

## **SECTION 5: DEANS AND DEANERIES**

The following policies shall be followed in regard to deans and their respective deaneries in the Archdiocese of New Orleans.

### **5.1 THE FUNCTION OF THE DEANERY**

The deanery provides an important regional bridge between the ministry of the Archbishop and the people of God throughout the archdiocese. It must reflect the pastoral care and guidance which the people of God rightfully expect from their archbishop. The deanery functions best in fostering cooperative programs where common socioeconomic conditions exist and where people share common concerns and hopes.

The specific functions of the deanery structure are:

- To provide support and care to the priests of the deanery;
- To provide pastoral supervision and assistance in implementing directives of the archdiocese;
- To encourage and coordinate common pastoral activity within the deanery, whether deanery-wide or in a cluster of parishes within the deanery;
- To provide a vehicle through which the archbishop can, at his discretion, consult with the parish communities on broad-based archdiocesan issues;
- To provide a line of communication between the local parishes and the archdiocesan administration regarding developing trends and issues.

### **5.2 THE ROLE OF THE DEAN**

After consulting the clergy of the deanery, the Archbishop appoints the dean, who represents him within the deanery. The dean is appointed to this part-time position for a three-year term renewable at the discretion of the Archbishop.

The specific functions of the dean are:

- To promote and coordinate common pastoral activity within the deanery (Canon 555, §1, 1);
- To see to it that the priests of the deanery diligently perform their duties and lead lives in harmony with ordained ministry (Canon 555, §1, 2)
- To see to it that the liturgy is celebrated in accord with the prescriptions of the law and

archdiocesan directives (Canon 555, §1, 3);

- To ensure that the church and its furnishings are carefully maintained, especially as they relate to celebration of the liturgy and the custody of the Blessed Sacrament (Canon 555, §1, ° 3);
- To ensure that the parish books are correctly inscribed and carefully maintained (Canon 555, §1, 3°)
- To see to it that the priests of the deanery participate in opportunities for spiritual renewal and continuing formation, such as retreats, continuing education, conferences and seminars. (Canon 555, §2, 1°);
- To ensure that the priests of the deanery have access to spiritual assistance with special attention given to those who find themselves in special difficulty for whatever reason (Canon 555, §2, 2°);
- To assist the priests of the deanery who are ill;
- To visit the parishes of the deanery in accord with archdiocesan regulations (Canon 555, §4);
- To ensure that parish property and goods are properly maintained and administered;
- To install new pastors in the parishes of the deanery;
- To convene, preside at, and encourage attendance at regularly scheduled deanery meetings;
- To represent the Archbishop, when called on to do so, in an ecclesiastical capacity at community, parish or deanery events.

### **5.3 ARCHDIOCESAN FACULTIES FOR DEANS**

Deans are granted the faculty to:

- Grant the faculties of the archdiocese for a period of six months to any priest residing temporarily in the deanery and approved for the hearing of confessions in the United States. In the event that the priest requesting faculties is not from the United States, his faculties for hearing confessions from his Ordinary, or the proper office, or his superior, must be presented to the dean (Canon 967, §2).
- Dedicate fixed altars, and to dedicate or bless movable altars according to the rites prescribed in the liturgical books (Canon 1237).

- Preside at ground breaking ceremonies for any facility erected in his deanery.
- Install pastors within the confines of one's deanery.
- Give permission for the celebration of a funeral on a Sunday for a very serious reason.
- Grant an exception to the normal six month preparation for marriage for serious pastoral reasons. To be put in writing and entered into the pre-nuptial file for marriage preparation.
- Hear serious appeals from a couple whose wedding is delayed or denied by a priest or deacon, and after consulting with the priest or deacon, to make a recommendation to the archbishop or his delegate.
- Administer the sacrament of confirmation when the confirming prelate is delayed for at least 30 minutes beyond the scheduled time (Canon 884, §1).

## 5.4 ARCHDIOCESAN PROCEDURES FOR DEANS

**5.4.1** The dean is appointed for a renewable term of three years. Some time before the terms of the deans expire, the Archbishop will write to all the priests of the deanery inviting them to submit their suggestions for a priest to be appointed as dean.

**5.4.2** The Deans will form and participate in a council presided over by a chairman appointed by the Archbishop.

**5.4.3** The dean is to schedule and conduct a meeting of the priests of his deanery at least four times a year. A brief one page summary of the principal items of the meeting is to be submitted to the Director of the Council of Deans after each meeting.

**5.4.4** In the fulfillment of his duties, the dean is to conduct periodically a formal visit to each parish in his deanery. These visits should occur at least once in a three-year period. During the formal visitation, the dean is to:

- Review with the pastor the most recent pastoral report (former *status animarum*) submitted to the archdiocesan central administration. Any updates or changes should be noted in the dean's report.
- Note carefully the condition of the parish property, especially the following:
  - The condition of the church building and its suitability for liturgical services (the way in which the Eucharist is maintained; the appropriate placement of the altar; options available for the sacrament of reconciliation; etc.).
- Any building or renovation projects the parish may be completing in the near

future (in consultation with the building commission and office of worship).

- Examine each of the sacramental registers and sign his name and date to indicate that he has done so. Should there be any irregularities, he should note this fact on his report.
- Make a random check of the marriage files (prenuptial investigations), to determine that appropriate procedures, documents, permissions, and dispensations have been obtained. This review should be noted in his report.
- Conduct a private interview with the pastor and any other clergy assigned to or in residence in the parish. .
- Meet alone with the professional staff of the parish.
- Meet privately with the members of the Parish Council's Executive Committee and privately with the Parish Finance Council.
- Record his observations about the parish property and each of the above meetings on the form that is provided, and this is to be submitted to the Director of the Council of Deans as soon as possible after his visit.
- See to it that the canonical regulations are followed regarding Mass intentions (Canons 953-956).

**5.4.5** The dean may be asked to assume the responsibility for overseeing the spiritual and financial affairs of a parish in the event of the death or incapacity of the Pastor.

**5.4.6** The Dean is to facilitate the scheduling of Sunday Masses within his deanery so as to provide maximum service to the people and a minimum of unnecessary duplication.

**5.4.7** The Dean is to encourage the priests of the deanery to cooperate in providing pastoral coverage for other priests when they are absent from their parishes.

**5.4.8** Deans will be consulted regarding any major changes contemplated regarding the status of parishes and institutions within their deaneries.

**5.4.9** Deans will meet as a council with the Archbishop at least (4) times annually in order to apprise him of the states of their deaneries and to discuss any specific pastoral concerns which they may have.

**5.4.10** Deans may meet periodically as a council under the leadership of their Chairman when deemed necessary.

## **5.5 ARCHDIOCESAN PROCESS FOR COMPLAINTS**

The following process for complaints shall be followed:

**5.5.1** If a complaint is received directly by the Archbishop or the Executive Director for Clergy, it may be handled directly by him in consultation with the Dean or it may be referred to the Dean.

**5.5.2** If the Dean directly receives a complaint or a complaint is referred to him, he should try to have the person making the complaint speak directly to the pastor.

**5.5.3** If the person is not able to speak to the pastor then the Dean should ask that the complaint be put into writing to the Dean.

**5.5.4** When the Dean receives the written complaint he should then contact the Executive Director for Clergy to discuss a process for handling the complaint and the roles that the Dean and the Director would play in the process.

**5.5.5** The process could include:

- Meeting with the pastor or priest involved.
- Meeting with the person making the complaint.
- Utilizing additional personnel from the Archdiocese to assist in mediation.
- Follow-up with all parties involved.

**5.5.6** A written report should be made by the Dean or the Director for the priest's file with the Archdiocese.

## **5.6 PROCEDURE FOR VISITATION**

### **5.6.1 PRELIMINARY PREPARATIONS**

- Have a parish plant ready for inspection.
- All parish sacramental books, death register, mass stipend, and prenuptial forms complete and available.
- Have all personnel available for interviews with completed reports. Pastor set times for interviews, a copy of this schedule ready for Dean upon arrival.
- Pastor and Dean agree upon day and time for visitation.

- Dean will send all necessary forms in advance of visit. Pastor will reproduce such forms as necessary.
- Provide a copy of Parish Pastoral Report and Finance Report, most recent.

### **5.6.2 VISIT**

- Dean and Pastor will review schedule for visit.
- Dean will interview Pastor, Parochial Vicar, Deacons, other staff, Principal, Director of Religious Education, Pastoral Council, School Board, Finance Council, and others separately.
- Dean will inspect all Sacramental Books. Dean will collect all individual reports.

### **5.6.3 REPORT OF VISIT**

- Dean will review all interviews and forms.
- Dean will make pertinent observations and recommendations.
- Dean will send copy of his report to Pastor who will acknowledge it by his signature. (Pastor may or may not agree with the report.) The report will be sent to the Director of the Council of Deans who will present it to the Archbishop.
- A letter should be sent to the Pastor from the Archbishop thanking the pastor for his cooperation. Dean will draft this letter. Send draft with the Dean's Report.

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