a school or religious education program, he/she shall be provided with appropriate educational programs as well as catechetical instruction at the proper level.*

2. Implementation

- a) HIV-infected students shall not be excluded from attending school or parish religious education programs for reason of the infection unless it is determined that conditions exist which would represent a danger to the student in question or to others in the educational setting. this determination is to be made by the school principal or parish director of religious education and, in a parish setting, the pastor, in consultation with the student's parents and physician.
- b) When the decision is made at the parish or local level, the superintendent of schools or diocesan director of religious education shall be informed.
- c) In cases resulting in disagreement as to the existence of conditions of exclusion, the decision on admission, continuation, or exclusion shall be referred to the superintendent of schools or diocesan director of religious education, who may call upon another qualified physician(s) to examine the student and submit a medical report evaluating the student's condition.
- d) A teacher who refuses to instruct or work with an HIV-infected student or colleague who has been duly admitted to the school or parish religious education program shall be treated in accordance with the applicable policy concerning failure to observe parish/diocesan policy.

**G. Confidentiality**

1. Policy Statement

*The identity of HIV-infected persons is confidential and every precaution should be taken to protect the confidentiality of records, files, and other information about the HIV status of employees, students, applicants, clients, and patients.*

2. Implementation

- a) Health and social service providers in agencies sponsored by the diocese may disclose identifying information about the HIV status of an individual only as required or allowed by law.
- b) Education programs for health and social service providers should include information about confidentiality issues.
- c) The identity of a student infected with HIV seeking enrollment in or enrolled in grades pre-kindergarten through 12 in school or religious education programs should be known only by those directly involved in making the decision regarding whether the child can be accommodated in the classroom.
- d) All health records of employees should be kept separate from other personnel records.

**H. Education Programs on HIV-Infection**

1. Policy Statement

*Education programs on HIV-infection, rooted in the Christian responsibility to recognize the dignity and worth of all persons in God's eyes and to minister to all with love and compassion, shall be undertaken.*

*This education will be designed to:*

- a) provide the most current factual information about the disease
- b) mitigate unreasonable reactions to the disease and to the persons affected
- c) provide information concerning support services for those infected and their families.

2. Implementation

- a) Educational programs will be provided for leadership persons -- priests, deacons, religious and lay leaders.
- b) Training programs will be developed for those who minister to persons affected by AIDS or ARC and their families.

- c) All diocesan agency and department heads will assume responsibility for providing appropriate educational programs for their employees or will encourage their attendance at diocesan or interagency programs.
- d) Curricular guidelines, materials and teacher training will be provided for Catholic schools and religious education programs to insure appropriate education for all children.
- e) Educational programs will be encouraged on the parish level.
- f) A procedure should be established by the Director of Administration to coordinate programs, provide resources, and prevent unnecessary duplication.

## **I. Public Information**

### **Policy Statement**

*In the event that media inquiries are directed to the diocese, its parishes, or agencies regarding the existence of the HIV-infection in a member, employee, or client thereof, the chief administrator of that program or designee will respond. That person will assure anonymity and will provide only the following information:*

- 1. *Confirmation as to whether the HIV-infection has been diagnosed (provided, however, that such confirmation will not compromise the anonymity of any person so diagnosed).*
- 2. *In the instance(s) of confirmed cases, assurance that all medical precautions related to the disease are being followed.*
- 3. *Assurance of the existence of diocesan policy for dealing with the presence of the HIV-infection and of the availability of that policy to those who wish to read it.*
- 4. *Any requests for official diocesan comment should be directed to the Public Information Bureau of the Diocese of Rockville Centre (516-594-1000).*

## **VII. EDUCATION: ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS**

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The Department of Education issued a *Handbook of Policies: Elementary Schools* in 1993 with the approval of Bishop McGann. Each pastor and school principal was given a *Handbook*. As revisions and changes are made these are sent to the pastors and principal. Elementary school teachers also receive sections of this *Handbook*. Below is the Table of Contents of the *Handbook of Policies*. A full text of this lengthy document can be obtained from the Education Office.

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## **VIII. YOUTH MINISTRY POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

### **A. Parish Youth Ministry Development**

#### **1. Resource**

Serves as a *resource* in providing a broad range of support, enrichment, education and spiritual formation opportunities for parish-based youth ministry personnel.

- a) Contact the Department Secretary at (516) 678-5800, ext 519 to be placed on the youth ministers' mailing list.
- b) Contact the Director (678-5800, ext. 522) for information on program offerings and resources available.
- c) Contact the Director to learn about the Diocesan Youth Ministry Networking Structure.
- d) Contact the Director to learn about the "Basics of Youth Ministry" Course, as well as other educational programs.

#### **2. Consultant**

Serves as a *consultant* to parishes seeking guidance for establishing youth ministry programs.

Contact the Director to learn about the consultation service offered through the Groundbreaking Program.

#### **3. Liaison**

Serves as *liaison* for parishes in the following four areas:

- a) Recruitment and Placement of Youth Ministry Coordinators
  - (1) Contact the Director to request assistance.

- (2) The parish contact person will be apprised of possible candidates and will receive copies of their resumes and applications.
  - (3) The hiring process/procedures are determined by the pastor/parish.
- b) Utilization of nonparish-based organizations/individuals that render services to Catholic youth.  
Contact the Director to see if they are registered with the diocese. See the registration procedure below.
- c) Orientation of New Youth Ministry Coordinators  
Contact the Director to learn about the mentoring service offered through the Groundbreaking Program.
- d) Parish participation in Diocesan, Regional and National Events, Conferences and Initiatives
  - (1) Pastors and those on the mailing list are notified by mail of diocesan, regional and national youth ministry events and initiatives.
  - (2) In addition, the Director, via quarterly meetings, communicates such information to the Youth Ministry Networking Group Coordinators. In turn, the coordinators pass on this information to the members within his or her group.

**B. Registration of Nonparish-based organizations/individuals**

The Office of Youth Ministries assists parishes in obtaining references for organizations and individuals which render ministerial services to youth.

- 1. The official representative of a nonparish-based organization or individual minister will be contacted by the Office of Youth Ministries and encouraged to complete an application form.
- 2. The Office of Youth Ministries will conduct a background check into the references, education, credentials and professional experience of the applicant.



3. An interview will take place between the applicant and diocesan personnel (including staff from the Office of Catechesis and/or the Office of Youth Ministries).
4. Parishes may contact the Office of Youth Ministries to check if a particular organization or individual has registered as well as obtain references regarding past performance.

**C. Scouting**

*Catholic Committees on Scouting*

**1. Liaison**

The Division serves as a *liaison* between the Church, its Parishes and Catholic Organizations with the National and Local Boy and Girl Scout Organizations.

**Procedure:** establishes a Catholic Committee on Boy Scouting and a Catholic Committee on Girl Scouting according to the guidelines provided by the National Catholic Committees on Scouting.

**2. Earning Religious Emblems**

The Catholic Committee on Scouting require that all Scouting Religious Emblems be earned or achieved according to the requirements provided by the Diocesan Committees or the National Catholic Committees on Scouting.

**Procedures:**

- a) Contact the Scouting Secretary at (516) 678-5800 ext. 249 for Books and Guides for all Religious Emblems offered by the Catholic Committees.
- b) A Religious Emblems sub-committee, within the Boy and Girl Scout Catholic Committees, monitors and regulates the religious emblems program.
- c) Boards of review determine the eligibility of candidates in the awarding of religious emblems.
- d) Acceptance letters are forwarded to candidates.

**3. Religious Emblem Counselors**

The Catholic Committees on Scouting require that all Religious Emblem Counselors, for religious emblems offered by the Diocese and the National Catholic Committees on Scouting, be certified by the Division of Scouting.

**Procedures:**

- a) Contact the Program Coordinator for information on becoming a religious emblem counselor.
- b) Contact the Program Coordinator for an updated list of certified counselors.

**4. Religious Emblems**

The Catholic Committees on Scouting request that all Scouting Religious Emblems, earned or achieved, be presented at a suitable approved ceremony.

**Procedures:**

- a) Contact the Scouting Secretary for copies of ceremonies, suitable for parish or unit presentation of certain religious emblems.
- b) Notifies parishes regarding participation in annual Diocesan Convocations for Boy and Girl Scouts.

**5. Spiritual Development**

The Catholic Committees on Scouting provide a program of activities to promote the spiritual development of scouts and their leaders.

**Procedure:** Contact the Scouting Secretary for information.

**D. CYO Support: Ministerial Resource**

Serves as a *ministerial resource* to CYO of Nassau & Suffolk Counties.

Please note: CYO of Nassau & Suffolk Counties is the newly formed (1993) parish-based entity that implements the diocesan-wide parish athletic programs. Their mailing address and phone number is:

CYO of Nassau & Suffolk Counties

P.O. Box 7367

Wantagh, NY 11793

(516) 826-2203

Procedures:

- a) For the day-to-day programmatic matters (e.g. - registration procedures, eligibility requirements, schedule, rules, code of behavior, etc.), contact CYO of Nassau & Suffolk Counties directly.
- b) For information on ministerial events (Coaches Clinics, Days of Recollection, Ministry Day, etc.) contact the CYO Program Coordinator within the Office of Youth Ministries, (516) 678-5800 ext. 238.

## **IX. PASTORAL PLAN FOR HISPANIC MINISTRY**

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## **PASTORAL PLAN FOR HISPANIC MINISTRY**

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The plan was issued on December 12, 1992. A full copy in English and Spanish, including bibliography and glossary, is available from the Spanish Apostolate Office.

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### **A. Framework of Hispanic Reality**

#### **1. History**

The Catholic Church is truly universal. It is not confined to one race, color, class, or culture. Saint Paul wrote, "You were baptized into union with Christ, and now you are clothed, so to speak, with the life of Christ Himself. So there is no difference between Jews and Gentiles, between slave and free men, between men and women; you are all one in union with Christ Jesus." (Gal. 3:27-28)

The Church is constantly being challenged to remain truly Catholic. This means that all who wish to belong are welcomed with a warm sense of hospitality and each is treated equally. The Church is constantly challenged to live out this unity and overcome division. "Do your best to preserve the unity which the Spirit gives by means of the peace that binds you together. There is only one body and one spirit, just as there is one hope to which God has called you. There is one God and Father of all, Who is Lord of all." (Eph. 4:3-6)

This challenge is even more evident today with the growing number of Hispanics in our country. Hispanics, with the exception of the American Indian, have been in this country longer than any other European culture. To be explicit, Hispanics arrived in 1492 when Christopher Columbus discovered America. In 1564, forty-two years before the English founded Jamestown, the Spaniards established the first permanent settlement in what is now St. Augustine in Florida. It is here that the first Spanish Mass was celebrated. In 1565 the Spanish-speaking people began the colonization of New Mexico. That was twelve years before Jamestown and a

quarter of a century before the Pilgrims landed at Plymouth Rock.

Over the past thirty years the Spanish-speaking people have become the fastest growing population in the United States. In 1983, the American bishops, in their pastoral letter, **The Hispanic Presence: Challenge and Commitment**, estimated that there were at least twenty million people of Hispanic origin in this country. This was an increase of over three hundred percent dating back to the 1950's.

In the 1990 census the Hispanic population in the United States was 22,238,059. In the Northeast Region of the country the Hispanic population was 3,754,389. On Long Island the Hispanic population was 165,238 with 77,386 in Nassau County and 87,852 in Suffolk County. Thirty-seven percent are Puerto Ricans. People from El Salvador, the Dominican Republic and Colombia make up the next largest ethnic groups. The remaining represent other Spanish speaking countries.

Since the 1980 census the Hispanic population on Long Island has increased by 63,263 (62%). This statistic does not include the many undocumented whose estimated numbers according to Catholic Charities and The Central American Refugee Center are between 85,000 to 100,000 persons.

Hispanics can be found in 291 of the more than 300 towns, villages, hamlets and cities of which Long Island is comprised. Those communities with the largest percentages are: North Bay Shore, 37.3%; Brentwood, 34.7%; Central Islip 27.7%; and Freeport 21.2%. The percentages in sixteen other Long Island communities range from 11.4% to 19.1%.

Eighty percent of the Hispanic population on Long Island is Catholic. Parishes with the largest percentage of Hispanic Catholics are: Our Lady of Loretto, Hempstead, 60%; St. Aloysius, Great Neck, 32%; St. Anne and St. Luke, Brentwood, 55%, Sts. Cyril and Methodius, Deer Park, 47%

and St. John of God, Central Islip, 34%. Although many parishes have a large Hispanic Catholic population, they do not as yet celebrate the Eucharist in Spanish or provide pastoral and social services to this community.

Hispanics began arriving on Long Island in the late 1920's. They brought with them their strong gift of faith and faith practices and deep family values. At that time they established residences in Brentwood and Patchogue. In the early 1950's, through the efforts, hard work and dedication of a small group of lay leaders the first Spanish Mass was celebrated in St. Anne's Parish in Brentwood. Subsequently, all Spanish Masses that are being celebrated today in this Diocese of Rockville Centre and the presence of religious and apostolic movements are a result of the hard work and commitment of the laity.

In the 1960's the apostolate grew to many other parishes. The presence of Hispanic priests and religious, diocesan priests and religious who are bi-lingual and bi-cultural and supportive pastors enriched the faith life of the Hispanics, thus enabling them to express their faith through their culture and language. In response to the demands of the ever-increasing Hispanic Catholic population, the diocese officially opened the Spanish Apostolate Office in September 1968.

Since its inception the office has developed programs and ministries for Hispanics. It has provided training and developed resources which pertain to all levels of pastoral outreach and social advocacy. It has raised consciousness concerning the Hispanic presence within the diocesan structure and among the civic community. It has collaborated with and supported other existing groups such as the Charismatic Renewal and the Cursillo.

By 1970 Mass was being celebrated in Spanish in the parishes of St. Agnes, Rockville Centre; St. Francis de Sales, Patchogue; St. Kilian, Farmingdale; St. Mary of the Isle, Long Beach and Our Lady of Loretto, Hempstead.

The work of the Spanish Apostolate was blessed by the appointment of its first Vicar for Hispanics, Bishop Gerald J. Ryan who served from 1977 until his untimely death in 1985. Father Pablo M. Rodriguez has been appointed, now, in 1992, the second Vicar for Hispanics.

There are thirty-five priests ministering with the Hispanic population. Of these ten are Hispanic, three Filipino and the others are diocesan who are bi-lingual and bi-cultural. There are eight religious women, one of whom is Hispanic. There are six Hispanic deacons. There are six full-time employed lay people in the Spanish Apostolate and some fifteen percent of the Hispanic population serve as volunteers in the ministry. Their time, gifts and talents are used in all the work of the diocese as well as in their respective parishes. Mass is celebrated in twenty-four of the one hundred thirty-three parishes of the diocese each Sunday. Four celebrate Mass on Saturday evening and five celebrate Spanish Mass once a month.

This historical background of the Spanish-speaking people of our diocese gives a clearer understanding of their desire to prepare and implement this Diocesan Pastoral Plan for Hispanic Ministry called "**A People United in Christ.**" They firmly believe that working within a Pastoral de Conjunto this plan will indubitably enable them to continue to develop their apostolate and thereby achieve greater participation in the life of the church as the bishops of this country have requested in their pastoral letter: **Hispanic Presence: Challenge and Commitment.**



## 2. **Faith and Culture**

Culture can be defined as: "The values, shared meanings, social norms, customs, rituals, symbols, arts and artifacts, ways of perceiving the world, life styles, behaviors and ideologies by which people participate in an organized society. "(*A Family Perspective in Church and Society*, p. 32)

Culture and cultural values are distinguishing features of the Hispanic community. A very distinctive characteristic is the fact that Spanish is the language which is spoken by second and third generation Hispanics in the majority of homes in this country and on Long Island.

The value and dignity of the person as well as the commitment to and strong sense of family are the pre-eminent values of the Hispanic culture. The Hispanic family is not comprised only of parents and children. It also includes relatives by blood and marriage, godparents and close-knit friends.

Although Hispanics share a common language they are not a homogeneous group. It is important to note that each country is culturally diverse, therefore, social, economic, educational and political differences can be noted among the different nationalities.

Spirituality is considered as a relationship with God. One of the riches of the spirituality of the Hispanic people is to discover that God is present in all aspects of their daily lives. He is a personal God to whom one has recourse not only in moments of formal prayer, but also in all daily human affairs. Common sayings which are part of ordinary conversation are, "Si Dios quiere, "Primero Dios," "Ay, Dios Mio," "Ave Maria." This spirituality gives an orientation and a perspective to all the dimensions of a person's life in the following of Jesus and in continuous conversation with the Father.

The Hispanic people are very religious. Teaching Christian values, spiritual development, evangelization and a special devotion to the Blessed Mother are gifts and values which are deeply rooted in their family traditions.

Culture for Hispanic Catholics has become a way of living out and transmitting their faith. Many local practices of popular religiosity are widely accepted as cultural expressions. All this points to the fact that for Hispanics, culture and spirituality go hand-in-hand, and cannot be separated. Nevertheless, the Hispanic culture, as others has constant need of evangelization.

The Bishops of the Northeast Region of the country, in their recent letter, "The Five Hundredth Anniversary of the Evangelization of the Americas" tell us:

*Our Hispanic people have maintained a strong faith during these five centuries thanks to a popular religiosity which parents have handed on to their children since Christianity marked its beginning in the Americas...If the streets and walls of our countries of origin could speak, they would tell us about the Holy Rosary, which in homes and chapels, roads and plazas was prayed by our ancestors...The Rosary, prayed in a family atmosphere has been the seed of vocations to the priesthood and religious life in our Church.*

The Blessed Virgin Mary is at the heart of Hispanic spirituality. The Hispanic people find God in her arms. They address the Mother of God and the saints with complete familiarity as they seek their guidance, help and intercession. Hispanic spirituality finds its expression in popular devotions, celebrations of the saints and religious practices. In addition it influences inter-personal relationships in such a way that they become an integral part of a Hispanic cultural expression. The celebration of the Eucharist is the center of the spiritual life for the Hispanic person. The Eucharist and the sacraments offer to this people the elements of community and religiosity which are their source of unity, which manifests itself in their

hospitality with other people. All of this has its origin based on the reality of the Paschal Mystery: the life and death of Jesus which is made real in the daily life of the Hispanic people. This source of unity reminds us of what Jesus said at the Last Supper, "Do this in memory of me." This strong custom of hospitality and sharing their table is the same as the disciples who saved a place for Jesus at their table.

Sadly, upon arriving to the United States and as a result of the conflict of cultures and the passing of time, many religious practices and devotions have lost their religious significance. It is the goal of this Pastoral Plan through its evangelization, formation and community development to be a source of enrichment for the strong spiritual sense of the Hispanic people.

3. **Social Reality**

*Because of the Church, the leadership of the clergy, the influence of the parish and the identification of the Church with the poor as their advocate and defender, the poor moved into the mainstream of American life. ("The Hispanic Poor in the Middle Class Church," Joseph P. Fitzpatrick, SJ)*

There are, in this diocese an estimated 200,000 Hispanics including the many Hispanic undocumented immigrants with an even distribution in each of the two counties of Nassau and Suffolk. They, like all other ethnic groups who have migrated and established residency here, struggle to move into the mainstream of American life.

Education, housing and professional advancement are areas in which Hispanics continue to struggle to gain equality. This is an acute problem for the many undocumented Hispanics who arrive on a daily basis. The fact that they are undocumented and that there is a high rate of illiteracy among them forces most of these people to live below the poverty level.

Language also becomes an obstacle. The fact that they are unable to speak or understand the English language closes many doors and inhibits the opportunities for advancement.

Prejudice is a grave factor which works against Hispanics. They encounter prejudice in the work force, religious institutions, health care and housing. This negative attitude affects the ways in which Hispanics live and very often weakens the desire and the drive for self-actualization and economic advancement. Although the diocesan agencies and local parishes have taken steps to improve conditions for Hispanics much more must be done.

In terms of housing, education and professional advancement a small percentage of the Hispanic population has "made it" on Long Island. Second and third generation Hispanics who have been born or raised in this country have managed to improve their social and economic status. This has been accomplished after many years of struggle and much sacrifice. By obtaining a higher education which granted professional degrees many found suitable employment which, of course, enabled them to move from the sub-standard conditions in which they had been living. According to the 1990 Census at least fifty-six percent of Hispanics living on Long Island are home owners.

There still is, however, on Long Island a large percentage of the Hispanic population who have not been as fortunate. Many Hispanics lack sufficient preparation, training and skills. As was stated earlier, the problem of illiteracy, inability to speak English and prejudice make it virtually impossible for many to survive, let alone succeed.

The Hispanic family on Long Island is substantially younger (43% of the population is under the age of 25), more numerous and financially less prosperous than non-Hispanic families. According to the 1990 census, Hispanics have a higher percentage of unemployment than non-Hispanics. Ten percent of Hispanic families live below the poverty level compared with four percent of the general population.

According to a report based on home visitations throughout the Hispanic communities on Long Island, 21% of Hispanic single parent homes are headed by females who live in rented homes or apartments.

Parish Teams who visited these homes found as many as ten to twelve persons living in one or two bedroom apartments. This is a problem which mainly applies to the undocumented

population who as individual families cannot afford the high rental costs.

Although many Hispanics manage to find employment it is mostly domestic, factory, agriculture and landscaping work and they are not paid just wages. When medical care is provided, it often is inadequate. Hispanic children are often the ones most affected.

Many Hispanic teenagers are forced to drop out of high school and find employment so as to assist in supporting the family. According to the 1990 census 35% of Hispanic youth on Long Island do not have a high school diploma. Drugs, alcohol, sexual problems and child abuse are elements the Hispanic youth as all youth on Long Island have to contend with. There are however, high percentages among the Hispanic youth involved in each of these. According to the Long Island Association of Aids Care, the highest percentage of AIDS cases on Long Island is among the Hispanics. Present in each of these is the constant struggle of the Hispanic teenager to live within two cultures, a Hispanic culture at home and an American culture in all other aspects of their lives.

Faced with the problem of prejudice and racism, and constantly being ridiculed for maintaining and practicing cultural modes and expressions, many of these teenagers feel ashamed of being Hispanic. Looking for acceptance and feeling the need to belong, many of these young people go through an assimilation process.

The riches and cultural values that make a positive impact in their lives and which are a part of their cultural heritage are sacrificed in this process.

Although our report revealed that socio-economic needs were a main concern to the Hispanic community, its primary and utmost concern was for their pastoral needs. Eighty percent of the Hispanics who responded to the diocesan survey considered themselves to be Catholic. The most urgent needs expressed were Mass in Spanish, catechesis of adults, youth and children, personal formation, leadership formation, family ministry, youth ministry, social pastoral ministry programs and unity in the family and within the community.

Our diocese has responded to some of these needs, however, in spite of all that has been achieved, pastoral needs of Hispanics on Long Island continue to be a great concern. Parish facilities are not always readily made available so that classes and meetings can be held. (Spiritual development, which is very important to the Hispanic often is deterred by their economic situation which cannot afford the rates at Retreat Centers.) There are still some parishes in this diocese where Hispanics are not welcomed. This causes another problem. At least 10% of the Hispanic Catholic population have left the Church to join the Jehovah's Witnesses, and other Protestant and fundamentalist groups where they are warmly received by clergy and congregations. They are accepted as part of these communities without having to assimilate. The Catholic Church must respond more effectively to this problem which affects not only Hispanics, but the entire Church.

Prejudice and racism in our society and in the Church inhibits full integration of all peoples and weakens our country and its institutions. The U.S. bishops in their pastoral letter of 1983, ***The Hispanic Presence: Challenge and Commitment*** state: *Hispanics in this country have experienced cruel prejudice. So extensive has it been in some areas that they have been denied basic human and civil rights. Even today, Hispanics, Blacks and the recent Southeast Asian Refugees and Native Americans continue to suffer from such dehumanizing treatment which makes us aware that the sin of racism lingers in our society. It is particularly disheartening to know that some Catholics hold strong prejudices against Hispanics and others and deny them the respect and love due to their God-given dignity. This is also evident in some parish communities where one finds reluctance among some non-Hispanics to serve with Hispanics or to socialize with them at parochial events. We appeal to those with this unchristian attitude to examine their behavior in light of Jesus' commandment of love and to accept their Hispanic brothers and sisters as full partners in the work and life of their parishes.* (p. 24)

The Catholic Church faces the same challenge today that it always will face. It is called to be the advocate and defender of the poor.

4. **Doctrinal Framework**

*The mission of the Church is the continuation of Jesus' work; to announce the Kingdom of God and the means for entering it. (Mt.28:18-20).*

The Church as community carries out this work of Jesus by entering into the cultural, religious and social reality of the people realizing that each is made in the image and likeness of God. Therefore, each is to be served with the personal and human dignity which that likeness deserves. As the U.S. Bishops attest in their pastoral letter:

**Hispanic Presence: Challenge and Commitment:**

*Although many pastoral challenges face the Church as a result of the Hispanic presence, we are pleased to hear Hispanics voicing their desire for more opportunities to share their historical, cultural and religious heritage. Let us hear their voices; let us make all feel equally at home in the Church. Let us be a Church which is in truth universal, a Church with open arms, welcoming different gifts and expressions of our "one Lord, one faith, one Baptism, one God and Father of all. (Eph. 4:5-6) (NPP pg.3).*

Our Bishops are calling us to live out the message of Jesus and the teachings of the council in *Lumen gentium*, *Gaudium et Spes* and in Paul VI's exhortation, *Evangelii Nuntiandi*. The common theme expressed in each of these teachings is the profound respect for particular cultures and a call for all Christians to be sensitive to each other's backgrounds. It sustains the belief in integration and not assimilation. It challenges us to live in unity and not uniformity. With a policy of integration, the Bishops of this country are celebrating the rich diversity that makes up the American Church and they are calling each group to respond in the same way. In terms of the Hispanic presence this means:

*Our Hispanic people are to be welcomed to our church institutions at all levels. They are to be served in their language when possible, and their cultural values and religious traditions are to be respected. Beyond that, we must work towards mutual enrichment through interaction among all our cultures. Our physical facilities are to be made accessible to the Hispanic community. Hispanic participation in the institutions, programs and activities of the Church is to be constantly encouraged and appreciated. (NPP, pg. 2 #4)*

Thus, as the Bishops state, the Hispanic presence is a "moment of grace," "a blessing from God," challenging local churches to re-examine their Catholic mission.

May we continue to live Jesus' mission.

## **B. Mission Statement**

**So that our Diocese respond more effectively to its evangelizing mission we commit ourselves by means of a PASTORAL DE CONJUNTO to promote the full integration and holistic formation of the Hispanic community.**

**This objective will be realized by the development of Small Faith Communities.**

## **C. Framework for Action**

### **1. PASTORAL DE CONJUNTO**

The National Pastoral Plan for Hispanic Ministry defines Pastoral de Conjunto as:

*The harmonious coordination of all the elements of pastoral ministry with the actions of pastoral ministers and structures in view of the common goal; The Kingdom of God.*  
(p. 38)

*The Hispanic Catholic experiences a lack of unity and communion in the Church's pastoral ministry. There is lack of union and coordination in criteria, vision, goals and common actions, as well as a lack of fraternity, communion and team work in various aspects of pastoral ministry. The*



*challenge here is for laity, religious and clergy to work together. (p.45)*

As a concept, Pastoral de Conjunto is not new. It is rooted in the Gospel imperative of communion and unity. Its primary concern is the task of Evangelization and not pastoral efficiency.

It is a methodology that places itself at the service of the Kingdom of God and assists the faithful in its announcement and realization.

Pastoral de Conjunto is the main theme and methodology our Diocesan Plan will employ. It will be implicit in each specific dimension to allow our Hispanic community to live this communion of Church not only among itself but also with the different cultures which makes the Church universal. The Plan also says:

*Greater participation by Hispanic Catholics in the total life of the Church will make possible their authentic integration and help the Church to become an even greater presence and leaven of communion in our society. (#20)*

2. **Specific Objective**

**By means of a Pastoral de Conjunto, the Spanish Apostolate must devise a structure which enables and directs this most basic theme of the Pastoral Plan.**

**How:** By continuing to work with existing structures and relating them more closely to other Diocesan agencies and offices.

3. **Vicar for Hispanics**

To serve as the Bishop's Spanish liaison regarding matters of priests' personnel. To accompany all the ministries of the Spanish Apostolate.

4. **Office of the Spanish Apostolate**

To develop and administer pastoral policies, plans and objectives with and on behalf of Hispanics and to serve as a resource for parishes and agencies in order to provide for and develop this ministry.

5. **Pastoral Advisory Board**

Continue to work with this Board which is representative of all areas of Hispanic Ministry. Their on-going advice and evaluation will assist in all areas and on all levels.

6. **Parish Structure**

The Parish Teams and their co-workers in collaboration with the priest, religious and deacon who serve with the Hispanics, will continue to work with the Spanish Apostolate office and the Diocesan Committee for the Pastoral Plan in the implementation of the Plan's programs and projects.

7. **Responsible Agents**

a) **Diocesan Level**

The Vicar for Hispanics, the Office of the Spanish Apostolate, Pastoral Advisory Board, Diocesan Committee for the Pastoral Plan.

b) **Parish Level**

All Pastors, Priests, Religious, Deacons and Parish Teams.

8. **Plan for Action**

a) The challenge of a ***Pastoral de Conjunto*** is that it includes pastoral responsibility according to the actual situation of the people. The diocese cannot improvise its response to the needs of the people. Each parish and its communities are called to serve their own reality. They must do this in collaboration with local personnel, both pastoral and civic. The diocese must accompany and assist these ministries and services.

b) These ministries have been suggested by the people in the home visits which were made by the equipos moviles in each

parish. In this Diocesan Plan for Hispanic Ministry the following section presents these specialized areas of ministry:

**9. Specific Dimensions**

- a) **Integral Formation**  
Describes the need to educate each person in his or her totality, both human and spiritual, with all that each implies.
- b) **Evangelization**  
Is the call to live in Small Faith Communities whose prophetic life-style strengthens the People of God to live the Gospel and serve one another.
- c) **Family Ministry**  
Challenges us to be living witnesses of the Domestic Church.
- d) **Youth Ministry**  
Is to regard youth as the young church of today and to share in their formation and acceptance as such.
- e) **Social/Pastoral Ministry**  
Implies that we live the Gospel imperative in such a way that we are living witnesses of the Beatitudes.

**10. Programs and Projects**

The programs and projects and projects for each of these specific dimensions will be carried out on both the diocesan level and the parish level.

- a) **Diocesan Level**  
In order to accomplish all that has been suggested and provide the necessary programs and projects the Spanish Apostolate Office must:
  - (1) Collaborate with all diocesan offices and agencies in the formulation of such programs and projects.

- (2) Educate all pastoral agents regarding the language, culture and social and historical reality of the Hispanic people of the diocese. This must be an informative and practical education which will evoke an openness of attitude and a pastoral response.
- (3) Continue to accompany all those priests, religious, deacons, laity and apostolic movements so that Hispanic ministry may be realized at the parish level.

b) Parish Level

- (1) Responsible Agents:
  - (a) The parishes, parish staffs, as well as lay volunteers are to coordinate all programs and projects with local civic agencies, educational offices and health care centers, B.O.C.E.S. County Services, the Long Island Association of AIDS Care.
  - (b) Once programs have been coordinated, materials and information should be disseminated among the Hispanic community in the Church bulletin, local newspapers, local radio and TV stations, local centers and agencies, etc.
  - (c) Hispanic people who are working in a Pastoral de Conjunto can accomplish all of these programs because of their strong faith and commitment to the Gospel.

11. **Time**

The implementation of these programs and projects should begin in January, 1993. In order to accomplish this each parish will:

- a) Study the Diocesan Pastoral Plan. Use it as a guide and working tool.
- b) Assess parish needs which are based on the report of its home visits.
- c) Make a list of its own priorities so as to decide which projects must be accomplished and how this is to be done.
- d) Send a report of their Plan of Action to the Diocesan Committee by May, 1993.

## **D. Formation**

### **1. Background**

A person by virtue of being a Christian, that is, being baptized and confirmed, is called to be an apostle, to be a prophet and as such to proclaim the divine message of salvation so that it will be known, received and practiced by people of good will. A Christian must also be a witness and help transform the community in which they live according to the Gospel spirit.

In order to live, proclaim and defend the faith, all Christians are entitled to acquire the knowledge and formation that will enable them to carry out this task. That is, every Christian has the inalienable right to an integral education.

During the elaboration process of this Pastoral Plan and its analysis of the Hispanic reality on Long Island it was discovered that Hispanics feel the need for and seek an integral education.

This is the case regarding both the Church and society. Their need is for spiritual growth, personal and academic development.

This lack of an integral education is the principal contributing factor to the low socio-economic status which negatively impacts the life of Hispanics on Long Island. It is very important that the formation process address the problem of illiteracy, the lack of adequate training in job skills, the poor educational experiences and the lack of proficiency in the English language if it is to enable the Hispanic people to fully integrate into the North American society. The lack of more committed and well informed leadership among the laity in society and in the ecclesial community also reflects this need.

Hispanic Catholics lack a clear and enriching catechesis. Not being accepted by many in our ecclesial communities places the future of their Catholic faith at risk and makes them more vulnerable to the proselytizing efforts of other sects and religious denominations. Often, in order for Hispanics to be fully accepted as members of their parish, they must go through an assimilation process instead of healthy integration. Assimilation forces them to give up their culture and language and adopt a form of worship which is foreign to them and which denies their rich cultural expressions.

An integral education would permit the Hispanic people of our diocese to become fully integrated into the life of the Church and society.

This kind of education must be holistic. It must consider therefore, the cultural, economic, political, social and religious aspects. Only then can it be integral education.

**2. Specific Objective**

**Utilizing the process of integral education provide formation and training that will enable the Hispanic community to live and proclaim its faith. Also, it will facilitate the process of integration into the North American society.**

**3. Programs and Projects**

**a) Diocesan Level**

- (1) Provide a formation program for the catechesis of adults, youth and children. Provide training so that the R.C.I.A. process may be initiated in Hispanic communities.
- (2) Provide formation programs for liturgical ministers: choirs, lectors, ushers, Eucharistic Ministers. These ministers will serve in their parishes.
- (3) Continue to train teachers for the course, "Conoce a Jesús y Conócete a ti Mismo." These teachers are to offer the course at the parish level.

**b) Parish Level**

- (1) Provide information to the Hispanic community regarding the academic education programs and ESL classes which are being offered in their local towns and villages.

**How:** Parish leadership can do so in the following way:

- (a) Gather information from local high schools, colleges, B.O.C.E.S. Centers and any other institutions which offer Adult Education Programs, County Offices.

- (b) This material can be prepared and given to the people in churches, schools, all stores and public meeting places.

**Responsible Agents:** Lay leadership in each community.

- (2) Provide academic education programs and ESL classes in the parishes in order to enhance work skills.

**How:** Parish priests, religious, deacons and laity form a committee who make all the necessary arrangements with local high schools and B.O.C.E.S. Also, parish staff can invite local professional teachers to serve the community in such courses and workshops.

**Responsible Agents:** Priest, religious, deacons and laity.

- (3) Provide courses for personal Christian formation and development.

**How:** This can be done by offering the course, "Conoce a Jesús y Conócete a ti Mismo." Parish leaders make arrangements with the diocesan coordinator of this course.

**Responsible Agents:** Priest, religious, deacons and laity.

- (4) Provide spiritual formation programs and Bible classes.

**How:** Parish priests, religious, deacons and laity arrange such courses by preparing curriculum, teachers and resources. They can invite teachers, and, also work with the Cursillo Movement and the Charismatic Renewal.

**Responsible Agents:** Priests, religious, deacons and laity.

## **E. Evangelization**

### **1. Background**

*Evangelization is the essential message of Christ and is the basis of our identity as Church. Evangelization means: "Bringing the Good News into all strata of humanity so that humanity may be transformed from within and made new. The object of evangelization is to convert both the personal and collective consciences of people, the activities in which they engage and the lives and concrete milieu which is theirs."* (EMW 17 and 18)

The analysis of the Hispanic reality on Long Island revealed that the greatest concern expressed by eighty percent of the Hispanic Catholics interviewed is the need for spiritual and pastoral assistance. As the Hispanic population continues to grow both in Nassau and Suffolk Counties, so does the need for more Masses in Spanish, catechesis of adults, youth and children. There also is an urgency to respond to the needs of the family and the poor.

Hispanic Catholics of this diocese are very much aware of the support they receive from our bishop and know they are accepted in many parishes. They also acknowledge the fact that the office of the Spanish Apostolate provides programs, training and services which effect all areas of their lives. They also rejoice in the presence of apostolic movements and societies who enable an expression of the faith in the Spanish culture and language. Yet, Hispanics feel there is much more to be done.

In some parishes of the diocese where Hispanics make up a large percentage of the Catholic population, their presence is not fully recognized or accepted. The media does not reflect the fact that there is a large Hispanic presence. Hispanics are not offered programs or articles in Spanish. This would serve as a means of evangelizing and enriching the faith life of Hispanics and also serve to contrast the false values and ideologies which constantly "feed" the mind and the senses from television, radio and the newspapers. Fundamentalist sects continue to use the media for proselytizing purposes.

Although all positive support and efforts are recognized Hispanics feel that they are permitted in our Church but not invited to fully integrate in it as equals. In this sense they feel the Church as an institution is no different than any other social, civic or political group. Many who abandon the Catholic Church to join other sects do so because they have not been welcomed, accepted and



supported by many pastors and congregations. This exodus from our Church is not only a Hispanic issue, it concerns our entire membership.

2. **Specific Objective**

**Promote and develop the Hispanic identity as church, a church that is prophetic, missionary and communitarian. To extend the evangelizing process to all Hispanics so that they and the communities in which they live will be transformed and renewed from within.**

3. **Evangelization - Introduction To Programs And Projects**

Based on what has been said it is important to state that each of the specific dimensions implies the process of evangelization. Our parishes must be made up of evangelizing communities whose ministries serve the family and youth within the context of the gospel call to justice.

These evangelizing communities are called Small Faith Communities. To be part of these communities is precisely within the essence of Christianity and therefore of Jesus' vision for the new humanity in which the concept of community is very essential. When Jesus proposes His project of the Kingdom for the new humanity, he speaks in terms of community. He shows Himself to us as living in community.

The first communities described their experience of living in community in the Acts of the Apostles 2:41-47. They were small groups who gathered in the homes, listened to the explanation of the Word of God, prayed, celebrated the Eucharist, shared what they had among them, and called attention to the way they lived. The *Puebla* document describes the force of Small Ecclesial Communities in the following way:

*The Small Base Community, as community, integrates families, adults and youth, in an intimate, inter-personal faith relationship. As ecclesial, it is a community of faith, hope and love; it celebrates the Word of God in life, by means of the solidarity and commitment with the New Law of the Lord, it makes present and actualizes the Church's mission and has a visible communion with the lawful pastors by means of a coordinated service. It is a base, by being made up of few members, in a permanent form of the larger community. They deserve the term ecclesial, when*

*they conduct their own spiritual and human existence in fraternal charity. (EN 58)*

The National Pastoral Plan challenges us to live a model of Church formed by communities which are principal agents of evangelization. They are evangelizing communities. They should be an alternative way of life, one which is a voice for the poor and oppressed, which works to develop strong family life and minister to youth.

The specific objective of Evangelization in the Diocesan Plan challenges us to promote and develop a Hispanic identity as a Church that is prophetic, missionary and communitarian.

Therefore, in order to train the People of God to be part of these communities and to live out their mission all the programs and projects will be carried out on the diocesan level. This will be an on-going apostolate since the work involved will grow alongside the ever-growing Hispanic population of our diocese.

#### 4. **Programs And Projects**

- a) Facilitate and accompany the development of Small Ecclesial Communities. Their purpose is to promote within the parish framework faith and conversion experiences: prayer life, mission spirit, evangelization, inter-personal relations, fraternal love, prophetic questioning and action for justice.

**How:** Organize workshops with pastoral agents who specialize in the preparation and development of Small Ecclesial Communities. This is to train leadership and membership. Also, a training manual should be prepared according to the Hispanic reality of this diocese.

- b) Prepare and train mobile teams from within Small Ecclesial Communities for the following ministries: proclaim the Word of God, visit and invite back those who have left the Church, visit the marginalized so as to offer sound alternatives to fundamentalist sects.

**How:** Organize workshops at the diocesan and parish levels

to develop skills and techniques that would prepare and facilitate this ministry: prayer, family, youth, Bible with its Catholic interpretation and popular religiosity.

- c) Support existing groups and movements such as the Cursillo and Charismatic Renewal so that their ministries will complement and enrich the implementation of the pastoral plan.

**How:** Training workshops and courses for leaders of movements and societies with the purpose of developing a common vision.

- d) Provide formation and training for lay leaders as pastoral agents for Hispanic ministry in the diocese and in the parishes.

**How:** Offering programs, courses and materials.

- e) Utilize the Church's communication media in the evangelization process of the Hispanic people and incorporate within this ministry important issues pertaining to them.

**How:** Enter into dialogue with the directors of the various communications media in order to share ideas and offer suggestions.

## **F. Family Ministry**

### **1. Background**

The family is the place where personal and spiritual growth begins. It is the place where a community of love is experienced, the place where Christian values are taught and where evangelization takes place.

According to the 1990 Census, the Hispanic family on Long Island is much younger, financially less prosperous and has more children than non-Hispanic families.

Hispanics have not been able to gain equality with non-Hispanics in areas of housing, jobs, medical care, education and professional advancement. This situation combined with a lack of legal status, a high illiteracy rate, and lack of knowledge of English makes it very

difficult to break their cycle of poverty. Those who are most greatly affected by these conditions are children, heads of single-parent families and the undocumented.

In spite of these crises which Hispanic families face each day, the analysis of the survey revealed the significant fact that eighty percent of those interviewed identified pastoral needs as the main concern for families and for communities. This clearly indicates that the Hispanic people of this diocese place more value on matters of faith and religion than on their material well-being.

The unity of the family as well as our Catholic faith is being threatened by a lack of pastoral care and concern.

Although this reality does pose a challenge to our Church, it also should be an occasion for rejoicing. The people are asking the Church to fulfill her evangelizing mission.

## 2. **Specific Objective**

**Promote the faith and active participation of the family which includes, women, single parents, those who live in solitude and youth. This is to be done within the structures of the Church and society.**

## 3. **Programs And Projects**

### a) **Diocesan Level**

Develop an education program for the family based on the documents of the Bishops of the United States; *A Family Perspective Putting Children and Families First: A Challenge for our Church, Nation and World* and the document of John Paul II, *Familiaris Consortio*.

**How:** Prepare a course at the diocesan level to be implemented at the parish level.

### b) **Parish Level**

- (1) Develop and provide programs and workshops which are focused on improving the quality of life for Hispanic families. Suggested themes and topics are: unity, language and culture, spiritual values,

family values and customs.

**How:** Arrange for such programs with local high schools and colleges, parish personnel, diocesan office of the Spanish Apostolate, local Hispanic civic agencies.

**Responsible Agents:** Parish priests, religious, deacons and laity.

- (2) Provide workshops that educate and assist with those problems affecting Hispanic families such as: drugs, alcohol, gambling, domestic violence between couples and between parents and children, "Santeria," AIDS, abortion, family planning, sexual harassment.

**How:** Arrange for such programs with local civic agencies, hospitals, health centers, substance abuse clinics, youth boards, The Long Island Association of AIDS care, school counselors, the Diocesan offices of the Spanish Apostolate, Family Ministry and Catholic Charities.

**Responsible Agents:** Parish priests, religious, deacons and laity.

- c) Provide counseling for single parents, widows and widowers, separated and divorced, bereavement for adults and children, victims of abuse, emotional, physical and sexual, the aged, women and men living in solitude.

**How:** Arrange for such services from County Social Services, Catholic Charities, local hospitals and health centers, school guidance counselors, Diocesan Offices of the Spanish Apostolate, Youth Ministry and Family Ministry.

**Responsible Agents:** Parish priests, religious, deacons and laity.

**G. Youth Ministry**

**1. Background**

*The youth in a great many countries of the world represent half of the population and often constitute in numbers half of the people of God living in those countries. Simply from this aspect, youth make up an exceptional potential and great challenge for the future of the Church. (Christifideles Laici, #46).*

The above can also be said of Long Island where 43% of the Hispanic population is under the age of 25.

The Hispanic youth in our diocese are facing very difficult times. Their problems and needs are a major concern expressed by those who were visited and interviewed. Aware that the majority of these young people are faced with important challenges that touch upon every aspect of their lives, many felt their needs should receive top priority.

Drugs, alcohol, sexual problems and child abuse are elements that affect all the youth on Long Island regardless of race or natural origin. What makes the Hispanic youth more vulnerable to each of these is the fact that many come from much larger families while still others come from single parent homes headed by women. In such families the standard of living is usually at or below the poverty level.

These parents lack the knowledge, education, financial ability, training and skills to help their children deal with or solve these problems. Under these same circumstances, many Hispanic teenagers drop out of high school while still others are forced to do so to help support the family. This accounts for the high drop out rate among Hispanic teens which according to the 1990 Census is 35%.

Those Hispanic youth who graduate from high school and manage to go on to college find that employment opportunities for Hispanics is on a par with the non-Hispanic population. Spiritual development is another concern. A small number of young people participate in programs at the diocesan and parish levels. The majority of these teenagers feel that these programs are

limited and in many instances deficient because they do not address the reality of life for the Hispanic young person. Also, pressures imposed by society itself and by their peers have led many young people away from the church.

Pope John Paul II in speaking of the youth of the world stated:

*Youth must not simply be considered as an aspect of pastoral concern for the church: in fact, young people are and ought to be encouraged to be active on behalf of the church as leading characters in evangelizing and participating in the renewal of society.* (Christifideles Laici, #46)

The youth of our diocese are the young Church of today and will be the Church of the future. We must therefore seek out the potential, talents and abilities inherent in them and provide them with the proper guidance which instills Christian values rather than the materialism and individualism our society imposes.

## **2. Specific Objective**

**Present to our young people the living Christ as their only Savior and encourage them to participate actively in the renewal of society and to be leaders in the Church's evangelizing mission.**

## **3. Programs and Projects**

### **a) Diocesan Level**

- (1) Develop and train mobile youth teams so that they will be responsible for developing and providing programs for the youth at the parish level.

**How:** The office of the Spanish Apostolate in collaboration with the office of Youth Ministry has to prepare this training which should include courses on counseling, formation of groups, youth seminars on special themes and leadership formation.

- (2) Develop a program to train and educate adult and youth leaders on how they can work with the youth at the parish level who have special needs such as:

Runaway youth, problems with drugs and suicide, pregnant teenagers, incarcerated youth, young people who are victims of physical, sexual and emotional abuse, young people who have suffered the loss of parents, young people who are children of divorced parents.

**How:** The Spanish Apostolate Office in collaboration with professionals in the field should prepare for each of the above programs.

b) Parish Level

- (1) Provide workshops in each parishes that will include:  
Cultural identity  
Service to the community  
Leadership formation  
Sex education  
Parish life  
Racial and ethnic harmony

**How:** Pastoral agents collaborate with local and county agencies, counselors of local high schools.

**Responsible Agents:** Priests, religious, deacons and laity.

- (2) Promote youth representation both at the diocesan and parochial level.  
Diocesan youth committee  
Parish pastoral board, etc.  
Advisory Board

**How:** Pastoral agents make necessary arrangements for such participation with pertinent leadership.

**Responsible Agents:** Priests, religious, deacons, and laity.

- (3) Provide bilingual catechesis programs, Bible studies, spiritual formation, marriage and courtship formation.

**How:** Pastoral agents coordinate with parish staffs and diocesan agencies to provide programs of catechesis, Bible classes, spiritual formation and inter-personal relationships



for marriage.

**Responsible Agents:** Priests, religious, deacons and laity collaborate with Directors of Religious Education, those who teach scripture and spiritual development.

- (4) Educate youth for vocations to priesthood, religious life, marriage and the single state.

**How:** Pastoral agents should provide for such workshops in collaboration with professionals and vocation directors.

**Responsible Agents:** Priests, religious, deacons, and laity.

- (5) Provide workshops for parents to stress the responsibility of parents as primary evangelizers and encourage their active participation in youth activities.

**How:** Pastoral agents prepare courses and workshops which emphasize the role of the family as the "domestic church." The importance of prayer and the sacraments for children and the entire family should be stressed.

**Responsible Agents:** Priests, religious, deacons, and laity.

## **H. Social Pastoral Ministry**

### **1. Background**

Each person by virtue of being created in the image and likeness of God is an inherent member of the universal human family. As such, he/she is committed to seek the well-being of his/her brothers and sisters. Each person has to be responsible in ensuring that the economic, political and social order be more at the service of everyone and allow each person to cultivate and affirm his or her human dignity. The Church must also ensure that there is no inequality based on race or nationality, social condition or sex. As St. Paul says; "There does not exist among you, Jew or Greek, slave or free man, male or female. All are one in Christ Jesus." (Gal. 3:28)

The Bishops of the United States in their pastoral letter, *Hispanic Presence: Challenge and Commitment* recognized that Hispanics have been victims of racial prejudice in our Church and in society. They addressed the need for purification and reconciliation and exhorted those who manifest prejudicial attitudes to accept Hispanics totally, as full partners in the life and work of their parishes.

Nine years have passed since the pastoral was issued, and still prejudice and racism toward Hispanics and other ethnic groups continue to exist both in the Church and in society. In spite of many positive changes that have taken place on behalf of the Hispanic community, an analysis of their reality on Long Island, (based on home visits, the 1990 Census and data from L.I.L.C.O., local School Districts and the Long Island Regional Planning Board) makes it evident that Hispanics continue to suffer from inequality in the areas of housing, employment, medical care and education.

Pastoral care continues to warrant improvement. Too many Hispanics in our diocese are not yet able to find full support, for their spiritual and pastoral needs and desires. There is a

division between the mainstream English-speaking Catholic and the Spanish-speaking Catholic. The study also revealed the division which exists among Hispanic cultures themselves. For this reason many of those interviewed expressed the need for unity in the family and in the local community.

It is of utmost importance that each person be conscious of his or her own dignity as a child of God. Each is to be treated in that way regardless of race, ethnicity, sex, academic or social status. We must all be reminded that if we ask others to avoid racism and prejudice, we in turn must first examine our own prejudicial attitudes. It is essential that our Church as an institution be the first to give testimony and be a strong living witness of such unity.

In reclaiming a proper ministry, Hispanics are demanding of responsible agents the recognition of their fundamental rights, the God-given right to be a person with the proper treatment this implies.

2. **Specific Objective**

**Help the Spanish-speaking people achieve self-actualization on all levels: spiritual, political and socio-economic. Affirm and cultivate their sense of human dignity that will enable them to become protagonists of their own destiny.**

3. **Programs and Projects**

a) **Diocesan Level**

- (1) Develop a program that will enable Hispanics to identify their own roots and their own culture.

**How:** Office of the Spanish Apostolate is to prepare such programs in coordination with

Hispanic cultural groups. These programs are to be offered at both the diocesan and parish levels.

- (2) Develop programs for those who wish to minister in prisons, hospitals and Parish Outreach Offices.

**How:** The Office of the Spanish Apostolate is to prepare these programs in coordination with the Offices of Prison Ministry and Health Ministry as well as the Parish Outreach Offices of Catholic Charities. These programs are to be offered at both the diocesan and parish levels.

- (3) Educate Church and civic institutions and agencies regarding the Hispanic peoples, their culture and customs. Provide practical suggestions for working with Hispanics and serving their needs, especially the poor and undocumented.

**How:** Office of the Spanish Apostolate in coordination with all diocesan agencies, ecumenical groups, schools, and hospitals should offer pertinent workshops, courses, and seminars. Strive towards the employment of Hispanics in diocesan agencies and offices.

b) Parish Level

- (1) Provide training for those persons who want to work with social and civil agencies that will enable them to assist the poor and undocumented. Such training and service will establish social/pastoral ministries at the parish level.

**How:** Pastoral agents coordinate such training programs with Parish Outreach coordinators, all civic and social agencies.

**Responsible Agents:** Priests, religious, deacons and laity.

- (2) Provide services and courses regarding Health Care that will assist the Hispanic community to care for their health needs. Such programs would include: nutrition classes, health fairs, AIDS, all other health related workshops, programs and seminars.

**How:** Pastoral agents coordinate such programs and services. Parish space should be provided to afford easy access for these programs and services.

**Responsible Agents:** Priests, religious, deacons and laity.

- (3) Promote active participation in politics: the electoral process, affairs of local, county, state and federal government. Educate people concerning their fundamental rights as citizens, residents, and undocumented.

**How:** Pastoral agents coordinate such programs with local and county agencies and Catholic Charities Office of Immigration.

**Responsible Agents:** Priests, religious, deacons and laity.

## **I. Evaluation**

Implicit in a pastoral planning process is the assessment and evaluation of its programs and projects. This is not meant to be a

technical exercise since the plan is to form an integral part of the faith life of our Spanish speaking people.

This evaluation should be an on-going reflective process whose purpose is to:

1. Continue to accompany all who participated in the organization of the process.
2. Through theological reflection, enable the plan's implementation at the parish level.
3. Serve as a basis of ministry for the Vicar for Hispanics and the Office of the Spanish Apostolate as they continue to be a voice for the Spanish-speaking people at all levels of the diocesan structure.

The implementation of the programs and projects for each specific dimension should begin in January, 1993. The Vicar for Hispanics and the Office of the Spanish Apostolate in collaboration with the Diocesan Committee of the Pastoral Plan will conduct an annual evaluation where new horizons can be seen, as well as possibilities and alternatives to the efforts that have not produced the desired results. An effective evaluation will also provide the opportunity for reshaping the plan in the light of ongoing pastoral experiences.

#### **J. Conclusion**

This Hispanic Catholic community, due to their great sense of religion, family and community, is a prophetic presence and source of renewal within the Catholic Church. As a consequence of their youth and growth, this community will continue to be an important presence in the future.

We offer this pastoral plan to the Catholic community of the Rockville Centre Diocese. Our goals are clear, our programs and projects have the capability to bring about an effective change in our

parishes. We hope that it will also produce a good harvest for God, for our society and for each person who shares this mission.

*May the world of our time, which is searching, sometimes with anguish, sometimes with hope, be enabled to receive the Good News not from evangelizers who are dejected, discouraged, impatient or anxious, but from ministers of the Gospel whose lives glow with fervor, who have first received the joy of Christ, and who are willing to risk their lives so that the Kingdom may be proclaimed and the Church established in the midst of the world. (EMW, #80)*

## **X. HEALTH CARE MINISTRY**

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The Church has always viewed the sick and elderly as an integral part of the parish community. It has been part of the mission of each parish to pray for and to bring the sacraments to the sick. Among parishes on Long Island there is a long and rich tradition to seek out and to care for their sick and elderly.

Geographic boundaries can no longer be the sole deciding factor in parish coverage of hospitals. A sharing of responsibility among a cluster of parishes is emerging as the model for providing pastoral/sacramental coverage. (*Commission on Pastoral Care*, 1992, p.35)

Recognizing the variety of approaches that local churches use, the Diocese must encourage discovery of new and creative ways for parishes to provide quality pastoral care services. For example, it is recommended that the Sacrament of the Sick should be celebrated regularly at the parish level throughout the Diocese for parishioners who are anticipating surgery. Scheduled times for reception of this sacrament should be adopted locally. (*Commission on Pastoral Care*, 1992)

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### **A. Hospitals and Nursing Homes With part-time or full-time Chaplain**

- a) The immediate care of the sick in a hospital with a full-time Chaplain is the primary concern of the Chaplain. Parishes should always be mindful that cooperation with the Chaplain concerning sacramental administration and visitation is essential.
- b) If the Chaplain is part-time or alone, the local parishes are expected to supply relief for the Chaplain's days off, vacation or at least emergencies during those times.
- c) Parishes are expected to provide a supportive presence to priest chaplains regarding back-up, night coverage, emergencies and sick days. (*Commission of Pastoral Care*, 1992, p. 35)



**B. Hospitals served by Parishes**

1. Where a hospital is without Chaplain services, the parishes of the cluster should arrange to maintain the primary and normal care of the patients. All procedures should be determined through the hospital administration. General Norms concerning coverage are:
  - a) To insure proper coverage, the cluster of parishes should arrange a definite schedule of visitation so that every Priest will know what is expected of him when he is responsible for the hospitals.
  - b) A priest or parish representative should visit newly admitted patients every day (Saturdays and Sundays excepted), and the opportunity to receive Holy Communion the next day should be given to these patients.
2. A priest of the parish covering a hospital is to be available for emergency calls when requested.
3. All seriously ill patients should receive the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick as soon as possible after admission. It is strongly recommended that parishes celebrate the sacrament of Anointing of the Sick on a regular basis for the parishioners about to enter the hospital for surgery or for any surgical procedures.
4. Emergency and pre-operative patients should be seen prior to surgery if they so request.
5. Holy Eucharist should be brought to all patients who desire it at least once a week.
6. All personnel, clergy or lay, from within a given cluster should cooperate with the implementation of the plan agreed

upon by the members of the cluster in all matters related to sacramental administration.

7. It is recommended that where it is appropriate a Coordinator of Pastoral Care Ministry be appointed for each hospital to provide the following services.
  - a) Provide information about the administration of the sacraments of the sick to the nursing personnel in order to facilitate better communication of a patient's pastoral needs with the priest on coverage.
  - b) Develop methods of communicating information about emergencies that will avoid duplication.
  - c) Other services included in the Coordinator of Pastoral Care Ministry's description approved by the Senate of Priests, June, 1996.
8. Coverage of the hospital should not be curtailed because of vacations or other activities.
9. It is recommended that a name tag be worn by the Priest while making routine hospital rounds.

**C. Nursing Homes and Health Related Facilities**

1. The Sacrifice of the Mass should be offered at least once a month if physical conditions of the building permit.
2. The Sacraments of Penance and Anointing of the Sick should be regularly scheduled celebrations.
3. Residents should have the opportunity to receive the Eucharist once a week.
4. Cooperation and dialogue with the administration is encouraged and necessary.

5. A designated person within the parish structure should be appointed to act as liaison between parish and facility.

**D. Suggested Guidelines**

1. Eucharist under both species in hospitals and nursing homes presents significant problems and caution is advised.
2. Extraordinary ministers should be carefully instructed and directed concerning their proper functions, especially in distributing Eucharist. Permission is required of the Chaplain or proper pastor when extraordinary minister desires to bring the Eucharist to a patient in a hospital outside the parish of the Extraordinary minister. (See section on Special Ministers of the Eucharist in “Church Ministries” above.)
3. Recording Sacramental Administration may be done on the health chart or in a separate register. Baptismal, Confirmation and Sick Call Registers are considered appropriate. Marriages require consultation with and special permission of the Chancellor's Office. (See “Baptisms in Health Care Facilities” in the “Baptism” section above.)

**E. Mitigation of the Eucharistic fast for the sick and aged**

1. The sick in hospitals or in their own homes even if not confined to bed.
2. The faithful advanced in age who must remain at home because of age or who are living in a home for the aged.
3. Sick Priests even if not confined to bed and elderly Priests who wish to celebrate Mass or receive the Eucharist.
4. Persons caring for the sick and the aged as well as those relatives of the sick and the aged wishing to receive the

Eucharist with them when observance of the fast is reasonably inconvenient.

## **XI. CHARISMATIC RENEWAL**

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Below are the policies and procedures for Charismatic Renewal, the Hispanic Charismatic Renewal, and the Diocesan Ministry to the Marian Movement. Further questions should be directed to the Charismatic Renewal Office at 952-7400, P.O. Box 1301, Brentwood, NY 11717.

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### **A. CHARISM: CHARismatic Institute of Spirituality and Ministry**

1. CHARISM provides practical, hands-on experiences to help individuals reflect on life in order to deepen spiritually and to grow in service to the Church and world. CHARISM strives to integrate the best of the charismatic renewal with the Church, and the best of the Church with the charismatic renewal.
2. A separate brochure is available for workshops, seminars, courses, and other resources produced by CHARISM. Parishes in the diocese may host any of these events by contacting the office.

### **B. Charismatic Renewal**

1. The Charismatic Renewal is a movement seeking to restore the experience of being baptized in the Holy Spirit and the use of the charismatic gifts to the heart of Catholic Christian life. However, the Charismatic Renewal is not an organization as much as it is a spirituality. Therefore, it does not get started in a parish in the way most parish organizations begin. The charismatic renewal flows from personal and communal experiences of the presence and power of the Holy Spirit. These experiences often begin with the "release of the Spirit" or "renewal of the Spirit." What we received in the Sacraments of Baptism, Eucharist, and Confirmation ( the Sacraments of Initiation) is enlivened or rekindled.
2. A free copy of *An Introduction to the Charismatic Renewal*, which covers questions like: What is the Charismatic Renewal?, What have the Bishops said about it?, Pope John

Paul II's statements, and much more is available by contacting the diocesan office.

**C. Life in the Spirit Seminar**

Typically the entry door into involvement in Charismatic Renewal. These eight-week seminars are designed to help participants experience the release, power and presence of the Spirit promised and given in Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist. They are normally given by local parish-based prayer groups.

**D. Charismatic Prayer Group**

A group of people who come together in an informal but regular way for shared prayer and mutual support in Jesus Christ. They are united by their experience of being baptized in the Spirit and in the exercise of the charismatic gifts.

**E. Charismatic Prayer Meeting**

The informal worship session of a charismatic group or groups who meet to praise and listen to God. Praise is expressed in a number of ways: songs, formal or spontaneous prayer, silence, and even applause or shouts of joy. God may speak to those gathered through Scripture, teaching, exhortation, charismatic gifts, and personal sharings.

**F. Prayer Group Leadership**

Leadership is essential to developing strong and healthy groups. Those leading charismatic groups should be 1) Catholics in good standing, 2) in regular contact with the parish pastor or group moderator, 3) be in regular contact with the Diocesan Office of Charismatic Renewal, 4) receive ongoing training through the Charismatic Renewal Office.

**G. Regional Gatherings**

Regional Charismatic gatherings are held at least monthly all around the diocese. Local prayer groups are strongly encouraged to participate in these events to receive regular teaching, ministry training, and retain a strong connection to the Church.

**H. Diocesan Gatherings**

Other diocesan gatherings are frequently held. They include evangelistic events, training courses, conferences, praise rally's, Intercessory Prayer for Priests, etc. Listings of these events are published monthly in *Charismatic NewsNotes*.

**I. Publications**

Copies of *Charismatic NewsNotes* (monthly newsletter), *Mission Long Island* (quarterly magazine), *Diocesan Ministry to the Marian Movement* (bimonthly flyer), and information on the Hispanic Charismatic Renewal may be obtained free of charge by contacting the office. Bulk orders are made available to parishes and prayer groups.

**J. Catholic Evangelization Resources**

Over fifty resources for training in Catholic Evangelization including *Evangelistic Healing Masses*, *From Ashes to Fire: Evangelistic Ash Wednesdays*, *Simple Ways Catholics Can Share Faith* have been developed over the past ten years. A complete listing is available by contacting the office.

**K. Healing Masses**

1. Healing Masses have become very popular in many parishes. Technically every Mass celebrated is an opportunity for healing, but the term "Healing Mass" usually means that a special time of prayer for healing along with the use of other charisms will take place after the Mass.
2. The Gift of Healing is the charism by which people experience a new physical, emotional, psychological, or spiritual wholeness flowing from God's Spirit. Prayer for healing commonly involves placing hands on a person in prayer. Healing of memories involves the removal of pain from past hurtful experiences.
3. The diocesan office has many training resources for those interested in hosting Healing Masses.

**L. Hispanic Charismatic Renewal**

1. In addition to the above, the Hispanic Charismatic have monthly weekend retreats for the general public, the youth, and married couples. Those wishing to participate should contact this office for an application. One day retreats, evangelization and healing services open to the general public are also celebrated in different churches throughout the Diocese.
2. The devotion to Mary among the Hispanics is rooted in our culture. She is the depository of all the Lord's Charisms. It is customary for many prayer groups to say the rosary during the half-hour before the prayer group begins.
3. It is a requirement for all prayer group leaders to attend the formation classes given by the Diocesan Hispanic Apostolate at the Pastoral Institutes in Babylon & Riverhead.
4. All prayer groups should function in their own parish, under the Pastor's spiritual guidance. Prayer groups conducted in private homes are discouraged. Groups in homes lacking solid leadership have been a frequent target of various Protestant groups. Pastors should make an effort to welcome the Hispanic Charismatics to the Church.

**M. Diocesan Ministry to the Marian Movement**

1. Marian Movement Mission Statement



The Marian Movement is a spirit-led response that reflects a total surrender to Jesus through Mary as revealed in Sacred Scripture and approved private revelation as defined by our Holy Father and the Magisterium of the Church. The Movement mirrors the messages given by Our Lady in Fatima and other reported apparitions of the present time.

2. The turning to Our Lady and the devotion to her is based on the principles outlined by St. Louis de Montfort and given to us by Our Lady: "Do whatever He tells you." (Jn.2:5)
  - a) Renewal of Baptismal vows
  - b) Consecration to the Immaculate Heart of Mary
  - c) Conversion, reconciliation with God and neighbor, confession
  - d) Holy Mass
  - e) The Rosary
  - f) Fast
  - g) Fidelity to the Pope/Church
3. Marian Prayer Groups

A simple and informal gathering of people who begin prayer by invoking the Holy Spirit. They recite the rosary, five or fifteen decades, pray for the needs of the Holy Father and the Church. Usually there is a reading with time for reflection and sharing. The meeting closes with the Act of Consecration to Mary and refreshments.
4. Apparitions

Many of the Prayer Groups have formed in response to 20th century reported apparitions. Pastoral guidance is given to the prayer groups and to individuals in the diocese who claim to be experiencing phenomena from the Blessed Mother or Jesus. This is done in

collaboration with local pastors and the Chancellor's office.

5. Newsletter

Bimonthly Newsletter is sent to all members of Marian Prayer Groups. It contains teachings on Marian Spirituality and provides information of events taking place in the diocese.

6. Teaching

Parish Retreats, courses, days of prayer, and reflection centered on our life in Jesus lived in union with Mary, Mother of God and Mother of the Church are being offered with the Montfort Fathers.

## **N. Glossary of Terms**

1. *Baptism in the Holy Spirit or Release of the Spirit* - A conscious breaking forth of the graces and power of the Holy Spirit already received in the Sacraments of Christian Initiation (Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist). God offers a new inner awareness that activates our spiritual lives and gives faith a new dimension.
2. *Charisms or Spiritual Gifts* - Free gifts of grace given by the Holy Spirit to the faithful. By these gifts, the Spirit makes us able and ready to undertake various tasks for the evangelization, renewal, and upbuilding of the Church and the world.
3. *Conversion* - The changing of our lives that comes about through the power of the Holy Spirit as we accept the gospel of Jesus Christ. It is meant to be a continuous process that occurs in the emotional, intellectual, moral, and social areas of our lives.
4. *Covenant Communities* - A charismatic group of married and single lay people, religious, and clergy that, almost like a religious congregation or institute, makes a formal commitment to life together, based around the experience of being baptized in the Spirit and using the charismatic gifts in daily life.
5. *Discernment of Spirits* - A kind of supernatural instinct by which the Church perceives the origins, either divine or not, of thoughts, messages, and visions. It is most fully exercised as part of an ongoing process of seeking God's will and direction.

6. *Evangelization* - Bringing the Good News of Jesus into every human situation . Its essence is the proclamation of salvation in Jesus Christ and our response in faith, both being the work of the Spirit of God.
7. *Praying in Tongues* - A language of non-rational prayer and song, also called *glossolalia*. Praying in tongues is away of surrendering voice and thoughts to God. Sometimes a message is spoken in tongues to a community and the "interpreted." Someone else experiences a sense of the meaning of the words or is inspired to yield to the charism of prophecy.
8. *Prophecy* - The speaking forth of a word or communication from God, a kind of personal message, The charism by which what God seems to be saying is offered for the benefit and discernment of the community. Prophecy can be intended for either an individual or a group.
9. *Slain in the Spirit or Resting in the Spirit.*- An intense awareness of God's peace that involves an ecstatic concentration on God's presence and usually a shut down of voluntary movements like standing or speech for a short time.
10. *Witnesses* - Speakers sharing how they see God at work in the details of their lives, a telling of personal faith experiences, conversion, healing, and insights for the upbuilding of the community. Sometimes such sharings are called personal testimonies.

## **XII. TRIBUNAL**

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While no one has a *right* to a declaration of nullity of his or her marriage, everyone has a right to introduce a petition to that effect. Pastoral ministers will help prospective petitioners to introduce the case without pre-judging it either way.

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### **A. Prior Valid Bond**

1. A prior valid bond is contracted between two Catholics or by a Catholic and a non-Catholic when marrying according to the canonical form (or dispensation from it).
2. A prior bond is also contracted by two non-Catholics, non-baptized, non-believers (any combination) when marrying according to a form recognized by the competent civil authority.
3. In such cases the person with the prior bond should contact the Tribunal directly (678-5800, ext. 571).

### **B. Lack of Canonical Form**

1. If a baptized Catholic or a person received into full communion with the Catholic Church attempts to contract a marriage without observing the Canonical Form of Marriage or the case of a mixed marriage involving a Catholic, without a Dispensation from the Canonical Form or Marriage, the marriage is considered invalid.
2. In such cases, the priest, deacon or pastoral minister should contact the Chancellor's Office for a petition form on the Lack of Canonical Form. (See section on "Defect of Form" in the marriage section of the Manual.)
3. In cases where there was a semblance of form but an invalid one, because of lack of proper delegation in the officiating minister, or any other canonical reasons, the Chancellor's Office will forward the petition to the Tribunal which handles such Defect of Form cases.

**C. Counseling After a Decree of Nullity**

1. After a judgment by the Tribunal has been rendered, the parties receive a final letter which they are to bring to the parish priest. In order to provide a care and concern for the couple wishing to marry, a period of counseling is recommended.
2. The priest or the party is to contact the Post-Annulment counselor at the Tribunal in order to proceed with setting up a suitable counseling program.

**D. No Date Can be Set**

1. *NO DATE* (Neither in pencil, tentative, or by word of mouth) may be set for any couple until the case in the Tribunal has been completed and the counseling program has been concluded. The priest will then receive the Tribunal Decree.
2. Many people do not understand "penciled" or "tentative" dates. They do understand a commitment on the part of the Church to perform a marriage and proceed with their plans. No "commitment" is made and no "commitment" will be honored by the Tribunal or the Chancellor's Office.

**E. Fee**

The Tribunal's budget is subsidized for almost two-thirds by the Bishop's Annual Appeal funds. In deference to the contributors to the Appeal, a fee is requested to help defray the expenses. Truly hardship cases will be considered; the pastor's letter to that effect will be honored.

### **XIII. LENT AND EASTER: A PASTORAL-LITURGICAL DIRECTORY**

#### **A. Lenten Observances**

1. In Catholic liturgical and spiritual tradition, **Lent** is a “preparation for the celebration of Easter. For the Lenten liturgy disposes both catechumens and the faithful to celebrate the paschal mystery.” (*Roman Calendar*, 27) This is accomplished through the liturgy itself, and by penitential practices such as fasting, almsgiving and intensive prayer. These are designed to foster conversion, reconciliation, purification, and healing with God, oneself and the community, especially for those preparing to celebrate the Easter Sacraments.

#### **2. Abstinence and Fasting**

All Catholics who have reached their fourteenth year are bound to abstain entirely from meat on Ash Wednesday and all the Fridays of Lent. All Catholics between the ages of eighteen and fifty-nine inclusive are also bound to observe the law of fast on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday. This means limiting oneself to a single full meal and avoiding food between meals. Two other light meals, which together do not equal a full meal, may be taken during the day.

#### **3. Celebration of the Sacrament of Reconciliation**

*Just as the wound of sin is varied and multiple in the life of individuals and of the community, so, too the healing which penance provides is varied. Those who by grave sin have withdrawn from the communion of love with God are called back in the sacrament of penance to the life they have lost. And those who through daily weakness fall*

*into venial sins draw strength from a repeated celebration of penance to gain the full freedom of the children of God. (Rite of Penance, 7)*

Great care should be taken to both preach and promote the celebration of the Sacrament of Penance. Ample opportunity for the celebration of the Sacrament of penance, and, if possible, a variety of confessors should be provided in the parish schedule. Throughout Lent, additional opportunities for the celebration of the Sacrament of Penance ought to be provided in addition to the normal parish schedule. Many parishes have found a great deal of success in using Rite II of the Rite of Penance: *Communal Penance Service with Individual Confession and Absolution*.

As the attention of the church moves to the great events of our salvation, the early days of Holy Week are an ideal time for additional celebrations of Penance. These celebrations are to be encouraged and promoted. While the celebration of the sacraments on Good Friday and Holy Saturday is prohibited, this prohibition does not include the sacraments of Penance and Anointing of the Sick. Every possible opportunity should be offered for the people to celebrate the Sacrament of Penance. The bishop requests that celebrations of Penance be scheduled during the Triduum for this gives true meaning to the Paschal mystery in individual lives. As these days are significant moments for a change of heart, priests should be especially sensitive and responsive to the request of members of the faithful to celebrate the Sacrament of Penance, even when it is outside the normal schedule.

4. The **obligation to do penance** and to observe the appointed penitential seasons is a serious one. Those whose work or health would be impaired are excused



from fast and abstinence. Individual conscience should decide proper cause for excuse. A more serious reason is required to excuse oneself from Ash Wednesday and Good Friday fast and abstinence.

5. **Easter Duty**

After they have been initiated into the Eucharistic banquet, all the faithful are bound by the obligation of receiving communion *at least* once a year. This precept should be fulfilled during the Easter season, unless for a good reason it is fulfilled at another time of the year. (CF. Canon 920). [The dioceses of the United States have an indult which allows the Easter Duty to be satisfied from the First Sunday of Lent to Trinity Sunday.]

**B. Ash Wednesday**

1. Ash Wednesday makes a dramatic beginning to Lent. The blessing and **imposition of ashes**, a gesture rich in biblical significance occurs after the homily. The Penitential Rite is omitted. Thus at the beginning of Mass, the opening prayer follows immediately upon the greeting and introductory comments.

2. **Ministers**

The ashes must be blessed by a priest or a deacon. They may be imposed by a deacon, special minister of the Eucharist, or other suitable person, either assisting the priest or in his absence, e.g. at a service in a nursing home.

If the ashes are to be imposed outside of Mass, this is to take place within the context of a Service of the Word, as prescribed in the rubrics of the *Sacramentary* and/or *Book of Blessings*. A short homily is always indicated so that the use of ashes can be rightly understood, and a Christian spirit of repentance fostered. Bishop McGann has determined that ashes may be placed on the forehead even of infants, provided that the child is not frightened, and the sacramental is imposed in a prayerful manner as a sign of the entire Church's repentance and acceptance of our human frailty.

3. The *Book of Blessings* provides a full order for the blessing and distribution of ashes. *Catholic Household Blessings and Prayers* provides an "Ash Wednesday Blessing of the Season and of A Place of Prayer." Other family Lenten customs are likewise provided.
4. The **music** at the liturgy of Ash Wednesday introduces the journey into Lent, and will set the tone for these days of repentance. The penitential rite and Gloria are omitted. Likewise, the Alleluia is not sung, but one of the other Gospel Acclamation takes its place. (This is observed throughout Lent, even in funeral, wedding and Confirmation Masses which occur during the season.)
5. As the ashes are imposed, Psalm 51 or another penitential song is sung. Songs with a refrain and verse work best. Instrumental music may also be appropriate. The music may extend through the ministers' washing of hands at the end of the imposition of the ashes, but should end promptly when the general intercessions are about to begin.
6. Visual impressions, whether startling or subtle, both teach and create. The physical appearance of the **worship space**

can, without words, demonstrate a change of season. Attention to simple observances can help individuals revalue the often neglected signs of faith in the death and resurrection of Jesus. Simplicity is perhaps the most effective approach to the Lenten season, an approach which reminds us to be detached from all else save him who is all in all.

7. Some of the ways in which the assembly might be visually reminded of the message of the season are: the appearance of Lenten purple in vesture and hangings; removing floral arrangements; using a simple altar cloth; “hiding” for a time the festive adornments so that they might reappear at Easter with surprising newness; cleansing and renewing the holy water fonts.
8. The **Liturgy of the Hours** is the means by which the church fulfills the mandate of Christ to “pray always.” In addition, this prayer consecrates human persons throughout the course of the day and night. The blessing and imposition of ashes outside of Mass could occur within the context of Morning or Evening Prayer, or one of the midday hours. Pastoral judgment would guide the decision whether to choose this form of service, the choice of hymns and other elements of the celebration.

### **C. Sundays of Lent**

1. On the first Sunday of Lent, the **Rite of Election** is celebrated in the diocese for the catechumens, candidates for full communion, their sponsors, and others involved in the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults. Although this rite is celebrated by the bishop, parishes are encouraged to celebrate a preparatory rite of sending catechumens and candidates to the Rite of Election. On the third, fourth, and fifth Sundays of Lent, the **Scrutinies** take place,

according to the norms of the RCIA. On the Second Sunday of Lent, the RCIA provides a Penitential Rite (Scrutiny) for baptized but uncatechized Catholics and for those preparing to be received into full communion.

2. The *Ceremonial of Bishops* suggests that a penitential procession begin the liturgy on the first Sunday of Lent. The *Circular Letter on the Easter Feasts* suggests that this practice could occur in all parishes. The procession into the church would occur while the Litany of the Saints is chanted. When the presider has revered the altar and the litany is concluded, he would then sing or say the opening prayer.

#### **D. Weekdays of Lent**

(22) A brief **daily homily** is “strongly recommended” in the *Introduction to the Lectionary*, 25. The scripture readings assigned to the mass of the day can also provide insights to planning celebration of the liturgical hours. the weekdays of Lent have precedence even over obligatory memorials. The antiphons for the canticles of morning and evening prayer are often drawn from the gospel of the day. Morning, midday or evening prayer can be used to begin Lenten meetings of education or spiritual enrichment.

#### **E. Passion (Palm) Sunday**

(26) The commemoration of the Lord’s entry into Jerusalem is celebrated at **every Mass**. The first form (procession from a station outside the church) takes place before the principal Mass. If the first form is not possible, the second form (solemn entrance, or procession within the church) may be substituted. It is recommended that this second form be repeated at the other Masses. The third form (simple entrance) may also be used, though this does not convey as strongly the commemoration of the Lord’s entrance into Jerusalem.

**F. Holy Thursday**

1. The morning liturgy on Holy Thursday is the **Chrism Mass** celebrated by the Bishop with his priests in the cathedral. Only in cases of grave and genuine necessity should a morning mass be celebrated in a parish church. A morning Mass cannot be scheduled merely as a convenience for some.
2. The **Evening Mass of the Lord's Supper** begins the Paschal Triduum, the most sacred moment in the church's life. The Mass of the Lord's Supper is to be celebrated in parish churches between 4 and 9 p.m. While an additional evening Mass of the Lord's Supper may be celebrated between 4 and 9 p.m., it would in no way be a mere convenience, and should in no way prejudice the principal Mass. Faculty 9, notwithstanding. (Cf. Directions in the *Sacramentary* for Holy Thursday and Pastoral Faculty in *To Serve the People; Pastoral Faculties of the Diocese of Rockville Centre*.)
3. Permission is given for priests to binate in order to concelebrate the Evening Mass of the Lord's Supper. It is highly recommended and encouraged that Holy Communion be distributed under both species. Communion may be given to the faithful only during Mass, but may be brought to the sick at any hour of the day.
4. Taking a cue from the entrance antiphon, the processional hymn may fittingly be one that celebrates the priesthood of Christ. The reception of the oils into the parish church can be incorporated into the introductory rites of the Mass of the Lord's Supper. While an official text will appear in the future edition of the *Sacramentary*, a provisional text is available from the Office of Worship. The Gloria is sung, and the church bells are rung. They remain silent until the Easter Vigil. The responsorial psalm appointed for the day is Psalm 116. The homily should explain the principal mysteries which are commemorated in this

- Mass: the institution of the Eucharist, the institution of the priesthood, and Christ's commandment of mutual love.
5. After the homily, the washing of feet may take place. The *Sacramentary* provides six antiphons to accompany the footwashing; other songs reflecting charity and service may be used. This ritual action represents the service and charity of Christ and is away of accentuating the evangelical command of the Lord to love one another. Those who will have their feet washed come forward to a location that has been suitably prepared and one that is visible to the assembly. The priest may be assisted by a deacon or server in the footwashing. When the rite is completed, all return to their places.
  6. When communion is administered under both kinds, a more extended setting of the "Lamb of God" might be needed to cover the breaking of the bread and the pouring of the wine into chalices. After communion the Blessed Sacrament is carried through the church in procession. During the procession the hymn *Pange Lingua* (or another suitable eucharistic song) is sung. If *Pange Lingua* is used, the entire hymn is done, exclusive of the last two verses. The hymn can be done in alternation between choir and people, chant and chorale, English and Latin. If necessary, another hymn could be added to accompany the procession. When the procession reaches the place of reposition, the last two verses of *Pange Lingua* are sung. After a period of silent adoration, the tabernacle door is closed, and all depart in silence. Adoration at the repository continues until midnight. The stripping of the altars is no longer a formal part of the liturgy, but should be conducted quietly at the end. Evening prayer is said only by those who do not participate in the Mass of the Lord's Supper.

## **G. Good Friday**

1. On Good Friday and Holy Saturday, the **sacraments** of Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist (except for viaticum) may not be celebrated. (Cf. n. 5 above). It is strongly recommended that weddings not be scheduled on Holy Saturday, but if a wedding must be celebrated, it should be done in keeping with the spirit of the day, e.g. without music, flowers, candles or external display.
2. The **Celebration of the Lord's Passion** should begin about 3 p.m. but, if pastoral reasons make it advisable, it may begin at a later hour. The liturgy must be conducted in its entirety in accordance with the *Sacramentary*. If the size or nature of a parish indicates the pastoral need for an additional liturgical service on Good Friday, the service may be repeated (Faculty 10).

#### **H. Holy Saturday**

1. Apart from the celebration of the hours, there is no liturgical assembly on Holy Saturday. Holy Communion may be given only as viaticum. The preparatory rites for catechumens takes place in the morning. In certain cultural settings, the blessing of foods has been traditional. The *Book of Blessings* provides a rite for the blessing of food.
2. 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 rule is to be taken in the strictest sense. It is not permissible to celebrate the Easter Vigil at the time of day that it is customary to celebrate anticipated Sunday Mass. The people should be advised and instructed about the integral nature of the entire vigil so that they do not arrive late and thereby miss the Liturgy of the Word. The Easter Vigil Mass may never be celebrated more than once in a given Church, not may the Mass of Easter Sunday be anticipated before the Vigil Mass. (For pastoral reasons an additional Mass may be celebrated on Saturday evening *after* the Easter Vigil

Mass. Omitted would be the Service of Light, the Easter Proclamation and the Baptismal Liturgy (Cf. *Sacramentary*, Easter Vigil, 3.)

3. **Adults** who are baptized or received into the full communion by a profession of faith should be confirmed at the same time, according to the rite provided in the ritual. **Catholics** who were baptized in infancy but were uncatechized, especially those who have participated in a program modeled on the catechumenate, may also be confirmed at the Easter Vigil, if the indult has been received from the Bishop.
4. The entire Easter season is characterized by the singing of the alleluia. The festive character of Easter day should extend through the **great fifty days**. The *Sacramentary* reminds us that “the fifty days from Easter Sunday to Pentecost are celebrated as one feast day, sometimes called ‘the great Sunday.’” Therefore the tone and style of the season should reflect the pattern of the Easter Octave. Having engaged in Lent’s forty day fast, the community is ready for the fifty day joyful festival.
5. The **Ascension** celebrates the exaltation of Christ into glory. Easter hymns, as well as hymn to Christ the King are appropriate. The Easter candle continues to be lighted.
6. Pentecost brings the Easter Season to a close. It celebrates the fulfillment of the Easter promise in the coming of the Spirit. The same festive character evident throughout the Easter Season is also evident on Pentecost.

Note that priests cannot confirm baptized Catholics without the proper faculty to confirm. Consult the sections on RCIA and Confirmation above



## **XIV. SUNDAYS AND HOLYDAYS OF OBLIGATION**

*Sunday is the day on which the paschal mystery is celebrated in light of the apostolic tradition and is to be observed as the foremost holy day of obligation in the universal Church. Also to be observed are the day of the Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, the Epiphany, the Ascension and the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ, Holy Mary Mother of God and her Immaculate Conception and Assumption, Saint Joseph, the Apostles Saints Peter and Paul, and finally, All Saints (canon 1246, §1).*

### **A. United States: Holydays of Obligation**

1. Christmas (December 25)
2. Ascension (Thursday of the Sixth Week of Easter)
3. Mary Mother of God (January 1)
4. Immaculate Conception (December 8)
5. Assumption (August 15)
6. All Saints (November 1)

### **B. Special Norm for the United States**

1. When a holyday of obligation falls on a *Monday or a Saturday*, the obligation to participate in the Eucharist is abrogated. The three holydays affected are:
  - a) January 1, Mary Mother of God
  - b) August 15, Assumption
  - c) November 1, All Saints
2. Note that these days remain “holydays,” solemnities. Even though there is no obligation to participate in the Eucharist, ritual Masses (e.g., Funeral Masses) may not be celebrated. The texts and readings are from the liturgy of the solemnity.
3. Holydays not affected:
  - a) Ascension Thursday

- b) Immaculate Conception
- c) Christmas

**C. Obligation**

*On Sundays and other holy days of obligation the faithful are bound to participate in the Mass; they are also to abstain from those labors and business concerns which impede the worship to be rendered to God, the joy which is proper to the Lord's Day, or the proper relaxation of mind and body (canon 1247).*

1. **participate in Mass:** The precept of participating in the Mass is satisfied by assistance at a Mass which is celebrated anywhere in a Catholic rite either on the holyday or on the evening of the preceding day (canon 1248, §1). [United States: 4:00 p.m. the night before ("vigil Mass.")]
2. **exception:** *If because of a lack of a sacred minister or for other grave cause participation in the celebration of the Eucharist is impossible, it is specially recommended that the faithful take part in the liturgy of the word if it is celebrated in the parish church or in another sacred place according to the prescriptions of the diocesan bishop, or engage in prayer for an appropriate amount of time personally or in a family or, as occasion offers, in groups of families (canon 1248, §2).*
  - a) Pastoral Faculty 22  
*To dispense persons, in individual cases and for a just cause, from the obligation of observing a day of precept or a day of penance, or to commute such obligations into other religious acts (canon 1245).*
3. Catholics are to abstain from activities that impede worship.

**D. Ritual Masses**

1. On Sundays and Holydays of Obligation, no ritual Masses (e.g., Funeral Masses) can be celebrated. However, the readings and prayers of the *Mass of the day* may be used and the prayers of commendation may be used.

2. However, on most Sundays of the year the nuptial Mass can be celebrated. The exceptions remain the Easter Triduum, Christmas, Epiphany, Ascension, Pentecost, the Body and Blood of Christ, or solemnities which are holy days of obligation. On these days one of the readings for marriage may be chosen. On the Sundays of the Christmas season and on Sundays in ordinary time, in Masses which are not parish Masses, the wedding Mass may be celebrated without change. When a marriage is celebrated during Advent or other days of penance, the parish priest should advise the couple to take into consideration the special nature of these times.

## **XV. GUIDELINES FOR PASTORAL COUNCILS**

### **A. Introductory Letter of Bishop McGann June 24, 1987**

God has joyfully called us all in Christ to be co-workers for his Kingdom and members of his Body, the Church. In this responsibility all the members of the Church are called to work together to bring about Christ's mission, the salvation of all people. We hope that the new Pastoral Councils of the Diocese of Rockville Centre will bear much fruit in this Mission of the Church. By meeting and prayer, deliberation and contemplation, the Pastoral Councils of our diocese will help us to move toward the future with clearer goals in mind and a greater willingness to carry out those goals. I hope that all the people of our diocese, those actively involved in the Church and those who, for whatever reason, are less visible, will find in the Pastoral Council a new voice for their hopes, their feelings, their needs and their strengths.

The following guidelines are presented in the hope that they will lend more direction to the councils of our diocese. Together with diocesan training programs and coordination among the councils of our diocese, these guidelines seek to support and strengthen the ability of all people to exercise their ministry in the Church.

I ask you to continue to pray for the success of the work of the Church in our diocese. My prayers are with all of our Pastoral Councils, that they may experience the power of the Risen Christ in the task they undertake.

### **B. Introduction Councils: Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow**

The Church on Long Island owes a great deal to the councils which were formed in the past. The Parish Council has helped us to understand more about the relationship of parishioner and pastor, of participation and representation, and of reflection and planning.

Over the years many people have worked very hard to establish something new, a way for the clergy and people to share responsibility for the work of the local church. They did this despite the fact that there was no clear tradition upon which to draw; they did this with love for the Church and with a willingness to learn. We would not be able today to speak of

revision if they had not first established the precedent for this work and consultation.

The insights which form the basis for these guidelines were contributed by people who dedicated themselves to making their parish council work. They have tried to keep what was useful and to change what was less than successful. Their reflections and statements have pointed councils in a new direction, and their hopefulness for the future motivates this continuing process of revision and renewal.

Rather than use the traditional phrase, "parish council," the guidelines speak of the "pastoral council." This reflects the unique role the council has in collaborating with the pastor and his associate pastoral ministers. It also highlights the council's role as an aid to knowing the people, the flock for whose pastoral care Church leaders are responsible.

We hope that what is begun with these new guidelines will bring all the members of the parish into a closer relationship with each other, with the Church, and with God.

### **C. Guidelines for Pastoral Councils**

1. The Council Members
  - a) Pastor (or Administrator)
  - b) Usually eight to ten members (in no case less than six or more than twenty)
2. The Role of the Pastoral Council
  - a) The council serves as a forum of consultation for the pastor primarily by engaging priests and people in ongoing dialogue about the needs, feelings, hopes, and reactions of parishioners. The purpose of this interaction is to make a unique contribution to the process of making pastoral decisions.
  - b) The council should seek to know the people of the parish well and to make their ideas and hopes known to the pastor and staff.
  - c) The council has a special responsibility to provide information and advice for long-range planning in the parish. Its primary task as a council is not to run the day-to-day activities of the parish, but to address the over-all approach of the local church in light of the most important needs of the parishioners.

- d) A council must develop a relationship among its members which reflects the ideals and responsibilities of our faith. This relationship is very important to honest dialogue and earnest care for the parish.
  - e) Councils are encouraged to develop ways of formally surveying the parish-at-large in order to find out how the parishioners feel about different areas of the parish. The council also seeks ways to evaluate the affect parish programs are having on the lives of the parishioners.
3. Membership
- a) Every council member should be an active, believing parishioner.
  - b) Each council should have a determined manner of nominating its members. Members may be nominated in more than one way-- by parishioners, parish groups, staff members or by the pastor, and they are then selected by any process specified by the council's written document of policies and procedures.
  - c) A member's term should normally run for three years (not less one or more than five). It is advisable for terms to be staggered so that a sense of continuity is maintained. Members should be permitted to serve more than one term, but the council's procedures should also strive to provide opportunities for new members to be selected.
  - d) Each member should accept the responsibility of attending diocesan and parish training programs prior to participating on the council. This will enable new members to come to the council with some orientation and background.
  - e) Members are encouraged to see their work on the council as their major contribution to the life of the parish during their term of office. The members ought not to be so overly involved in day-to-day parish work that it would interfere with their work on the council.
  - f) Staff members should meet with the council when it can benefit the life of the parish. While staff members may serve on the council, they should refrain from doing so if their duties will inhibit them from participating fully in the work of the council.

- g) Associate pastors and deacons could benefit greatly by involvement with the council, and the council in turn would be aided by the experience of the associate pastors and deacons. While it is not a requirement for associate pastors or deacons to be members of the pastoral council, it is to be encouraged that they be represented in this important work.
  - h) The council should be representative of the entire parish. This means that each council member must have a sense of responsibility for all of his or her fellow parishioners, not just for a particular group. The council's nominating and selection procedures should provide a practical way of ensuring widespread representation, but it is not necessarily to be done by geographical area or by society.
  - i) Council members should regularly contact people to ask them if there is anything about the parish they would like to talk about. Each council member is encouraged to call or speak to several other parishioners between meetings. Being available to the parishioners is very important.
  - j) Council members are encouraged to speak to staff members and heads of societies even outside of meetings in order to learn more from them about the resources and difficulties, hopes and needs of those ministering to the people.
4. The Pastor
- a) The pastor has the important task of incorporating a sense of real consultation in the way he leads the parish. To do this well, he must establish a good relationship of collaboration with his associate pastors, other pastoral ministers, religious serving in the parish, and his people.
  - b) One of the most important ways that the pastor shows respect for the talents and abilities of parishioners is by involving them in the activities and planning of the parish.
  - c) By convening a pastoral council, a pastor is committing himself to the task of including his parishioners in the long-range planning for the future of the parish. Their faith and wisdom and their intimate knowledge of the parish and its people can bring enormous rewards to his ministry and to that of his associates.

- d) The pastor should help develop a truly Christian process for selecting council members, that is, a process developed consultatively and based upon the principles of the Church. The process should involve in some way the pastor's approval of those who are selected to serve on the council. If a serious pastoral need arises, he must be able to ask a member to leave the council, but he should discuss with that member the reason why this is necessary.
- e) Pastors will be given the opportunity to attend a set of diocesan training sessions in order to learn about the function and operation of a pastoral council. This will be very important in order for them to be acquainted with new approaches to councils and to experience what the council members will be taught.
- f) The pastor should provide opportunities for the council to grow spiritually. He is encouraged to provide leadership in prayer and avenues for development of the faith of the council.
- g) The pastor may have to provide outside help for the continued training of members or for the better facilitation of council meetings. In this way the council members can grow more proficient in their ministry.

5. The Staff

- a) By “*staff*” is meant those who provide leadership in the day-to-day running of the parish. What constitutes “staff” may vary from parish to parish.
- b) The staff generally has its own unique role apart from the council, and its own relationship to the pastor and his decisions. This relationship is characterized by skills and responsibilities centered around the concrete operations and activities of parish life.
- c) While the staff has its own meetings with the pastor on a regular basis, a staff member may be invited by the pastor to participate in a pastoral council meeting even when he or she is not an actual council member.
- d) It is also advisable for the entire staff to meet with the entire pastoral council at least once each year (preferably for a



whole day) to discuss areas and concerns of mutual importance. This kind of meeting could be useful for establishing parish goals that focus the agenda of both groups for the year.

- e) Staff members may themselves ask to be invited to a pastoral council meeting whenever they need the council's help or have something to discuss which is of importance to the council.

6. Policies, Procedures and Practices

- a) The pastoral council may be established and run in any form which is essentially in agreement with these basic guidelines.
- b) The council should put into writing its basic policies, procedures, and practices. This written document and any later changes to it must be submitted to the pastor for his approval and recommendations before it goes into effect.
- c) The procedures should be reviewed on a regular basis and updated to meet the needs of the council and pastor. When a new pastor assumes his office, the written document of policies and procedures should be reconsidered and submitted to him for his acceptance and possible changes.
- d) A written copy of the procedures is to be sent to the Diocesan Office of Research and Planning so that it can be kept on file. These written procedures may then be shared among the parishes of the diocese to help in the exchange of ideas and practices.

**D. Commentary upon the Pastoral Council Guidelines**

1. What a Pastoral Council is Meant to Be

- a) A pastoral council is meant to be a way for the pastor of the parish to come to know even more intensely the feelings, hopes, reactions and needs of his parishioners, and a way for the parishioners to exercise responsibility for the life of the Church. This kind of consultation is extremely important for the health of the community and for the process of decision making. Decisions with good consultation are

- life-giving and creative because they come from contact with the very roots of Church life.
- b) Very simply stated, a pastoral council is a way for a pastor and parishioners to meet and speak about the needs and hopes of the people so that better decisions can be made. We wish to use a structure which minimizes the barriers presented by personality differences and by the tensions of leadership. Hopefully, this will create the proper climate for honest dialogue and interaction. Proper training of the members (including the pastor) and a continuing process of change and evaluation will help the council to become the model of Christian service and dialogue it seeks to be.
  - c) A pastoral council should be seen more as a *relationship between members* than as a structure. That is, a council is to be based upon the ideals of our faith, with respect and love between all the members, and a recognition of the call of every believer to take responsibility for the mission of the Church. The council must be above all a place of truth, where people say what needs to be said, with courage as well as kindness. It also must be a place of trust, so that each member feels comfortable enough to speak from the heart.
  - d) Being a council member is not so much a "privilege" which sets someone above or apart, but is rather a service or work for the sake of the parish. But service itself is not the first step. An old teaching of the Church is that we were created to "know, love and serve God." This is true also of the council members and of the parish. We are called first to try to know our parishioners and fellow council members well, to be aware of their needs, hopes, desires and concerns. We are then to respond in light of this knowledge with genuine love; there can be no substitute for the deepest respect of each other, a respect founded upon the Love of Christ. Only then are we capable of genuine service, service which is not just the "curing of problems" but is rather the "caring for God's people." This begins right in the council itself.
  - e) We hope that it may be said of our pastoral council: "See these Christians, how they love one another."

2. What a Pastoral Council is Not Meant to Be
  - a) In the past, many councils experienced real difficulties, and although the members often tried to work things out, in many cases the very structure of the council was a hindrance. To many, the council seemed to be a meaningless exercise in parliamentary procedure. The endless stream of "motions" and "seconded motions" seemed very artificial to the parish that wanted to create an atmosphere of cooperation and openness among its council members.
  - b) Many people feel that the previous system of council was based too much upon the "city council" or "political" model. It seemed almost like a "lesson in civic government" and not like the experience of Christian community for which they were hoping. While this approach may have worked to keep order, it did not always give the members that feeling of communion that the Gospels speak about.
  - c) Very often a council started to degenerate into a long session of unnecessary or redundant reports and endless agenda items which take up time but seemed to the members themselves to be of very little value. The council in these circumstances had become cut off from the life of the people, and had instead become a formality. Naturally, this was discouraging to members and reduced the chances that active parishioners would join.
  - d) Many councils divided up their "representation" in such a way that it almost encouraged factionalism. Each member began to feel that he or she represented a particular interest and then felt obligated to fight as often as possible for that interest. Instead of cooperation, competition grew.
  - e) Many people came to perceive a need for a different way of approaching parish consultation, coming from the beliefs of the Catholic Church and the needs of the local community, and not necessarily modeled after any existing secular structures.

3. Planning and Implementation: Council and Staff
  - a) The new approach to pastoral councils sees them as valuable instruments of *planning* and an aid to *implementation*. This concept will be crucial to the proper functioning of a council under these new guidelines.
  - b) *Implementation* refers to the actual carrying out of day to day programs and activities. Once a decision has been reached about an important need of the parish or community, qualified people who have been hired or chosen, or who have volunteered for a task are called upon to implement that decision. These people make the many small decisions concerning the task at hand, using the expertise and talents that made them right for the job in the first place. They also do some planning, but their planning is more directly related to the matter at hand, planning an approach or set of procedures to carry out the task. The implementers are the "doers" who turn plans and decisions into reality.
  - c) *Planning*, in the sense we are using it here, refers to the long-range view of the parish. Before a decision is made, knowledge and dialogue about the concerns, feelings, hopes and reactions of the community helps us to plan for the future. The people who are responsible for this task of dialogue are meant to help the decision-maker (usually the pastor) to see the long-range goals and needs of the parish. Through discussion, prayer and contact with the parishioners, they seek to know clearly the past history of the community, the present needs and hopes, and what future areas of development and concern there will be. Planners seek to identify the areas of concern and assist the decision-makers and implementers in developing concrete programs.
  - d) People who work on the pastoral council have to learn to make this important distinction and to see a primary part of their task to be planners. Many studies have shown that pastoral councils with the most consistent success have made this kind of long-range vision a key element of their work. It is very easy to jump right away into making decisions, trying to do all the work by ourselves, but this leads to many

problems. Council members must come to see that planning is real *work*. It is not just "dreaming"; it is extremely important if the parish is going to meet the real needs of the people and be faithful to the message of the Gospel.

- e) It is also important there be coordination in the work of decision- makers, implementers and planners. The parish needs an overall vision to keep it from operating blindly or mechanically. Relying upon the task of the planners will allow implementers more time to do what they do best-- concrete realization of programs.
- f) In the usual parish set-up, the pastoral council stresses the planning, and the staff stresses the implementing. The pastor is involved with both phases, and he is the final decision-maker. However, as a cooperative effort, all three areas are interrelated, so it will be impossible for each area to work in the absence of the other. It is the *primary stress* that we are emphasizing here. By knowing that all of these roles are clear, distinct and legitimate, many pitfalls can be avoided. The staff members will be able to make day-to-day decisions in their areas without having to run to the council all the time (avoiding red-tape and bureaucracy). The pastor will feel freer to make those decisions which come before him for immediate action, knowing that his decisions are better informed because the council has provided better knowledge of the people, more coordination in the parish and the long-range view which helps him in his perspective. The council does not have to become burdened with any unnecessary committees, helping them to avoid redundancy and frustration. And most of all, the people of the parish will be heard, their needs made known, and their reactions solicited as the parish tries to serve them.

4. Membership

- a) A pastoral council usually consists of about eight to ten members, including the pastor. It is best if the number remains smaller (but no smaller than six, and no greater than twenty) to insure good dialogue.

- b) The members should strive to be active, believing parishioners who are willing to speak on behalf of the needs and hopes of all the parishioners, not just their own concerns. They should be willing to accept the responsibility of attending a period of training by the diocese, which is best completed before they actually begin working on the council. This training will help new members to come to a council with some preparation and knowledge of the work of a council. The pastor will also have an opportunity to complete a training and orientation program.
- c) Associate pastors, deacons, pastoral associates and other staff members could benefit greatly from involvement with the council, especially since their own work is often concerned with the needs, feelings, hopes and concerns of the people of the parish. The council in turn could have much to learn from the insights and experience of these parish staff members. Each parish can determine for itself how the associates and deacons are to be represented and the extent of their involvement with the council.
- d) The selection process of the members is determined by the pastor, with consultation. In general, members can be nominated by the parishioners, parish groups, or staff members. The term for members is usually three years (but no less than one or more than five), after which members are eligible for nomination again. Care should be taken that terms of office do not all come up at once so that the council has a continuity with some more experienced members. The policies of choosing new members should provide real opportunities for new members to come to the council. Some possible options for procedures follow:
  - (1) The pastor and staff meet and review a list of names of people who will be asked to consider being council members, or
  - (2) The present council members review a list of names of people who have indicated an interest in working on the council. A final list is submitted to the pastor for his selection, or

- (3) General elections are held in the parish after nominations have been submitted from various sources, or
  - (4) All interested parishioners submit their names to the council or staff. After interviewing the candidates, one or both of these groups meets with the pastor to finalize the choices.
  - (5) There are, of course, many means of selecting members. The process used should be a Christian model, reflective of Church experience, and helpful to the pastor in best leading the parish.
- e) It is best if the selection of new members takes place before October 1st or before February 1st of each year, to coincide with the training sessions offered by the diocese. All members should go for this training session if they have not attended before. This includes members who have served on councils previous to these guidelines.
  - f) Members are encouraged to regard their work on the council as the primary way that they serve the parish during their term. They should be careful not to overextend themselves in the day to day work of the parish. This will allow them to devote more attention to the important task of dialogue, planning, and evaluation done by the council. For this reason, it may not be possible in some cases for a person to be a council member *and* run a major parish activity at the same time, given the limits of time and energy. Parish staff members particularly have to be wary of overextending themselves, because they work with the pastor and leadership in a closer manner. But whether they are on the council or not, they may be called upon individually to meet with the council when this is helpful to the work of either.
  - g) Membership does not have to be determined by geographic areas of the parish, or by society or age group. However, it is important that there be variety among the membership and that no important area of the parish be neglected because of a lack of contact by the council.

5. The Pastor

In order for any Pastoral council to work well and be fruitful, the cooperation of the pastor is essential. Since the consultative role of the council is directed toward him, the council cannot be considered properly without understanding some of his role.

- a) The pastor who truly wishes to do the work of God in his community is a man who respects the talents and the vocations of the people around him: his fellow priests, his staff and his people. He is called to be a man of hope and of vision, willing to plan for the future, and willing to see the Church from the perspective of those he serves. He is called to understand the Church as it is *today*, and to strive to overcome any shortcomings because of past experiences or deficiency in his training. Most of all, he is called as a man of prayer, to believe in the Church as a community, not the work of one person alone or of the clergy. He dedicates himself to drawing upon all of the many talents and abilities planted by God in the soil of his people.
- b) The pastor is ultimately responsible for the decisions of the parish. He is the shepherd of the local flock. To do this well, he needs to know the flock and their wants: he needs to know their talents and their weaknesses. A council helps him to do this. In the end, he finalizes the decisions, but he needs good consultation if he is to make effective decisions.
- c) The pastor also is responsible for helping to formulate the process used to select council members. Although they may be nominated by the parish at large, or by the staff, or by the pastor (often after consultation) must decide upon how candidates are chosen. The pastor may have to ask a member to resign from the council if a pastoral reason of importance arises. However, he should discuss with the member the reason for this action and the best way to handle things at this time. He should also give the member the opportunity to voluntarily resign from the council.
- d) The diocese will provide training and orientation programs for the pastors so that they will be ready to work with their councils under these new guidelines. This will be important so that all the council members, with their pastors, are



acquainted with the expectations and the structures of the new diocesan guidelines.

- e) The pastor may lead the council meetings, or appoint another, or allow the council to decide upon a leader. In all he decides, he should strive to treat the members with great respect and to help them to understand the importance of what they do. He should generally seek to give the correct impression that he is open to honest dialogue and in need of the help they offer.
- f) The pastor also should help the council to grow in prayerfulness and in commitment to the Gospel. By calling upon outside help whenever it is needed to accomplish the goals of the council and to facilitate the training of the members, the pastor may better insure the effectiveness and the happiness of his council members.

6. The Council and Staff

In every parish the composition of the staff differs. Some people use the term to refer only to salaried leaders. Others include office help or important volunteers. By *staff* we intend in this report to speak of all those who provide *leadership* in the running of the day-to-day life of the parish.

- a) Staffs have many functions, and it is not the purpose or intention of these guidelines to define or limit those functions. We wish to indicate in a general way the unique role of the staff and its relationship to the pastor and to the pastoral council. The staff members have been chosen or hired for their particular competence and skills in certain areas of parish life. These skills are manifested in concrete ways in programs and activities of parish life.
- b) The staff meets with the pastor in its own way on a regular basis, but from time to time an area of parish life which concerns both the council and a staff member may come up. It would be appropriate then for the pastor to invite the staff member (or members) to participate in a council meeting (if they are not already members). He may wish to do this after the council has discussed a topic and realizes that it needs more information. Or it may be best to invite the staff member right from the beginning of the topic as it comes up

on the year's agenda. Staff members themselves may suggest that they be invited to a meeting when they have something to discuss which affects the work of the pastoral council.

- c) The pastoral council and staff might want to have a joint meeting (preferably a day together) at least once a year so that all of their efforts may be discussed and so that communication between them may grow. Part of the agenda could be to evaluate what has been accomplished during the year and to evaluate the working relationship among the pastoral council, the staff and the pastor.

7. Contact with the Whole Parish

- a) One major role of the pastoral council is to know the people of the parish and to try to represent their feelings, hopes, desires and needs. In order to do this properly, it is important that the council have ways of coming into contact with parishioners.
- b) First of all, since each council member is also a parishioner, that is one way that people are represented. The council members also can give the insights of their own families and close friends. But it is good to move beyond to wider circles as well.
- c) Council members are encouraged to listen to their neighbors and to invite people close by to speak about the parish to them, not just on specific issues, but also on the Church and the parish in general. They are also encouraged to listen closely to other people with which they are associated in the parish and community. No authentic planning or meaningful consultation can take place in ignorance of public issues or events.
- d) It is also good for council members to regularly call people and ask them if there is anything about the parish that they would like to talk about. It would be helpful if each council member called or spoke to at least ten people between each meeting. Trying to find out more about staff members, leaders of societies, and parish organizations would also help to round out the knowledge that each council member has of the parish as a whole.

- e) The use of formal surveys and questionnaires can be very helpful in finding out in a concrete way how the parishioners feel about areas of parish life. They can also help the council to learn more about the make-up of the parish and the life-situations of the people. This is also a way for councils to evaluate and learn more about how effectively parish programs are reaching the people. Councils may want to share with each other any survey instruments that they have developed which may serve as a model or a useful approach for another parish.
  - f) Council members seek to become known to the parishioners, not for their own sake, but in order to get others involved and aware of the lay responsibility for the work of the Church. Parish staffs are encouraged to develop programs of public relations to help council members become more visible in the parish community. In this way the work of the council can be communicated back to the parish-at-large.
  - g) The members of the council are called always to keep in mind that it is the parish community and the People of God whom they hope to serve. All that is done by them, as members of the council and as parishioners themselves, is meant to convey concern, warmth, compassion and faith. We follow in the footsteps of Christ, who came "not to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."
8. Procedure and Practices
- a) Pastoral councils can take on many different concrete forms, provided they are in basic agreement with the guidelines that are presented here. Councils may take upon themselves a number of roles, provided that their primary role is to help the pastor of the parish make better decisions by providing him with the consultation he needs.
  - b) Whatever procedures are established by the council should be put into some written form so that they are clear for all those who participate. This format should be submitted to the pastor for his approval and recommendations. It may take some trial and error before the council finds a workable way of operating.

- c) The council's procedures and practices should be reviewed and evaluated on a regular basis so that they will not become stale or outmoded. The needs of the council and the pastor may change over the years, and these changes should be reflected in the way the council operates. Also, if a new pastor comes to a parish, these procedures should be reworked with him so that the council can reflect his personal style and needs.
  - d) A written copy of the established procedures of the council must be submitted to the Diocesan Office of Research and Planning. It is hoped that these guidelines will be available to other councils who are looking for examples for their own proposed practices. If important revisions occur in these practices later, a new copy should be sent to the Diocesan Office.
  - e) The following section provides some suggestions that might be helpful to councils in formulating their practices and procedures. Each council is encouraged to work out its own policies and procedures.
9. Some Suggestions for Procedures
- a) Time and place of meetings
    - (1) Meetings generally occur at least once each month (excluding vacation months).
    - (2) The meeting in most cases lasts about one and one-half to two hours. However, this can be extended or shortened in special cases.
    - (3) The meeting occurs in a comfortable, "lounge-type" room, if such a room is readily available. However, any room the council finds suitable to its needs is fine.
  - b) Attendance
    - (1) Since the working of the council involves continuing dialogue with the pastor, generally a meeting is canceled if the pastor is unable to attend, unless the pastor has made other provisions in his absence.
    - (2) No quorum is necessary, but the Pastor should determine if there are enough members present for a fruitful meeting.
  - c) Prayer

- (1) In most cases, the meeting has a prayer time, about 10 to 15 minutes.
  - (2) Prayer may be focused upon the matter at hand, the parish needs or the council needs.
  - (3) Prayer time should be prepared in advance by a member (or members). Care should be taken that the prayer is suitable to the members, and avoids being the same each meeting.
- d) Leading the meeting
  - (1) The pastor may lead the meeting himself or he may appoint a member to lead.
  - (2) He may invite the members to suggest a leader.
- e) Taking notes
  - (1) The pastor may ask a member to take notes of the meeting if he wishes, or if the group feels that this is helpful.
  - (2) He may invite a non-member to be present to take notes (but this person may not actively participate).
- f) Beginning the meeting
  - (1) At the beginning of each meeting the group may be invited to make an informal synopsis of the previous meeting. Or the group may use minutes if this is more helpful.
  - (2) The leader may also poll the group at the beginning of each meeting to see if they wish to continue with the same topic, or to determine the priority of matters the council wishes to address at that meeting.
  - (3) The pastor may use his discretion to determine whether this is the appropriate time for a particular topic.
- g) Topics for discussion:
  - (1) Topics may come from a yearly agenda meeting. They may also be suggested by members throughout the year.
  - (2) The pastor may change the agenda or bring up an item for discussion at any time if the need arises. Staff people who are not members may also suggest areas for the discussion of the council, and may be invited by the pastor to participate if the discussion involves their areas of interest and competence.
  - (3) Topics should always be considered in the light of the needs, feelings, hopes or reactions of the parish-at-large,

since the council seeks to draw its meaning from the people it serves.

- (4) Generally the council discussion topics are not about specific solutions or responses, but are about long-range planning and goals. However, it is understandable that there is much overlapping when planned goals seek to become concrete realities.
- (5) The results of that discussion often have to be conveyed to the parish staff for their development of specific programs and action. The council should avoid trying to accomplish all of the work of the parish through itself, but should seek instead to involve the rest of the parish and to acknowledge the expertise of others.

h) Voting

Since the council is trying to avoid the semblance of a political model of operation, the emphasis is not on "voting" on issues. The pastor or leader may poll the group's opinions when this is most helpful.

i) Break time

In most cases there is a break during the meeting and, if possible, refreshments are shared.

j) Finishing the meeting

- (1) At the end of each meeting, members may be invited to share briefly anything important they have learned from the discussion during the meeting. The idea is to get members to reflect for a moment on the progress of the council's work.
- (2) The time and place of the next meeting should be made clear before the meeting ends if it is possible to do so at that time.
- (3) In order not to cut discussion short, it is advisable for the leader to inform the group near the end that time is almost up and that discussion should soon come to a conclusion.

*"Where two or three are gathered in my name,  
there am I in the midst of you."*

## **XVI. *THE LONG ISLAND CATHOLIC*: POLICY STATEMENT**

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This policy statement was issued by Bishop McGann in June, 1991. A pamphlet version of the statement is available from *The Long Island Catholic*.

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- A. *The Long Island Catholic* is the official newspaper of the Diocese of Rockville Centre. Its publisher is the diocesan bishop of the diocese.
- B. The diocesan bishop wishes every Catholic household to receive *The Long Island Catholic*, and directs each pastor or administrator to strive for this goal. The phrase “every Catholic household” is meant to include all persons, by household, within the territory of the parish, who have identified themselves as Catholic through personal registration, the census, or any other means. No one, however, having been informed of the paper’s functions and the diocesan bishop’s policy, shall be continued on the subscription list against his or her will.
- C. By appropriate methods and on appropriate occasions, the pastor shall make known to his parishioners why the diocesan bishop wishes each family or household to receive *The Long Island Catholic*. These reasons include the following:  
The paper
  - 1. Assists the diocesan bishop in his role as chief teacher of the Catholic faith by publishing and distributing to all Catholics the authentic teaching of the Holy Father, the College of Bishops, the Congregations of the Holy See, the National Conference of Catholic Bishops and the Diocesan Bishop himself, as well as by publishing other instructional materials on the Catholic faith.
  - 2. Emphasizes and promotes a sense of the Diocese as a unity of parishes, diocesan departments and agencies, religious orders, schools, hospitals and other institutions in the service of our faith.

3. Functions as an instrument of communication within the Diocese.
4. Supplies parishioners with news of Church affairs beyond the borders of the Diocese and of the nation, thereby promoting a sense of the Universal Church.
5. Provides comment from a Catholic point of view on important issues affecting our communities.

Taken together, these functions identify *The Long Island Catholic* as a key element in the communications apostolate of the Diocese, which every parish is expected to support.

*The faithful should be advised of the necessity of reading and circulating the Catholic press if they are to make Christian evaluations of all that happens. (Vatican II, **Decree on the Instruments of Social Communication**, 14)*

*Catholics are encouraged to read Catholic publications regularly....It is hard to see how people can keep in touch with what is happening in the Church without the Catholic Press. Neither can people keep a Catholic attitude towards what happens in the world without the help of commentaries on the news written in the light of Christian principles. (Pastoral Instruction for the Application of the Decree of the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council on the Means of Social Communication, 1971, 140).*

- D. On the occasion of registering new parishioners or taking a census, parishioners shall be asked whether they presently receive *The Long Island Catholic*. If they do not, the registrar or census-taker shall inform them of the bishop's policy with regard to circulation of the paper and inquire if they have any objections to receiving it. The registrar should also be ready to give, if necessary, a brief explanation of the paper's role in the diocesan communications apostolate, as well as its annual subscription price. Inability to pay the subscription price shall not preclude one's reception of the paper.
- E. Because pastors are responsible for all Catholics living within their parish boundaries, the total list of Catholic families or households in any particular parish will ordinarily include a certain percentage of people who are effectively alienated from the Church. Principle B in this diocesan policy statement is not intended to require that *The Long Island Catholic* be sent to such families. A pastor will



therefore be considered to be implementing the complete coverage plan if he includes, consistent with the principles already mentioned, on his subscription list:

- a) All families on his active mailing list – that is, all families or households to whom he would send parish communications, appeals, chance books, and so forth. (This criterion does not refer simply to his weekly envelope list.)
- b) When subscribers residing in one parish actually attend a neighboring parish, their subscriptions shall be paid through the parish of their residence, unless the two pastors come to another agreement and so inform *The Long Island Catholic*.

- F. Each pastor, in cooperation with his associate priests and the parish council, keeping in mind the special functions of the diocesan newspaper, shall always strive to promote the circulation of *The Long Island Catholic* and not to delimit its circulation. Pastors who have achieved the goal of virtually 100% coverage in their parishes are urged to maintain this coverage in a way consistent with the principles listed above and the general welfare of the parish. Cancellation lists sent to the paper shall contain the reason for each cancellation.
- G. Pastors will be billed on a monthly basis for the subscriptions received within their parish. The size of the prompt payment discount (from 5% to 15%) takes into account the percentage of families receiving *The Long Island Catholic* and is applicable on pastors' bills paid on or before the 10<sup>th</sup> of the month. Pastors shall urge their parishioners to pay the subscription price for *The Long Island Catholic*, but actual payment shall not be a condition for receiving the paper. To assist pastors in collection for the paper, *The Long Island Catholic* will conduct, as circumstances permit, a campaign annually for subscription renewal and new subscriptions.

## **XVII.POLITICAL ACTIVITY**

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Pastors are often confronted with a balancing act between helping their parishioners to be informed in their voting and complying with the restrictions imposed by the Internal Revenue Code. The same challenge is faced by the administrators of other religious organizations. The following may help in this area. The following were distributed by the Vicar for Administration in November, 1996.

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***Internal Revenue Code.*** An organization that is exempt from federal income taxation under s. 501(c)(3) of the tax code may not “participate in or intervene in any political campaign on behalf of any candidate for public office,” even if such participation or intervention is not “substantial.” If a church violates the prohibition, its federal tax-exempt status may be revoked by the IRS and/or a tax may be assessed against it. The problem, of course, is in defining “participation” (which includes the publishing or distributing of statements) and “intervention.”

The IRS considers the following 5 types of activity a form of participation or intervention and therefore inappropriate:

- endorsement of candidates
- donations to a candidate’s campaign
- fund-raising for a candidate
- distributing statements relating to specific candidates
- involvement in other activities that may be beneficial or detrimental to a candidate

***Issues v. candidates?*** These restrictions apply to *candidates*. As a general rule, it is always permissible to provide information to parishioners about important *issues* and to encourage them to make such issues a significant part of their deliberation as informed voters.

This can be done from the pulpit or in parish bulletins or other publications.

Distributing unbiased candidate questionnaires or voting records on a wide variety of issues is also permissible. Such a survey, however,

should not be restricted to a few selected issues nor rate candidates numerically or classify them “favorably/unfavorably.”

There should be no homilies or bulletin inserts about specific candidates which could be construed as an endorsement of or opposition to their election.

**“Personal” endorsements?** Even though priests and other administrators are citizens and have a right to participate freely in the political process as private individuals, they must be careful how and when they personally endorse a candidate or party.

An endorsement of a party or a candidate for public office by a minister of a religious organization at an official function of the organization (e.g., at Mass or at a parish meeting) is construed as an endorsement by the religious organization itself.

The inclusion of a personal endorsement in an official publication of the religious organization (e.g., the parish bulletin or periodic newsletter) also qualifies as inappropriate activity on the part of the religious organization itself.

**Voter education?** A neutral *voter education forum* on parish facilities is permissible under 3 conditions:

There are no overt campaign activities (such as enlisting campaign volunteers or fund-raising).

All candidates are afforded an equal opportunity to participate.

Parishioners are informed before or after speeches that the church itself does not endorse any particular candidate for public office.

*Voter education publications* (e.g., distributing information in a parish bulletin) are also permissible provided that they are neutral in both content and format. When the circulation or distribution of the publication is rather limited, its use for voter education is looked upon more benignly.

**Pamphleteering?** Pamphleteering may be viewed as indirectly intervening or participating in a political campaign:

Handing out campaign literature (by parishioners or non-parishioners) under parish auspices or on parish property is not permissible.

Granting permission to anyone to put campaign literature on cars parked on parish property or to hand out such pamphlets on parish property is also considered inappropriate activity.

***Voter registration drives?*** Such drives are eminently suitable activities for a parish provided that they are conducted in a neutral, non-partisan way that is not biased for or against a particular party or candidate.

***Dialogue about legislation?*** Activities to influence legislation are not treated as severely as influencing elections. Such activity is permissible if it does not comprise a *substantial part of the organization's overall activities*. Consequently, parishes are permitted:

- to endorse or oppose legislation, including ballot referenda
- to arrange for groups to meet with their elected officials to advocate for or against legislation
- to encourage letter writing, phone calls and other contacts with candidates and elected officials about important issues
- to provide parishioners with educational materials on public policy issues, even regarding specific pieces of proposed legislation

When deciding about particular activities on parish property or under the auspices of the parish, the principal criterion to keep in mind is the following: *The content or format should not endorse specific candidates or parties or otherwise instruct people how to vote on specific candidates or parties.*

If you have questions about a proposed activity, please do not hesitate to contact Msgr. Alesandro, Vicar for Administration (873-0972) or the diocesan attorney George Rice (766-0081) to discuss the matter.

## **XVIII.DIRECTORIES**

### **A. Official Catholic Directory (“Kenedy” Directory)**

1. The *Official Catholic Directory* (OCD) is published annually. It includes information and statistics for every diocese in the United States. It is helpful as a reference tool for parishes.
2. Each parish is contacted directly by the OCD each fall. Parish information, including the parish staff, is updated. The forms are *submitted to the Chancellor’s Office* for final collation and return to the OCD.
3. There is *no need* to complete the statistical information (located on the back of the form). The OCD does not use the information nor does the Diocese of Rockville Centre. (The diocesan *spiritual report* includes all pertinent information and is submitted annually.)
4. Inclusion of an entity in the Diocese of Rockville Centre in the OCD is facilitated by the Chancellor’s Office. Contact that office for further information.

### **B. Blue Book**

1. The Brooklyn *Tablet* publishes an annual volume with information about the Dioceses of Brooklyn and Rockville Centre.
2. When contacted, parishes submit annual updates *directly* to the publisher.

**C. Catholic Telephone Guide**

1. This guide includes information for dioceses in the New York Metropolitan area, including the Diocese of Rockville Centre.
2. When contacted, parishes submit annual updates *directly* to the publisher.

## **XIX. PAPAL BLESSINGS AND PAPAL AUDIENCES**

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Papal blessings are obtained through religious article shops, many of which are located in Rome. Persons may apply *directly* for a papal blessing. The Chancellor's Office has developed the **Information Sheet** (A) as a tool to assist persons in the application process. The **Sample letter** (B) may be used to help in writing to A. Garey in Rome.

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### **A. Application for Papal Blessing -- Information Sheet**

Fill out the enclosed letter of application carefully. It is important that all information be TYPED OR PRINTED CLEARLY. Please note the following details:

1. Fill in the text you desire to be inscribed on the scroll. Here are some examples:

---

*Sample Text: (For Wedding or Wedding Anniversary)*

MOST HOLY FATHER  
John Smith and Emily Jones  
humbly seek your SPECIAL APOSTOLIC BLESSING  
on the occasion of their Wedding Day  
January 6, 199-  
at a Nuptial Mass in the  
Church of St. Mary  
New York, New York

---

*Sample Text: (Birthday or any other special occasion)*

MOST HOLY FATHER  
Laura Smith  
humbly seeks your  
SPECIAL APOSTOLIC BLESSING  
on the occasion of her  
90th Birthday  
19-- January 27 199-

---

2. Fill in the address to which the scroll is to be mailed.

3. Bring the letter to your parish office, asking that the application be signed that the parish seal be placed on the application.
4. Sign the letter.
5. Enclose a BANK CHECK for \$30.00 payable to: " A. Garey." (Please do not send a *personal check*.)
6. Mail to A. Garey in Rome and keep a copy of your letter. *The scroll should arrive within six to eight weeks.*
7. If there are any questions, call the Chancery Office (678-5800, ext. 580, 581, 582). In the unlikely event that delivery is delayed, you may wish to contact Rome directly.



**B. Sample Letter of Application for Papal Blessing**

Mrs. A. Garey  
Piazza Farnese, 104  
00186 Roma  
ITALY

Dear Mrs. Garey:

I am seeking to arrange for a Papal Blessing. Enclosed please find a certified Bank Check in the amount of \$30.00 to defray the cost of the following Papal Blessing together with handling and postage:

(86/NB)  
MOST HOLY FATHER

The scroll is to be sent directly to:

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

STREET ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

TOWN/STATE/ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_ U.S.A.

Thank you for your kind interest and attention.

Sincerely,

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature)

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Dear Mrs. Garey:

May I recommend that the above request for an Apostolic Blessing be honored. Thank you for your kind assistance.

Sincerely yours,

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Parish Priest, Deacon or Associate)

PARISH SEAL

**C. Papal Audiences**

Those who would like to attend a papal audience while on a visit to Rome can apply for tickets through the Chancellor's Office. The audiences are usually held on Wednesdays at 11:00 a.m.

Direct those interested to include the following information:

1. Names and those who would like tickets
2. Date of arrival in Rome and date of departure
3. If known, name and phone number of the hotel

The Chancellor's Office will write to the Office of Visitors in Rome and arrange for tickets to be held at the office. Those seeking tickets will receive a letter which gives directions on how to obtain the tickets once they arrive in Rome. (Tickets cannot be sent to the USA prior to the audience. They are reserved at the Office of Visitors and usually available the afternoon before the audience (i.e., Tuesday).

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