

THE DIOCESE OF LAKE CHARLES



POLICIES AND GUIDELINES UPDATED SEPTEMBER 2024



Office of the Bishop

DIOCESE OF LAKE CHARLES

P.O. Box 3223
Lake Charles, LA 70602
(337) 439-7400

June 27, 2020

The Memorial of Saint Cyril of Alexandria

To all the Faithful, Clergy, Religious and Laity of the Diocese of Lake Charles,

May the God of all consolation bless you in every way!

I write this on a historic day in the Diocese of Lake Charles, having just ordained four young men to the Holy Priesthood, one each for the four decades of the Diocese's existence.

In accord with diocesan practice and after consultation with the Presbyteral Council, I am reissuing the updated and revised Diocesan Policies and Guidelines. Every five years the policies and guidelines are redistributed to ensure that all personnel have the current listing of policies which have the effect of particular law within the Diocese of Lake Charles.

Much has taken place in the past five years. The Diocese of Lake Charles has expanded its ministry to youth and young people with Camp Karol, the Cathedral has been restored and continues to stand as a beacon of faith, and many have accepted Christ as Lord through the Sacraments. For that reason, the updating of our policies and guidelines takes on added significance.

I wish to express my gratitude to all who worked so diligently in updating and preparing for the redistribution of the Diocesan Policies and Guidelines. In particular, I thank the Very Reverend Ruben Buller, the Very Reverend Ruben Villarreal, the Presbyteral Council, and the heads of all offices and departments that reviewed the policies and offered valuable input.

Please note that the policy for marriage approved in conjunction with all the dioceses of the Province of New Orleans is included in a separate division of this book.

With appreciation for your good work and prayers for your well-being, I remain

Sincerely yours in our Lord,

Glen John Provost
Bishop of Lake Charles

Policies and Guidelines
Table of Contents

Book I: General Norms

101	Unity Policy
102	Parish Rectories
103	Diocesan Celebrations
104	Apostolate to the Hearing Impaired
105	Sale and Use of Alcoholic Beverages
106	The Saint Charles Borromeo Scholarship Fund (Seminarian Burses)
107	Parish Halls and Building Usage Appendix 107: Political Activities
108	Plan of Emergency Preparedness and Evacuations
109	Diocesan Tax (Assessment)
110	Apostolate to those with Special Needs
111	Archives, Personnel Files, and Record Retention Appendix 111: Archives, Personnel Files, and Record Retention

Book II: The People of God

201	Suitability for Ministry Appendix 201-A: Testimonial of Suitability for Priestly Ministry Appendix 201-B: Testimonial of Suitability for Diaconal Ministry Appendix 201-C: Testimonial Letter for Guest Lay Speakers/Presenters
202	Faculties for Priests
203	Continuing Formation of Priests
204	Guidelines for Postgraduate Continuing Education
205	Behavioral Addictions, Compulsions, Alcoholism, and other Drug Dependencies
206	Compensation for Clergy Working in Diocese Appendix 206-A: Compensation Guidelines for Diocesan and Religious Clergy Appendix 206-B: Priest Absences
207	Pre-Retired, Senior and Retired Priests Appendix 207: Guidelines for Pre-Retired, Senior and Retired Priests
208	International Student Priests
209	Relationship of Pastors and Parochial Vicar
210	Presbyteral Council Appendix 210: Statutes of the Presbyteral Council
211	Personnel Advisory Board
212	Faculties for Deacons
213	Continuing Formation of Deacons
214	Director of Vocations/Director of Seminarists
215	Guidelines for Seminarists
216	Vicars, General and Episcopal
217	Deans
218	Parish Boundaries Commission
219	Parish Pastoral Councils
220	Diocesan Pastoral Council

Book III: The Teaching Function of the Church

- 301 Office of Religious Education
- 302 Office of Catholic Schools
- 303 Certification of Catechists and Catechetical Leaders in Schools and Parishes
- 304 Office of Youth Ministry
- 305 Education in Human Sexuality
- 306 Adoption of the Ethical and Religious Directives
- Appendix 306: Ethical and Religious Directives for Catholic Health Services

Book IV: The Sanctifying Function of the Church

- 401 Baptisms for Adults, Infants, and Young Children
- 402 Guidelines for the Reception of the Sacrament of Confirmation
- 403 Guidelines for the Sacrament of Eucharist
- 404 Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion
- 405 Guidelines for Servers
- 406 “Communion Services” and Reception of Holy Communion Outside of Mass
- 407 Communion Under Both Species
- 408 Offerings given for the Celebration of Mass and Multiple Intentions
- 409 Tabernacle Placement
- 410 Guidelines for the Sacrament of Penance
- 411 Preparation for the Sacrament of Marriage in the Catholic Church
- 412 Separation and Divorce
- 413 Christian Funerals
- 414 Sacred Music
- 415 Office of Liturgy and its Director
- 416 Guidelines for the Rite of Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament and the Establishment of “Adoration” Chapels

Book V: The Temporal Goods of the Church

- 501 Parish Finance Councils
- 502 Parish Trustees
- 503 Diocesan Building Commission

Book VI: Sanctions in the Church

Book VII: Processes

- 702 Due Process
- 703 A Safe Environment for the Protection of Children and Young People
- 704 Code of Professional Conduct for All Who Have Contact with Minors
- Appendix 704: Louisiana Child Abuse or Neglect Reporting Laws

Marriage Preparation Guidelines: Province of New Orleans with Specified Norms for the Diocese of Lake Charles

BOOK I

General Norms



POLICIES AND GUIDELINES

UPDATED SEPTEMBER 2024

DIOCESE OF LAKE CHARLES

DIOCESAN POLICY STATEMENT

UNITY POLICY

TO EFFECT GREATER UNITY AMONG ALL PARISHES AND THE PEOPLE OF GOD SERVED BY THE DIOCESE OF LAKE CHARLES, BISHOP PROVOST ISSUES THE FOLLOWING STATEMENT AS DIOCESAN POLICY:

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the Diocese is to form all people into a "family" within the larger family of the Church - a family that is the body of Christ. With this ideal in mind and with the hope that we can, as a "family," work toward renewing and uniting the Church of Lake Charles, the following is established as policy:

1. Efforts must be made continually to develop programs of collaboration in every phase of pastoral activity among all parishes of a given area. This collaboration may take many forms. Some examples are the following:
 - a. Parish councils meeting regularly or at stated intervals.
 - b. Shared catechetical programs.
 - c. Exchange of pulpits occasionally.
 - d. Combined choir recitals, exchange of choirs on Sunday.
 - e. Retreats or days of recollection for organizations.
 - f. Team ministry.
 - g. Joint confirmation ceremonies, alternating parishes.
 - h. Joint adult education programs.
 - i. Active deanery pastoral council.
 - j. Adoption of poorer parishes by those more fortunate.

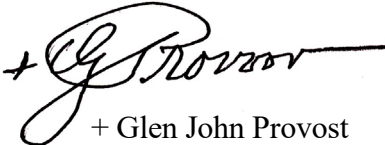
2. The practice of having racially designated parishes has been a major cause of lack of unity among the people of the Diocese. The Bishop has mandated that the Parish Boundaries and Development Commission study each situation with the local church - clergy and parish councils - to develop and implement effective measures to bring about unity among the people of the Diocese.

In many cases, this can be done by giving parishes specific territorial boundaries. Each case is to be studied and evaluated individually. No decision will be made without prior consultation.

Promulgated: April 23, 2008

Effective: July 1, 2008

Updated: July 1, 2020


+ Glen John Provost
Bishop of Lake Charles

DIOCESE OF LAKE CHARLES
DIOCESAN POLICY STATEMENT
PARISH RECTORIES

Rectories are provided as residences for priests. Only priests, and seminarians assigned to the parish by the Bishop may live in rectories. Overnight guests are restricted to priests, seminarians, or family members. In those parishes staffed by members of religious congregations, members of the congregation who are not priests may live in the rectory if assigned to do so by the competent congregational authority. Any exception to this policy must be approved in advance by the Bishop.

It is the duty of the pastor and the parish to properly maintain the residence. Basic maintenance and cleanliness should be upheld. This would include the yard, the residence, living conditions, and the kitchen. The pastor should be aware of the needs and take care that the residence remains a dignified part of the parish's patrimony.

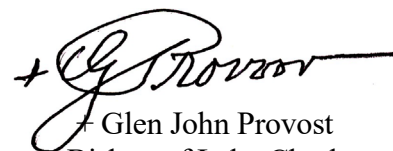
The parish shall be responsible for the general upkeep of the parish rectory. The pastor, parochial vicar, resident priest, or seminarian assigned to the parish shall be responsible for those things that he personally causes. This would include the cleaning of the residence if the cleric or seminarian would have a pet, smokes, or has other interests and hobbies that would have damaged the residence. This cleaning will not be the responsibility of the parish.

The pastor should keep an updated inventory of contents for the rectory.

The Dean of the parish will ensure that the residence is properly ready when a new priest is assigned to the parish.

Promulgated: April 23, 2008

Effective: July 1, 2008


+ Glen John Provost
Bishop of Lake Charles

Updated: July 1, 2020

DIOCESE OF LAKE CHARLES
DIOCESAN POLICY STATEMENT
DIOCESAN CELEBRATIONS

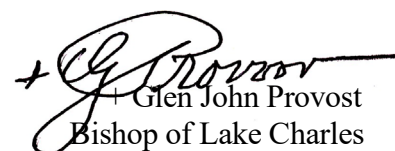
The Bishop of the Diocese of Lake Charles will appoint a Director of the Office of Liturgy for the Diocese of Lake Charles. It is the duty of the Director of the Office of Liturgy to coordinate all diocesan celebrations.

The Director of the Office of Liturgy will have all resources available to ensure the proper worship of God in the Cathedral, Church Parish, or oratory that is hosting the Diocesan Celebration.

The Celebration of the Solemnity of Saint Peter Claver will be celebrated on the Sunday closest to the actual Feast (September 9th) in the Diocese of Lake Charles in all parishes.

Promulgated: April 23, 2008

Effective: July 1, 2008


+ Glen John Provost
Bishop of Lake Charles

Updated: July 1, 2020

DIOCESE OF LAKE CHARLES
DIOCESAN POLICY STATEMENT
APOSTOLATE TO THE HEARING IMPAIRED

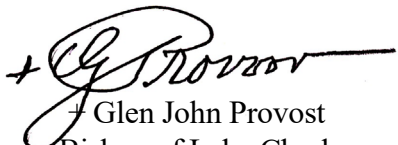
The coordinator and chaplain for the Apostolate to the Hearing Impaired is given the faculty to perform marriages, baptism, funerals, and other celebrations in which one or more persons with impaired hearing are involved. This faculty may be exercised in any parish in the Diocese. It is understood that the exercise of this faculty be with the approval of the proper pastor.

The local pastor should call upon the coordinator of this office in all instances of baptisms, first communions, confirmations, marriages, sacrament of the sick, and funerals when the presence of an interpreter would be beneficial to deaf members of the family by increasing their participation in, and understanding of, the celebrations.

The office of the coordinator makes itself available to all parishes of the Diocese in all cases involving the hearing impaired for other needs such as pre-marriage courses and marriage counseling. The personnel of this office are also available to visit the shut-ins or elderly in their homes. Each pastor should provide the coordinator with all available information on parishioners who might avail themselves of these services.

Promulgated: April 23, 2008

Effective: July 1, 2008


+ Glen John Provost
Bishop of Lake Charles

DIOCESE OF LAKE CHARLES

DIOCESAN POLICY STATEMENT


SALE AND USE OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES

1. No parish, school, or diocesan entity may sell alcoholic beverages of any kind at any event regardless of venue.
2. Beer and wine, but no other forms of alcoholic beverages, may be served by the parish, school, or diocesan entity at an event according to these guidelines:
 - a. The parish, school, or diocesan entity serving alcohol must comply with Louisiana law. In particular, the parish, school, or diocesan entity must obtain a permit from the Louisiana Office of Alcohol and Tobacco Control for an event wherein the beer and wine permitted by this policy are served as an incidental part of the event for payment rendered or are supplied as part of a general admission or other type fee.
 - b. Beer and wine in the quantity allowed by this policy are to be dispensed only by a licensed bartender.
 - c. Food should be served constantly throughout the event.
 - d. Two tickets for the consumption of one serving of beer or wine per ticket must be issued to those in attendance.
 - e. One ticket is collected by the bartender in exchange for each serving. No person may consume more than two servings.
 - f. No one shall be allowed to bring any additional alcoholic beverage into the event.
3. Those who rent parish, school or diocesan facilities must observe the guidelines in #2. b, c, d, e and f, above.
4. The guidelines indicated in #3, above, must be included in RENTAL AGREEMENTS between the parish, school, or diocesan entity and those who rent the parish, school, or diocesan facility. These signed agreements must be received prior to the event.
5. “Event” does not include private parties where no sales are made or fees charged. Hosts are to bear in mind, however, that they are responsible for their guests and third-parties who could be injured by impaired behavior.

6. This policy is to be interpreted and applied always in a manner that complies with requirements established by the diocesan insurance provider and, when applicable, by the insurance provider for the venue.

Promulgated: February 22, 2020

Effective: July 1, 2020


+ Glen John Provost
Bishop of Lake Charles

DIOCESE OF LAKE CHARLES

DIOCESAN POLICY STATEMENT

THE SAINT CHARLES BORROMEO SCHOLARSHIP FUND (SEMINARIAN BURSES)

INTRODUCTION

The St. Charles Borromeo Scholarship Fund is herewith established. This fund is named for Saint Charles Borromeo who was one of the first bishops to carry out the desires of the Council of Trent by founding the Seminary of Milan.

DESCRIPTION

Each year, the sum of \$712.00 per priest assigned to a parish or diocesan department will be collected from all parishes or departments to which they are assigned. This yearly sum may be paid in two equal installments in January and July.

FUNDS FROM PARISHES

The annual amount of \$712.00 will be invested by purchasing a life insurance policy in the name of each diocesan priest consenting to be covered. Face value of each policy will be \$25,000.00 and the Seminary Fund will be beneficiary of the policy. Death benefits paid will then be invested in a manner similar to present seminary burses. Only the annual interest earned by this burse will be available for paying the educational costs of students for the priesthood. Each individual burse will bear, in perpetuity, the name of the priest in whose honor and memory it is established.

Parishes served by religious ordered priests will make the same annual contribution of \$712.00 per priest for the use of the Vocations Office in the Diocese of Lake Charles.

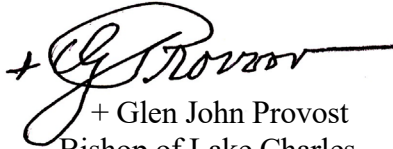
DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

It shall be the duty and responsibility of the Chief Financial Officer of the Diocese of Lake Charles to ensure the proper contribution of interest to be used for the tuition of seminarians as needed for the Diocesan Budget.

Information and application forms for grants may be obtained from the DIRECTOR OF SEMINARIANS: DIOCESE OF LAKE CHARLES; P.O. Box 3223; LAKE CHARLES, LA 70602; Telephone 439-7426 ext. 308.

Promulgated: April 23, 2008

Effective: July 1, 2008


+ Glen John Provost
Bishop of Lake Charles

Updated: July 1, 2020

DIOCESE OF LAKE CHARLES
DIOCESAN POLICY STATEMENT
PARISH HALLS AND BUILDING USAGE

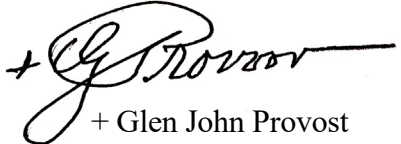
The Church is bound together by faith in Christ the Lord. This experience is often enriched by various social activities which are celebrated in and make use of the various structures of the Church community. In addition to the Church building, other buildings owned by the Church and parish are used for meetings, celebrations and instruction and are commonly referred to as halls or centers. To better enable the community to use these facilities, the following policies are enacted:

1. All parishes are to develop a written contract to be employed whenever the parish hall and centers are used or rented. A suggested contract is attached to this document.
2. The Diocesan Policy on the “Use of Alcohol” (#105) is to be included as part of each written contract and is to be observed at all times for all uses.
3. Parish halls and centers are not to be rented to or used by persons or organizations inimical to the Catholic faith.
4. The celebrations of all weddings, according to the law of the Catholic Church, are to occur in the parish church. Thus, no hall or parish center may be used or rented for the purpose of a wedding.
5. Wedding receptions can be held in a Catholic center or hall only if the marriage is in keeping with the Church’s law and teaching on marriage.
6. Each parish is to develop a written policy for the use of its buildings by parish organizations. The policy should clearly indicate the number of times an organization may use the parish hall or center as well as rental fees, if any, expected for that use.
7. Each parish is to develop a written policy with regard to the use of parish halls or centers for the purpose of wake services. Issues related to remuneration, if any, and the hours of use should be included in this policy, and it should be presented in advance to parties using the halls or centers for this purpose.

8. All parties not included in number 6 above, using any parish hall or center for special events (including but not limited to wedding receptions, anniversary receptions or parties, banquets, baby or wedding showers, family reunions or other such events) must purchase liability insurance coverage under the Diocesan insurance policy.

Promulgated: October 9, 2019

Effective: July 1, 2020



+ Glen John Provost
Bishop of Lake Charles

DIOCESE OF LAKE CHARLES

DIOCESAN POLICY STATEMENT

POLITICAL MATERIALS AND ACTIVITIES ON CHURCH PROPERTY

A fundamental aspect of the Christian mission is to be leaven in the world. Although this mission is most clearly fulfilled through catechesis and apostolates, it is also expressed through involvement in political life. Christians possess the right as do all citizens to fulfill their civic duties in the societies they live in. In fact, in Catholic tradition responsible citizenship is a virtue and even maintains that it is a moral obligation to participate in political life. However, in fulfilling their duties, Christians must be aware of legitimate laws and regulations placed by legitimate civic leaders.

Due to IRS designation, 501 (c) (3), diocesan and parish organizations are prohibited from participating in political campaign activity. Certain political activities must be avoided by these organizations and their representatives, and even political activities that are permissible must be scrupulously nonpartisan.

Therefore, it is necessary for the diocesan attorney to be consulted by the pastor through the Office of the Vicar General for a review of all political activities being considered by diocesan and parish organizations as well as all printed materials being distributed.

Furthermore, with regard to all printed political material distributed on church property or through church offices, it must have originated from or have been approved by one of three sources: 1) the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops or 2) the Louisiana Conference of Catholic Bishops or 3) the local bishop.

It is prohibited to distribute voter guides by organizations or associations of the faithful who represent themselves as *Catholic* or use the name of *Catholic* and who are not an official part of the Church. The Church is to be impartial with respect to the election of candidates for political office.

Although church property may not be used for partisan electioneering by political candidates, it may be used for nonpartisan political activities. Below are activities, as described by the USCCB, that are allowed and those to be avoided:

Activities That are Allowed

Sharing the Principles of Catholic Social Teaching

Diocesan and parish organizations are encouraged to share the Church's teaching on the relationships between Christian faith and political life. The Church's teaching on political responsibility, human life, human rights, and justice and peace need to be shared more widely and effectively.

Voter Participation

Diocesan and parish organizations can encourage members to participate in the electoral process: to register, to vote, to become informed on a broad range of issues, and to become active in the political life of the community.

Ballot Measures

Supporting or opposing ballot measures, including referenda, initiatives, constitutional amendments, and similar procedures, is considered "lobbying" activity and not political campaign activity. Diocesan and parish organizations can take positions on such measures and work to support or oppose them within the limits of permitted lobbying activity for section 501(c)(3) organizations.

Voter Education

Diocesan and parish organizations can and should engage in non-partisan voter education. This may include distributing the results of candidate polls or surveys, so long as these materials have been approved by your diocesan attorney or state Catholic conference. Voter education materials should (1) be consistent with church teaching on political responsibility; (2) cover a wide range of issues important to voters; and (3) exhibit no bias for or against any candidate or party.

Activities to be Avoided

Do not endorse or oppose candidates, political parties, or groups of candidates, or take any action that reasonably could be construed as endorsement or opposition.

Do not make available the use of church facilities, assets, or members for partisan political purposes.

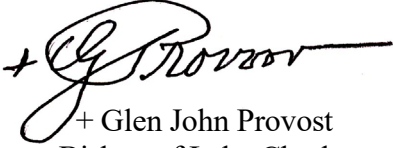
Do not authorize distribution of partisan political materials or biased voter education materials (those that support or oppose—or exhibit bias for or against—any candidate or party) on church property, in church publications, or at church activities.

Do not invite or permit only selected candidates to address your members. Before inviting candidates, make sure such events are consistent with diocesan policy. If so, it is important that all candidates be invited.

The bishops of the Louisiana Conference of Catholics Bishop and the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops have issued resources for consultation and guidance with regard to our ongoing participation in political life. Please consult these resources to be informed on how to act responsibly.

Promulgated: October 27, 2014

Effective: December 1, 2014


+ Glen John Provost
Bishop of Lake Charles

DIOCESE OF LAKE CHARLES

DIOCESAN POLICY STATEMENT


PLAN OF EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS AND EVACUATION

1. Clergy should follow directions of Civil Authorities.
2. Designation of contact in the event of an emergency:
 - a. The Diocesan Bishop will communicate to all parishes and affiliations who the contact person or persons will be and the methods by which he or she may be reached.
 - b. Each parish will formulate a similar plan for their parish and affiliated staff, e.g., schools. If the Pastor is out of town, the staff and support clergy will assist. It should be noted whose responsibility it will be to follow this policy, including support clergy (Priest replacement), and this shall be conveyed to the Diocese.
3. All clergy must contact the Diocesan contact person to let him/her know where they are staying and a phone number where they may be reached during a potential evacuation. This is to be done in May of each year.
4. Prior to leaving, these steps are to be followed to secure church property, including Priest Residence, to the best of your ability by the Pastor and staff:
 - a. Remove the Blessed Sacrament (consume or bring to a secure location).
 - b. Sacramental records and plats of cemetery (where applicable) are to be taken with the priest or placed in the most secure area available.
 - c. Backup all data from computers concerning financial, legal, parish registries, other documents of importance be taken with priest upon departure. Also have copies of inventory, insurance and/or photographic records with Pastor or designated person when leaving.
 - d. Take financial records and checks for parish, Corporate Resolutions, savings account and investment information (such as articles of financial transactions, passbooks, checks, savings, CDs, etc.).
 - e. Take religious articles and secure as best as possible (chalices, artwork, sacred vessels, etc.).
 - f. Secure all buildings (lock doors and turn off utility master switches).
 - g. Secure office space of other parish public buildings, including schools (secure and lock all doors and windows, turn off utilities).
 - h. Remove or secure all records of historical import, sacred art, and anything of historical value (deeds of property, legal documents, relics).
 - i. On doors of Church and Office Buildings, prior to evacuation, indicate who the Diocesan contact person is and how to reach them for status of pastor and for emergencies.
 - j. Take or secure any items of personal significance or importance but not to the disadvantage of the Church.

5. Clergy who evacuate are not to return to the Diocese or Parishes until the Civil Authority permits them to do so. Upon return, clergy are to contact the Diocesan contact person to inform them of such.
6. During the term of a mandatory evacuation, liturgies may be celebrated by the clergy who are present in the Diocese; the faithful are encouraged to use common sense realizing that when morally prohibited, the faithful are not obligated to fulfill Mass on days of obligation including Sundays.
7. Upon return and as soon as possible, the pastor or his representative is to make an assessment of property damage with photographs and report to appropriate person and insurance contact.
8. The Diocese of Lake Charles' contact person will send information via email as often as is necessary. Also, the contact person should be contacted by the same method for general questions or concerns.
9. The Parish plan should be reviewed each time a new pastor or clergy joins a parish and when new staff members are employed by the Parish.

Promulgated: April 23, 2008

Effective: July 1, 2008



+ Glen John Provost
Bishop of Lake Charles

DIOCESE OF LAKE CHARLES
DIOCESAN POLICY STATEMENT
DIOCESAN TAX (ASSESSMENT)


According to the norm of can. 1263, the diocesan Bishop may “impose a moderate tax for the needs of the diocese.” Following consultation with the Diocesan Finance Council and the Presbyteral Council, the tax, also known as the “Assessment,” is 15% of the income of all churches, chapels, and oratories in the Diocese of Lake Charles, without prejudice to those forms of income that have been exempted.

Those churches, chapels, and oratories who participate in the annual Audits of the Fiscal Office need only pay 14% of the income without prejudice to those forms of income that have been exempted.

Details of the annual Audit are sent out annually by the Fiscal Office of the Diocese of Lake Charles.

Promulgated: June 29, 2023

Effective: July 1, 2023


✠Glen John Provost
Bishop of Lake Charles

DIOCESE OF LAKE CHARLES

DIOCESAN POLICY STATEMENT

APOSTOLATE TO THOSE WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

Because all the faithful have the right to participate fully in the sacramental life of the Church when not prohibited by law or conscience, the Diocesan Bishop appoints the Director of the Office of Religious Education to oversee the diocesan effort to catechize and evangelize those with special needs.

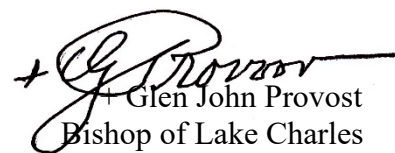
Among the considerations in this area are the following:

- 1) Texts should be provided so that children and young adults of catechetical age may receive the knowledge that should be afforded every Christian;
- 2) The sharing of the Word of God orally transmitted should be a priority in all circumstances;
- 3) Programs for the preparation of the sacraments of initiation should be developed and implemented for those who need special attention;
- 4) The celebration of the sacraments especially the sacraments of initiation should be afforded all consideration and decorum as is fitting for the worship of God and the dignity of the children of God.

The Director of the Office of Religious Education is to ensure that the rights of the faithful to be instructed and catechized is fulfilled in every parish. Furthermore, the Diocesan Bishop delegates the Director of the Office of Religious Education to make the prudential judgement of what fulfills the canonical and diocesan requirements for those with special needs in cases of sacramental preparation and catechesis.

Promulgated: December 25, 2019

Effective: July 1, 2020


+ Glen John Provost
Bishop of Lake Charles

Updated: July 1, 2020

DIOCESE OF LAKE CHARLES

DIOCESAN POLICY STATEMENT

ARCHIVES, PERSONNEL FILES, AND RECORDS RETENTION

In accordance with the Code of Canon Law, each parish and mission is to establish and maintain an archive. The norms below shall apply also to all Diocesan and Parish entities, including schools.

The canonical norms that govern this are as follows:

Can. 486 §1. All documents which regard the diocese or parishes must be protected with the greatest care.

Can. 491 §1. A diocesan bishop is to take care that the acts and documents of the archives of cathedral, collegiate, parochial and other churches in his territory are also diligently preserved and that inventories or catalogs are made in duplicate, one of which is to be preserved in the archive of the church and the other in the diocesan archive.

Can. 535 §4. In each parish there is to be a storage area or archive, in which the parochial registers are protected along with letters of bishops and other documents which are to be preserved for reason of necessity or advantage. The pastor is to take care that all of these things, which are to be inspected by the diocesan bishop or his delegate at the time of visitation or at some other opportune time, do not come into the hands of outsiders.

NORMS FOR LAY PERSONNEL RECORDS

The Diocese, church parishes, schools, and all other diocesan or parish entities are to maintain personnel files for each employee. A personnel file contains the employment application, job description, performance evaluations, hiring information and other pertinent employment data. Job-related education, certification, or other training accomplishments achieved may also be included in personnel files.

Separate files are to be maintained for payroll, citizenship and work authorization, beneficiary designation forms, medical information, and any other documentation, which may disclose personal and confidential information, protected under federal or state employment laws. Such information cannot be used as a basis for any activities in the employment process including but not limited to hiring or placement, transfer or promotion, demotion, discipline or termination, training or development, and compensation and benefits.

Each employee is responsible for informing his or her employer of any changes to personal status that may affect emergency contact information, payroll, and/or benefits.

The diocesan Human Resources and Risk Manager Liaison is, with the knowledge and oversight of the Chancellor, responsible for the culling of diocesan lay personnel files.

These records are confidential and should be made available only to diocesan/parish representatives with a legitimate right to know, unless their disclosure is compelled by some legal action.

NORMS FOR FINANCIAL AND ACCOUNTING RECORDS

The diocesan Chief Financial Officer is responsible for the oversight of all financial and account records and is to ensure adherence to the “Financial and Accounting Records” retention schedule.

NORMS FOR DIOCESAN CLERGY PERSONNEL FILES

The purposes of the Clerical Personnel Record Keeping Policies and the Diocesan Clerical Personnel File Access Procedures are three fold: 1) to insure that the Bishop of Lake Charles is able to consider the complete record of a priest in making ministerial assignments, 2) to document decisions and actions pertaining to assignments and suitability for ministry, and 3) to safeguard the privacy rights of individuals.

FILE MAINTENANCE FOR CLERGY PERSONNEL FILES

All records related to the formation, placement, and treatment of Diocesan clerics shall be maintained.

All records containing personal identifying information shall be kept in a secure location.

All recorded information gathered in the process of evaluating a candidate's fitness for ministry or placement within ministry shall be maintained for the duration of that candidate's formation and clerical ministry. The records of candidates in the formation process who leave voluntarily or are asked to leave shall be maintained in their entirety for twenty years after their separation date. After twenty years, the Chancellor of the Diocese of Lake Charles shall draw up and maintain a summary of vital information including the reason for the separation.

Upon completion of seminary formation, the seminarian/cleric's complete file, including all evaluation documents from the seminarian/cleric's seminary/seminaries, shall be archived.

ACCESS TO FILES OF SEMINARIANS, THOSE PREPARING FOR THE PERMANENT DIACONATE, AND DIOCESAN CLERICS

Access to personnel files shall be governed by the following conditions:

1. In order to protect the confidentiality of those individuals named in the file, all personnel files shall be restricted from unwarranted access by individuals other than the Bishop, the Chancellor, the Vice-Chancellor, and the Vicar for Clergy and Religious. No one is permitted access except with the permission either of the Bishop or of both the Moderator of the Curia and the Chancellor.

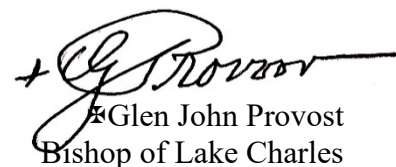
2. Interested parties have the right to obtain personally or through a proxy an authentic written copy or photocopy of documents which by their nature are public and which pertain to their personal status (can. 487 §2).
3. Full and complete access to all diocesan personnel files, excluding those exempted by all legal privileges, shall be granted to appropriate civil authorities only when a court order, subpoena, or summons properly served through the Diocesan Director of Legal Services warrants such action.

FILES OF DECEASED CLERICS

All records of deceased clerics shall be stored permanently in the Archives of the Diocese of Lake Charles.

Promulgated: February 22, 2023

Effective: July 1, 2023



✠Glen John Provost
Bishop of Lake Charles

DIOCESE OF LAKE CHARLES

DIOCESAN POLICY STATEMENT

ARCHIVES, PERSONNEL FILES, AND RECORDS RETENTION

RECORDS RETENTION SCHEDULES

The following is to be read in the context of Policy 111.

Records retention schedules indicate the period of time during which records must be kept according to legal and/or organizational requirements. This document covers retention schedules for several different types of records: Administrative, Personnel, Financial, Property, Cemetery, Publications, and Sacramental. Within each group, different series are listed followed by a retention period. Records older than the retention period should be destroyed. Those of permanent value should be stored appropriately.

The legitimate superior of a diocesan or parish entity (e.g. pastor of parish, principal of a school) or the superior's delegate is responsible for the culling of files according to the retention schedule below.

RECORD TYPE	RETENTION PERIOD
BENEFITS	
Disability records	Permanent
Pension vesting files	Permanent
Retirement benefits	Permanent
Service records	Permanent
GENERAL	
Permanent earnings and records	7 years after benefit termination
Attendance records	7 years after termination
Employee contracts	7 years after termination
Employee expense reports	4 years
Employee leave reports	Retain final leave balance for 7 years after termination. During the time the employee is active, retain ongoing leave balance for 3 years (or until audit requirements - if any - are met.)
Employee salary schedules	7 years after termination
HEALTH AND SAFETY	
Accident/injury reports	7 years
Employee medical complaints	7 years
Employee medical records	30 years from termination
Environmental test records/reports	Permanent
Hazardous exposure records	Permanent
Toxic substance explore reports	Permanent
Workers' compensation records	12 years after injury (filing), death, or last

	compensation payment
LAY PERSONNEL ACTIONS	
Applications rejected	3 years
Employee evaluations	3 years after termination
Personnel files	7 years after termination
Termination records	7 years
SALARY ADMINISTRATION	
W-2 forms	7 years from time of filing
W-4 forms	7 years from date of filing
Time cards	3 years from date of filing
Time sheets	3 years from date of filing
I-9 form	7 years after termination

Administrative Records: These records are produced in the course of the management of the affairs of the diocese/parish/entity.

RECORD TYPE	RETENTION PERIOD
Abstracts, deeds (property)	Permanent
Annual reports to Chancery (<i>Status Animarum</i>)	Permanent
Annual reports to the diocese/parish	Permanent
Articles of incorporation and bylaws	Permanent
Bequest and estate papers (<i>wills</i>)	Permanent
Census records	Permanent
Contracts, inactive	7 years after end of contract
Correspondence, legal	Permanent
Correspondence, official (<i>regarding diocesan/parish policies, diocesan/parish directive, etc.</i>)	Permanent
Correspondence, routine	Review/discard biannually
Damage and theft reports	7 years
Donor lists	Permanent
Endowment decrees	Permanent
Finance Committee minutes	Permanent
Historical file (<i>newspaper clippings, photos, etc., related to diocese/parish</i>)	Permanent
Insurance policies	Permanent
Inventories of property and equipment	Permanent
Leases	Destroy 7 years after expiration
Liturgical minister's schedules (<i>altar servers, ushers, lectors, etc.</i>)	Retain until superseded
Mass intention books	2 years
Office files, subject	Selective retention; retain those that document diocesan/parish administration and activities

Parish council constitutions	Retain until superseded
Parish council minutes	Permanent
Diocese/parish organization records (minutes, correspondence, publications, etc.)	Permanent
Photographs (relating to diocesan/parish history, clergy, parishioners)	Permanent
Policy statements	Permanent
Religious education reports (for the diocesan offices)	Permanent
Roster of parishioners	Permanent
Subject files (correspondence, memos, rules, schedules, etc.)	Annual review; destroy superseded files biannually
Will, testaments, codicils	Permanent

Financial and Accounting Records:

RECORD TYPE	RETENTION PERIOD
FINANCIAL	
<i>BANKING</i>	
Bank deposits	7 years
Bank statements	7 years
Cancelled checks	7 years
Check registers/stubs	7 years
<i>GENERAL</i>	
Audit reports	Permanent
Balance sheets, annual	Permanent
Balance sheets, monthly/quarterly	Destroy after 1 year
Budgets, approved, revised	7 years
Financial reports, annual	Permanent
Financial reports, monthly	Destroy after 1 year
Financial statements	Permanent
<i>INVESTMENT / INSURANCE</i>	
Bonds, cancelled	7 years from date of cancellation
Certificates of deposit, cancelled	3 years after redemption
Insurance policies/active	Permanent
Insurance policies/cancelled	Permanent
Letters of credit	7 years
Mortgage records	Permanent
Securities sales	7 years
Stock investment	7 years after sale
ACCOUNTING	
Accounts payable invoices	7 years
Accounts payable ledgers	7 years

Accounts receivable ledgers	7 years
Bills of sale – assets	7 years from disposal of asset
Credit card statements/charge slips	7 years
Invoices and paid bills, major building construction	Permanent
Invoices and paid bills, general accounts	7 years
Cash books	7 years
Cash journals	7 years
Cash journal, receipts on offerings and pledges	7 years
Receipts	7 years
Mortgage payments	7 years
<i>OTHER RECORDS</i>	
General ledger/annual	Permanent
Journals, general and specific funds	Permanent
Journal entry sheets	7 years
Ledgers, subsidiary	7 years
Payroll journals	7 years
Payroll registers, summary schedule of earnings, deductions, and accrued leave	7 years
Pension records	Permanent
Pledge registers/ledgers	7 years
Permanently restricted gift documents	Permanent
Temporarily restricted gift documents	7 years after meeting restrictions
<i>TAX RECORDS</i>	
Employment taxes, contributions, and payments, including taxes withheld, FICA	7 years from date of filing
W-2 forms	7 years from date of filing
W-4 forms	7 years from date of filing
IRS exemption determination letters, for organizations other than those listed in <i>The Official Catholic Directory</i>	Permanent
Form 990	Permanent
State tax exemption certificates (<i>income, excise, property, sales/use, etc.</i>)	Permanent

Property Records:

RECORD TYPE	RETENTION PERIOD
Architectural records, blueprints, building designs, specification	Permanent
Architectural drawings	Permanent
Deeds files	Permanent
Mortgage documents	Permanent
Property appraisals	Permanent

Real estate surveys/plots, plans	Permanent
Title search papers and certificates	Permanent

Cemetery Records:

RECORD TYPE	RETENTION PERIOD
Account cards (<i>record of lot ownership and payments</i>)	Permanent
Annual report	Permanent
Bank statements	7 years
Board minutes	Permanent
Burial cards (<i>record of interred's name, date of burial, etc., alphabetically</i>)	Permanent
Burial record (<i>record of interred's name, date of burial, etc.</i>)	Permanent
Contracts documenting lot ownership	Permanent
Correspondence	Selective retention; keep if item has historical, legal, fiscal value
General ledger	Permanent
Lot maps	Permanent

Publications:

RECORD TYPE	RETENTION PERIOD
Anniversary books	Permanent
Annual reports to the diocese/parish	Permanent
Newsletters of the diocese/parish or affiliated organizations	Permanent
Other diocese/parish-related publications	Permanent
Parish bulletins	Permanent

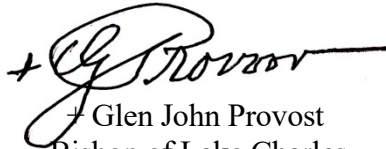
Sacramental Records:

RECORD TYPE	RETENTION PERIOD
Baptism register	Permanent
Confirmation register	Permanent
First Communion register	Permanent
Death register	Permanent
Marriage register	Permanent
Marriage case files	Permanent
Petitions for Declaration of Nullity	Execution of definitive sentence
Definitive Sentences - Marriage Cases	Permanent

Promulgated: February 23, 2023

Effective: July 1, 2023

Updated: May 10, 2023



+ Glen John Provost
Bishop of Lake Charles

BOOK II

The People of God



POLICIES AND GUIDELINES

UPDATED SEPTEMBER 2024

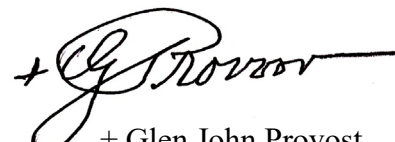
DIOCESE OF LAKE CHARLES
DIOCESAN POLICY STATEMENT
SUITABILITY FOR MINISTRY

A priest or deacon who does not possess faculties for ministry within the Diocese of Lake Charles will only be allowed to function in a ministerial capacity once he has obtained and completed the *Testimonial of Suitability for Ministry* Form (See APPENDIX 201-A for Priests and APPENDIX 201-B for Deacons).

This form is to be submitted to the appropriate person in the Diocese where the minister is currently serving. The completed form is to be sent to the Bishop of the Diocese of Lake Charles and he will inform the appropriate pastor/priest that permission has been granted for ministry by the given individual within the Diocese of Lake Charles for a specific ministry.

Promulgated: April 23, 2008

Effective: July 1, 2008


+ Glen John Provost
Bishop of Lake Charles

Testimonial of Suitability for Priestly Ministry

The Most Reverend Glen Provost
Diocese of Lake Charles
P. O. Box 3223
Lake Charles, LA 70602

Dear Bishop Provost:

The Reverend _____ is seeking to exercise priestly ministry in the Diocese of Lake Charles for _____ [event, i.e., celebrating Rite of Marriage/Parish Mission] on _____ [date], at _____ [parish] in _____ [city]. I have carefully reviewed our personnel files and all other records which we maintain, and I have consulted with those who served with him in the works he has been assigned under our authority. Based on these opinions, and on my own personal knowledge, I am able to make each of those statements listed below which I have checked off and initialed:

- ___ () He is a priest in good standing of the (Arch)Diocese of _____ /Religious Community of _____.
- ___ () He has never been suspended or otherwise canonically disciplined.
- ___ () No criminal charges have ever been brought against him, and he has no criminal record.
- ___ () He has never behaved in such a way as to indicate that he might deal with minors in an inappropriate manner.
- ___ () He does not have a current, untreated alcohol or substance abuse problem.
- ___ () He does not have a current, untreated emotional or mental health problem.
- ___ () He has never been involved in any incident, to my knowledge, which would adversely affect his performance as a priest.

Based on my inquiries and on my personal knowledge, _____ [name of priest] is a man of good moral character and reputation, and is qualified to serve as a priest in an effective and suitable manner.

I hereby grant him permission to seek to exercise priestly ministry in the Diocese of Lake Charles for _____ [event or period of time], with the understanding that such permission will cease at the end of this ministry or time.

Signature of Superior or Diocesan Ordinary of Priest

Date

Title

Seal

Testimonial of Suitability for Diaconal Ministry

The Most Reverend Glen Provost
Diocese of Lake Charles
P. O. Box 3223
Lake Charles, LA 70602

Dear Bishop Provost:

Deacon _____ is seeking to exercise diaconal ministry in the Diocese of Lake Charles for _____ [event, i.e., celebrating Rite of Marriage/Parish Mission] on _____ [date], at _____ [name of parish] in _____ [city].

I have carefully reviewed our personnel files and all other records which we maintain, and I have consulted with those who served with him in the works he has been assigned under our authority. Based on these opinions, and on my own personal knowledge, I am able to make each of those statements listed below which I have checked off and initialed:

- ____ () He is a deacon in good standing of the (Arch)Diocese of _____ /Religious Community of _____.
- ____ () He has never been suspended or otherwise canonically disciplined.
- ____ () No criminal charges have ever been brought against him, and he has no criminal record.
- ____ () He has never behaved in such a way as to indicate that he might deal with minors in an inappropriate manner.
- ____ () He does not have a current, untreated alcohol or substance abuse problem.
- ____ () He does not have a current, untreated emotional or mental health problem.
- ____ () He has never been involved in any incident, to my knowledge, which would adversely affect his performance as a deacon.

Based on my inquiries and on my personal knowledge, _____ [name of deacon] is a man of good moral character and reputation, and is qualified to serve as a deacon in an effective and suitable manner.

I hereby grant him permission to seek to exercise diaconal ministry in the Diocese of Lake Charles for _____ [event or period of time], with the understanding that such permission will cease at the end of this ministry or time.

Signature of Superior or Diocesan Ordinary of Priest

Date

Title

Seal

DIOCESE OF LAKE CHARLES

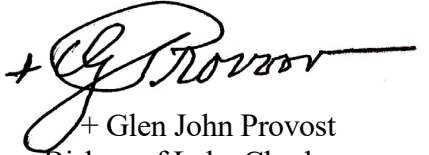
DIOCESAN POLICY STATEMENT

TESTIMONIAL LETTER FOR GUEST LAY SPEAKERS/PRESENTERS

The bishop is the moderator of the word in the diocese entrusted to him (c.756 § 2) and must see to the careful observation of the ministry of the word, especially those concerning catechetical formation (c. 386 § 1). For a guest lay speaker/presenter to address the sacred sciences, moral issues, or ethical questions in a parish of the diocese, the host pastor or sponsoring diocesan secretary must request permission in writing from the bishop. If the speaker/presenter is domiciled outside the diocese, this request must include a testimonial letter *per annum* from the ordinary of the speaker/presenter, unless the speaker/presenter already possesses an episcopal mandate (cf, *Ex Corde Ecclesia*, “The Applications of *Ex Corde Ecclesia* for the United States”). In this case, the host pastor or the sponsoring diocesan secretary in the letter of request need only reference this fact.

Promulgated: October 4, 2011

Effective: October 4, 2011



+ Glen John Provost
Bishop of Lake Charles

DIOCESE OF LAKE CHARLES
DIOCESAN POLICY STATEMENT
FACULTIES FOR PRIESTS

Priests within the Diocese of Lake Charles possess the following faculties:

PREACHING

1. **To preach the Word of God, including the homily at the Sacred Liturgy.** (cc. 764, 765)

This faculty has been granted 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 the priest is preaching or the permission of the proper superior when preaching in a church or oratory of a religious institute. **This faculty permits a priest to preach throughout the world** unless a diocese has required that a priest receive express permission to preach there.

BAPTISM AND CONFIRMATION

2. **To baptize or receive into full communion with the Catholic Church all persons, including those who have completed their fourteenth year.** (c. 863)

As a rule, an adult is to be confirmed, participate in the Eucharist, and receive Holy Communion immediately after baptism (c. 866). The term catechumen includes any non-baptized person (c. 851, 1°). A married person should not receive the Sacraments of Initiation unless he or she is living in a valid marriage.

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

Regarding baptized non-Catholics received into the Church, the Sacrament of Confirmation should be administered upon reception into full communion with the Church.

THE HOLY EUCHARIST

4. **To celebrate the Eucharist twice on weekdays and three times on Sundays and holy days of obligation, and on the vigils of Sundays and holy days of obligation.** (c. 905, §2)

The Diocesan Bishop grants delegation to the Dean of the appropriate deanery and the Vicars General or Episcopal Vicar to give verbal permission for a priest to celebrate the Sacrifice of the Mass more than prescribed for a true pastoral reason.

5. **To celebrate Mass on a weekday outside a church edifice provided there is a legitimate pastoral reason, the place is liturgically suitable, and the local pastor has no objection.** (c. 932, §1)

The permission of the Bishop is required to celebrate a public Mass outside a church edifice on Sundays and Holy Days and their vigils.

6. **To celebrate Mass in a suitable place outside a church edifice any day of the week if the priest is retired, on vacation, ill, or convalescing.** (c. 932, §1)
7. **To celebrate a Sunday or holy day Mass the afternoon before.** (c. 931)

Mass celebrated at 4:00 pm or afterwards the day before Sunday or a day of obligation satisfies the obligation of the faithful for the fulfillment of the Precept of the Church. In accord with the practice adopted by the Diocese of Lake Charles, the Mass celebrated at 4:00 pm or after may be the Mass of Sunday or the Holy Day in accord with the Universal Law of the Church and Liturgical Guidelines.

8. **To conduct a public procession with the Blessed Eucharist on the solemnity of the Body and Blood of Christ or other special occasions provided this can be done in a dignified manner.** (c. 944, §1, §2)

Permission is required to bring in Procession the Blessed Sacrament on streets. This permission may be requested in writing to the Diocesan Bishop or Administrator.

DISPENSATIONS: MASS OR PRECEPT, FAST AND ABSTINENCE

9. **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 pious activities.** (c. 1245)

This faculty may be used on behalf of all those committed to the pastoral care of a priest as well as those who are visiting the parish or ecclesiastical institution under the pastoral care of the priest. (c. 91) This permission may not be granted generally or indiscriminately. When one is morally impeded by forces beyond the control of the individual, one does not need the permission or dispensation of the dispensing authority.

10. **To dispense from the Eucharistic fast in particular cases and for a just reason.** (c. 919; c. 87, §1; c. 90, §1)

This dispensation may not be granted generally or indiscriminately.

PENANCE

11. **To hear confessions and grant sacramental absolution within the territory of the Diocese of Lake Charles.**

If a priest is an incardinated priest of the Diocese of Lake Charles or has established a canonical domicile (c. 102), the concession of habitual faculties to hear confession **authorizes the cleric to hear confessions validly and licitly throughout the world** unless specifically prohibited from doing so in a particular diocese by the ordinary of the place (c. 967, §2).

12. **To remit in the internal or external forum any *latae sententiae* (automatically incurred) penalty established by law, provided it is not reserved to the Apostolic See and has not been juridically declared.** (c. 1355, §2)

This faculty may be exercised anywhere, either in the act of sacramental confession or apart from it, on behalf of the members of this Diocese or of those who incurred the penalty in this Diocese. It may be exercised within the Diocese on behalf of anyone who has incurred the penalty elsewhere. By this faculty a priest may remit the excommunication attached to the **procuring of an abortion** (c. 1398) and that attached to **apostasy, heresy, or schism** (c. 1364). An appropriate penance should be given to the penitent when absolving from these censures. In case of apostasy, heresy or schism, the remission should, if possible, be granted in the external forum so that a record may be had of the penitent's reconciliation and subsequent ecclesial rights and obligations, such as the right to marry in accord with canonical form (c. 1117) with due regard to law and current legislation in the Universal Church. The following excommunications are reserved to the Apostolic See: desecration of the Sacred Species; violence against the Roman Pontiff; absolution of an accomplice against the Sixth Commandment; a Confessor's direct violation of the Seal of Confession; and the recording of what is said by a penitent or confessor in the confessional.

VOWS - OATHS

14. **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 harm others who refuse to remit the obligation.** (cc. 1195, 1196, 1203)

MARRIAGE

15. **To assist at marriages within the parish or other territory or church in which a priest possesses ordinary power, or for which you are generally or specifically delegated by the local pastor or the ordinary of the place.** (cc. 1109-1111)

This faculty allows the pastor and parochial vicar to assist validly at all marriages within the limits of their parish territory (c. 1109). Parochial Vicars are generally delegated to perform marriages within the limits of the territory of the parish to which they are assigned for the duration of their appointment. Pastors or parochial vicars of a **personal** parish may validly assist at marriages when at least one of the parties is a parishioner (c. 1110). The pastor may delegate or the parochial vicar may sub-delegate a priest or deacon to assist at marriages; this must be expressly given to a specific person for a specific marriage (c. 1111, §1; 137, §1, §3, §4).

All priests assisting at marriages in this diocese are to follow the policies and guidelines as established by the bishops of Louisiana for the preparation of couples for this sacrament.

16. **To dispense for marriage from all ecclesiastical impediments to marriage from which the ordinary of the place may dispense, whenever everything has been prepared for**

the wedding (or convalidation) and the delay to a dispensation from competent authority would be likely to cause serious harm. (c. 1080)

The chancery should be notified when such a dispensation has been granted so that it may be properly recorded. This faculty does not extend to dispensations from the impediment arising from Sacred Orders or from a public perpetual vow of chastity in a pontifical religious institute.

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

Our local custom has generally been to publish banns in parish bulletins, especially the parish where the marriage takes place. It would seem wise to provide this sort of publicity even for mixed marriages.

SEPARATIONS

18. **To allow the separation of spouses from common conjugal life when grave danger of soul or body exists to them or their children. (c. 1692, §1, §2; c. 1151; c. 1152, §1, §2, §3; c. 1153, §1, §2; c. 1154; c. 1155)**

SACRAMENTALS - BLESSINGS

19. **To administer the sacramentals of the church especially blessings, in accord with the liturgical books. (c. 1168; c. 1169, §2, §3; c. 1170)**

FUNERALS

20. **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. (c 1183, §2)**
21. **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. (c. 1183, §3)**

In such celebrations the Rite of Christian Burial should be appropriately accommodated to the special ecumenical situation. Non-Catholics participating in the celebration are not to receive Holy Communion.

SPECIAL FACULTIES GRANTED BY THE DIOCESAN BISHOP

1. **To commute the Divine Office.**

It is the desire of Holy Mother Church that her sons who have dedicated themselves to Holy Orders fulfill five of the prescribed Hours of prayer and to fulfill them “as far as possible at the appropriate times” (*General Instruction of the Liturgy of the Hours*, 29). The Hours that are obliged are Office of Readings, Morning Prayer, one of the Daytime Hours, Evening

Prayer, and Night Prayer. Further, a priest may fulfill his obligation to pray the Hours by praying the appropriate Hours according to the Roman Breviary. A priest is to observe the rubrics of the Liturgy of the Hours or the Roman Breviary in integrity.

In virtue of the authority inherent in the office of the Diocesan Bishop recognized in Canon 87, the Bishop may dispense an individual priest from this obligation if just and reasonable cause exists. (Canon 90)

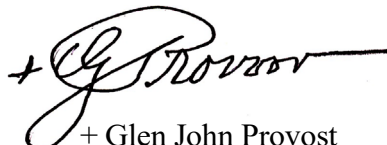
Only a priest who requests in writing to the Diocesan Bishop and receive his explicit permission may be individually dispensed from the obligation of the Divine Office. The Diocesan Bishop will set the conditions and time for the dispensation. Only with a letter of renewal may the dispensation continue.

2. Use of Exorcism Prayer

Every priest legitimately exercising in the Diocese of Lake Charles is granted the habitual authorization to employ in the Latin language the prayer *Exorcismus in Satanam et Angelos apostaticos* found in Title XII, Chapter 3 of *Rituale Romanum* in effect in 1962 when it is deemed pastorally prudent for use.

Promulgated: February 22, 2020

Effective: July 1, 2020



+ Glen John Provost
Bishop of Lake Charles

DIOCESE OF LAKE CHARLES

DIOCESAN POLICY STATEMENT

CONTINUING FORMATION OF PRIESTS

Continuing education and formation for priests is lifelong. It is rooted in the traditional understanding of conversion as an ongoing process that touches all facets of the one's life as a priest: intellectual, affective, social, spiritual, moral, and ecclesial. The bishops of the United States define "continuing formation" as "any learning after ordination, including growth both internal (spiritual, social, psychological) and external (external changes, theological disciplines and pastoral skills)."

The person primarily responsible for continuing formation is the individual priest himself.

The Diocesan Bishop has appointed a Director of Continuing Formation to assist the priests of this Diocese in this important task. The Director of Continuing Formation will form a Committee for Continuing Formation.

This policy deals with the following dimensions of continuing formation: spiritual growth, academic and professional growth, accountability, and the rights and responsibilities each priest is to have in this regard.

SPIRITUAL GROWTH

The spiritual development of priests is part of their continuing formation since its aim is the total development of the person in ministry. This policy deals with five instruments of the priest's spiritual growth: retreats, prayer days, support groups, spiritual direction and the annual convocation.

A. Retreat

All priests serving in the Diocese of Lake Charles are required to make an annual retreat. Every second year all must attend a diocesan retreat. In the other years, priests are free to choose whatever style of retreat they wish. However, they must notify the Office of Continuing Formation when the accountability forms are due each year.

The Director of the Office of Continuing Formation is responsible for retreats. He is charged with searching for and recommending retreat directors to be invited by the Bishop. Priests will be informed in advance of what to expect in each retreat.

Costs of the retreat for priests active in the Diocese of Lake Charles are paid by the parish or department for which the priest serves. Retired priests are invited and urged to attend the diocesan retreat. The fees of retired priests are paid by the Office of Continuing Formation.

For the years when a priest can plan his own retreat, the allotted amount for the cost of the retreat may be no more than \$700.00 and must be paid to retreat facility directly.

Religious priests serving in the Diocese of Lake Charles are invited and urged to participate in diocesan retreats.

Priests in active ministry who are unable to attend the retreat are to request permission from the Bishop in writing before the retreat.

B. Days of Prayer

All priests are encouraged to make days of prayer throughout the year.

The Presbyteral Council will sponsor mornings of reflection and prayer at least twice a year for all priests.

C. Support Groups

Support Groups of priests are encouraged as an opportunity for fraternal growth and a means for priests to speak openly about matters of the spiritual life and ministry to brother priests.

It is encouraged that Support Groups meet monthly to pray and discuss pertinent aspects of priestly life.

D. Spiritual Direction

Spiritual Direction is encouraged and urged so that the priest may grow in holiness and virtue.

E. Annual Convocation

The Annual Convocation is mandatory for all priests (diocesan and religious) and for those who will be ordained in the coming year to the transitional diaconate or are ordained to the transitional diaconate for the Diocese of Lake Charles. Its purpose is to assist the priest to grow in the four areas of formation. The fees and registration of the Annual Convocation are to be paid by the parish or department for which the priest ministers.

ACADEMIC AND PROFESSIONAL GROWTH

Priests are encouraged to foster the intellectual life through personal and professional study. The priest should keep the following in mind:

- A. Each priest of the Diocese is encouraged to attend workshops and seminars related to his ministry as a priest every year. Diocesan sponsored programs should be given priority in one's yearly educational plans. To do this, each person is permitted one week of released time per year in addition to vacation and may not exceed this allotted week without the Bishop's written permission.
- B. The Presbyteral Council and the Office of the Vicar for Clergy and Religious sponsors three workshops. The first workshop is for the newly ordained priests and is a one-day orientation held at the Diocesan Offices. The Vicar for Clergy also offers a workshop periodically for new pastors. The last workshop is a pre-retirement session for those priests who are approaching the age of retirement.

These workshops will be announced as needed.

In addition to the annual cost of a retreat, each priest serving in the Diocese of Lake Charles is authorized to spend up to \$700.00 per year for continuing education. These funds come from the parish or department for which he ministers and must be paid directly to the program or institution through whom the continuing education is being conducted. Any greater amount must have permission from the Bishop.

SABBATICALS

Sabbaticals range from one to three months in length and are for personal and professional growth. A sabbatical must be associated with an institution or program and must have the approval of the Bishop or Diocesan Administrator.

The following are guidelines for applying for a sabbatical in the Diocese of Lake Charles.

1) Application for Sabbatical

Requests for sabbaticals must be made to the Bishop in writing and include the purpose; the time frame; the relationship to ministry, spiritual growth, and personal growth; and the cost and location.

Application for a sabbatical should be made as far in advance as possible. The Bishop may decide to postpone a sabbatical plan at his discretion for the good of pastoral planning.

The Bishop may consult whoever he deems necessary and appropriate on the practicality or feasibility of a sabbatical.

The granting of a sabbatical will be judged upon the following criteria:

- a) Degree of usefulness for ministry in the Diocese of Lake Charles
- b) Years of ministry in the Church and the Diocese of Lake Charles; priests are eligible to apply for a sabbatical every seven years
- c) Quality of the program
- d) Needs of the individual priest

2) Financing of the Sabbatical

The financing of the sabbatical is determined by the Bishop in consultation with those of his choosing. It is customary that the cost of the sabbatical will be shared by the Diocese of Lake Charles, the parish or department of ministry, and the individual priest. The request and arrangement for payments are to be made after the sabbatical has been granted.

When a sabbatical has been approved by the Bishop, the parish or department of ministry will continue the full salary.

3) Replacement for Ministry during the Sabbatical

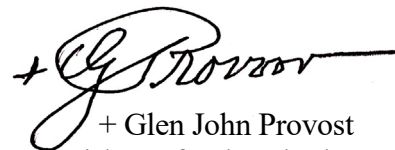
Depending on the length of the sabbatical, the Bishop may assign an administrator to act for the parish in the absence of a pastor. All sacramental schedules must be filled in before the priest leaves the Diocese for the sabbatical.

ACCOUNTABILITY

Each priest should give an account of his professional, education, spiritual, and continuing formation. The minimum standard for priests working in the Diocese of Lake Charles is twenty (20) hours in continuing education/formation a year. Priests of the Diocese of Lake Charles are asked to complete the accountability form that is sent by the Director of Continuing Formation annually.

Promulgated: February 22, 2020

Effective: July 1, 2020



+ Glen John Provost
Bishop of Lake Charles

DIOCESE OF LAKE CHARLES

GUIDELINES FOR POSTGRADUATE CONTINUING EDUCATION

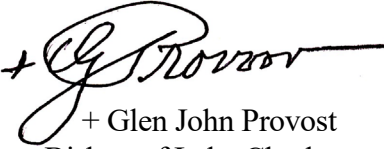
Postgraduate Continuing Education is defined as the pursuit of any graduate degree after ordination. The pursuit of the studies may be:

- a) Requested by the Diocese in the Person of the Diocesan Bishop or Administrator. In these cases, the Diocese of Lake Charles pays for all fees and tuition associated with the studies. The Diocese will pay the salary and benefits of the priest.
- b) Requested by the individual priest to the Diocesan Bishop or Administrator. In these cases, the studies are treated in the same fashion as a sabbatical both for absences and financing (cf. Policy 203) and may be modified by the Bishop. The priest should include in his request the reasons that he thinks the formal studies will benefit the ministry of the Church in the Diocese of Lake Charles.

All priests who are pursuing Postgraduate Continuing Education degrees are urged to seek grants and scholarships to help defer expenses.

Promulgated: February 22, 2020

Effective: July 1, 2020



+ Glen John Provost
Bishop of Lake Charles

DIOCESE OF LAKE CHARLES

DIOCESAN POLICY STATEMENT

BEHAVIORAL ADDICTIONS, COMPULSIONS, ALCOHOLISM, AND OTHER DRUG
DEPENDENCIES

Alcoholism, various forms of chemical dependency, and addictive behaviors constitute some of the most serious health and social problems in contemporary American society. Behavioral addictions and compulsions are also becoming more prevalent and can have devastating effects on people's mental health and ability to engage with others and cope with life's challenges. Dependency is devastating to the spiritual life and clerical life of ministers of Holy Mother Church.

As a Mother, the Church's overriding concern is addressing the problem of dependency in the clergy both in a spirit of justice and charity, providing opportunity for mental health and emotional support; and ensuring that the sacramental and pastoral needs of the people of God are addressed.

The basis of this policy is charity which demands that the truth be spoken.

For the sake of clarification, "dependency" in this policy refers to alcoholism and other forms of chemical, drug, and behavioral addictions and compulsions (for example pornography and gambling).

POLICY OVERVIEW

1. Dependency is a human disease condition, as indicated by overwhelming medical evidence. Therefore, it is the policy of the Diocese to address the problem of all addictive behaviors directly with informed and compassionate concern.
2. Since growth in the spiritual and moral life builds upon nature, the Diocese of Lake Charles seeks to ensure that clerics who suffer from dependency seek the proper professional help not excluding residency at a treatment center.
3. Evidence indicates that persons suffering from dependency may be unable to recognize the truth of the dependency. Therefore, fraternal charity dictates that fellow clerics, support groups, and staff of parishes and institutions to assist the individual with the awareness of dependency. Those who are concerned should contact the Vicar for Clergy, the Vicar General, and/or the Diocesan Bishop so that the proper assistance can be given.

PROCEDURES FOR IMPLEMENTATION

The procedures for implementing the policy concerning dependency for the Diocese of Lake Charles takes as its first principle the good of souls. The two concerns in this regard are the cleric himself and the people whom he serves.

This policy adopts four basic steps for the identification of dependency. The four steps are identification, intervention, treatment, and recovery.

1. Identification of a problem. Dependency becomes a problem when the individual's behavior or compulsions repeatedly:
 - a. Impairs his interpersonal life among the clergy and the faithful;
 - b. Interferes with the proper performance of his assigned duties;
 - c. Reduces his dependability;
 - d. Affects his physical, mental or spiritual health;
 - e. Reflects discredit on his clerical office.

The dependency becomes an issue when one or more of these before-listed items become evident.

2. Intervention. Since it is difficult for an addict to self-diagnose or to volunteer for treatment, intervention is sometimes necessary. The notion that it is not possible to help a person suffering from addiction until that person wants help is false and should be avoided.

It is strongly recommended that a cleric undertakes a personal fraternal correction, and if the individual does not respond or continues to demonstrate the dependency, the cleric who is intervening should discuss the matter with the Bishop or Vicar for Clergy and Religious, observing appropriate discretion.

When preparing for an intervention, it is important to review with the Bishop and the Vicar for Clergy knowledge of **specific facts and events** that point to the existence of dependency.

3. Treatment. Proper treatment for dependency will vary from case to case. Determination of treatment will depend on such factors as duration from onset, degree of impairment, physical and psychological complications, social and vocational complications, insight, and motivation.


The Bishop, the Vicar for Clergy, the Vicar General, and others as determined by the Bishop will help to determine the proper treatment.

4. Recovery. Upon satisfactory completion of primary treatment, the Bishop will consider viability for ministry in the Diocese of Lake Charles based on Canon Law, norms of the USCCB, particular law of the Diocese, and the good of the people of God in the Diocese of Lake Charles.

No cleric is guaranteed an assignment if he is a perceived danger to himself or others.

Promulgated: February 22, 2020

Effective: July 1, 2020


+ Glen John Provost
Bishop of Lake Charles

Updated: July 1, 2020

DIOCESE OF LAKE CHARLES

DIOCESAN POLICY STATEMENT

COMPENSATION FOR CLERGY WORKING IN OR FOR THE DIOCESE

All pastors, parochial vicars, full-time chaplains, diocesan officials, and priests in full-time teaching or student positions are entitled to a fair financial compensation in return for sharing their God given gifts.

In addition to direct financial compensation, each priest working in the Diocese of Lake Charles shall be provided with adequate housing, board, insurance, retirement programs, and any other benefits as may be deemed appropriate by the Bishop, in consultation with the Diocesan Finance Council and the Presbyteral Council.

All compensation and benefits shall be in compliance with all Federal, State, and local laws and regulations.

Clergy who are in residence for and assist in sacramental ministry are entitled to and cannot be denied basic residential rights of groceries, internet access, electricity, access to laundry, access to the kitchen, and other rights that are deemed so by Vicar for Clergy or the Bishop's Delegate. Clergy who do not assist sacramentally in parishes, but whose assignment pays the Room and Board Allowance will be afforded these same rights.

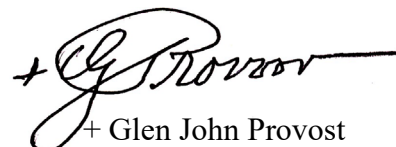
Each priest working in the Diocese of Lake Charles is considered to be self-employed and is responsible for payment of his own taxes at any and all applicable levels of taxation/government.

Compensation tables and guidelines may be found in Appendix 206 of this document. Appendix 206, A shall be reevaluated every three years in consultation with the Presbyteral Council. Any raise in compensation that is not a cost of living raise shall be discussed with the Diocesan Finance Council and the Presbyteral Council.

Additionally, each parish of the Diocese of Lake Charles shall participate in the Saint Charles Borromeo Scholarship Fund as set forth in Policy 106 of this document.

Promulgated: April 23, 2008

Effective: July 1, 2008


+ Glen John Provost
Bishop of Lake Charles

Updated: July 1, 2020

DIOCESE OF LAKE CHARLES

COMPENSATION GUIDELINES FOR DIOCESAN & RELIGIOUS CLERGY

CLERGY SALARIES

Effective July 1, 2020, monthly salaries for pastors, parochial vicars (associate pastors), those in full-time diocesan administration, full-time chaplains, and priests teaching full-time are as indicated in the following tables:

	PASTORS
2023-2024	\$2,290.00
2024-2025	\$2,340.00
2025-2026	\$2,350.00

	PAROCHIAL VICARS
2023-2024	\$2,190.00
2024-2025	\$2,240.00
2025-2026	\$2,290.00

	INCREMENT FOR YEARS OF ORDINATION
1-6 years:	\$25/month
7-12 years:	\$50/month
13-18 years:	\$75/month
19-24 years:	\$100/month
25-30 years:	\$125/month
31-36 years:	\$150/month
36 and above:	\$200/month

AUTOMOBILE

No parish may own an automobile for the use of a pastor, parochial vicar, or transitional deacon.

BUSINESS EXPENSE REIMBURSEMENT

Each priest is allowed a monthly reimbursement for business related expenses. It is recommended that each priest receive two checks per month: 1) his salary, and 2) the business expense reimbursement (coded 5322). The maximum allowable reimbursement is to follow this table:

2023-2026	\$510/month
-----------	-------------

The pastor of the parish is to maintain accounting records for the business expense reimbursement for himself and his parochial vicar(s).

When business expense exceeds the allowable reimbursement for any one month, the excess may carry over to the following month(s).

SOCIAL SECURITY (FICA)

1. Each priest must decide and is responsible for communicating to the parish/diocesan bookkeeper if he wishes to have Federal and State Tax withheld from his monthly salary check and how much he wishes to have withheld. A W-4 Form must be completed.

A priest **may not** withhold Social Security or Medicare tax payments.

2. Current tax law requires a payment of Social Security taxes on the salary plus a reasonable value of housing in the rectory.

To assist in computing this payment, it is conservatively estimated that the rental value of such housing is \$450.00 per month. This evaluation is for calculating Social Security taxes only. It has no relation to one's income taxes.

3. All diocesan priests and transitional deacons must be enrolled in the Social Security program.
4. All international priests working in the Diocese of Lake Charles must have either a Work Visa or a Missionary Visa in order to earn a salary; International priests on a Visitor's Visa cannot receive an assignment, salary, or stipends in the Diocese of Lake Charles.

All international priests must comply with the laws of the United States of America regarding Social Security and Income Taxes.

CHAPLAIN

The institution shall compensate a chaplain who serves. A chaplain of a public hospital or institution working full-time in that capacity will receive salary, benefits, and operating expenses from a fund established and paid into by the church parishes served by the hospital or institution. In other situations, the dean and the pastors of the area served are responsible for determining the proportionate amount to be assessed each parish.

DIOCESAN HEALTH AND HOSPITALIZATION INSURANCE

Effective September 1, 1989, each priest and transitional deacon of the Diocese was insured with the Diocese of Lake Charles Health Care Plan.

The Diocese will pay the deductible and the co-pay expense for the diocesan priests. The Fiscal Office can clarify the procedure for the individual priest to follow.

Religious clergy will pay from parish funds to their community health programs a sum equal to the current rate for diocesan clergy, either on a monthly or annual basis.

In order to participate in the Health Care Plan of the Diocese of Lake Charles, all Diocesan Priests of the Diocese of Lake Charles as well as Diocesan Priests from other dioceses must also be enrolled in Social Security.

Priests 65 years old or older, please note: The Diocesan Health Plan applies only to hospitals approved by MEDICARE. Call the Fiscal Office for helpful information on clergy hospitalization and claims.

RETIREMENT PLAN

Only priests incardinated into the Diocese of Lake Charles are eligible to enroll in the retirement program of the Diocese of Lake Charles.

A Religious Priest who is in an assignment in the Diocese of Lake Charles with an official agreement between his Community and the Diocese or the Diocesan Priest from another Diocese who is working in the Diocese with an official arrangement between the Diocese of Lake Charles and his home Diocese, will pay from parish funds to the Diocese of Lake Charles a sum equal to the current rate for diocesan clergy. The monies for either the religious priest or the diocesan priest incardinated in another diocese will be forwarded to his religious community or diocese.

A priest serving in the Diocese who has come from elsewhere and who is serving without a specific time commitment must work in the Diocese of Lake Charles for three years before payment can be made to his Community or Diocese retirement program. Payments will be made to his Community’s or Diocese’s Retirement plan and will begin after the three-year period.

All active priests of the Diocese of Lake Charles must participate in the retirement program administered by the MetLife Insurance Company. Diocesan Priests must be enrolled in Social Security to be eligible for the Diocesan Retirement Plan.

The parish, department, or institution must pay the entire retirement assessment for each priest assigned to it as of July 1 of each year regardless if the priest is participating in the Diocesan Retirement Plan or not. The cost for each priest to be paid out on July 1 is:

2023-2024	\$3,350.00
2024-2025	\$3,375.00
2025-2026	\$3,400.00

ROOM & BOARD ALLOWANCE FOR ACTIVE PRIESTS IN RESIDENCE

The Diocese of Lake Charles or department will pay \$450.00 per month to the parish for room and board of a priest simply in residence who renders no service to the parish.

SUBSTITUTE AND WEEKEND HELP

Compensation for one (1) Mass with or without Confessions shall be \$100.00 for Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation including their Vigil. Regular compensation for a weekday Mass will be \$50.00. In addition, if a Mass Stipend for a Mass Intention is offered it is given to a priest who offers substitute assistance.

Compensation for lesser or extra services will be negotiated by the parties involved.

Regardless of services rendered, the mileage of a priest who is traveling should always be considered.

SALARIES OF TRANSITIONAL DEACONS/INTERNS AND SEMINARIANS SERVING IN PARISHES DURING INTERSHIP PROGRAMS

A transitional deacon serving in a parish of the Diocese during an internship program shall be paid 75% of the salary as of a parochial vicar and the full monthly business allowance/expense reimbursement commencing at the conclusion of the month in which he is first employed in ministry.

A seminarian serving in a parish during his internship between the third and fourth year of theology and is not an ordained deacon will receive 75% of the salary of a parochial vicar commencing after the first month of employment in the parish.

A seminarian not in an internship program and serving in a parish will receive 50% of the salary of a parochial vicar beginning after the first month of employment in the parish.

Promulgated: May 9, 2023

Effective: July 1, 2023

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Glen John Provost". The signature is written in a cursive style with a cross at the beginning.

✠Glen John Provost
Bishop of Lake Charles

DIOCESE OF LAKE CHARLES
DIOCESAN POLICY STATEMENT

PRIESTS' ABSENCES

This policy affects all priests of the Diocese of Lake Charles, all priests serving actively in the Diocese of Lake Charles, and those who will begin priestly ministry in the Diocese of Lake Charles either by ordination or service.

Vacation time is calculated from the beginning of the calendar year.

Vacation time of a month is to be understood as thirty (30) days.

VACATION

1. All absences except for sick days, regular days out of the office (the “day off”), spiritual retreat, continuing education, and legitimate emergencies are to be included in the computation of the month of vacation each year permitted in the Code of Canon Law, canons 533, § 2 and 550, §3. During a vacation period, the regular day out of the office is to be computed in the vacation period, and, therefore, may not be added to the one-month vacation permitted in law.

In the Diocese of Lake Charles, vacation time, spiritual retreat, and continuing education will be calculated according to the calendar year. For the time allotted for spiritual retreats and continuing education, refer to the policies covering those topics.

Furthermore, no one is to be absent from his assignment for more than one consecutive month. The annual retreat and/or continuing education may not be added to a vacation period in order to extend the absence beyond one month.

2. Except for a grave and urgent cause, priests are not to be absent from their parishes on the occasions of major liturgical celebrations such as, but not limited to, All Saints Day and All Souls Day, Christmas, Ash Wednesday, Holy Week, the Sacred Triduum, Easter Sunday, the Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of the Lord, Parish Anniversaries, and Parochial Sacramental Celebrations.
3. Absences requiring tickets of any form of transportation must have a definite departure date and time and return date and time. Therefore, open ended tickets are not permitted.
4. When a priest will be absent for more than a week (seven days), he is to report the absence to the diocesan bishop, vicars general, the dean (cf. Canon 533, §3), and the pastor or parochial administrator if applicable. In the letter reporting the absence, the departure and return dates and times for any form of transportation requiring tickets must be included. This information is also to be given to the parish secretary or lay administrator.

For an absence one week or less, each priest is to inform the parish secretary or lay administrator by letter including the date he will be away from the parish or office and pastor or parochial administrator if applicable. Furthermore, if tickets for transportation are required, then dates and times are to be included.

In keeping with proper etiquette, it is highly recommended that priests personally contact the “supply” priest who will provide substitute assistance. It is not primarily the parish staff’s responsibility to contact them or make these arrangements. Substitute assistance should be acquired before the days of absence. A priest should have coverage for emergencies and funerals even for the regular day out of the office, and those who serve for these emergencies are to be informed as well. When “supply” priests are employed, a list of names and contact information is to be given to the parish secretary or lay administrator with the dates of the coverage. This list is to be included with the letter to the bishop, vicars general, and the dean.

INSTITUTIONS WITH CHAPLAINS

A chaplain in an institution(s) such as a hospital and nursing home must notify the pastor of the parish in which the institution is located of his absence. He should include the dates of the absence. Pastors and parochial vicars are responsible for the pastoral care of the institution(s) within the parish to which they are assigned during the absence of the chaplain.

OFFICIAL PILGRIMAGE

Pilgrimages and mission trips are considered part of the one-month vacation of each priest.

Any exception must be requested in writing to the bishop with reasons for the exception and requires a written response from the bishop.

Promulgated: January 8, 2020

Effective: July 1, 2020



✠Glen John Provost
Bishop of Lake Charles

DIOCESE OF LAKE CHARLES

DIOCESAN POLICY STATEMENT

PRE-RETIRED, SENIOR AND RETIRED PRIESTS

Retirement is one of the major life transitions that a priest will make. It is significant because of the personal and professional issues that he faces. Because many conditions of the priest's life change with retirement as well, the policies and guidelines affecting him are stated here for easy reference.

AGE OF RETIREMENT

The *motu proprio Ecclesiae Sanctae* (6 August 1966) states, "In order to put into effect the prescription of the Decree *Christus Dominus*, n. 31, all priests are asked to offer spontaneously to their Bishop their resignation from office, not later than at the completion of their seventy-fifth (75th) year of age".

At the age of seventy-five (75), a priest must submit a letter requesting retirement. However, a priest has the option to retire at age seventy (70). The pension for retired priests is set by the Bishop and Administration of the Diocese. To receive full retirement benefits, a priest be twenty (20) years vested in the retirement fund. For anything less than twenty years, he would be awarded a prorated share based on the number of years he participated in the retirement program.

For serious reasons of health, or other compelling circumstances, a priest may apply for retirement at an earlier age or be requested to retire at an earlier age. This application, stating specific reasons, must be presented to the Bishop who will consult with the Priestly Life and Ministry Committee and the Clergy Personnel Advisory Board.

In cases of complete disability prior to age seventy-five (75), a priest will receive full retirement benefits as determined by the Bishop and the Administration of the Diocese. In cases of partial disability, a priest may be assigned to some limited responsibilities and a pension determined accordingly.

A priest wishing to retire prior to his seventy-fifth (75th) birthday must approach the Ordinary of the Diocese about his intention to retire one (1) year prior to the date of his proposed retirement.

SENIOR PRIEST

A Senior Priest is one who has reached seventy (70) years of age and chooses to continue in ministry in an assignment made by the Bishop. A Senior Priest will receive the salary and benefits appropriate to his assignment plus one-half (1/2) of his retirement benefits.

PROCESS OF RETIREMENT

Because the quality of the priest's life in his senior years is dependent on his own financial planning and because many priests put off thinking about the topic until it is too late to plan, the Diocese of Lake Charles initiates the process through a period of pre-retirement that begins at the fifty-fifth (55th) birthday.

The Secretary for Clergy and Religious is responsible for the Pre-Retired and Retired clergy and is a resource for them throughout this process. He serves as an advocate for the senior and retired priests and is responsible for the implementations of this policy and its guidelines found in the appendix.

1. At fifty-five (55), the priest is to attend a pre-retirement workshop in which financial and life skills, and the spirituality of the senior priest are introduced.
2. At this time the Secretary for Clergy and Religious also provides the priest an information packet that outlines all the benefits and responsibilities that the retired priest has. This includes information on finances, housing, ministerial expectations, a living will, last will and testament, power of attorney letters, and articles that might help him plan for his future.
3. Five (5) years prior to retirement, the priest submits a life-plan that will describe specifically how he intends to enter retirement, where he will live and other pertinent information.
4. At seventy-five (75), a priest has two options. He may choose to retire outright and even move out of the diocese itself. This person would then be classified as a "Retired Priest."
5. The second option would be for the priest to resign from full-time work, but to continue to exercise his pastoral ministry on a part-time basis. He may then choose to live in a rectory and be paid for his services (confer appendix). He may want to work in a part-time capacity as a hospital chaplain, or in a nursing home, retreat house, or campus ministry setting. This policy and the guidelines would apply to him in every way but he would be classified as a "Senior Priest". The Secretary for Clergy and Religious works with him to find a position and may have to work with him later when the time comes for him to enter the ranks of the fully retired clergy.

BENEFITS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

1. All active diocesan priests must participate in the retirement program. Diocesan priests must also be enrolled in Social Security in order to be eligible to join this plan. For a religious priest to participate in the Diocesan program, the entire order working within the Diocese must elect to join as a group.

2. The Diocese of Lake Charles will maintain and contribute to an annuity fund specifically set up for retirement benefits for priests. The retired or senior priest will receive a monthly clergy pension from the Diocese. Benefits from the retirement annuity represents only a portion of the monthly pension.

A priest may choose to invest additional funds into the Diocesan Retirement Plan. These supplemental investments would raise the basic monthly pension according to the additional funds invested.

The benefits from the Retirement Plan will be in addition to any Social Security benefits received.

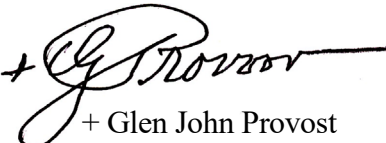
3. The Diocese of Lake Charles will pay the cost of the annual retreat and convocation for all retired priests incardinated in the Diocese who choose to attend.
4. Hospitalization insurance premiums for retired and senior priests are paid by the Diocese.
5. The cost for housing is paid by the individual priest.
6. Rent for a nursing home is paid by the individual priest.

For all priests who have participated in Social Security, the priests' welfare program of the Diocese pays nursing care costs beyond the Medicare and diocesan health care coverage.

Guidelines for this policy are contained in Appendix 207.

Promulgated: April 23, 2008

Effective: July 1, 2008



+ Glen John Provost
Bishop of Lake Charles

DIOCESE OF LAKE CHARLES

GUIDELINES FOR PRE-RETIRED, SENIOR AND RETIRED PRIESTS

Following are the guidelines for implementing the Diocesan Policy on retirement of priests.

I. Pre-retirement Preparation

A. The Secretary for Clergy and Religious shall serve as the coordinator of Pre-Retired and Retired Clergy. In this role, he shall:

1. Be responsible for the collection, research and dissemination of various resource materials which are deemed useful in helping the clergy plan for and/or live out retirement;
2. Schedule and lead or provide leadership for workshops when pertinent new or renewed information becomes available and is timely;
3. Visit with the Retired and Senior priests regularly to be their voice in the administrative structure of the Diocese, and to serve as an advocate for their needs and interests.

B. Prior to the first anniversary of ordination of a priest the Secretary for Clergy and Religious shall review with the priest a Retirement Preparation Packet and conduct a briefing on the subject of retirement and preparation for same. The Retirement Packet shall include at least the following:

1. A copy of the current Diocesan Retirement Policy and Guidelines.
2. A "Power of Attorney" form, a copy of which is to be filled out and returned to the Chancellor. By way of this form each priest will designate some person to serve as his power of attorney.
3. A **Funeral Planning Guide for Priests** which offers the priest to indicate his desires about his funeral, including scripture readings, music, whom to notify, burial information such as funeral home, cemetery, etc. A copy of this completed form must be filed with the Chancellor. This information is to be updated periodically.
4. A "living will." The purpose of this is to provide instructions as to the

personal desires of the priest regarding the use of "extra-ordinary" means of life-support and other medical procedures should he become incapacitated and unable to make those decisions later. This "living will" shall also address possible donations of organs should this be appropriate at the time of death.

5. A legally drawn will to assure prompt and proper disposition of the personal possessions of the priest. This will is to be filed with the Chancellor in an envelope sealed by the priest making the will.
6. A form to be filled out and returned to the chancellor showing proof of the priest having a Social Security account.
7. This information shall be reviewed every five (5) years and not later than when the priest reaches the age of fifty-five (55).

II. Emotional and Psychological Preparation

- A. Every effort must be made by the Secretary for Clergy and Religious, the Continuing Formation Committee for Clergy, and the Diocesan Administration to assure the priests serving the Diocese are given complete and accurate information regarding retirement.
- B. A list of names of counselors, financial, business, legal, and psychological, shall be kept on file to assure adequate and timely referrals as a priest may need.
- C. Since priests are ordained for life, and since they may not wish to serve in a "high stress" assignment past a certain point in their lives, there shall be an opportunity for a priest to request assignment to a less stressful position. This is to serve the priests and at the same time allow them to continue to share their pastoral gifts.
- D. Senior priests may request assignment of Parochial Vicar, of Chaplain at a hospital, or some similar position which best suits them and their needs. As in all cases, such pastoral assignments are at the discretion of the Bishop.

III. Housing after Retirement

- A. The cost of housing is the responsibility of the individual priest.
- B. A retired or senior priest may choose his place of residence without restriction.

- C. However, should he choose to live in a Residence for Retired Priests owned or arranged for by the Diocese, the Bishop shall establish the reasonable value of room and board and this amount becomes the responsibility of the retired priest and is to be paid to the Diocese.
 - D. Should a senior or retired priest choose to reside in a parish rectory, the following applies:
 - 1. The Bishop shall establish the value of room and board and this amount is the responsibility of the retired priest and is to be paid to the parish.
 - 2. The retired or senior priest shall be compensated according to Diocesan Policies for any services(s) he renders to the parish.
 - E. Should the retired priest require housing in a nursing home facility, he is responsible for payment of such care.
- IV. Hospitalization
- A. The Diocese shall pay the hospitalization insurance policy premiums for retired and senior priests.
 - B. The Diocese will pay the deductible and the co-pay for the retired or senior priest if funds are not otherwise provided.
- V. Diocesan Retirement Annuity Fund
- A. In accord with the Retirement Policy of the Diocese, an annuity fund shall be maintained by the Diocese for the express and sole purpose of providing funds for the monthly compensation to be paid to senior or retired priests. Each parish, department or office to which the priest is assigned throughout his years of service in and for the Diocese shall contribute to this fund as directed by the Diocesan administration.
 - B. Each individual priest may choose voluntarily to contribute additional monies to the Retirement Fund.
- VI. Monthly Benefits and Computation of Same
- A. Each priest, upon retirement, shall receive a retirement benefit from the Diocese of Lake Charles in the amount of the current salary of a pastor, increment for years of ordination, and current business allowance. Forty percent (40%) of this retirement

benefit may be claimed as living expense.

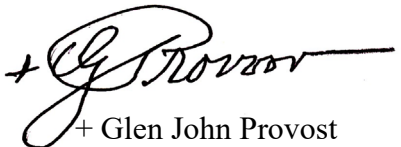
- B. Any supplemental monies invested by the priest into the Retirement Fund (V., B. above) shall be added to the priest's monthly benefit in direct proportion to the amount he invested in the Retirement Fund. This added benefit will be in addition to the monthly salary.

VII. Social Security Benefits

- A. Social Security benefits shall be in addition to the monthly retirement benefit.
- B. For all priests who have participated in Social Security, the priests' welfare program of the Diocese pays nursing care costs beyond the Medicare and Diocesan health care coverage.

Promulgated: October 13, 2011

Effective: July 1, 2012


+ Glen John Provost
Bishop of Lake Charles

DIOCESE OF LAKE CHARLES

DIOCESAN POLICY STATEMENT

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT PRIESTS

Applications for international student priests will be considered by the bishop on an individual basis. The positions of residence will be handled by the Bishop through his delegate, the Vicar for Clergy. The Vicar for Clergy will work with the Bishop and his delegates in determining places of residence. To be accepted, the student priest must forward to the Bishop a letter of recommendation from his Bishop/Superior, a letter of acceptance from McNeese State University, **Immigration and Naturalization Services approval**, and a letter requesting permission to be in residence in the Diocese. Acceptance of the student priest and admission to the Diocese in this program will be made by the Bishop of Lake Charles by means of a letter to the student priest and his Bishop/Superior. Ordinarily, a student priest will be ineligible to apply for incardination in this Diocese. In these cases, Canon 268, §1 will not apply.

In seeking a parish of residence, the Bishop, his delegate, or the Vicar for Clergy and Religious, will work together with the pastor of the parish being considered for residence. Actual assignment to a parish of residence will depend upon and follow completion of the process outlined above.

Upon acceptance of the student priest, the Diocese of Lake Charles will provide hospital insurance coverage. The parish of residence will supply room and board and a stipend of \$600.00 a month for the months in which the student priest is living and working in the parish. The student priest or his Diocese/Community is totally responsible for tuition, books, and all costs related to his education at McNeese, including transportation.

Prior to arriving in the Diocese of Lake Charles, the student priest shall prepare for residency by studying American English. In order to facilitate his ministry and service in the host Diocese, the student priest will be required to participate in a Diocesan “Inculturation Program” to help him understand American and local customs, practices and traditions.

Before assuming residence in the host parish, the student priest shall meet with the pastor to discuss the details of living in and working in the parish. This discussion will include particulars of parish/rectory life including cooking and meals, laundry, community life, entertaining in the house/rectory, guests, telephone and personal expenses, attitudes toward and involvement of laity and women in ministry, etc.

It is understood that the student priest’s primary commitment is to study. Should he at any time discontinue studies other than at summer break, his status and residency will be reevaluated by his Pastor and the Vicar for Clergy and Religious, who will then make a recommendation to the Bishop. In order to help defray the costs of his room and board, the student priest is expected to assist with confessions and weekday and weekend masses according to the needs of the parish.


Arrangements regarding weddings, wakes, and funerals can be made by the pastor and the student priest. It is also understood that the student priest is not expected to be in the parish when school is not in session, particularly at semester and summer breaks; concomitant with this understanding is that the monthly stipend is not paid. When the university is not in session, should the student priest, with the approval of the pastor, elect to be in the parish, his stipend will be adjusted accordingly.

While in residence in the Diocese, the student priest is expected to follow all policies and guidelines as contained in “The Diocesan Policies and Guidelines Manual.” He shall be under the supervision and direction of the pastor or his delegate of the parish in which he has residence. At the end of each Spring semester the Pastor will evaluate the student priest's progress and submit a report to the Vicar for Clergy and Religious which will determine his status for the Fall semester.

The Vicar for Clergy and Religious will be the primary contact for the Pastor and student priest once residency has begun.

Promulgated: January 8, 2020

Effective: July 1, 2020



+ Glen John Provost
Bishop of Lake Charles

DIOCESE OF LAKE CHARLES

DIOCESAN POLICY STATEMENT

RELATIONSHIP OF PASTOR AND PAROCHIAL VICAR

In his priestly prayer at the Last Supper, the Lord Jesus prayed for his Apostles and for us:

"May they all be one, Father, may they be one in us as you are in me and I am in you, so that the world may believe it was you who sent me." (John 17:21)

The task of priests is to serve as mediator between God and his people. To accomplish this noble end, the cleric himself must strive for union with God, with others, and with his fellow clergy. As a man, the cleric in his own unique work and life in the Church must seek the Lord and his ways.

In those parishes where more than one priest is assigned, the priests are to work together for the building up of the people entrusted to their care. The common work brings about a unity between the clergy. This unity is one of faith, charity, hope, and service to God and the people of the parish. The unity that is to be sought is one marked by mutual respect, understanding, and compassion; it is not one that demands the loss of identity or individuality, but obedience to lawful authority and the hierarchy of Holy Mother Church.

PASTOR

1. Pastors have true authority over their parishes, that is, that authority of service exemplified by the supreme Pastor, Jesus Christ. They derive this authority from the very office of pastor (parish priest) granted by the diocesan bishop.
2. The primary role of the pastor is to teach, lead, and proclaim the Gospel of Christ especially through the Mystery of the Sacraments. For that purpose, the pastor is to directly oversee the catechesis programs, liturgical celebrations, and moral growth of his parish. He is to appoint others when necessary to assist him in these areas so that the Gospel of Christ may be heard by all.
3. The pastor is the coordinator of the efforts of all the parish, especially the priests, deacons, and other members of the parish staff. For this reason, the pastor is the final word within his parish in the areas of catechesis, liturgical celebrations, and service opportunities. His duty it is to ensure that all programs are in conformity with the teachings of the Church and in keeping with all laws of the Church (universal and particular).
4. Pastors are to be fatherly and lead their parishes to Christ. Those priests who are not able to work with others or bring about a unity in Christ in a parish should ask the bishop for another assignment. The diocesan bishop holds the responsibility to bring to the attention of such priests the concerns of the people and his own concerns as well.
5. The pastor is to be aware that he is the pastor of all souls within the boundaries of his parish. For this reason, he should become aware of needs of the community to which he is assigned.

6. The pastor is to integrate all clergy (other priests and deacons) and occasionally seminarians into the life and activities of the parish in as constructive a fashion as possible, serving in the role of mentor and father, especially for those newly ordained and those in formation. His example becomes a model for these individuals.

PAROCHIAL VICAR AND OTHER CLERGY AND SEMINARIANS ASSIGNED TO A PARISH AND THEIR RELATIONSHIP WITH A PASTOR

1. A parochial vicar or a deacon is assigned to the parish under the supervision and direction of the pastor. His task is to cooperate with the pastor under the authority of the bishop in the parish.
2. Pastors should consult and advise with parochial vicars and deacons about parish duties and assignments. Primary consideration must be given to the service of the people of the parish, the sacramental celebrations, and the catechesis for the faithful.
3. The pastor and the parochial vicar should have regular meetings to discuss the life of the parish, evaluate current parish programs, plan new programs, and to ensure unity of purpose. All the clergy of the parish should act in a unified way for the good of the parish. It is for the pastor to make the final decision in matters of disagreement.

If the rights of any of the faithful are in jeopardy, the parochial vicar or deacon should approach the dean, Vicar for Clergy, or the Vicar General. A seminarian should approach the Director of Seminarians. All disputes should be handled at the lowest possible level of authority.

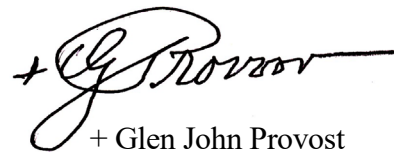
As a parochial vicar or deacon assigned to a parish, the cleric should recognize that he often will have to subordinate his personal feelings for the good of the parish. A parochial vicar, deacon, or seminarian must also strive to strengthen the bond of charity and cooperation within a parish assignment and serve the needs of the faithful.

4. The parochial vicar and deacon should feel a real personal sense of responsibility for the total life of the parish seeking ways to show initiative as well as cooperation among the clergy.
5. In rectory living, the pastor is to manage the household dutifully but respect the privacy and rights of each cleric living at the rectory. Nothing that is paid in common by the parish may be denied to a priest, deacon, or seminarian assigned to live at a parish rectory; nor may what is held to be common to the living situation be denied or expected to be paid by a cleric or seminarian assigned to live in a rectory or has an agreement of living within a parish rectory. Mutual respect is required in these circumstances to ensure a unity of ministry.
6. The parochial vicar, deacon, and pastor should keep each other informed of their various parish and community involvements and ministries. For this purpose, it is not prudent for a

deacon or parochial vicar to accept ministry outside of an assigned parish without the agreement of the pastor. The primary responsibility of all clerics assigned to a parish is the parish.

Promulgated: January 8, 2020

Effective: July 1, 2020



+ Glen John Provost
Bishop of Lake Charles


DIOCESE OF LAKE CHARLES
DIOCESAN POLICY STATEMENT
PRESBYTERAL COUNCIL

The Diocese of Lake Charles shall have an organization of priests, elected from among the priests of the Diocese, for the purpose of aiding the Bishop in matters concerning the welfare of the people of the Diocese.

Such a body of priests will be organized and function according to and under the *Statutes of the Presbyteral Council*. This constitution is attached as Appendix 210.

Promulgated: April 23, 2008

Effective: July 1, 2008



+ Glen John Provost
Bishop of Lake Charles

DIOCESE OF LAKE CHARLES

STATUTES OF THE PRESBYTERAL COUNCIL

- ARTICLE I NAME, PURPOSE AND FUNCTION
- Section A The Name of this organization shall be “The Presbyteral Council of the Diocese of Lake Charles.”
- Section B The Presbyteral Council is a consultative body of the Bishop with the purpose of “aid(ing) the Bishop in the governance of the Diocese according to the norm of law (that) the pastoral welfare of the people of God may be promoted as effectively as possible.” (Canon 495)
- Section C In order to carry out its duties relative to the welfare of the laity and clergy, the Presbyteral Council will also review the following areas:
1. Spiritual welfare (retreats, prayer life, etc.);
 2. Continuing formation;
 3. Material welfare (salary, housing, insurance, retirement, etc.);
 4. The welfare of the religious and the laity will be studied as deemed necessary by the Diocesan Bishop and the Presbyteral Council; and
 5. Any other issues deemed appropriate by the Diocesan Bishop.
- Section D Periodically, Diocesan Vicars, Deans, Secretaries of Secretariats, Directors of Offices and Chairpersons of various Diocesan Boards will be asked to submit information reports to the Presbyteral Council.
- ARTICLE II MEMBERSHIP
- Section A Canon 497 dictates how the Diocesan Bishop is to constitute the Presbyteral Council in his diocese.
- In the Diocese of Lake Charles, regarding the designation of members:
1. Not less than half the membership is to be freely elected
 2. Those who are appointed by the bishop as Vicar General, Judicial Vicar, Episcopal Vicar, and Dean are *ex Officio* members of the Council
 3. The Diocesan Bishop is free to name others at will
 4. All members possess the right to vote
- Section B Any priest currently enjoying the faculties of the Diocese of Lake Charles and actually residing in the Diocese, with the exception of those listed below, may be elected to the Presbyteral Council:
1. The Chancellor of the Diocese
 2. *Ex Officio* members
- Section C With regard to the elected members, two shall be elected from each of the following age groups:
- 25-40 years of age

41-60 years of age
61- above, not retired

One (1) retired priest will be elected from among the retired priests and one (1) religious priest will be elected.

Section D To ensure continuity, members are to be elected to “staggered terms” for a three-year period; if any elected member enters a different age group, he is to serve until the completion of his term.

Section E If an elected member fails to attend two consecutive meetings without adequate reason, the Chair shall remind him of his duty and verify his intentions to serve.

Section F It shall be the responsibility of members to

1. Attend all meetings informing the Chair when and why they are unable to be present
2. Serve as liaison persons to various committees as needed
3. Report to the clergy of his age group when necessary on issues before the Presbyteral Council and seek their input for decisions to be made
4. Work closely with the Deans on issues in their deanery

Section G *Ex Officio* and appointed members of the Presbyteral Council shall cease from membership on the Council when their terms of appointment or terms of office expire unless re-appointed by the Diocesan Bishop; elected members shall cease from membership in the Presbyteral Council at the expiration of their terms or upon loss of Diocesan Faculties.

ARTICLE III ELECTIONS

Section A Elections to the Presbyteral Council are to be held at the Spring District Meetings or annual Convocation. The Current Chair of the Presbyteral Council and the current Secretary of the Presbyteral Council shall conduct the election and report the vote to the Bishop and the clergy.

Section B Nominations shall be made to the Executive Committee of the Presbyteral Council. Prior to accepting nomination, a candidate should be familiar with Article II, Section F.

Section C All secular priests incardinated in the Diocese of Lake Charles and all priests enjoying the faculties of the Diocese of Lake Charles are eligible to vote regardless of which age group from which the member is being elected to serve.

Section D Voting shall be conducted by secret ballot and the one receiving a simple majority of the votes is considered elected. If no one receives a simple majority, a “runoff” shall be held between the two nominees with the largest number of votes.

Section E Elected members shall serve a term of three years and may be reelected with no term limit. Newly elected members begin service on the Presbyteral Council upon election and the term shall be determined by expiration of the previous member's term.

ARTICLE IV OFFICERS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Section A There shall be two officers of the Council namely, the Chair and the Secretary. The Chair is elected after the election of Council Members by a simple majority of those present. The Secretary is also elected by the members of Council at the same meeting by a simple majority. Both shall serve a one-year term and may be reelected.

The Bishop has the prerogative to appoint one member of the Council to serve as a third Officer-at-Large.

Section B Any member may be nominated as Chair.

Section C An "Executive Committee" shall be constituted from the Presbyteral Council and shall consist of the officers mentioned in Article IV, Section A. The Executive Committee will serve as representatives of the Diocese to the New Orleans Provincial Council.

Section D The Chair of the Presbyteral Council is responsible to:

1. Prepare the agenda and chair all meetings of the Presbyteral Council
2. Have periodic meetings with the Diocesan Bishop to discuss the business/work of the Presbyteral Council and items of concern from the clergy
3. See to it that all items on the agenda are considered
4. Fulfill any other duties assigned to him by the Diocesan Bishop or Presbyteral Council
5. Communicate the agenda for the forthcoming meeting and minutes from the previous meeting to all members before the scheduled meeting
6. Keep careful records regarding membership, need for elections, etc.

ARTICLE V MEETINGS

Section A The Presbyteral Council shall meet monthly, except July, provided there are items for an agenda. Special meetings are subject to call by the Diocesan Bishop or the Chair with the approval of the Diocesan Bishop.

Section B Monthly meetings are scheduled monthly at the Administrative Offices of the Diocese on the first Tuesday of the month unless otherwise noted by the Bishop.

Section C A quorum shall consist of a simple majority of the members. No quorum may be formed without the presence of the Diocesan Bishop.

ARTICLE VI PROCEDURES

- Section A Proposals for deliberation may be submitted by any cleric working in the Diocese and submitted to either the chairman or the Secretary.
- Section B In order to be placed on the forthcoming agenda all proposals are to be submitted to the Chair within one week of the next meeting.
- Section C Once an issue has reached the stage of a potential recommendation, a vote is to be taken. Matters to be recommended to the Diocesan Bishop for action require a simple majority of the members present.
- Section D Diocesan policies shall be reviewed, altered, and recommended within the timeline given in each policy.
- Section E Any cleric working in the Diocese can request to address the Presbyteral Council; the determination regarding such a request will be made by the Chair in consultation with the Diocesan Bishop.

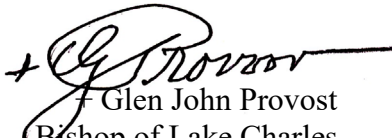
ARTICLE VII CESSATION

- Section A When the see is vacant, the Presbyteral Council lapses and its functions are fulfilled by the College of Consultors. Within a year of taking possession of the diocese, the new bishop must establish the Presbyteral Council anew. (Canon 501, §2)
- Section B If the Presbyteral Council does not fulfill the office entrusted to it for the welfare of the Diocese or if it gravely abuses its office, the Diocesan Bishop may dissolve it, after consultation with the Metropolitan, according to Canon 501 §3.

ARTICLE VIII AMMENDMENTS

- Section A Amendments to these statutes and their effective date shall be made by the affirmative vote of a two-thirds majority of those present.
- Section B All amendments must be approved by the Diocesan Bishop in order to become binding.

Promulgated: December 17, 2019
Effective: July 1, 2020


+ Glen John Provost
Bishop of Lake Charles

DIOCESE OF LAKE CHARLES
DIOCESAN POLICY STATEMENT
PERSONNEL ADVISORY BOARD

INTRODUCTION

The Diocese of Lake Charles shall have a Personnel Board. The Personnel Board serves in an advisory capacity to the Bishop, who, in effect and fact, is responsible for all appointments. The Board shall have as its purpose to serve the Bishop and priests of the Diocese of Lake Charles in order to foster the best possible service for the people of God. Through the evaluation of needs, the Board shall recommend assignment of individual priests to fruitful service according to their suitability and according to diocesan policy then in force.

SCOPE

The scope of the Personnel Advisory Board shall be:

1. To advise and assist the Bishop in the appointment, transfer and distribution of all diocesan priests.
2. To assist the Bishop in securing and training interested and capable personnel for needs of the Diocese in different specialized fields.
3. To assist the Bishop in establishing and implementing retirement policies for the diocesan clergy.
4. To assist the Bishop in other ways as he may request in handling personnel problems.

MEMBERSHIP

The Personnel Advisory Board shall be composed of those who hold the offices of Vicar General, Judicial Vicar, Dean, and Vicar for Clergy and Religious. In addition, two priests will be elected at large, one of whom is to represent those aged twenty-four to fifty, the other to represent those fifty-one and above.

The Presbyteral Council and its Executive Committee receive nominations and the elections will be held when the elections for Presbyteral Council are held.

TERM OF OFFICE

Elected members of the Personnel Board shall serve a term of three years. All others shall serve on the Board if they hold the offices named above.

MEETINGS

The Personnel Advisory Board will hold at least an annual meeting and also meet whenever the Diocesan Bishop should need to consult them. The recommendations made by the Board are to be held in strictest confidence.

PROCEDURE

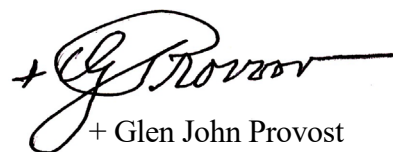
Since the Personnel Advisory Board serves as an advisory board of the Bishop, the Bishop will determine the shape and purpose of the meetings.

Clergy should feel free to communicate to the Diocesan Bishop their desires or needs. These communications are held in confidence but may be shared in part or whole with the Personnel Board.

The Personnel Board functions without prejudice to the Bishop's right to make appointments in emergencies or as the Bishop judges pastorally necessary.

Promulgated: January 8, 2020

Effective: July 1, 2020



+ Glen John Provost
Bishop of Lake Charles

DIOCESE OF LAKE CHARLES
DIOCESAN POLICY STATEMENT
FACULTIES FOR DEACONS

In accordance with the duties of the deacon as described in the Constitution of the Church, *Lumen Gentium* (Par. 29), and the Code of Canon Law, the following faculties are granted to all ordained deacons in the Diocese of Lake Charles.

These faculties are to be exercised subject to the pastor of the parish to which the deacon is assigned.

SERVICE TO THE SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM

1. To celebrate the *Rite of Baptism* solemnly with adults and infants (c. 861§1) using the appropriate and approved rituals.
2. To baptize an adult, using the *Rite of Baptism* when a grave and reasonable cause exists.
3. To supply the explanatory rites of Baptism in accord with the Rite of Baptism when a child has received an emergency baptism.

SERVICE TO THE SACRAMENT OF THE EUCHARIST

1. To distribute the Eucharist during the celebration of the Eucharist. (c. 910§1)
2. To celebrate the *Rite of Distributing Holy Communion Outside Mass*.
3. To celebrate the rite for Viaticum Outside Mass with the sick. (N.B. care must be taken that these are encouraged to receive the Sacrament of Penance if they so desire.)

PROCLAMATION OF THE SACRED SCRIPTURE

1. To proclaim the Gospel during the celebration of the Eucharist. (c. 757)
2. To conduct Scripture Services.

SERVICE TO THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY MATRIMONY

1. To witness the *Rite of Holy Matrimony* within the *Rite for Celebrating Holy Matrimony During Mass*, as well as the *Rite for Celebrating Holy Matrimony Outside Mass*, after receiving proper delegation in each instance (c. 1108, 1111) using the most current rites for Holy Matrimony
2. To impart the Nuptial Blessing within the *Rite for Celebrating Holy Matrimony Outside Mass*; however, when the *Rite for Celebrating Holy Matrimony During Mass* is celebrated, the Nuptial Blessing is always given by the celebrant, even if the deacon witnesses the exchange of vows.

3. To administer the oath and complete the premarital investigation.
4. To initiate the process for the convalidation of marriage, for declarations of nullity, and/or for dissolutions of the bond.

FUNERALS

1. To celebrate the *Vigil for the Deceased* at wakes according to the *Order of Christian Funerals*.
2. To accompany the body from the funeral home to the church.
3. To celebrate the *Funeral Liturgy Outside Mass* and the *Final Commendation*.
4. To celebrate the *Rite of Committal*.

SACRAMENTALS

1. To bless medals and other religious articles with a simple Sign of the Cross. (c. 1169 §3)
2. To pray the invocative blessings found in the *Book of Blessings*.

PREACHING

The faculty to preach a homily is granted by the Bishop in a separate decree and individually to a deacon. For a deacon to be considered for the faculty to preach, he must complete the diocesan requirements for the faculty to preach and receive the favorable recommendation of those responsible for his formation.

The faculty for preaching for deacons is only given for one year and may only be requested by the pastor of the deacon. Without the pastor's written request, delegation will not be given.

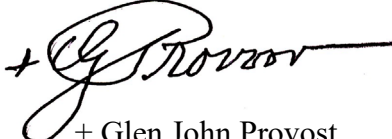
If granted, the faculty for preaching will include any or all the following as stipulated by the Bishop:

1. To occasionally preach the homily at Mass, aware that this is properly the function of the celebrant of the Mass. (c. 767)
2. To preach the homily at other liturgical celebrations (e.g., weddings, funerals, baptisms, wake services, liturgy of the hours) especially those at which the deacon functions as presiding celebrant.

3. Deacons who do not plan to preach at Masses but still plan to preach at other sacraments are required to seek this delegation through the pastor of the parish to which they are assigned.

Promulgated: January 8, 2020

Effective: July 1, 2020

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "+ Glen John Provost". The signature is written in a cursive style with a cross at the beginning.

+ Glen John Provost
Bishop of Lake Charles

DIOCESE OF LAKE CHARLES
DIOCESAN POLICY STATEMENT
CONTINUING FORMATION OF DEACONS

Continuing education and formation for clerics is a life-long endeavor. The Bishops of the United States Conference define "continuing formation" as "any learning after ordination, including growth both internal (spiritual, social, psychological) and external (external changes, theological disciplines and pastoral skills)."

The person primarily responsible for continuing formation is the individual cleric. The Diocese of Lake Charles offers opportunities for continuing formation for deacons. This policy defines the opportunities and outlines the guidelines.

SPIRITUAL GROWTH

The spiritual development of deacons is part of their continuing formation since its aim is the total development of the person in ministry. This area considers five instruments for the deacon's spiritual growth: retreats, prayer days, support groups, spiritual direction and workshops.

A. Retreats

All deacons serving in the Diocese of Lake Charles are required to make an annual retreat. Every second year all must attend a diocesan retreat to which their wives will also be invited. In the other years, deacons are free to choose whatever style of retreat they want.

The Bishop, the Director of Continuing Formation, and the Deacon Council Executives are responsible for the retreats.

The spouses of deacons may be invited to the annual retreat.

The cost of the retreat for the deacon and his spouse will be covered by the parish of assignment.

Only the Bishop may excuse a deacon from his annual retreat, and the request should be in writing.

B. Days of Prayer

All deacons are encouraged to make days of prayer throughout the year.

C. Support Groups

Deacons are encouraged to form support groups to assist one another in ministry and growth in the Christian Life.

D. Spiritual Direction

Since all clerics are ministers of the Church, they must tend to their spiritual life. This includes seeking spiritual direction from clerics who are skilled in the spiritual life and practices of the Church.

ACADEMIC AND PROFESSIONAL GROWTH

Deacons are encouraged to take advantage of the opportunities to continue their education through independent study, reading programs, seminars, workshops, and formal courses. In addition to these programs the Deacons' Council in cooperation with the Director of Continuing Formation offers the following:

1. Each deacon of the diocese is encouraged to attend workshops and seminars related to his ministry as a deacon every year. Diocesan sponsored programs should be given priority in one's yearly educational plans.
2. Special programs are held for specific seasons in a deacon's life and ministry. Deacons are expected to attend certain workshops mandated by the Bishop that may affect the individual deacon's faculties. These workshops will be clearly communicated before hand to the deacons.

ACCOUNTABILITY

Each deacon should give an account of his professional education to the Deacons' Council Executive Committee and the Assistant to the Vicar for Clergy. The minimum standard for deacons working full-time in the Diocese of Lake Charles is twenty (20) hours in continuing education a year.

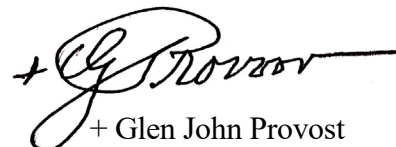
WORKSHOPS AND SEMINARS

In addition to the annual retreat cost, each deacon of the Diocese of Lake Charles is authorized to use up to \$200.00 a year from the parish or department of assignment to avail of continuing formation opportunities.

Any program outside of these parameters is to be presented to the Assistant to the Vicar for Clergy and, if he deems necessary, the Bishop.

Promulgated: April 23, 2008

Effective: July 1, 2008


+ Glen John Provost
Bishop of Lake Charles

DIOCESE OF LAKE CHARLES

DIOCESAN POLICY STATEMENT

DIRECTOR OF VOCATIONS/DIRECTOR OF SEMINARIANS

The Diocese of Lake Charles shall have a Director of Vocations and a Director of Seminarians. These two offices may be filled by the same person.

The Director of Vocations shall be responsible for the recruitment, screening, and placement of prospective seminarians always in consultation with the Diocesan Bishop.

The Director of Seminarians shall be responsible for the students once they are assigned to a seminary. He shall remain so until the seminarian is ordained deacon.

The Director(s) will advocate for the Bishop's interests and the Diocese's good with the seminary and seminarians.

DIOCESAN SEMINARIAN ADVISORY BOARD

To assist the Director(s) of Vocations and Seminarians in application to the seminary, the Diocesan Bishop has established a Seminarian Advisory Committee. The committee will hold interviews, evaluations, and critiques seeking the best candidates for Holy Orders for the Diocese of Lake Charles. The Advisory Board will use the current Program for Priestly Formation and other pertinent Church documents and guidelines in their evaluation of applicants for priestly formation. The Advisory Committee may also be called upon by the director(s) for other support, ideas, and guidance.

VIANNEY HOUSE

The Diocese of Lake Charles will have a Vianney House of Discernment. The Vianney House may serve as part of the formation of seminarians.

The Diocesan Bishop will appoint a priest to serve as a director of the Vianney House.

Promulgated: January 8, 2020

Effective: July 1, 2020



+ Glen John Provost
Bishop of Lake Charles

DIOCESE OF LAKE CHARLES
GUIDELINES FOR SEMINARIANS

GENERAL

The formation of men who will serve in the Diocese of Lake Charles as priests is one of the priorities of the Diocesan Bishop and the Diocese of Lake Charles. The following is a guide to ensure that the primary goal of the Church of fulfilling the Lord's Commission to proclaim the Gospel in all ages is fulfilled especially in the future generations of the local Church.

A seminarian is defined as a man who has been accepted for priestly formation in the Diocese of Lake Charles. The beginning of this formation should be clearly defined by the Director of Vocations and the Director of Seminarians.

PROCEDURES AND PLACEMENT

1. The Bishop, evaluating the needs of the Diocese and after consulting with the Director of Vocations and the Director of Seminarians, may assign a seminarian to whatever seminary fulfills those needs.
2. The Diocese of Lake Charles does not permit seminarians to participate in Summer programs except those approved by the Director of Seminarians.
3. All seminarians for the Diocese of Lake Charles are required to take part in the Diocesan Summer Program for Seminarians and to attend all required Diocesan Liturgies.
4. The Diocese of Lake Charles may ask a man to spend time in the Vianney House of Formation, in which case, the seminarian will be under the supervision of the Rector of the Vianney House and required to complete all other requirements of the Diocese of Lake Charles.

The Duration of this time will be determined by the Bishop, Director of Vocations, and the Director of Seminarians.

5. All seminarians must adhere to the policy regulations listed in the Diocesan Seminarian Handbook including the tuition policy.

SPECIALIZATION

The Diocesan Bishop will decide if there is a need for specialization of ministry or study. Specialization is based on the needs of the Diocese of Lake Charles and the talents of the individual seminarian.

SEMINARIANS LEAVING THE DIOCESE TO JOIN A RELIGIOUS ORDER OR ANOTHER DIOCESE

1. Reimbursement is to be requested from the religious order or diocese that the seminarian is asking to join for at least the last year the student studies under the Diocese.

2. If the student is refused by the religious order or another diocese and asks to remain in the Diocese of Lake Charles, a period may be invoked if there is evidence of instability.

SCREENING SEMINARY APPLICANTS

All applicants for formation in the Diocese of Lake Charles are required to undergo the admission process that is in keeping with the most current Program for Priestly Formation. Among the areas of consideration are those concerning the moral life and the spiritual life. For that reason, candidates must give evidence of requisite maturity and stability before being considered for priestly formation. Any candidate who refuses to undergo the mandated batteries for consideration will not be allowed to apply and will not be considered for the future.

CESSATION OF FORMATION FOR SEMINARIANS

A seminarian who wishes to depart seminary formation is encouraged to write a letter to the Director of Seminarians explaining his wishes and the reason for his departure. Failure to do so will affect the potential for reapplication to the Diocese.

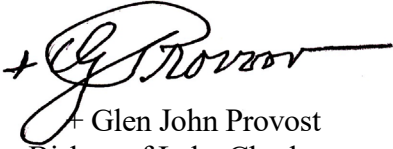
The Diocese of Lake Charles reserves the right to dismiss any seminarian from formation at any point.

A seminarian may wish to have a temporary leave of absence as well. The permission for and parameters of a temporary leave will be left to the discretion of the Bishop and the Director of Seminarians.

A seminarian who is dismissed from seminary formation, leaves of his own volition, or takes a temporary leave of absence is still responsible for his portion of his tuition agreed upon at the beginning of his seminary formation. A newly ordained priest is also required to fulfill that financial obligation. Any exceptions to this must be worked out between the seminarian, the Director of Seminarians, and the Chief Financial Officer; or the newly ordained priest, the Bishop or his delegate, and the Chief Financial Officer.

Promulgated: January 8, 2020

Effective: July 1, 2020



+ Glen John Provost
Bishop of Lake Charles

DIOCESE OF LAKE CHARLES
DIOCESAN POLICY STATEMENT
VICARS, GENERAL AND EPISCOPAL

In the Diocese of Lake Charles, The Vicar General "possesses that executive power in the entire Diocese which belongs to the Diocesan Bishop in law; that is, the Vicar General possesses the power to place all administrative acts with the exception of those which the Bishop has reserved to himself or which in law require the special mandate of the Bishop." (c.479§1) Other vicars shall be appointed by the Bishop as he deems necessary and appropriate.

An Episcopal Vicar possesses the same executive power as that which belongs to the Diocesan Bishop but only for the determined part of the Diocese which has been entrusted to him. (c.479§2)

The Canons that govern the rights and obligations of the Office of the Vicar General and the Office of the Episcopal Vicar are Canons 475-481.

By virtue of their appointment, all Vicars General and Episcopal will belong to all diocesan boards. This includes, but is not limited to the Presbyteral Council, the Personnel Board, the Diocesan Finance Council, the Diocesan Pastoral Council, and the Boundary Commission.

FACULTIES OF VICARS GENERAL

In addition to the faculties mentioned directly in the Code of Canon Law which are listed as the privileges granted to those who have ordinary authority, the following are the faculties granted to the Vicar General for those who hold the office:

1. To dispense from universal disciplinary laws of the Church and particular diocesan disciplinary if the following are observed:
 - a. There is grave harm in delay
 - b. Recourse is difficult
 - c. It is a type of discipline that requires a dispensation from the legitimate authority.
2. To dispense from diocesan, provincial, or national plenary laws only when such an action is required for validity or liceity. If a penalty is attached to the beforementioned law contains a penalty, he may also dispense from the penalty attached.
3. To dispense where there is a doubt of fact regarding the application of a law.
4. To dispense from the form of marriage and marriage impediments reserved to an ordinary in danger of death and when everything else is prepared.
5. To dispense from all impediments except for those that the Code of Canon Law reserves to the Holy See (cf., canon 1078).
6. To dispense from the observances of fasts and days of abstinence for individuals, groups, or all those under his jurisdiction subject to him or who are in the territory of his jurisdiction temporarily for reasons of prudence or good of the people.

7. To have the privilege of ordinary jurisdiction for hearing confessions and to grant delegation to those who are in his jurisdiction.
8. To absolve those from censure who have joined societies or parties which are hostile to the Church provided that the members adjure membership in such societies. These include but are not limited to Masons or other masonic lodges, the communist party, racists organizations, or societies of freethinkers.

FACULTIES OF THE EPISCOPAL VICAR

The Episcopal Vicar enjoys all the faculties of the Vicar General (see above), but only as pertains to the area of governance that is shared with him by his appointment.

THE OFFICE OF THE EPISCOPAL VICAR FOR CLERGY

The Bishop establishes the Office of the Episcopal Vicar for Clergy for the Diocese of Lake Charles.

The Vicar for Clergy assists the diocesan bishop in matters pertaining to the ministry of priests and deacons. He is an *ex officio* member of the Presbyteral Council, Priestly Life and Ministry Committee, and the Personnel Advisory Board. He will also assist the diocesan bishop personally with diocesan and parish assignments. The Vicar for Clergy will be the primary delegate of the diocesan bishop for the vicar foranes in matters concerning the clergy.

In order to aid the Vicar for Clergy, an Assistant to the Vicar for Clergy will be appointed from a member of the order of the diaconate in the administration of matters concerning the permanent diaconate. He will serve as a consulter and liaison between the Vicar for Clergy and the permanent deacons.

TERM AND CESSATION OF OFFICE FOR VICARS GENERAL AND EPISCOPAL

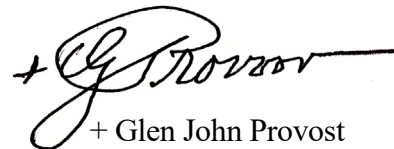
In accord with the Code of Canon Law, the Vicars General and Episcopal will be appointed as Diocesan Consultors.

Their offices and privileges cease when the Diocesan Bishop removes the Vicar from Office, the Vicar resigns from Office, or the Diocesan See becomes vacant.

The Bishop has total and complete prerogative to appoint a Vicar General or Episcopal as he deems necessary for the governance of the local Church. The Bishop may also remove without prejudice a Vicar who is a priest.

Promulgated: July 1, 2020

Effective: July 1, 2020


+ Glen John Provost
Bishop of Lake Charles

DIOCESE OF LAKE CHARLES
DIOCESAN POLICY STATEMENT
DEANS (VICARS FORANE)

A Vicar Forane, who is also called a dean, an archpriest, or some other name, is a priest who is placed over a vicariate forane. (c. 553§1)

In the Diocese of Lake Charles, the Bishop will appoint one dean for each deanery.

The office of dean is not tied to the office of pastor of a certain parish, the Bishop may select a priest who he has judged suitable for the office. (c. 554§1) Although the Bishop may appoint who he wishes, he may consult with the priests of the deanery or other priests to help his judgment.

Typically, the term for a dean is three years, but the Bishop may remove the dean for a just cause.

FACULTIES AND DUTIES OF THE DEAN

In the Diocese of Lake Charles, the following are the Faculties and Duties of the deans.

1. Coordinating Pastoral Efforts

The Dean is to ensure that the sacramental needs of a deanery are attended to with the proper care and attention. If necessary, he should coordinate between pastors and parishes the schedules of Masses and other sacramental celebrations so that the needs of the lay faithful will be fulfilled. He is also to assist in finding coverage in cases of absence and emergency so that the sacramental life in parochial settings will not be disrupted.

2. Ensuring the Proper Decorum and Activity of Clergy

The Dean in a spirit of fraternal charity will bring to the attention of a cleric (deacon or priest) any concern that has caused alarm among the faithful especially when such activity may cause wonderment or have the potential of scandal.

3. Ensuring that the Rites of the Church are Conducted in accord with the Church's Praxis and Law

The Dean is to address issues of concern that arise when the faithful raise concern about liturgical or canonical issues. Chief among his concerns in this area is the proper reservation and adoration of the Most Blessed Sacrament. It is the duty of the Dean to ensure that all chapels of adoration are in keeping with the Laws of Church and with particular law of the Diocese.

Also, the Dean is to ensure that the beauty and patrimony of the local parishes are preserved.

4. Inspect the Parochial Records and Plant of the Parishes

The Dean is responsible to ensure that all parochial records are kept up to date, in a neat and orderly form. The Dean should inspect the records personally whenever a new pastor is appointed to a parish within the deanery. He should plan to inspect the records at the parish

in question. Likewise, the Dean should ensure that each pastor in his deanery present his records to the diocesan Bishop.

In addition, the Dean is to ensure that the physical plant of the parish is properly maintained. Before a new pastor begins his tenure, the Dean is to inspect in person the plant and give instructions for the proper cleaning and care of the buildings if necessary. After a new pastor has begun his tenure, the Dean is to complete the transfer documents and send them to the Diocese.

5. Ensure that Clergy attend Required Meetings and Formations

The Dean is to be informed when a cleric in his deanery is unable to attend a required event for the Diocese. It then becomes the Dean's duty to let the appropriate person know of the cleric's absence.

When a cleric frequently misses required meetings or days of formation, the Dean is to inquire in a spirit of fraternal charity as to the reason why.

6. Encourage Fraternal Gatherings and Formation

The Dean is to encourage within his own deanery fraternal gatherings and the formation of the clergy in theological development and the spiritual mysteries. When a cleric's teachings has been questioned or is suspect, the Dean in fraternal charity inquires and assists with the proper formation.

7. Ensure that the Spiritual and Temporal Needs of the Clergy are Addressed

The Dean is to ensure that needs of clerics are addressed especially informing the Bishop and those who hold the Offices of Vicar General and Episcopal Vicar of those needs. He is to ensure that clergy who are ill are afforded the opportunity of Reconciliation and the Anointing of the Sick. Further, the Dean makes available the necessary items for the celebration of the Mass when a priest is unable to leave his residence.

8. Serve on Various Councils and Committees

The Dean while in office serves as an *ex Officio* member of the Presbyteral Council, the Personnel Board, the Boundary Committee, and whatever other committees or councils that the diocesan Bishop deem worthy. When the Dean's term ends, his tenure on these various committees and councils end as well unless otherwise stipulated.


SERVICES OF THE DEAN TO HIS DEANERY

1. The Dean should be knowledgeable of the Diocesan Offices and Services so that he can be a resource for the faithful clergy and laity.
2. The Dean is to communicate concerns and plans between the Diocesan Curia and the faithful of his deanery. In turn, he is to inform with regularity the growth and programs of the parishes in his deanery.
3. The Dean is to cultivate a spirit of fraternal charity and collaboration among the priests of his deanery. This may include the coordination of liturgical celebrations or programs for the mutual benefit of a parish or groups of parishes.

4. The Dean is to ensure that each parish within his deanery has a functioning Pastoral and Finance Council that is run in accordance with the Code of Canon Law and the Particular Law of the Diocese of Lake Charles.
5. The Dean is to ensure the that those in religious life within his deanery are working with due collaboration with the proper authorities and that their rights and needs are being fulfilled.
6. The Dean is to make an annual report to the Bishop concerning the welfare of his deanery based on his findings, investigations, and reports made to him by both clergy and laity. This report is typically given at a special meeting of the Presbyteral Council.

Promulgated: December 25, 2019

Effective: July 1, 2020



+ Glen John Provost
Bishop of Lake Charles

DIOCESE OF LAKE CHARLES
DIOCESAN POLICY STATEMENT
PARISH BOUNDARIES COMMISSION

The growth of the Diocese and the demands made upon its clergy make it more necessary that the study of parish boundaries and the creation of future parishes be approached with great attention to proper planning.

The members of the Parish Boundaries Commission are the Vicars General and Episcopal and the Deans of each Deanery.

The purpose of the Parish Boundaries Commission is to bring a recommendation to the Bishop so that he may make the final decision in regard to the establishment of a new parish, the clustering of parishes, the closing of a parish, or the suppression of a parish.

The Parish Boundaries Commission does not meet on its own volition but is convened by the Bishop. The Bishop appoints one member to serve as the Chair of the Committee and it is the responsibility of the Chair to give to the Bishop a final report.

Before a parish may be established or suppressed, the Bishop is to bring the findings of the Commission to the Presbyteral Council for consultation. After this, he makes a final decision.

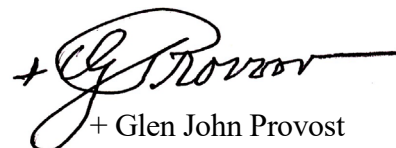
The Commission is to consider the following factors in rendering an opinion:

1. What is the good of the local Church and the area that may be affected?
2. Are there personnel that would be able to consistently and effectively minister to the needs of the faithful in the affected area?
3. Do the faithful (lay and clergy) in the area see a need for change?
4. What are the historic and cultural considerations for the area?
5. What is the civic census for the area? What do public officials believe about the growth potential of the area?

The Bishop may add to these points for the Commission's final report.

Promulgated: January 8, 2020

Effective: July 1, 2020


+ Glen John Provost
Bishop of Lake Charles

DIOCESE OF LAKE CHARLES
DIOCESAN POLICY STATEMENT
PARISH PASTORAL COUNCILS

The Code of Canon Law states that the Diocesan Bishop has the option of mandating the creation of a Parish Pastoral Council in each Parish.

The Bishop of Lake Charles after consultation with the Presbyteral Council does mandate the establishment of a Parish Pastoral Council in each Parish of the Diocese of Lake Charles.

The following will be the governing Principles and Guidelines for Parish Pastoral Councils in the Diocese of Lake Charles:

NATURE OF THE PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL

The Parish Pastoral Council is by title a group of individuals who are constituted to advise the Pastor on questions of his leadership in the Parish. It is a consultative group and may only vote in a consultative fashion.

Because of its nature, the Pastor must consult the Parish Pastoral Council for the following:

1. Before changing and/or adding Mass times
2. Before taking on a parish program or campaign that will affect the resources and time of the parish

Since the Pastoral Council is constituted from the Parish which the Pastor serves, he may not disband or dissolve the Pastoral Council without the permission of the Bishop.

MEMBERSHIP

The Parish Pastoral Council is to be constituted of elected, appointed, and *ex Officio* members.

Five (5) members of the Council are to be elected at large from parishioners. The selection of those who run for the Council is done by a nominating committee with the Pastor's final approval. Only those whose membership would not cause scandal or wonderment may run. It is not suggested that elected members serve for more than two terms.

The appointed members consist of a member of a Parish Mission of the Parish selected by the Pastor to serve and those others who the Pastor deems necessary, for example other clerics or religious who reside and serve in the Parish.

The *ex Officio* members of the Council are:

1. The Vice-Chair of the Parish Finance Council
2. The Principal of the Catholic School located in the Parish
3. The two Trustees of the Parish Corporation
4. The Parochial Vicar(s) should one be assigned to the Parish

OFFICERS

The Officers of each Parish Pastoral Council will be a Chair, a Vice-Chair, and the two Trustees.

The Pastor will serve as the Chair of the Parish Pastoral Council, and no meeting may be conducted without the presence of the Chair.

The Parish Pastoral Council shall elect from among its own membership a Vice-Chair and Secretary who may not be a Trustee. The Chair may conduct the election of these officers as he deems appropriate.

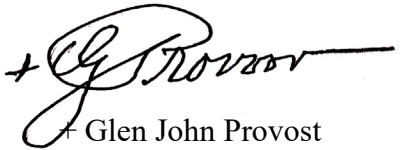
MEETINGS

Parish Pastoral Councils are to meet regularly. Each Council should meet at least four (4) times a year. The Meetings should have an agenda that is approved beforehand by the Pastor and sent to all the members of the Council. For a Meeting to be conducted, a quorum must be present of 51% of the members and the Chair.

If a Parish Pastoral Council feels that it is not being heard or respected by the Pastor, the Vice-Chair may bring the grievance to the Dean of the Parish's Deanery. It will then become incumbent of the Dean to bring the issue to a resolution.

Promulgated: January 8, 2020

Effective: July 1, 2020



+ Glen John Provost
Bishop of Lake Charles

DIOCESE OF LAKE CHARLES
DIOCESAN POLICY STATEMENT
THE DIOCESAN PASTORAL COUNCIL

The Bishop of the Diocese of Lake Charles has decided to establish the Diocesan Pastoral Council that shall be governed by the Universal Law of the Church and the Particular Law of the Diocese of Lake Charles contained herein.

NAME, NATURE, AND PURPOSE

The name given to the group convened by the Bishop will be the Diocesan Pastoral Council of the Diocese of Lake Charles. The Nature of the Council shall be consultative. Its purpose shall be to assist the Bishop in accordance with the Code of Canon Law in the pastoral initiatives of the Diocese of Lake Charles.

MEMBERSHIP

The Membership of the Diocesan Pastoral Council shall consist of at least the following:

- a. The Chair of the Presbyteral Council who serves *ex Officio* as long as he has the office of Chair
- b. The Chair of the Deacons' Council who serves *ex Officio* as long as he has the office of Chair
- c. One woman religious of a Diocesan Rite or Pontifical Rite Order that serves in the Diocese of Lake Charles
- d. One Member of the Catholic Student Center of the local university
- e. No more than three individuals from the Deaneries of the Diocese of Lake Charles

The Bishop appoints the members officially after receiving consultation from the Deans and Pastors of the reputations of those who have been suggested. The members are appointed for three years and may serve as long they are reappointed by the Bishop.

At the Meeting, the members will select among themselves officers who will serve as Chair and Secretary for the Council.

MEETINGS

The Meetings of the Diocesan Pastoral Council shall be at least twice a year and may be convened more if the Bishop so desires. The agenda will be decided upon by the Bishop and communicated through the Officers.


No Meeting may take place without the presence of the Bishop.

CESSATION

The Diocesan Pastoral Council may be disbanded or suspended by the Bishop, and it ceases to exist when the Diocesan See is vacant.

Promulgated: January 8, 2020

Effective: July 1, 2020



+ Glen John Provost
Bishop of Lake Charles

BOOK III
The Teaching Function of the Church



POLICIES AND GUIDELINES
UPDATED SEPTEMBER 2024

DIOCESE OF LAKE CHARLES

DIOCESAN POLICY STATEMENT

OFFICE OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION AND ITS DIRECTOR

The Bishop of the Diocese of Lake Charles is ultimately responsible for all catechetical and evangelical efforts, but to assist him in this task, he has chosen to appoint a Diocesan Director for Religious Education. For this reason, the Diocesan Director of Religious Education should strive to believe and conform to all the teachings of the Holy Catholic Church.

The purpose of the Office of Religious Education is to promote and develop catechesis in the Diocese in parish youth catechetical programs, in Catholic Schools in collaboration with the Office of Catholic Schools, and in parish and diocesan adult religious education programs.

Some specific functions and responsibilities of the Director are as follows:

1. Assist parishes and schools in the development of quality catechetical programming for youth and adults.
2. Meet regularly with catechetical leaders in Religious Education, both parish and school, to seek their input regarding all catechetical issues; to provide new resources, trends, and directions in catechesis; and to develop a support network among those who work in similar fields.
3. Recommend to the bishop policies and guidelines regarding issues in catechesis.
4. To establish when necessary, to serve on, and work with diocesan committees that address issues of concern to catechesis especially when directed by the Bishop.
5. Direct special programs and projects regarding catechesis.
6. Delegate authority to qualified persons for coordinating various programs, while assuming ultimate responsibility for such programs.
7. Direct the curriculum and faculty of the Center for Catholic Studies in the Diocese of Lake Charles.
8. Act as chief liaison officer between the Office of Religious Education and the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), the National Conference of Catechetical Leaders (NCCL), and the New Orleans Mobile Provincial Conference of Catechetical Leaders (NOMPCCL).
9. Collaborate with other Curial Directors especially in the area of Christian Formation for the programs and efforts of the Diocese of Lake Charles.

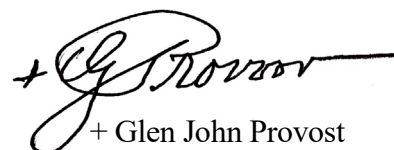
PAROCHIAL RESPONSIBILITIES TOWARD CATECHESIS

Since each parish is to work toward unity with the Diocesan Bishop and the Universal Church, the following directives are established to assist with that unity in the area of catechesis.

1. Appropriate catechesis is to be provided and encouraged for both youth and adults;
2. Appropriate catechesis is provided to properly prepare those receiving the sacraments, especially their first reception of Penance, Confirmation and Eucharist. Special care is to be taken that the current sacramental preparation programs are used for these sacraments;
3. Catechetical formation is given to individuals with physical or mental impediments, insofar as their condition permits;
4. All catechists are to be appropriately formed and trained. It is the duty of the parish priests and the Parish Catechetical Leaders or Directors of Religious Education in Catholic schools to ensure this training is on-going;
5. All language groups within the parish are provided with catechetical formation;
6. The catechumenate process, which is the model for all parish catechesis, is implemented;
7. Facilities and resources for the catechetical program are provided;
8. Separate from the role of pastor, a competent and qualified Catechetical Leader (Parish Catechetical Leader or Director of Religious Education in Catholic schools) is appointed to oversee the parochial catechetical curriculum and to serve as the liaison between the parish and the Bishop's Delegate.

Promulgated: February 22, 2020

Effective: July 1, 2020



+ Glen John Provost
Bishop of Lake Charles

DIOCESE OF LAKE CHARLES

DIOCESAN POLICY STATEMENT

OFFICE OF CATHOLIC SCHOOLS AND ITS SUPERINDENDENT

The Diocesan Bishop's responsibility to ensure that those entrusted to his pastoral care are provided with an opportunity to learn within an environment that promotes the Catholic Faith is vital to the life of the local church. It is the right and responsibility of Christian parents to educate their children in both, what the Church Fathers called, the Book of Nature and the Book of Faith.

To assist in this task, the Bishop appoints a Superintendent of Catholic Schools. The Superintendent is to manage and direct the Office of Catholic Schools under the Direction of the Moderator of the Curia. Further, the Superintendent will be the chief administrative officer of the elementary and secondary schools in the Diocese and of the programs which come under the jurisdiction of the Office of Catholic Schools.

The following are the directives of the area of administration for the Superintendent in the area of governance:

1. Assist schools in the achievement of diocesan goals for education.
2. Promote quality Catholic education in all the schools of the Diocese.
3. Translate diocesan policy decisions into procedures and guidelines and implement such in the schools of the Diocese. With the final approval of the Bishop, this will become the handbook for all Catholic schools within the Diocese of Lake Charles. These policies should be reviewed every five years.
4. Report to the Bishop and his delegates the activities related to the administration of the schools.
5. Establish and maintain effective public relations with officials in public and non-public school systems and in other public and voluntary agencies.
6. Act as chief liaison between the Diocese of Lake Charles and its Catholic Schools and the USCCB (United States Conference of Catholic Bishops) Coordinator of Government Programs, the NCEA (National Catholic Education Association), the Louisiana State Department of Education, and the Louisiana State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education.
7. Coordinate special programs and projects operating in the schools of the Diocese especially those of a diocesan nature.
8. Evaluate periodically the instructional programs, the administration, and the facilities of all the schools in the Diocese.

9. Delegate authority to qualified persons for directing various programs while assuming ultimate responsibility for such programs.
10. Plan surveys and collect data pertinent to programs operating within the schools of the Diocese.
11. To ensure that all grievances are managed and resolved in a timely fashion in accord with the latest Diocesan Policies and Guidelines for Catholic Schools.

PAROCHIAL RESPONSIBILITIES TOWARD CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

In parishes having a Catholic school, the parish, under the guidance and supervision of the pastor, and in consultation with the Parish School Board, the Parish Pastoral Council, the Parish Finance Council, and the Trustees, shall provide adequate facilities in which to house a school. Any additional classrooms, or other buildings, or facilities shall be the responsibility of the parish as well as the general maintenance and repair of said physical plant.

Any parish wishing to establish a new school shall do so under these guidelines and in full consultation with the Diocesan Superintendent of Schools.

Projects for expansion, establishment, or large repair or remodeling shall be accomplished only after approval of the Ordinary. All said projects must be submitted through established channels for such approval.

Promulgated: February 22, 2020

Effective: July 1, 2020


 + Glen John Provost
 Bishop of Lake Charles

DIOCESE OF LAKE CHARLES
DIOCESAN POLICY STATEMENT
REQUIREMENTS FOR CATECHISTS

The Diocese of Lake Charles and its Ministers takes seriously the formation of the People of God. For that reason, this policy defines who may serve as a catechist and what formation is required for those who assist in this vital ministry.

First and foremost, every person who wishes to follow Christ must strive to believe in his teachings as revealed in Holy Mother Church and to adhere to the moral conduct of the Church. Those who are not able to do so may not serve as catechists.

Those who are chosen to share in the ministry of the Church as catechists are also required to undergo ongoing formation and education. Without a constant learning and renewing of the Faith within, there is a temptation for the faith of the believer to grow stagnant.

The following guidelines are established and are mandated for all catechists, teachers of religion in Catholic schools, Directors of Religious Education, and Parish Catechetical Leaders.

1. To assist catechists, teachers of religion in Catholic school, Directors of Religious Education, and Parish Catechetical Leaders in seeking continuing education, the Diocese of Lake Charles will offer throughout the year various programs and classes.
2. Since it is ultimately the Pastor's responsibility in a parish to ensure the ongoing education of catechists in his parish, he may provide his own formation within his own parish but should inform the Diocesan Office of Religious Education.
3. It is the responsibility of the Pastor to ensure that each catechist receives ongoing education. As such, it is a responsibility that each parish should share in even financially.
4. The Director of Religious Education or the Parish Catechetical Leader is responsible to report to the Pastor who has or has not participated in approved ongoing education programs.

MASTERS' PROGRAM

The Diocese of Lake Charles offers support to individuals seeking a Master of Arts degree in Theology. Priority for tuition assistance is given to school employees and leaders of catechetical ministry, as well as those who will serve as instructors for the Center for Catholic Studies. The Diocesan Office of Religious Education will have oversight in determining which programs qualify for assistance.

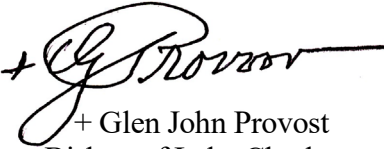
Ordinarily, the Diocese of Lake Charles will pay one-third of the tuition for qualifying students of approved Masters' degree programs in theology. The parish or school where the applicant is employed will pay one-third, and the student will be expected to pay the remaining third.

Applications for tuition assistance must be received in a timely fashion in order to be considered. The applications will be expected no later than 30 days prior to the start of the program.

If the number of applicants requesting assistance surpasses the amount budgeted for the program, the Diocesan Director of Religious Education will make the final decision on which applicants are approved.

Promulgated: February 22, 2020

Effective: July 1, 2020



+ Glen John Provost
Bishop of Lake Charles

DIOCESE OF LAKE CHARLES
DIOCESAN POLICY STATEMENT
OFFICE OF YOUTH MINISTRY

The Evangelization of the Christian Faithful is an apostolic responsibility that falls to the Office of Bishop. In the Diocese of Lake Charles, the Bishop has chosen to appoint certain known and proven individuals to assist in this role of evangelization. Among these areas is that of Youth Ministry. Because evangelization is fundamental for the Office of Bishop, all youth ministry in whatever form must have the full consent of the Bishop and the cooperation of his delegate.

The delegate for the Bishop in the area of Youth Ministry will be known as the Director of the Office of Youth Ministry in the Diocese of Lake Charles.

The Responsibilities of the Director of the Office of Youth Ministry are as follows:

1. Administration of the office, preparation and overseeing annual budget, annual evaluation of office activities, setting of goals and objectives, coordination of activities of this office with Christian Formation, and submitting periodic reports on the progress of the evangelical efforts.
2. Assisting the pastors in developing a comprehensive youth ministry program in each parish.
3. Meet regularly with youth directors and youth ministers to seek their input regarding all youth ministry issues; to provide new resources, trends, and directions in youth ministry; and to develop a support network among those who work in similar fields.
4. Recommend to the bishop policies and guidelines regarding issues in youth ministry.
5. Work with diocesan committees when assigned that address issues of concern to youth ministry.
6. Direct special programs and projects regarding youth ministry.
7. Delegate authority to qualified persons for coordinating various programs, while assuming ultimate responsibility for such programs.
8. Develop leadership in parishes for the promotion of youth ministry programs.
9. Work under the direction of the Secretary for Christian Formation and with other diocesan Curial directors to develop quality educational programs especially for sacramental preparation.
10. Serve as liaison between the diocesan bishop and the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), the National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministry (NFCYM) and Region V Youth Directors.

PAROCHIAL RESPONSIBILITIES TOWARD YOUTH MINISTRY

All parishes are highly encouraged to provide a comprehensive youth ministry program for their young people that include structure and formal catechesis.

Since the duty of evangelization is fundamental to the office of Bishop, those who exercise the Office of Pastor are equally bound to it within their own parish. Therefore, the Pastor is to oversee that facilities and resources are provided to enable a comprehensive youth ministry program.

Parishes are encouraged to name a Coordinator for Youth Ministry to assist the Pastor in evangelizing youth and young people. Those who serve as Coordinators of Youth Ministry are to adhere to the same requirements as Catechists in Policy 303.

In addition, the following also defines the qualifications of a Coordination for Youth Ministry.

1. Coordinators of Youth Ministry should be persons of mature faith who participate in the life of a Catholic Parish adhering to the Precepts of the Church and living a moral life.
2. Coordinators of Youth Ministry should
 - a. have theological formation as well as competence and experience in catechesis;
 - b. be able to lead and guide young people to grow in the knowledge and practice of the Catholic Faith, especially in participating in the celebration of the sacraments and in the development of spiritual lives; and
 - c. be models of Christian living for the young people they serve and be able to speak credibly about their experience of the gift of faith.
3. Under the guidance of the Parish Pastor, the Coordinator of Youth Ministry in each parish should collaborate with all the parish staff especially the Parish Catechetical Leader and other catechists so that all efforts may be made to make the Person Jesus Christ known.

Camp Karol exists as the primary location for diocesan youth ministry for the Diocese of Lake Charles.

Promulgated: April 23, 2008

Effective: July 1, 2008



+ Glen John Provost
Bishop of Lake Charles

DIOCESE OF LAKE CHARLES
DIOCESAN POLICY STATEMENT
EDUCATION IN HUMAN SEXUALITY

Human sexuality is a gift from God, and as such, the Church takes very seriously the education of men, women, and children about the gift and responsibility of human sexuality. The following policy is meant to define the areas in which the Diocese of Lake Charles participates in education in human sexuality.

PARENTAL RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The family is the first environment in which children learn the meaning of their self-worth, of love, of human dignity and of life. By Natural Law and right, parents are the primary teachers of their children especially in the area of human sexuality.

Parents are to be involved in the development of programs, policies, and curriculum regarding human sexuality. Three rules are to be followed in the development of human sexuality programs in the Diocese of Lake Charles:

1. Begin with parental involvement – Parents are to be told about any program and given all material and access to all material before any presentation on sexuality.
2. Include parents throughout the planning and execution of the program – Parents are encouraged to attend all classes and presentations on human sexuality.
3. Involve parents in the evaluation process – Any Pastor, Parish, or School is to ensure that parents understand fully their rights and the information shared in the program. The crucial follow-up with parents ensures that they are equipped to continue the formation of their children especially in the area of sexuality.

PROGRAMS OFFERED THROUGH THE ECCLESIAL EFFORTS

The following will serve as norms for the presentation of human sexuality within institutions in the Diocese of Lake Charles. To be understood, one must always see them in the context of the parental involvement and responsibility.

CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

Each school shall develop a program of education in family living, human sexuality and sexual morality appropriate to the age and maturity of the students. This program shall be described in the school handbook. This program shall be developed under the auspices of the Diocesan Director of Religious Education and the Director of Family Life and administered according to guidelines issued by the Office of Catholic Schools and its handbook.

PARISH PROGRAMS FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Each parish shall develop a program of education in family living, human sexuality and sexual morality appropriate to the age and maturity of students. The program will be developed by the Offices of Religious Education and the Office of Family Life. The program may be conducted

through CCD or other parish programs and shall be developed and administered according to diocesan guidelines. The program shall be described in writing and distributed to all parents whose children are invited into the program.

PARISH PROGRAMS FOR ONGOING EDUCATION

Recognizing that it is a lifelong task for Christians to relate sexual feelings with the call to love and be loved, there is an ongoing need for parish programs to help people grow and develop as morally mature human beings. It is, therefore, recommended that all parishes offer courses and workshops periodically in the area of sexuality for parents and other adults, especially during times of major transitions in life.

PURPOSE OF EDUCATION IN HUMAN SEXUALITY

The Diocese of Lake Charles adopts the guidance given by the Congregation for Catholic Education in 1983 as the purpose for an education in human sexuality, whether formal or informal, namely:

1. To give each learner an understanding of the nature and importance of sexuality as a divine gift, a fundamental component of personality and an enrichment of the whole person - body, emotions, soul - whose deepest meaning is to lead the person to the gift of self in love.
2. To give each learner an appreciation of chastity as a virtue that develops a person's authentic maturity and makes him or her capable of guiding the sexual instinct in the service of love and integrating it into his or her psychological and spiritual development.
3. To give each learner an appreciation of the human and Christian values that sexuality is intended to express and to lead each learner to a knowledge of, respect for, and sincere personal adherence to the moral norms regarding sexuality that are taught by the Church.

CURRICULUM PLANNING

The planning of curriculum either for Catholic Schools or Parish Programs, will include a presentation of human sexuality that is value-based and faith rooted. These values include human dignity and equality, respect for life, personal worth, personal responsibility, honesty, fairness, chaste living, wholesome relationships, sexuality, moral norms and responsible parenting.


As stated, the planning of programs is to include parents. In addition, the pastor, principal of a school, catechetical leader(s), teachers, and professionals in health care and counseling are to be included. Consideration should be given to periodic classes separating the males and females for class discussion. School programs are to be submitted to the Office of Catholic Schools and the Office of Religious Education for approval of content. Parish programs are to be approved by the pastor and submitted to the Office of Religious Education.

INSTRUCTORS OF CURRICULUM REGARDING HUMAN SEXUALITY

Those who are chosen by a parish or a school to teach human sexuality, especially to children, must be well instructed. Because they can strongly influence students, teachers must have a complete theoretical knowledge of the meaning and value of sexuality and be personally mature, integrated and responsible. Catechists must be certified through the diocese before teaching this subject area. Parishes and schools are to provide ongoing professional support for these teachers.

Promulgated: February 22, 2020

Effective: July 1, 2020



+ Glen John Provost
Bishop of Lake Charles

DIOCESE OF LAKE CHARLES

DIOCESAN POLICY STATEMENT


ADOPTION OF THE ETHICAL AND RELIGIOUS DIRECTIVES

The Diocesan Bishop adopts and promulgates the “Ethical and Religious Directives for Catholic Health Care Services” for the Diocese of Lake Charles. All Health Care Facilities who wish to hold the name and title of “Catholic” and those who are employed at these same facilities are to follow the Directives. In cases of doubt, the facilities are to consult the Diocesan Bishop.

The “Ethical and Religious Directives for Catholic Health Care Services” are found following this policy.

Promulgated: February 22, 2020

Effective: July 1, 2020



+ Glen John Provost
Bishop of Lake Charles

Ethical and Religious Directives for Catholic Health Care Services

Sixth Edition

UNITED STATES CONFERENCE OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS

This sixth edition of the *Ethical and Religious Directives for Catholic Health Care Services* was developed by the Committee on Doctrine of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) and approved by the USCCB at its June 2018 Plenary Assembly. This edition of the *Directives* replaces all previous editions, is recommended for implementation by the diocesan bishop, and is authorized for publication by the undersigned.

Msgr. J. Brian Bransfield, STD
General Secretary, USCCB

Excerpts from *The Documents of Vatican II*, ed. Walter M. Abbott, SJ, copyright © 1966 by America Press are used with permission. All rights reserved.

Scripture texts used in this work are taken from the *New American Bible*, copyright © 1991, 1986, and 1970 by the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, Washington, DC, 20017 and are used by permission of the copyright owner. All rights reserved.

Digital Edition, June 2018

Copyright © 2009, 2018, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, Washington, DC. All rights reserved. No part of this work may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or by any information storage and retrieval system, without permission in writing from the copyright holder.

Contents

4	Preamble
6	General Introduction
8	PART ONE The Social Responsibility of Catholic Health Care Services
10	PART TWO The Pastoral and Spiritual Responsibility of Catholic Health Care
13	PART THREE The Professional-Patient Relationship
16	PART FOUR Issues in Care for the Beginning of Life
20	PART FIVE Issues in Care for the Seriously Ill and Dying
23	PART SIX Collaborative Arrangements with Other Health Care Organizations and Providers
27	Conclusion

Preamble

Health care in the United States is marked by extraordinary change. Not only is there continuing change in clinical practice due to technological advances, but the health care system in the United States is being challenged by both institutional and social factors as well. At the same time, there are a number of developments within the Catholic Church affecting the ecclesial mission of health care. Among these are significant changes in religious orders and congregations, the increased involvement of lay men and women, a heightened awareness of the Church's social role in the world, and developments in moral theology since the Second Vatican Council. A contemporary understanding of the Catholic health care ministry must take into account the new challenges presented by transitions both in the Church and in American society.

Throughout the centuries, with the aid of other sciences, a body of moral principles has emerged that expresses the Church's teaching on medical and moral matters and has proven to be pertinent and applicable to the ever-changing circumstances of health care and its delivery. In response to today's challenges, these same moral principles of Catholic teaching provide the rationale and direction for this revision of the *Ethical and Religious Directives for Catholic Health Care Services*.

These Directives presuppose our statement *Health and Health Care* published in 1981.¹ There we presented the theological principles that guide the Church's vision of health care, called for all Catholics to share in the healing mission of the Church, expressed our full commitment to the health care ministry, and offered encouragement to all those who are involved in it. Now, with American health care facing even more dramatic changes, we reaffirm the Church's commitment to health care ministry and the distinctive Catholic identity of the Church's institutional health care services.² The purpose of these *Ethical and Religious Directives* then is twofold: first, to reaffirm the ethical standards of behavior in health care that flow from the Church's teaching about the dignity of the human person; second, to provide authoritative guidance on certain moral issues that face Catholic health care today.

The *Ethical and Religious Directives* are concerned primarily with institutionally based Catholic health care services. They address the sponsors, trustees, administrators, chaplains, physicians, health care personnel, and patients or residents of these institutions and services. Since they express the Church's moral teaching, these Directives also will be helpful to Catholic professionals engaged in health care services in other settings. The moral teachings that we profess here flow principally from the natural law, understood in the light of the revelation Christ has entrusted to his Church. From this source the Church has derived its understanding of the nature of the human person, of human acts, and of the goals that shape human activity.

The Directives have been refined through an extensive process of consultation with bishops, theologians, sponsors, administrators, physicians, and other health care providers. While providing standards and guidance, the Directives do not cover in detail all of the complex issues that confront Catholic health care today. Moreover, the Directives will be reviewed periodically by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (formerly the National Conference of Catholic Bishops), in the light of authoritative church teaching, in order to address new insights from theological and

medical research or new requirements of public policy.

The Directives begin with a general introduction that presents a theological basis for the Catholic health care ministry. Each of the six parts that follow is divided into two sections. The first section is in expository form; it serves as an introduction and provides the context in which concrete issues can be discussed from the perspective of the Catholic faith. The second section is in prescriptive form; the directives promote and protect the truths of the Catholic faith as those truths are brought to bear on concrete issues in health care.

General Introduction

The Church has always sought to embody our Savior's concern for the sick. The gospel accounts of Jesus' ministry draw special attention to his acts of healing: he cleansed a man with leprosy (Mt 8:1-4; Mk 1:40-42); he gave sight to two people who were blind (Mt 20:29-34; Mk 10:46-52); he enabled one who was mute to speak (Lk 11:14); he cured a woman who was hemorrhaging (Mt 9:20-22; Mk 5:25-34); and he brought a young girl back to life (Mt 9:18, 23-25; Mk 5:35-42). Indeed, the Gospels are replete with examples of how the Lord cured every kind of ailment and disease (Mt 9:35). In the account of Matthew, Jesus' mission fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah: "He took away our infirmities and bore our diseases" (Mt 8:17; cf. Is 53:4).

Jesus' healing mission went further than caring only for physical affliction. He touched people at the deepest level of their existence; he sought their physical, mental, and spiritual healing (Jn 6:35, 11:25-27). He "came so that they might have life and have it more abundantly" (Jn 10:10).

The mystery of Christ casts light on every facet of Catholic health care: to see Christian love as the animating principle of health care; to see healing and compassion as a continuation of Christ's mission; to see suffering as a participation in the redemptive power of Christ's passion, death, and resurrection; and to see death, transformed by the resurrection, as an opportunity for a final act of communion with Christ.

For the Christian, our encounter with suffering and death can take on a positive and distinctive meaning through the redemptive power of Jesus' suffering and death. As St. Paul says, we are "always carrying about in the body the dying of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our body" (2 Cor 4:10). This truth does not lessen the pain and fear, but gives confidence and grace for bearing suffering rather than being overwhelmed by it. Catholic health care ministry bears witness to the truth that, for those who are in Christ, suffering and death are the birth pangs of the new creation. "God himself will always be with them [as their God]. He will wipe every tear from their eyes, and there shall be no more death or mourning, wailing or pain, [for] the old order has passed away" (Rev 21:3-4).

In faithful imitation of Jesus Christ, the Church has served the sick, suffering, and dying in various ways throughout history. The zealous service of individuals and communities has provided shelter for the traveler; infirmaries for the sick; and homes for children, adults, and the elderly.³ In the United States, the many religious communities as well as dioceses that sponsor and staff this country's Catholic health care institutions and services have established an effective Catholic presence in health care. Modeling their efforts on the gospel parable of the Good Samaritan, these communities of women and men have exemplified authentic neighborliness to those in need (Lk 10:25-37). The Church seeks to ensure that the service offered in the past will be continued into the future.

While many religious communities continue their commitment to the health care ministry, lay Catholics increasingly have stepped forward to collaborate in this ministry. Inspired by the example of Christ and mandated by the Second Vatican Council, lay faithful are invited to a broader and more intense field of ministries than in the past.⁴ By virtue of their Baptism, lay

faithful are called to participate actively in the Church's life and mission.⁵ Their participation and leadership in the health care ministry, through new forms of sponsorship and governance of institutional Catholic health care, are essential for the Church to continue her ministry of healing and compassion. They are joined in the Church's health care mission by many men and women who are not Catholic.

Catholic health care expresses the healing ministry of Christ in a specific way within the local church. Here the diocesan bishop exercises responsibilities that are rooted in his office as pastor, teacher, and priest. As the center of unity in the diocese and coordinator of ministries in the local church, the diocesan bishop fosters the mission of Catholic health care in a way that promotes collaboration among health care leaders, providers, medical professionals, theologians, and other specialists. As pastor, the diocesan bishop is in a unique position to encourage the faithful to greater responsibility in the healing ministry of the Church. As teacher, the diocesan bishop ensures the moral and religious identity of the health care ministry in whatever setting it is carried out in the diocese. As priest, the diocesan bishop oversees the sacramental care of the sick. These responsibilities will require that Catholic health care providers and the diocesan bishop engage in ongoing communication on ethical and pastoral matters that require his attention.

In a time of new medical discoveries, rapid technological developments, and social change, what is new can either be an opportunity for genuine advancement in human culture, or it can lead to policies and actions that are contrary to the true dignity and vocation of the human person. In consultation with medical professionals, church leaders review these developments, judge them according to the principles of right reason and the ultimate standard of revealed truth, and offer authoritative teaching and guidance about the moral and pastoral responsibilities entailed by the Christian faith.⁶ While the Church cannot furnish a ready answer to every moral dilemma, there are many questions about which she provides normative guidance and direction. In the absence of a determination by the magisterium, but never contrary to church teaching, the guidance of approved authors can offer appropriate guidance for ethical decision making.

Created in God's image and likeness, the human family shares in the dominion that Christ manifested in his healing ministry. This sharing involves a stewardship over all material creation (Gn 1:26) that should neither abuse nor squander nature's resources. Through science the human race comes to understand God's wonderful work; and through technology it must conserve, protect, and perfect nature in harmony with God's purposes. Health care professionals pursue a special vocation to share in carrying forth God's life-giving and healing work.

The dialogue between medical science and Christian faith has for its primary purpose the common good of all human persons. It presupposes that science and faith do not contradict each other. Both are grounded in respect for truth and freedom. As new knowledge and new technologies expand, each person must form a correct conscience based on the moral norms for proper health care.

PART ONE

The Social Responsibility of Catholic Health Care Services

Introduction

Their embrace of Christ's healing mission has led institutionally based Catholic health care services in the United States to become an integral part of the nation's health care system. Today, this complex health care system confronts a range of economic, technological, social, and moral challenges. The response of Catholic health care institutions and services to these challenges is guided by normative principles that inform the Church's healing ministry.

First, Catholic health care ministry is rooted in a commitment to promote and defend human dignity; this is the foundation of its concern to respect the sacredness of every human life from the moment of conception until death. The first right of the human person, the right to life, entails a right to the means for the proper development of life, such as adequate health care.⁷

Second, the biblical mandate to care for the poor requires us to express this in concrete action at all levels of Catholic health care. This mandate prompts us to work to ensure that our country's health care delivery system provides adequate health care for the poor. In Catholic institutions, particular attention should be given to the health care needs of the poor, the uninsured, and the underinsured.⁸ Third, Catholic health care ministry seeks to contribute to the common good. The common good is realized when economic, political, and social conditions ensure protection for the fundamental rights of all individuals and enable all to fulfill their common purpose and reach their common goals.⁹

Fourth, Catholic health care ministry exercises responsible stewardship of available health care resources. A just health care system will be concerned both with promoting equity of care—to assure that the right of each person to basic health care is respected—and with promoting the good health of all in the community. The responsible stewardship of health care resources can be accomplished best in dialogue with people from all levels of society, in accordance with the principle of subsidiarity and with respect for the moral principles that guide institutions and persons.

Fifth, within a pluralistic society, Catholic health care services will encounter requests for medical procedures contrary to the moral teachings of the Church. Catholic health care does not offend the rights of individual conscience by refusing to provide or permit medical procedures that are judged morally wrong by the teaching authority of the Church.

Directives

1. A Catholic institutional health care service is a community that provides health care to those in need of it. This service must be animated by the Gospel of Jesus Christ and guided by the moral tradition of the Church.
2. Catholic health care should be marked by a spirit of mutual respect among caregivers that disposes them to deal with those it serves and their families with the compassion of Christ, sensitive to their vulnerability at a time of special need.

3. In accord with its mission, Catholic health care should distinguish itself by service to and advocacy for those people whose social condition puts them at the margins of our society and makes them particularly vulnerable to discrimination: the poor; the uninsured and the underinsured; children and the unborn; single parents; the elderly; those with incurable diseases and chemical dependencies; racial minorities; immigrants and refugees. In particular, the person with mental or physical disabilities, regardless of the cause or severity, must be treated as a unique person of incomparable worth, with the same right to life and to adequate health care as all other persons.
4. A Catholic health care institution, especially a teaching hospital, will promote medical research consistent with its mission of providing health care and with concern for the responsible stewardship of health care resources. Such medical research must adhere to Catholic moral principles.
5. Catholic health care services must adopt these Directives as policy, require adherence to them within the institution as a condition for medical privileges and employment, and provide appropriate instruction regarding the Directives for administration, medical and nursing staff, and other personnel.
6. A Catholic health care organization should be a responsible steward of the health care resources available to it. Collaboration with other health care providers, in ways that do not compromise Catholic social and moral teaching, can be an effective means of such stewardship.¹⁰
7. A Catholic health care institution must treat its employees respectfully and justly. This responsibility includes: equal employment opportunities for anyone qualified for the task, irrespective of a person's race, sex, age, national origin, or disability; a workplace that promotes employee participation; a work environment that ensures employee safety and well-being; just compensation and benefits; and recognition of the rights of employees to organize and bargain collectively without prejudice to the common good.
8. Catholic health care institutions have a unique relationship to both the Church and the wider community they serve. Because of the ecclesial nature of this relationship, the relevant requirements of canon law will be observed with regard to the foundation of a new Catholic health care institution; the substantial revision of the mission of an institution; and the sale, sponsorship transfer, or closure of an existing institution.
9. Employees of a Catholic health care institution must respect and uphold the religious mission of the institution and adhere to these Directives. They should maintain professional standards and promote the institution's commitment to human dignity and the common good.

PART TWO

The Pastoral and Spiritual Responsibility of Catholic Health Care

Introduction

The dignity of human life flows from creation in the image of God (Gn 1:26), from redemption by Jesus Christ (Eph 1:10; 1 Tm 2:4-6), and from our common destiny to share a life with God beyond all corruption (1 Cor 15:42-57). Catholic health care has the responsibility to treat those in need in a way that respects the human dignity and eternal destiny of all. The words of Christ have provided inspiration for Catholic health care: “I was ill and you cared for me” (Mt 25:36). The care provided assists those in need to experience their own dignity and value, especially when these are obscured by the burdens of illness or the anxiety of imminent death.

Since a Catholic health care institution is a community of healing and compassion, the care offered is not limited to the treatment of a disease or bodily ailment but embraces the physical, psychological, social, and spiritual dimensions of the human person. The medical expertise offered through Catholic health care is combined with other forms of care to promote health and relieve human suffering. For this reason, Catholic health care extends to the spiritual nature of the person. “Without health of the spirit, high technology focused strictly on the body offers limited hope for healing the whole person.”¹¹ Directed to spiritual needs that are often appreciated more deeply during times of illness, pastoral care is an integral part of Catholic health care. Pastoral care encompasses the full range of spiritual services, including a listening presence; help in dealing with powerlessness, pain, and alienation; and assistance in recognizing and responding to God’s will with greater joy and peace. It should be acknowledged, of course, that technological advances in medicine have reduced the length of hospital stays dramatically. It follows, therefore, that the pastoral care of patients, especially administration of the sacraments, will be provided more often than not at the parish level, both before and after one’s hospitalization. For this reason, it is essential that there be very cordial and cooperative relationships between the personnel of pastoral care departments and the local clergy and ministers of care.

Priests, deacons, religious, and laity exercise diverse but complementary roles in this pastoral care. Since many areas of pastoral care call upon the creative response of these pastoral caregivers to the particular needs of patients or residents, the following directives address only a limited number of specific pastoral activities.

Directives

10. A Catholic health care organization should provide pastoral care to minister to the religious and spiritual needs of all those it serves. Pastoral care personnel—clergy, religious, and lay alike—should have appropriate professional preparation, including an understanding of these Directives.

11. Pastoral care personnel should work in close collaboration with local parishes and community clergy. Appropriate pastoral services and/or referrals should be available to all in keeping with their religious beliefs or affiliation.
12. For Catholic patients or residents, provision for the sacraments is an especially important part of Catholic health care ministry. Every effort should be made to have priests assigned to hospitals and health care institutions to celebrate the Eucharist and provide the sacraments to patients and staff.
13. Particular care should be taken to provide and to publicize opportunities for patients or residents to receive the sacrament of Penance.
14. Properly prepared lay Catholics can be appointed to serve as extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion, in accordance with canon law and the policies of the local diocese. They should assist pastoral care personnel—clergy, religious, and laity—by providing supportive visits, advising patients regarding the availability of priests for the sacrament of Penance, and distributing Holy Communion to the faithful who request it.
15. Responsive to a patient’s desires and condition, all involved in pastoral care should facilitate the availability of priests to provide the sacrament of Anointing of the Sick, recognizing that through this sacrament Christ provides grace and support to those who are seriously ill or weakened by advanced age. Normally, the sacrament is celebrated when the sick person is fully conscious. It may be conferred upon the sick who have lost consciousness or the use of reason, if there is reason to believe that they would have asked for the sacrament while in control of their faculties.
16. All Catholics who are capable of receiving Communion should receive Viaticum when they are in danger of death, while still in full possession of their faculties.¹²
17. Except in cases of emergency (i.e., danger of death), any request for Baptism made by adults or for infants should be referred to the chaplain of the institution. Newly born infants in danger of death, including those miscarried, should be baptized if this is possible.¹³ In case of emergency, if a priest or a deacon is not available, anyone can validly baptize.¹⁴ In the case of emergency Baptism, the chaplain or the director of pastoral care is to be notified.
18. When a Catholic who has been baptized but not yet confirmed is in danger of death, any priest may confirm the person.¹⁵
19. A record of the conferral of Baptism or Confirmation should be sent to the parish in which the institution is located and posted in its baptism/confirmation registers.
20. Catholic discipline generally reserves the reception of the sacraments to Catholics. In accord with canon 844, §3, Catholic ministers may administer the sacraments of Eucharist, Penance, and Anointing of the Sick to members of the oriental churches that do not have

full communion with the Catholic Church, or of other churches that in the judgment of the Holy See are in the same condition as the oriental churches, if such persons ask for the sacraments on their own and are properly disposed.

With regard to other Christians not in full communion with the Catholic Church, when the danger of death or other grave necessity is present, the four conditions of canon 844, §4, also must be present, namely, they cannot approach a minister of their own community; they ask for the sacraments on their own; they manifest Catholic faith in these sacraments; and they are properly disposed. The diocesan bishop has the responsibility to oversee this pastoral practice.

21. The appointment of priests and deacons to the pastoral care staff of a Catholic institution must have the explicit approval or confirmation of the local bishop in collaboration with the administration of the institution. The appointment of the director of the pastoral care staff should be made in consultation with the diocesan bishop.
22. For the sake of appropriate ecumenical and interfaith relations, a diocesan policy should be developed with regard to the appointment of non-Catholic members to the pastoral care staff of a Catholic health care institution. The director of pastoral care at a Catholic institution should be a Catholic; any exception to this norm should be approved by the diocesan bishop.

PART THREE

The Professional-Patient Relationship

Introduction

A person in need of health care and the professional health care provider who accepts that person as a patient enter into a relationship that requires, among other things, mutual respect, trust, honesty, and appropriate confidentiality. The resulting free exchange of information must avoid manipulation, intimidation, or condescension. Such a relationship enables the patient to disclose personal information needed for effective care and permits the health care provider to use his or her professional competence most effectively to maintain or restore the patient's health. Neither the health care professional nor the patient acts independently of the other; both participate in the healing process.

Today, a patient often receives health care from a team of providers, especially in the setting of the modern acute-care hospital. But the resulting multiplication of relationships does not alter the personal character of the interaction between health care providers and the patient. The relationship of the person seeking health care and the professionals providing that care is an important part of the foundation on which diagnosis and care are provided. Diagnosis and care, therefore, entail a series of decisions with ethical as well as medical dimensions. The health care professional has the knowledge and experience to pursue the goals of healing, the maintenance of health, and the compassionate care of the dying, taking into account the patient's convictions and spiritual needs, and the moral responsibilities of all concerned. The person in need of health care depends on the skill of the health care provider to assist in preserving life and promoting health of body, mind, and spirit. The patient, in turn, has a responsibility to use these physical and mental resources in the service of moral and spiritual goals to the best of his or her ability.

When the health care professional and the patient use institutional Catholic health care, they also accept its public commitment to the Church's understanding of and witness to the dignity of the human person. The Church's moral teaching on health care nurtures a truly interpersonal professional-patient relationship. This professional-patient relationship is never separated, then, from the Catholic identity of the health care institution. The faith that inspires Catholic health care guides medical decisions in ways that fully respect the dignity of the person and the relationship with the health care professional.

Directives

23. The inherent dignity of the human person must be respected and protected regardless of the nature of the person's health problem or social status. The respect for human dignity extends to all persons who are served by Catholic health care.
24. In compliance with federal law, a Catholic health care institution will make available to patients information about their rights, under the laws of their state, to make an advance

directive for their medical treatment. The institution, however, will not honor an advance directive that is contrary to Catholic teaching. If the advance directive conflicts with Catholic teaching, an explanation should be provided as to why the directive cannot be honored.

25. Each person may identify in advance a representative to make health care decisions as his or her surrogate in the event that the person loses the capacity to make health care decisions. Decisions by the designated surrogate should be faithful to Catholic moral principles and to the person's intentions and values, or if the person's intentions are unknown, to the person's best interests. In the event that an advance directive is not executed, those who are in a position to know best the patient's wishes—usually family members and loved ones—should participate in the treatment decisions for the person who has lost the capacity to make health care decisions.
26. The free and informed consent of the person or the person's surrogate is required for medical treatments and procedures, except in an emergency situation when consent cannot be obtained and there is no indication that the patient would refuse consent to the treatment.
27. Free and informed consent requires that the person or the person's surrogate receive all reasonable information about the essential nature of the proposed treatment and its benefits; its risks, side-effects, consequences, and cost; and any reasonable and morally legitimate alternatives, including no treatment at all.
28. Each person or the person's surrogate should have access to medical and moral information and counseling so as to be able to form his or her conscience. The free and informed health care decision of the person or the person's surrogate is to be followed so long as it does not contradict Catholic principles.
29. All persons served by Catholic health care have the right and duty to protect and preserve their bodily and functional integrity.¹⁶ The functional integrity of the person may be sacrificed to maintain the health or life of the person when no other morally permissible means is available.¹⁷
30. The transplantation of organs from living donors is morally permissible when such a donation will not sacrifice or seriously impair any essential bodily function and the anticipated benefit to the recipient is proportionate to the harm done to the donor. Furthermore, the freedom of the prospective donor must be respected, and economic advantages should not accrue to the donor.
31. No one should be the subject of medical or genetic experimentation, even if it is therapeutic, unless the person or surrogate first has given free and informed consent. In instances of nontherapeutic experimentation, the surrogate can give this consent only if the experiment entails no significant risk to the person's well-being. Moreover, the greater the

person's incompetency and vulnerability, the greater the reasons must be to perform any medical experimentation, especially nontherapeutic.

32. While every person is obliged to use ordinary means to preserve his or her health, no person should be obliged to submit to a health care procedure that the person has judged, with a free and informed conscience, not to provide a reasonable hope of benefit without imposing excessive risks and burdens on the patient or excessive expense to family or community.¹⁸
33. The well-being of the whole person must be taken into account in deciding about any therapeutic intervention or use of technology. Therapeutic procedures that are likely to cause harm or undesirable side-effects can be justified only by a proportionate benefit to the patient.
34. Health care providers are to respect each person's privacy and confidentiality regarding information related to the person's diagnosis, treatment, and care.
35. Health care professionals should be educated to recognize the symptoms of abuse and violence and are obliged to report cases of abuse to the proper authorities in accordance with local statutes.
36. Compassionate and understanding care should be given to a person who is the victim of sexual assault. Health care providers should cooperate with law enforcement officials and offer the person psychological and spiritual support as well as accurate medical information. A female who has been raped should be able to defend herself against a potential conception from the sexual assault. If, after appropriate testing, there is no evidence that conception has occurred already, she may be treated with medications that would prevent ovulation, sperm capacitation, or fertilization. It is not permissible, however, to initiate or to recommend treatments that have as their purpose or direct effect the removal, destruction, or interference with the implantation of a fertilized ovum.¹⁹
37. An ethics committee or some alternate form of ethical consultation should be available to assist by advising on particular ethical situations, by offering educational opportunities, and by reviewing and recommending policies. To these ends, there should be appropriate standards for medical ethical consultation within a particular diocese that will respect the diocesan bishop's pastoral responsibility as well as assist members of ethics committees to be familiar with Catholic medical ethics and, in particular, these Directives.

PART FOUR

Issues in Care for the Beginning of Life

Introduction

The Church's commitment to human dignity inspires an abiding concern for the sanctity of human life from its very beginning, and with the dignity of marriage and of the marriage act by which human life is transmitted. The Church cannot approve medical practices that undermine the biological, psychological, and moral bonds on which the strength of marriage and the family depends.

Catholic health care ministry witnesses to the sanctity of life "from the moment of conception until death."²⁰ The Church's defense of life encompasses the unborn and the care of women and their children during and after pregnancy. The Church's commitment to life is seen in its willingness to collaborate with others to alleviate the causes of the high infant mortality rate and to provide adequate health care to mothers and their children before and after birth.

The Church has the deepest respect for the family, for the marriage covenant, and for the love that binds a married couple together. This includes respect for the marriage act by which husband and wife express their love and cooperate with God in the creation of a new human being. The Second Vatican Council affirms:

This love is an eminently human one. . . . It involves the good of the whole person. . . . The actions within marriage by which the couple are united intimately and chastely are noble and worthy ones. Expressed in a manner which is truly human, these actions signify and promote that mutual self-giving by which spouses enrich each other with a joyful and a thankful will.²¹

Marriage and conjugal love are by their nature ordained toward the begetting and educating of children. Children are really the supreme gift of marriage and contribute very substantially to the welfare of their parents. . . . Parents should regard as their proper mission the task of transmitting human life and educating those to whom it has been transmitted. . . . They are thereby cooperators with the love of God the Creator, and are, so to speak, the interpreters of that love.²²

For legitimate reasons of responsible parenthood, married couples may limit the number of their children by natural means. The Church cannot approve contraceptive interventions that "either in anticipation of the marital act, or in its accomplishment or in the development of its natural consequences, have the purpose, whether as an end or a means, to render procreation impossible."²³ Such interventions violate "the inseparable connection, willed by God . . . between the two meanings of the conjugal act: the unitive and procreative meaning."²⁴

With the advance of the biological and medical sciences, society has at its disposal new technologies for responding to the problem of infertility. While we rejoice in the potential for

good inherent in many of these technologies, we cannot assume that what is technically possible is always morally right. Reproductive technologies that substitute for the marriage act are not consistent with human dignity. Just as the marriage act is joined naturally to procreation, so procreation is joined naturally to the marriage act. As Pope John XXIII observed:

The transmission of human life is entrusted by nature to a personal and conscious act and as such is subject to all the holy laws of God: the immutable and inviolable laws which must be recognized and observed. For this reason, one cannot use means and follow methods which could be licit in the transmission of the life of plants and animals.²⁵

Because the moral law is rooted in the whole of human nature, human persons, through intelligent reflection on their own spiritual destiny, can discover and cooperate in the plan of the Creator.²⁶

Directives

38. When the marital act of sexual intercourse is not able to attain its procreative purpose, assistance that does not separate the unitive and procreative ends of the act, and does not substitute for the marital act itself, may be used to help married couples conceive.²⁷
39. Those techniques of assisted conception that respect the unitive and procreative meanings of sexual intercourse and do not involve the destruction of human embryos, or their deliberate generation in such numbers that it is clearly envisaged that all cannot implant and some are simply being used to maximize the chances of others implanting, may be used as therapies for infertility.
40. Heterologous fertilization (that is, any technique used to achieve conception by the use of gametes coming from at least one donor other than the spouses) is prohibited because it is contrary to the covenant of marriage, the unity of the spouses, and the dignity proper to parents and the child.²⁸
41. Homologous artificial fertilization (that is, any technique used to achieve conception using the gametes of the two spouses joined in marriage) is prohibited when it separates procreation from the marital act in its unitive significance (e.g., any technique used to achieve extracorporeal conception).²⁹
42. Because of the dignity of the child and of marriage, and because of the uniqueness of the mother-child relationship, participation in contracts or arrangements for surrogate motherhood is not permitted. Moreover, the commercialization of such surrogacy denigrates the dignity of women, especially the poor.³⁰
43. A Catholic health care institution that provides treatment for infertility should offer not only technical assistance to infertile couples but also should help couples pursue other solutions (e.g., counseling, adoption).
44. A Catholic health care institution should provide prenatal, obstetric, and postnatal services for mothers and their children in a manner consonant with its mission.
45. Abortion (that is, the directly intended termination of pregnancy before viability or the directly intended destruction of a viable fetus) is never permitted. Every procedure whose sole immediate effect is the termination of pregnancy before viability is an abortion, which, in its moral context, includes the interval between conception and implantation of the embryo. Catholic health care institutions are not to provide abortion services, even based upon the principle of material cooperation. In this context, Catholic health care institutions need to be

concerned about the danger of scandal in any association with abortion providers.

46. Catholic health care providers should be ready to offer compassionate physical, psychological, moral, and spiritual care to those persons who have suffered from the trauma of abortion.
47. Operations, treatments, and medications that have as their direct purpose the cure of a proportionately serious pathological condition of a pregnant woman are permitted when they cannot be safely postponed until the unborn child is viable, even if they will result in the death of the unborn child.
48. In case of extrauterine pregnancy, no intervention is morally licit which constitutes a direct abortion.³¹
49. For a proportionate reason, labor may be induced after the fetus is viable.
50. Prenatal diagnosis is permitted when the procedure does not threaten the life or physical integrity of the unborn child or the mother and does not subject them to disproportionate risks; when the diagnosis can provide information to guide preventative care for the mother or pre- or postnatal care for the child; and when the parents, or at least the mother, give free and informed consent. Prenatal diagnosis is not permitted when undertaken with the intention of aborting an unborn child with a serious defect.³²
51. Nontherapeutic experiments on a living embryo or fetus are not permitted, even with the consent of the parents. Therapeutic experiments are permitted for a proportionate reason with the free and informed consent of the parents or, if the father cannot be contacted, at least of the mother. Medical research that will not harm the life or physical integrity of an unborn child is permitted with parental consent.³³
52. Catholic health institutions may not promote or condone contraceptive practices but should provide, for married couples and the medical staff who counsel them, instruction both about the Church's teaching on responsible parenthood and in methods of natural family planning.
53. Direct sterilization of either men or women, whether permanent or temporary, is not permitted in a Catholic health care institution. Procedures that induce sterility are permitted when their direct effect is the cure or alleviation of a present and serious pathology and a simpler treatment is not available.³⁴
54. Genetic counseling may be provided in order to promote responsible parenthood and to prepare for the proper treatment and care of children with genetic defects, in accordance with Catholic moral teaching and the intrinsic rights and obligations of married couples regarding the transmission of life.

PART FIVE

Issues in Care for the Seriously Ill and Dying

Introduction

Christ's redemption and saving grace embrace the whole person, especially in his or her illness, suffering, and death.³⁵ The Catholic health care ministry faces the reality of death with the confidence of faith. In the face of death—for many, a time when hope seems lost—the Church witnesses to her belief that God has created each person for eternal life.³⁶

Above all, as a witness to its faith, a Catholic health care institution will be a community of respect, love, and support to patients or residents and their families as they face the reality of death. What is hardest to face is the process of dying itself, especially the dependency, the helplessness, and the pain that so often accompany terminal illness. One of the primary purposes of medicine in caring for the dying is the relief of pain and the suffering caused by it. Effective management of pain in all its forms is critical in the appropriate care of the dying.

The truth that life is a precious gift from God has profound implications for the question of stewardship over human life. We are not the owners of our lives and, hence, do not have absolute power over life. We have a duty to preserve our life and to use it for the glory of God, but the duty to preserve life is not absolute, for we may reject life-prolonging procedures that are insufficiently beneficial or excessively burdensome. Suicide and euthanasia are never morally acceptable options.

The task of medicine is to care even when it cannot cure. Physicians and their patients must evaluate the use of the technology at their disposal. Reflection on the innate dignity of human life in all its dimensions and on the purpose of medical care is indispensable for formulating a true moral judgment about the use of technology to maintain life. The use of life-sustaining technology is judged in light of the Christian meaning of life, suffering, and death. In this way two extremes are avoided: on the one hand, an insistence on useless or burdensome technology even when a patient may legitimately wish to forgo it and, on the other hand, the withdrawal of technology with the intention of causing death.³⁷

The Church's teaching authority has addressed the moral issues concerning medically assisted nutrition and hydration. We are guided on this issue by Catholic teaching against euthanasia, which is "an action or an omission which of itself or by intention causes death, in order that all suffering may in this way be eliminated."³⁸ While medically assisted nutrition and hydration are not morally obligatory in certain cases, these forms of basic care should in principle be provided to all patients who need them, including patients diagnosed as being in a "persistent vegetative state" (PVS), because even the most severely debilitated and helpless patient retains the full dignity of a human person and must receive ordinary and proportionate care.

Directives

55. Catholic health care institutions offering care to persons in danger of death from illness,

accident, advanced age, or similar condition should provide them with appropriate opportunities to prepare for death. Persons in danger of death should be provided with whatever information is necessary to help them understand their condition and have the opportunity to discuss their condition with their family members and care providers. They should also be offered the appropriate medical information that would make it possible to address the morally legitimate choices available to them. They should be provided the spiritual support as well as the opportunity to receive the sacraments in order to prepare well for death.

56. A person has a moral obligation to use ordinary or proportionate means of preserving his or her life. Proportionate means are those that in the judgment of the patient offer a reasonable hope of benefit and do not entail an excessive burden or impose excessive expense on the family or the community.³⁹
57. A person may forgo extraordinary or disproportionate means of preserving life. Disproportionate means are those that in the patient's judgment do not offer a reasonable hope of benefit or entail an excessive burden, or impose excessive expense on the family or the community.
58. In principle, there is an obligation to provide patients with food and water, including medically assisted nutrition and hydration for those who cannot take food orally. This obligation extends to patients in chronic and presumably irreversible conditions (e.g., the "persistent vegetative state") who can reasonably be expected to live indefinitely if given such care.⁴⁰ Medically assisted nutrition and hydration become morally optional when they cannot reasonably be expected to prolong life or when they would be "excessively burdensome for the patient or [would] cause significant physical discomfort, for example resulting from complications in the use of the means employed."⁴¹ For instance, as a patient draws close to inevitable death from an underlying progressive and fatal condition, certain measures to provide nutrition and hydration may become excessively burdensome and therefore not obligatory in light of their very limited ability to prolong life or provide comfort.
59. The free and informed judgment made by a competent adult patient concerning the use or withdrawal of life-sustaining procedures should always be respected and normally complied with, unless it is contrary to Catholic moral teaching.
60. Euthanasia is an action or omission that of itself or by intention causes death in order to alleviate suffering. Catholic health care institutions may never condone or participate in euthanasia or assisted suicide in any way. Dying patients who request euthanasia should receive loving care, psychological and spiritual support, and appropriate remedies for pain and other symptoms so that they can live with dignity until the time of natural death.⁴²
61. Patients should be kept as free of pain as possible so that they may die comfortably and

with dignity, and in the place where they wish to die. Since a person has the right to prepare for his or her death while fully conscious, he or she should not be deprived of consciousness without a compelling reason. Medicines capable of alleviating or suppressing pain may be given to a dying person, even if this therapy may indirectly shorten the person's life so long as the intent is not to hasten death. Patients experiencing suffering that cannot be alleviated should be helped to appreciate the Christian understanding of redemptive suffering.

62. The determination of death should be made by the physician or competent medical authority in accordance with responsible and commonly accepted scientific criteria.
63. Catholic health care institutions should encourage and provide the means whereby those who wish to do so may arrange for the donation of their organs and bodily tissue, for ethically legitimate purposes, so that they may be used for donation and research after death.
64. Such organs should not be removed until it has been medically determined that the patient has died. In order to prevent any conflict of interest, the physician who determines death should not be a member of the transplant team.
65. The use of tissue or organs from an infant may be permitted after death has been determined and with the informed consent of the parents or guardians.
66. Catholic health care institutions should not make use of human tissue obtained by direct abortions even for research and therapeutic purposes.⁴³

PART SIX

Collaborative Arrangements with Other Health Care Organizations and Providers⁴⁴

Introduction

In and through her compassionate care for the sick and suffering members of the human family, the Church extends Jesus' healing mission and serves the fundamental human dignity of every person made in God's image and likeness. Catholic health care, in serving the common good, has historically worked in collaboration with a variety of non-Catholic partners. Various factors in the current health care environment in the United States, however, have led to a multiplication of collaborative arrangements among health care institutions, between Catholic institutions as well as between Catholic and non-Catholic institutions.

Collaborative arrangements can be unique and vitally important opportunities for Catholic health care to further its mission of caring for the suffering and sick, in faithful imitation of Christ. For example, collaborative arrangements can provide opportunities for Catholic health care institutions to influence the healing profession through their witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Moreover, they can be opportunities to realign the local delivery system to provide a continuum of health care to the community, to provide a model of a responsible stewardship of limited health care resources, to provide poor and vulnerable persons with more equitable access to basic care, and to provide access to medical technologies and expertise that greatly enhance the quality of care. Collaboration can even, in some instances, ensure the continued presence of a Catholic institution, or the presence of any health care facility at all, in a given area.

When considering a collaboration, Catholic health care administrators should seek first to establish arrangements with Catholic institutions or other institutions that operate in conformity with the Church's moral teaching. It is not uncommon, however, that arrangements with Catholic institutions are not practicable and that, in pursuit of the common good, the only available candidates for collaboration are institutions that do not operate in conformity with the Church's moral teaching.

Such collaborative arrangements can pose particular challenges if they would involve institutional connections with activities that conflict with the natural moral law, church teaching, or canon law. Immoral actions are always contrary to "the singular dignity of the human person, 'the only creature that God has wanted for its own sake.'"⁴⁵ It is precisely because Catholic health care services are called to respect the inherent dignity of every human being and to contribute to the common good that they should avoid, whenever possible, engaging in collaborative arrangements that would involve them in contributing to the wrongdoing of other providers.

The Catholic moral tradition provides principles for assessing cooperation with the wrongdoing of others to determine the conditions under which cooperation may or may not be

morally justified, distinguishing between “formal” and “material” cooperation. *Formal* cooperation “occurs when an action, either by its very nature or by the form it takes in a concrete situation, can be defined as a direct participation in an [immoral] act . . . or a sharing in the immoral intention of the person committing it.”⁴⁶ Therefore, cooperation is formal not only when the cooperator shares the intention of the wrongdoer, but also when the cooperator directly participates in the immoral act, even if the cooperator does not share the intention of the wrongdoer, but participates as a means to some other end. Formal cooperation may take various forms, such as authorizing wrongdoing, approving it, prescribing it, actively defending it, or giving specific direction about carrying it out. Formal cooperation, in whatever form, is always morally wrong.

The cooperation is *material* if the one cooperating neither shares the wrongdoer’s intention in performing the immoral act nor cooperates by directly participating in the act as a means to some other end, but rather contributes to the immoral activity in a way that is causally related but not essential to the immoral act itself. While some instances of material cooperation are morally wrong, others are morally justified. There are many factors to consider when assessing whether or not material cooperation is justified, including: whether the cooperator’s act is morally good or neutral in itself, how significant is its causal contribution to the wrongdoer’s act, how serious is the immoral act of the wrongdoer, and how important are the goods to be preserved or the harms to be avoided by cooperating. Assessing material cooperation can be complex, and legitimate disagreements may arise over which factors are most relevant in a given case. Reliable theological experts should be consulted in interpreting and applying the principles governing cooperation.

Any moral analysis of a collaborative arrangement must also take into account the danger of scandal, which is “an attitude or behavior which leads another to do evil.”⁴⁷ The cooperation of a Catholic institution with other health care entities engaged in immoral activities, even when such cooperation is morally justified in all other respects, might, in certain cases, lead people to conclude that those activities are morally acceptable. This could lead people to sin. The danger of scandal, therefore, needs to be carefully evaluated in each case. In some cases, the danger of scandal can be mitigated by certain measures, such as providing an explanation as to why the Catholic institution is cooperating in this way at this time. In any event, prudential judgments that take into account the particular circumstances need to be made about the risk and degree of scandal and about whether they can be effectively addressed.

Even when there are good reasons for establishing collaborative arrangements that involve material cooperation with wrongdoing, leaders of Catholic healthcare institutions must assess whether becoming associated with the wrongdoing of a collaborator will risk undermining their institution’s ability to fulfill its mission of providing health care as a witness to the Catholic faith and an embodiment of Jesus’ concern for the sick. They must do everything they can to ensure that the integrity of the Church’s witness to Christ and his Gospel is not adversely affected by a collaborative arrangement.

In sum, collaborative arrangements with entities that do not share our Catholic moral tradition present both opportunities and challenges. The opportunities to further the mission of Catholic health care can be significant. The challenges do not necessarily preclude all such arrangements on moral grounds, but they do make it imperative for Catholic leaders to undertake careful analyses to ensure that new collaborative arrangements—as well as those that already exist—abide by the principles governing cooperation, effectively address the risk of scandal, abide by canon law, and sustain the Church’s witness to Christ and his saving message.

While the following Directives are offered to assist Catholic health care institutions in analyzing the moral considerations of collaborative arrangements, the ultimate responsibility for interpreting and applying of the Directives rests with the diocesan bishop.

Directives

67. Each diocesan bishop has the ultimate responsibility to assess whether collaborative arrangements involving Catholic health care providers operating in his local church involve wrongful cooperation, give scandal, or undermine the Church’s witness. In fulfilling this responsibility, the bishop should consider not only the circumstances in his local diocese but also the regional and national implications of his decision.
68. When there is a possibility that a prospective collaborative arrangement may lead to serious adverse consequences for the identity or reputation of Catholic health care services or entail a risk of scandal, the diocesan bishop is to be consulted in a timely manner. In addition, the diocesan bishop’s approval is required for collaborative arrangements involving institutions subject to his governing authority; when they involve institutions not subject to his governing authority but operating in his diocese, such as those involving a juridic person erected by the Holy See, the diocesan bishop’s *nihil obstat* is to be obtained.
69. In cases involving health care systems that extend across multiple diocesan jurisdictions, it remains the responsibility of the diocesan bishop of each diocese in which the system’s affiliated institutions are located to approve locally the prospective collaborative arrangement or to grant the requisite *nihil obstat*, as the situation may require. At the same time, with such a proposed arrangement, it is the duty of the diocesan bishop of the diocese in which the system’s headquarters is located to initiate a collaboration with the diocesan bishops of the dioceses affected by the collaborative arrangement. The bishops involved in this collaboration should make every effort to reach a consensus.
70. Catholic health care organizations are not permitted to engage in immediate material cooperation in actions that are intrinsically immoral, such as abortion, euthanasia, assisted suicide, and direct sterilization.⁴⁸
71. When considering opportunities for collaborative arrangements that entail material cooperation in wrongdoing, Catholic institutional leaders must assess whether scandal⁴⁹ might be given and whether the Church’s witness might be undermined. In some cases, the risk of scandal can be appropriately mitigated or removed by an explanation of what is in fact being done by the health care organization under Catholic auspices. Nevertheless, a

collaborative arrangement that in all other respects is morally licit may need to be refused because of the scandal that might be caused or because the Church's witness might be undermined.

72. The Catholic party in a collaborative arrangement has the responsibility to assess periodically whether the binding agreement is being observed and implemented in a way that is consistent with the natural moral law, Catholic teaching, and canon law.
73. Before affiliating with a health care entity that permits immoral procedures, a Catholic institution must ensure that neither its administrators nor its employees will manage, carry out, assist in carrying out, make its facilities available for, make referrals for, or benefit from the revenue generated by immoral procedures.
74. In any kind of collaboration, whatever comes under the control of the Catholic institution—whether by acquisition, governance, or management—must be operated in full accord with the moral teaching of the Catholic Church, including these Directives.
75. It is not permitted to establish another entity that would oversee, manage, or perform immoral procedures. Establishing such an entity includes actions such as drawing up the civil bylaws, policies, or procedures of the entity, establishing the finances of the entity, or legally incorporating the entity.
76. Representatives of Catholic health care institutions who serve as members of governing boards of non-Catholic health care organizations that do not adhere to the ethical principles regarding health care articulated by the Church should make their opposition to immoral procedures known and not give their consent to any decisions proximately connected with such procedures. Great care must be exercised to avoid giving scandal or adversely affecting the witness of the Church.
77. If it is discovered that a Catholic health care institution might be wrongly cooperating with immoral procedures, the local diocesan bishop should be informed immediately and the leaders of the institution should resolve the situation as soon as reasonably possible.

Conclusion

Sickness speaks to us of our limitations and human frailty. It can take the form of infirmity resulting from the simple passing of years or injury from the exuberance of youthful energy. It can be temporary or chronic, debilitating, and even terminal. Yet the follower of Jesus faces illness and the consequences of the human condition aware that our Lord always shows compassion toward the infirm.

Jesus not only taught his disciples to be compassionate, but he also told them who should be the special object of their compassion. The parable of the feast with its humble guests was preceded by the instruction: “When you hold a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind” (Lk 14:13). These were people whom Jesus healed and loved.

Catholic health care is a response to the challenge of Jesus to go and do likewise. Catholic health care services rejoice in the challenge to be Christ’s healing compassion in the world and see their ministry not only as an effort to restore and preserve health but also as a spiritual service and a sign of that final healing that will one day bring about the new creation that is the ultimate fruit of Jesus’ ministry and God’s love for us.

Notes

1. United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Health and Health Care: A Pastoral Letter of the American Catholic Bishops* (Washington, DC: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 1981).
2. Health care services under Catholic auspices are carried out in a variety of institutional settings (e.g., hospitals, clinics, outpatient facilities, urgent care centers, hospices, nursing homes, and parishes). Depending on the context, these Directives will employ the terms “institution” and/or “services” in order to encompass the variety of settings in which Catholic health care is provided.
3. *Health and Health Care*, p. 5.
4. Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, *Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity (Apostolicam Actuositatem)* (1965), no. 1.
5. Pope John Paul II, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *On the Vocation and the Mission of the Lay Faithful in the Church and in the World (Christifideles Laici)* (Washington, DC: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 1988), no. 29.
6. As examples, see Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Declaration on Procured Abortion* (1974); Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Declaration on Euthanasia* (1980); Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Instruction on Respect for Human Life in Its Origin and on the Dignity of Procreation: Replies to Certain Questions of the Day (Donum Vitae)* (Washington, DC: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 1987).
7. Pope John XXIII, Encyclical Letter *Peace on Earth (Pacem in Terris)* (Washington, DC: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 1963), no. 11; *Health and Health Care*, pp. 5, 17-18; *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2nd ed. (Washington, DC: Libreria Editrice Vaticana–United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2000), no. 2211.
8. Pope John Paul II, *On Social Concern, Encyclical Letter on the Occasion of the Twentieth Anniversary of “Populorum Progressio” (Sollicitudo Rei Socialis)* (Washington, DC: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 1988), no. 43.
9. United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Economic Justice for All: Pastoral Letter on Catholic Social Teaching and the U.S. Economy* (Washington, DC: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 1986), no. 80.
10. The duty of responsible stewardship demands responsible collaboration. But in collaborative efforts, Catholic institutionally based health care services must be attentive to occasions when the policies and practices of other institutions are not compatible with the Church’s authoritative moral teaching. At such times, Catholic health care institutions should determine whether or to what degree collaboration would be morally permissible. To make that judgment, the governing boards of Catholic institutions should adhere to the moral principles on cooperation. See Part Six.
11. *Health and Health Care*, p. 12.
12. Cf. *Code of Canon Law*, cc. 921-923.
13. Cf. *ibid.*, c. 867, § 2, and c. 871.
14. To confer Baptism in an emergency, one must have the proper intention (to do what the Church intends by Baptism) and pour water on the head of the person to be baptized, meanwhile pronouncing the words: “I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the

Holy Spirit.”

15. Cf. c. 883, 3°.
16. For example, while the donation of a kidney represents loss of biological integrity, such a donation does not compromise functional integrity since human beings are capable of functioning with only one kidney.
17. Cf. directive 53.
18. *Declaration on Euthanasia*, Part IV; cf. also directives 56-57.
19. It is recommended that a sexually assaulted woman be advised of the ethical restrictions that prevent Catholic hospitals from using abortifacient procedures; cf. Pennsylvania Catholic Conference, “Guidelines for Catholic Hospitals Treating Victims of Sexual Assault,” *Origins* 22 (1993): 810.
20. Pope John Paul II, “Address of October 29, 1983, to the 35th General Assembly of the World Medical Association,” *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 76 (1984): 390.
21. Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, *Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World (Gaudium et Spes)* (1965), no. 49.
22. *Ibid.*, no. 50.
23. Pope Paul VI, Encyclical Letter *On the Regulation of Birth (Humanae Vitae)* (Washington, DC: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 1968), no. 14.
24. *Ibid.*, no. 12.
25. Pope John XXIII, Encyclical Letter *Mater et Magistra* (1961), no. 193, quoted in Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Donum Vitae*, no. 4.
26. Pope John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *The Splendor of Truth (Veritatis Splendor)* (Washington, DC: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 1993), no. 50.
27. “Homologous artificial insemination within marriage cannot be admitted except for those cases in which the technical means is not a substitute for the conjugal act but serves to facilitate and to help so that the act attains its natural purpose” (*Donum Vitae*, Part II, B, no. 6; cf. also Part I, nos. 1, 6).
28. *Ibid.*, Part II, A, no. 2.
29. “Artificial insemination as a substitute for the conjugal act is prohibited by reason of the voluntarily achieved dissociation of the two meanings of the conjugal act. Masturbation, through which the sperm is normally obtained, is another sign of this dissociation: even when it is done for the purpose of procreation, the act remains deprived of its unitive meaning: ‘It lacks the sexual relationship called for by the moral order, namely, the relationship which realizes “the full sense of mutual self-giving and human procreation in the context of true love”’” (*Donum Vitae*, Part II, B, no. 6).
30. *Ibid.*, Part II, A, no. 3.
31. Cf. directive 45.
32. *Donum Vitae*, Part I, no. 2.
33. Cf. *ibid.*, no. 4. (Washington, DC: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 1988), no. 43.
34. Cf. Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, “Responses on Uterine Isolation and Related Matters,” July 31, 1993, *Origins* 24 (1994): 211-212.
35. Pope John Paul II, Apostolic Letter *On the Christian Meaning of Human Suffering (Salvifici Doloris)* (Washington, DC: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 1984), nos. 25-27.

36. United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Order of Christian Funerals* (Collegeville, Minn.: The Liturgical Press, 1989), no. 1.
37. See *Declaration on Euthanasia*.
38. *Ibid.*, Part II.
39. *Ibid.*, Part IV; Pope John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *On the Value and Inviolability of Human Life (Evangelium Vitae)* (Washington, DC: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 1995), no. 65.
40. See Pope John Paul II, Address to the Participants in the International Congress on “Life-Sustaining Treatments and Vegetative State: Scientific Advances and Ethical Dilemmas” (March 20, 2004), no. 4, where he emphasized that “the administration of water and food, even when provided by artificial means, always represents a *natural means* of preserving life, not a *medical act*.” See also Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, “Responses to Certain Questions of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops Concerning Artificial Nutrition and Hydration” (August 1, 2007).
41. Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, Commentary on “Responses to Certain Questions of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops Concerning Artificial Nutrition and Hydration.”
42. See *Declaration on Euthanasia*, Part IV.
43. *Donum Vitae*, Part I, no. 4.
44. See: Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, “Some Principles for Collaboration with non-Catholic Entities in the Provision of Healthcare Services,” published in *The National Catholic Bioethics Quarterly* (Summer 2014), 337-40.
45. Pope John Paul II, *Veritatis Splendor*, no. 13.
46. Pope John Paul II, *Evangelium Vitae*, no. 74.
47. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 2284.
48. While there are many acts of varying moral gravity that can be identified as intrinsically evil, in the context of contemporary health care the most pressing concerns are currently abortion, euthanasia, assisted suicide, and direct sterilization. See Pope John Paul II’s Ad Limina Address to the bishops of Texas, Oklahoma, and Arkansas (Region X), in *Origins* 28 (1998): 283. See also “Reply of the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith on Sterilization in Catholic Hospitals” (*Quaecumque Sterilizatio*), March 13, 1975, *Origins* 6 (1976): 33-35: “Any cooperation institutionally approved or tolerated in actions which are in themselves, that is, by their nature and condition, directed to a contraceptive end . . . is absolutely forbidden. For the official approbation of direct sterilization and, a fortiori, its management and execution in accord with hospital regulations, is a matter which, in the objective order, is by its very nature (or intrinsically) evil.” This directive supersedes the “Commentary on the Reply of the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith on Sterilization in Catholic Hospitals” published by the National Conference of Catholic Bishops on September 15, 1977, in *Origins* 7 (1977): 399-400.
49. See *Catechism of the Catholic Church*: “Anyone who uses the power at his disposal in such a way that it leads others to do wrong becomes guilty of scandal and responsible for the evil that he has directly or indirectly encouraged” (no. 2287).

BOOK IV
The Sanctifying Function of the Church



POLICIES AND GUIDELINES
UPDATED SEPTEMBER 2024

DIOCESE OF LAKE CHARLES

DIOCESAN POLICY STATEMENT

BAPTISM FOR ADULTS, INFANTS, AND YOUNG CHILDREN

"Go therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." (Matthew 28:19).

Baptism is the first of the three sacraments of Christian initiation. "Baptism is the basis of the whole Christian life, the gateway to life in the Spirit, and the door which gives access to the other sacraments" (CCC, 1213). All persons who wish to follow Christ must seek the Sacrament of Baptism, and from the earliest days of the Church, infant baptism has been a manifestation of the grace of salvation communicated in this sacrament.

This policy defines the obligations of parents and celebrant and defines particulars as to the celebration and recording of the sacrament and special circumstances that may surround it. It also defines briefly the norms that are to accompany the Baptism of Adults.

GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR ALL BAPTISMS

All baptisms are to follow the proper ritual for Baptism.

In the case of Adults, the Ritual is found in the *Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults*. Adults enrolled in these rites are called "catechumens." The explanatory rites of this ritual are encouraged and should not be dispensed from lightly. Great care should surround the precision of the rites for adult initiation. Likewise, an adult is by the law and practice of the Church to receive Confirmation and Eucharist when baptized. Preparation for these sacraments are to be given at the same time.

In the case of a child who has reached the catechetical age, everything is done in the same fashion and method as for adults including the reception of Confirmation and Eucharist.

In the case of infant baptism and children who are under the catechetical age, the rite is the *Order of Baptism of Children*.

The rites should be strictly observed for all cases. In cases of doubt, the pastor should consult the Office of Religious Education, the Office of Liturgy, or the Tribunal.

PREPARATION AND FORMATION OF PARENTS AND SPONSORS

When a child is born, it is a moment of immense joy. The Church, too, rejoices with the mother and father. As with the birth of a child, preparation is needed so that the Church with the parents of the child may rejoice at the declaration of God the Father that the child is now a child of God through baptism. For that reason, the following are requirements that must precede the baptism of a child:

1. Each Parish is to have a program to prepare parents for the Baptism of their child. The expectations should be clearly given when the baptism is scheduled.
2. The parents of the child are required to fulfill the Parish program for preparation. It is desirable for the godparents to participate.
3. One sponsor (godparent) or two sponsors (godparents) are to be chosen. If two sponsors are chosen, the sponsors must be one male and one female. The requirements to serve as a godparent are:
 - a. Must be chosen by the parent or guardian of the child;
 - b. Cannot be the parent or guardian of the child;
 - c. Must be a practicing Catholic living in harmony with the Faith;
 - d. Nor be under a canonical penalty;
 - e. Must be at least 16 years of age; and
 - f. Must have had received Confirmation and First Eucharist.

If one sponsor fulfills the beforementioned requirements, there may be a Christian Witness. A Christian Witness is:

- a. A Christian who strives to follow closely the ways of the Lord and his teachings;
 - b. A Christian who is a member of an ecclesial community (Protestant church);
 - c. A Christian who is baptized into an ecclesial community.
 - d. A non-baptized individual may never serve as a witness or sponsor.
4. Once parents have undergone one preparation program, they are not required to participate in another preparation program.
 5. The Parish Preparation Program for Baptism is to cover the following:
 - a. The Church's definition and teaching on Baptism;
 - b. The role of parents before and after baptism;
 - c. The requirements of parents and sponsors (godparents); and
 - d. The ritual of Baptism with its explanatory rites;

PREREQUISITES FOR RECEPTION OF BAPTISM

For a person to be baptized, there must be a hope that the person will live according to the faith. The pastor may make this judgement. In cases of an infant or young child, there must be a founded hope that the child will be raised in Catholic Faith. Indicators of this hope may be as follows:

- 1) Regular participation by the Catholic Parent(s) at the Holy Mass and their witness to the Christian Faith in word and deed;
- 2) The desire of the parents to seek convalidation of a problematic marriage;
- 3) The raising of the other children in the Faith and/or the children's participation in the Religious Education of the Parish; and
- 4) The selection of sponsors (godparents) who are exemplary in the witness to the faith and moral living for the child.

If the parents of the infant belong to another parish, the celebrant of the baptism is required to contact the pastor of the parents to obtain permission to celebrate the baptism.

If there is not a founded hope that an individual or an infant will be brought up in the Catholic Faith, the sacrament of baptism is to be delayed until such time that the pastor can satisfy a reasonable hope. The reasons for the delay are to be clearly communicated as well as a willingness for the pastor to accompany the parents or the individual until a satisfactory end can be brought about is to take place. If the parents disagree with the decision to delay the baptism, they may appeal the decision to the Dean.

TIME AND CELEBRATION OF THE SACRAMENT

The day which hold primacy for the celebration of baptism is the Easter Vigil especially for catechumens. Pastors may choose to baptize adults and children of catechetical age at other times. Infants may be baptized at a time close to their birth. Precedence should always be given to Sundays as the day of that marks the Lord's Resurrection.

Baptism may be celebrated within Mass or outside of Mass (especially for infants) according to rites of the Church. If the individual is to be confirmed, the baptizing minister must be a priest so that he can confer the sacrament of confirmation immediately after the baptism.

Other than what is beforementioned, baptisms may be celebrated on any day that is not prohibited by Law or the current Liturgical Norms.

Once a baptism is celebrated, the child's or adult's name is to be inscribed as soon as possible in the Parish's Record of Baptism. Once the name and information are inscribed into the record, no changes can be made. Therefore, it is not permitted to change one's parents, name, or sponsors after the event. In the case of the baptism of a child whose parents are not married, the place for the "Name of the Father" is to be completed with the words "Name not given" unless the father has by a legal document acknowledged his paternity.

SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES AND NOTES

In the Diocese of Lake Charles, the catechetical age or the age of reason is understood to be 7 years of age. Any exceptions to this must be reviewed with the Bishop before the baptism or preparation or the announcement of a date.

Baptisms may be performed by any person in any location or place in an emergency. Such baptisms are recorded in the territorial parish. It is the responsibility of the person who has performed the baptism to bring the necessary information to the territorial parish including the name of the child or individual, the name(s) of the parent(s), the date of the baptism, and the name of the person who has performed the baptism.

If a child or individual is baptized by someone other than a validly ordained minister of the Church in a "non-emergency" situation and the baptism is valid (i.e., with the intention of the Church, using

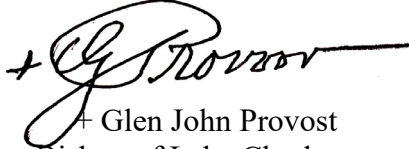
Updated: July 1, 2020

water, and pouring water over the head while saying the Trinitarian formula), that baptism is be recorded in Baptismal Record of the territorial parish in which it occurred once the pastor is made aware of it.

When a child of non-catechetical age is baptized in an emergency or outside of the Church, the explanatory rites of the Church may be given subsequently. The explanatory rites used (often called “Supplying the Rites”) are those rites that follow the baptism of the child (not the rites that precede the baptism).

Promulgated: February 22, 2020

Effective: July 1, 2020



+ Glen John Provost
Bishop of Lake Charles

Updated: July 1, 2020

DIOCESE OF LAKE CHARLES

DIOCESAN POLICY STATEMENT

GUIDELINES FOR THE RECEPTION OF THE SACRAMENT OF CONFIRMATION

"The sacrament of confirmation impresses a character and by it the Baptized, continuing on the path of Christian initiation, are enriched by the gift of the Holy Spirit and bound more perfectly to the Church; it strengthens them and obliges them more firmly to be witnesses to Christ by word and deed and to spread and defend the faith." (Canon 879)

PREPARATION FOR THE SACRAMENT OF CONFIRMATION

1. Each baptized person, who has not been confirmed, has the right to the sacrament when that person meets the requirements articulated in Canon 889:
 - a. The person has the use of reason;
 - b. The person has been suitably instructed;
 - c. The person is properly disposed;
 - d. The person is able to renew his/her baptismal vows;

The pastor is charged with the responsibility of providing suitable catechesis for the celebration of this sacrament that is approved by the Bishop and his delegate, the Director of the Office of Religious Education.

2. Catechesis for this sacrament is to include activities that will help further initiate young people into the Church. Service activities, retreats, opportunities to celebrate the Sacrament of Penance, opportunities to request the sacrament, and personal interviews with members of the parish clergy, as well as doctrinal instruction, are integral parts of this preparation. The parish confirmation program should provide the students with texts, approved by the Bishop, which present the teaching of the Church concerning Confirmation.

Children not baptized as infants, but who are of the age of reason should receive the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist at the Easter Vigil, along with other catechumens. This should only take place after proper catechesis, which may take several years. The age of reason is understood to be seven years of age.

Through the catechetical process, the candidate for confirmation should be able to:

- a. Articulate some understanding of the role of the Holy Spirit in his/her life;
 - b. Demonstrate an understanding of the sacraments of initiation: baptism, confirmation and eucharist;
 - c. Demonstrate involvement in the Catholic Christian community; and
 - d. Approach the sacrament freely;
3. Parents are the primary educators of their children. As such, they are responsible, together with parish priests, parish catechetical leaders, and catechists, for determining readiness of their children to celebrate sacraments. The parish has the responsibility of providing programs which will help meet the needs of those parents, helping them understand and fulfill their right and responsibility to educate their children.

4. If the name of a Christian saint was given to the person at baptism, the candidate may choose to retain this name. A new name, however, may be chosen if the baptismal name is not that of a Christian saint or if the candidate chooses another saint to model during this special time. A name may be any name inscribed in the *Martyrology* of the Church.
5. The preference for sponsors is the baptismal godparent(s), when possible. The criteria for sponsors, according to the Code of Canon Law (cc. 893, 874) are as follows:
 - a. Designated by the candidate or parents;
 - b. At least sixteen years old;
 - c. A confirmed Catholic who lives a life that is in harmony with the faith and the role to be undertaken;
 - d. Not be bound by any canonical penalty;
 - e. Not be the natural or adopted father or the mother or legal guardian of the one to be confirmed.

PARISH GUIDELINES

Parishes are to write and publicize their guidelines and requirements for the catechesis for this sacrament, in accord with these guidelines and in consultation with the Diocesan Office of Religious Education. Parish guidelines should state a definite time for registration, the requirements for entering the program, and the length of preparation. Those desiring to be prepared and their parents should be made fully aware of what is required for confirmation.

THE LITURGY OF CONFIRMATION

1. The ordinary context of the Sacrament of Confirmation is the Holy Mass with the Bishop as celebrant. The Bishop may, however, delegate a vicar or another priest to administer the sacrament. Other priests may be called upon at the time of celebration to assist him in the anointing because of the size of the group being confirmed.
2. Since the Bishop is the celebrant of the Sacrament of the Confirmation and the Holy Mass at which it is conferred, he is to have the final approval of all liturgical matters. It is the duty of the pastor to plan the Mass, ensure servers and ministers as needed, and music; but all details are subject to the final approval of the Bishop through his delegate.

CONFIRMATION BY A PRIEST WHEN RECEIVING A BAPTIZED CHRISTIAN INTO FULL COMMUNION WITH THE CATHOLIC FAITH

When receiving a baptized Christian of another denomination into full communion with the Catholic Church, the priest should administer the sacrament of confirmation. The principles set forth in the *Rite of Reception of Baptized Christians into Full Communion with the Catholic Church* are to be followed:

1. The term "convert" should not be applied to baptized Christians on the occasion of their entrance into full Catholic communion.
2. The sacrament of baptism may NOT be repeated. Conditional baptism is allowed only when there is reasonable doubt about the fact of the validity of baptism already received; even then baptism is to be administered in the private form.

3. The rite should take place during a Eucharistic celebration when a significant segment of the parish community is present. Communion under both kinds is especially appropriate at such a celebration. For good reason, the Rite of Reception may take place at another time, however this should be an exception.
4. Preparation for reception into the Church is best provided through the process as outlined in the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults*. The Office of Evangelization has materials available for pastors desiring to set up such a process.

CONFIRMATION BY A PRIEST AFTER BAPTIZING AN ADULT

A priest who lawfully baptizes adults has the faculty from law to confirm them.

The best time for baptism/confirmation of adults is at the Easter Vigil celebration. If this is not possible, it should take place at a Sunday Mass.

CONFIRMATION OF ADULTS WHO WERE BAPTIZED INTO THE CATHOLIC CHURCH AS INFANTS

An adult who was baptized as an infant into the Catholic Church but has not received the Sacraments of Eucharist and/or Confirmation is to be enrolled in an appropriate program of catechesis and formation. A priest of the diocese may administer the Sacrament of the Eucharist by virtue of his office but must receive delegation in writing from the Bishop in order to confirm this individual.

CONFIRMATION OF A PERSON IN DANGER OF DEATH

Any priest may confirm a sick person who is in danger of death and has reached the age of reason. This should take place after the necessary catechesis and before the distribution of Viaticum.

RECORDS

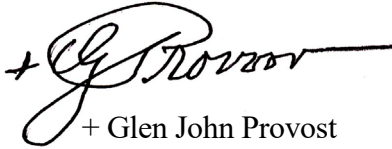
The pastor must record in a special book the names of the minister, those confirmed, parents, sponsors, and the date and place of confirmation. This is in addition to the notation in the Baptismal Register.

In the Diocese of Lake Charles, when parishes are clustered together for confirmation, the parish that gave instruction to the child or young person is to record the Confirmation and send the notification to the place of baptism.

If a person was baptized in another parish, notification of reception of confirmation must be sent to that parish for proper recording in its Baptismal Register.

Promulgated: February 22, 2020

Effective: July 1, 2020


+ Glen John Provost
Bishop of Lake Charles

DIOCESE OF LAKE CHARLES

DIOCESAN POLICY STATEMENT

GUIDELINES FOR THE SACRAMENT OF EUCHARIST

At the Last Supper, the Lord left as a perpetual memorial and mandate the Celebration of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. Those of the faithful who are properly disposed and not prohibited by law or personal circumstances may approach the Altar of God to receive the Lord in the Most August Sacrament.

Generally, among the duties of the pastor and the clergy associated with him, ongoing catechesis is to be presented so that all the faithful may know who and what they are receiving. Among the chief places for this catechesis is the homily in the context of the Mass which leads the faithful to a more fruitful reception of the Lord.

The preparation for the first Reception of the Holy Eucharist is vitally important in the life of a Christian. It constitutes the one of the three Sacraments of Initiation.

In the Diocese of Lake Charles, a child who has been baptized as an infant or before the catechetical age (the age of reason) may receive First Holy Communion at the age of seven or in the second grade provided that all requirements are fulfilled.

PREPARATION FOR THE SACRAMENT OF EUCHARIST FOR CHILDREN

1. Every baptized person who is not prohibited by law can be admitted to the Eucharist (c. 912). Parents/guardians and pastors of parishes are responsible for correctly preparing children who have reached the age of reason for the celebration of this sacrament (c. 914). Pastoral discretion should be exercised when preparing older students for the reception of this sacrament.
2. Those who may have developmental or mental disabilities have the same right to receive the Most Holy Eucharist in Communion. The criterion for reception though is not different from all other persons. Namely, a person must always be able to distinguish between the Eucharistic Presence and ordinary food.

In cases of doubt, the pastor or parent may consult the Director of the Office of Religious Education in accord with Policy 110.

3. Catechesis for the Reception of First Eucharist is to be offered in the first and second grades but reinforced at every age and frequently at Mass since the Eucharist is the Source and Summit of the Christian Life (cf. *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 10).

Catechesis on the Eucharist for children helps them understand that the Mass is the share in

the Mystery of Christ's Sacrifice on the Cross, as a memorial of his passion, death, and resurrection. Reception of Holy Communion then becomes a foretaste of the heavenly banquet and the striving toward the fullness of Christ on earth.

The parish First Eucharist program should provide the children with texts, approved by the Bishop, which present the teaching of the Church concerning Eucharist. Catechesis for First Eucharist should:

- a. Teach that the Eucharist is the real Body and Blood of Jesus, even though it is under the appearance of ordinary bread and wine;
 - b. Teach the children to participate in the Mass by instructing them in its various parts;
 - c. Teach that the Eucharist is not merely the commemoration of Jesus' last meal with his disciples, but is the living memorial of Christ's sacrifice for the salvation of humanity;
 - d. Teach the children the importance of receiving the Eucharist in a conscious and reverent manner in accord with the current norms of the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*. (NDC 127-128)
4. Parents are the primary educators of their children. Parents have a right and responsibility to be involved in the preparation of their children for this sacrament. Parents are expected to participate in the preparation program of their respective parish.
 5. Catechesis for the preparation for this sacrament are to prepare the children for reception of First Penance before that of First Eucharist. The programs of specific sacramental catechesis for each sacrament and the first celebration of each should be separated by a significant interval of time.

ADULT FIRST RECEPTION

The preparation of adults for first reception of the Eucharist is an integral part of the catechumenate process. The R.C.I.A. is the normal process to be used in the preparation of adults for the first reception of Eucharist.

For those adults who are being received into Full Communion with the Catholic Church, it is necessary that the adult understand the Doctrine of the True Presence of the Lord in the Eucharist and be able to articulate the beforementioned truths that are taught for a child's First Eucharist.

ONGOING CELEBRATION OF SACRAMENT OF EUCHARIST

1. Catechesis for the Sacrament of Eucharist should be an ongoing and integral part of each year's catechetical program.
2. Frequent celebration of the sacrament is to be encouraged as a means of ongoing conversion and growth in holiness.

3. Great caution should be given to “planning” Masses that seem exclusively for children whether these celebrations are for Catholic schools or Parish Religious Education Programs and regularly should be avoided. Rather recalling that the Mass is joining to Christ and being built into his body, greater emphasis should be placed on an integral and organic celebration of the Mass that is part of the Parish life.

PARISH GUIDELINES

All children (those in Catholic schools, home-schooled, and those participating in the Parish Religious Education Program) must register in their own parish for the reception of First Holy Communion during the regular registration period.

Parishes are to write and publish their guidelines for the catechesis for the Sacrament of Eucharist in accord with these diocesan guidelines, and in consultation with the Diocesan Office of Religious Education.

The Parish Guidelines are to include the following as guides and norms:

- a. Parents are expected to gather for the number of sessions determined by the pastor of the parish;
- b. Materials will be distributed to assist parents to understand the teachings of the Church concerning the Eucharist and its reception. These materials and texts are to be given at the regularly scheduled meetings and explained;
- c. A required aspect of the Sacramental Preparation will be an interview by the Pastor or his delegate to ensure that the child can exhibit the prerequisite knowledge of distinction and doctrine concerning the Blessed Sacrament. This interview will determine if the child is to be delayed in reception of Holy Communion.

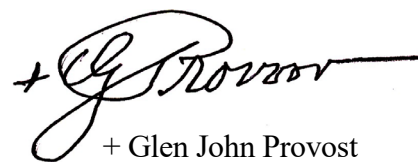
If parents would disagree with a decision made by a pastor or his delegate, the parent may appeal to the Dean of the Deanery in which the parish is located.

RECORDS

A record for the celebration of First Eucharist is to be kept in the parish and noted on the student record in the parochial school or CCD office. If the person was baptized in another parish, notification of reception of First Eucharist must be sent to that parish for proper recording in its Baptismal Register.

Promulgated: April 23, 2008

Effective: July 1, 2008



+ Glen John Provost
Bishop of Lake Charles

Updated: July 1, 2020

DIOCESE OF LAKE CHARLES

DIOCESAN POLICY STATEMENT

EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS OF HOLY COMMUNION

To be spiritually nourished through the reception of the Holy Eucharist is a privilege won for the people of God through the redemption wrought by Christ Jesus, the Eternal Son of God. Eternal life with him is the primary goal of the Christian life. Christ offers through the sacraments of the Church the gift of eternal life, especially through the frequent reception of Holy Eucharist at the Sacrifice of the Mass. That Catholics who can receive the Holy Eucharist may receive as frequently as possible as allowed by the Law of the Church, and to ensure this reception, enough ministers of Holy Communion should be present.

When the ministers of the Church (the ordained through Holy Orders) are too few or the number of faithful are great, Holy Mother Church allows for the appointment either permanently or temporarily of extraordinary (outside the usual) ministers to read the Word of God, lead the community in common prayer, and assist with the distribution of Holy Communion in accord with the prescriptions of Liturgical and Canon Law (cf. Canon 230, § 3).

For the Diocese of Lake Charles, the following are policies for extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion:

1. In such situations where a true need exists for assistance with the distribution of Holy Communion at Mass, the pastor of a parish, the administrator of a parish, or the celebrant of a Mass may depute a member of the lay faithful to assist for a single occasion.

An extraordinary minister may never replace an ordained minister.

2. Recognizing the importance of the choice of an extraordinary minister, the person in question must receive the full endorsement of his or her pastor. Without this endorsement, a person may not serve as an extraordinary minister in any form. The pastor should seek the consultation of the parochial vicars, deacons, and other lay leaders to ensure the character of the person who is nominated.
3. Those chosen to be extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion are to be mature persons (18 years of age or older), baptized, confirmed, and able to receive Holy Communion. The life of person must publicly adhere to the Church and her teachings concerning faith and morals. The occupation of the person should never lead to wonderment or scandal (cf. *CIC*, 207, §2; 208; 209, §1). When in doubt the pastor should consult the Diocesan Bishop. All other guidelines concerning selection should adhere to the Code of Canon Law and other instructions from competent authorities.

In addition to the minimum age requirement, the nominee must also be able to carry out duties incumbent upon them. Namely, the person should be able to enter and exit the sanctuary with ease and without assistance, not potentially dropping the Blessed

Sacrament, and have the capacity to distinguish between ordinary bread and wine and the True Presence of Christ in the Eucharistic Species. The pastor's discretion is always respected in judgments concerning these matters.

4. Special care should be shown to the extraordinary ministers who assist with the distribution of Holy Communion to numerous groups in various needs. Among these groups in need are the sick, the imprisoned, and the homebound (cf. Matthew 25: 35-36). These extraordinary ministers may bring communion to institutions and homes where the sick, ill, and imprisoned are; and receive the same training as all other extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion.
5. Extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion are commissioned for a three-year period and is required to attend a workshop or its equivalent offered by the Office of Liturgy. All those who do not attend the workshop or its equivalent are not permitted to serve in the capacity of extraordinary minister.
6. After the pastor has nominated the person, the person in question has attended the training, and the same person has met all the requirements, the diocesan bishop hereby delegates that each pastor may formally commission the extraordinary ministers of his parish alone in accord with the rite of commissioning found in the *Book of Blessings*, or may depute another priest to do the same.
7. It is the duty of the pastor to ensure the continued spiritual growth of extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion. This is especially done by deepening a Eucharistic Devotion. It is essential that all ministers of Holy Communion (ordained and extraordinary) strive to know better each day the Lord whose Presence is found in the Most Blessed Sacrament.

When possible, the extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion should attend Mass regularly throughout the week if not daily, have a weekly Holy Hour before the Blessed Sacrament, and attend an annual retreat. These along with regular reception of Sacrament of Reconciliation and Penance assists the extraordinary minister of Holy Communion to become a better Christian and representative of the Church.

8. In the Diocese of Lake Charles, extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion are not to distinguish themselves by vesture that is reserved for liturgical service. The exception to this is for those who are instituted in the ministry of acolyte or reader and are seeking Holy Orders.

Those extraordinary ministers who are not instituted ministers of the Church are to dress in accord with the dignity of the Sacrament of the Eucharist. Modesty and decorum are necessary which includes the refraining from the wearing of "casual clothing," "casual footwear," or "sports-wear."

9. In the Diocese of Lake Charles, priests, deacons, and all extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion are to refrain from language that lessens the reality of the Lord's True Presence. The term "bread-minister" and wine-minister" are not to be used. Rather, "Minister of the Sacred Host" and Minister of the Chalice" are the phrases that are permissible.

Promulgated: April 25, 2017
Effective: July 1, 2017


+ Glen John Provost
Bishop of Lake Charles

DIOCESE OF LAKE CHARLES

DIOCESAN POLICY STATEMENT

GUIDELINES REGARDING SERVERS

1. Although institution into the Ministry of Acolyte is reserved to lay men, the diocesan bishop may permit the liturgical role of an acolyte to be carried out by altar servers, men and women, boys and girls. The seeds of a vocation to ministerial service and religious life are sown in this ministry. Such persons may carry out all the functions listed no. 68, para, 2 and nos. 142-147 of the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*.

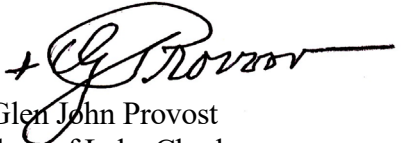
In the Diocese of Lake Charles, because of the general practice permitted in the past few decades, the Diocesan Bishop permits, but does not mandate, that females may assist at the altar during Mass.

2. Servers should be mature enough to understand their responsibilities and to carry them out well and with appropriate reverence. They should have already received holy Communion and normally receive the Eucharist whenever they participate in the liturgy.
3. Servers should receive proper formation before they begin to function. The formation should include instruction on the Mass and its parts and their meaning, the various objects used in the liturgy (their names and use), and the various functions of the server during the Mass and other liturgical celebrations. Servers should also receive appropriate guidance on maintaining proper decorum and attire when serving Mass and other functions. Therefore, a pastor may reserve the ministry for older minors and adults.
4. Since the role of server is typical to the celebration of the Mass, at least one server should assist the priest. On occasions of greater solemnity (i.e., Sunday, Solemnities, the Sacred Triduum, and Masses of Christian Burial), two or more servers can be employed to carry out the various functions normally entrusted to these ministers.
5. Servers should normally be vested. This is within the tradition of the Church and prevents difficulties regarding appropriate dress. All servers should wear the same appropriate liturgical vesture. In the Diocese of Lake Charles, instituted acolytes are to wear cassock and surplice. All other servers who assist at Mass may wear cassock and surplice or alb at the discretion of the pastor.
6. Servers carry the cross, the processional candles, hold the Missal or other sacred book for the celebrant when appropriate, carry the boat and censer, present the bread and wine, and water to the priest at the altar, wash the hands of the priest, and assist the priest celebrant and deacon as necessary. This and other items should follow in accord with the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*.

7. Servers respond to the prayers and dialogues of the priest along with the congregation. They also join in singing the hymns and other chants of the liturgy.
8. Servers should be seated in a place from which they can easily assist the ministers of the Mass. The place next to the priest is normally reserved for the deacon.
9. Servers may not distribute holy communion unless they have been mandated for this function by the bishop and in accord with particular law.
10. The *Order for the Blessing of Altar Servers, Sacristans, Musicians, and Ushers (Book of Blessings* nos. 1847-1870) may be used before servers first begin to function in this ministry.

Promulgated: February 22, 2020

Effective: July 1, 2020


+ Glen John Provost
Bishop of Lake Charles

DIOCESE OF LAKE CHARLES

DIOCESAN POLICY STATEMENT

“COMMUNION SERVICES” AND
RECEPTION OF HOLY COMMUNION OUTSIDE OF MASS

The Second Vatican Council teaches that the Liturgy of the Church and especially the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass is the fullness of the Christian life and of each individual Christian (*Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 2). Thus, Holy Mother Church offers the Mass as the rule of prayer that expresses the fullness of the Faith as revealed through Christ her Lord. It is the Sacrifice of the Mass that joins the individual Christian to the reality of Christ’s redemption (*General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, 2).

Holy Mother Church states as normative the Sunday observance of the faithful in the participation in the Mass along with holy days of obligations (cf. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2180). The daily celebration of the Sacrifice of the Mass is recommended strongly for priests and is encouraged for the lay faithful (cf., *CIC*, 276, § 2; 904; 919).

The Church teaches that the reception of the Lord’s Body and Blood is to be normally received at the Celebration of the Mass and that its full meaning is found in the reception at the same sacrifice (cf., *CIC*, 898, 918).

When age or health necessitates that a person remains at home or is hospitalized, Holy Mother Church encourages these faithful to receive Holy Communion outside of Mass in accord with the liturgical books.

Other circumstances may permit a pastor to allow for the reception of Holy Communion outside of Mass for those who not aforementioned. The circumstances are defined in policy for the safeguarding of the Blessed Sacrament and the Sacrifice of the Mass. The following are considered times and circumstances in which Communion may be given outside of Mass in the Diocese of Lake Charles.

- 1) When a person is prevented by the burden of years from attending Mass (*Holy Communion and Worship of the Eucharist Outside of Mass*, 14);
- 2) When a person is prevented by sickness from attending Mass even for a temporary period. If the person recovers, the person should be encouraged to return to Mass as soon as possible to give thanks to God (*Holy Communion and Worship of the Eucharist Outside of Mass*, 14; *Pastoral Care for the Sick*, 103);
- 3) When a Catholic is dying, the person is to be able and encourage to receive Communion as often as possible even to the point of daily reception. This is done in the context of *Viaticum* (*Holy Communion and Worship of the Eucharist Outside of Mass*, 14; *Pastoral Care for the Sick*, 164); and
- 4) When the Catholic faithful are not able to attend Mass for a substantiated period because of a legitimate absence of the parish priests from the parish.

The following prescripts are to be observed when Holy Communion is distributed outside of Mass in the Diocese of Lake Charles:

- 1) When Holy Communion is distributed outside of Mass, the Sacred Hosts are given the same respect and dignity as the Sacred Host at Mass.


No one is to reserve the Precious Blood under the Sacred Species of the Wine without the permission of the Diocesan Bishop. Permission will only be given for this form of distribution to those who are unable to consume the Sacred Host.

- 2) When a pastor permits Holy Communion outside of Mass for a group of the faithful not impeded by age or health, he is to ensure:
 - a. That a deputed deacon, installed acolyte, or extraordinary minister carry out the service per the prescripts of the liturgical books. For weekdays, the rite is found in *Holy Communion and Worship of the Eucharist Outside of Mass*. For Sundays, the rite is exclusively *Sunday Celebrations in the Absence of a Priest*, which is only allowed with the expressed permission of the Ordinary.
 - b. That the faithful understand that the reception of Holy Communion outside of Mass is not in any way equivalent to the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.
 - c. That only a deacon may give a reflection of the Scripture Readings.
 - d. That the deacon or extraordinary minister refrain from sitting in the Celebrant's Chair (Presider's Chair) or standing at the Altar to lead the service (cf. *Sunday Celebrations in the Absence of a Priest*, 186).
 - e. That this reception of Holy Communion outside of Mass is not a regular occurrence, but only occasional, occasional being defined as "not normative."
 - i. Occasional times are absences of the priests from a parish for annual retreats, pastoral necessities, or vacations.
 - ii. Occasional times do not include weekly "days off" since the Celebration of the Sacrifice of the Mass is still part of the priest's daily life.

The Rite of *Viaticum* in accord with Law and practice of the Church is to be conducted by the priest, or in his absence a deacon or extraordinary minister of Holy Communion. *Viaticum* even outside of Mass is of greatest importance for the Catholic who is dying.

Promulgated: April 25, 2017

Effective: July 1, 2017


 Glen John Provost
 Bishop of Lake Charles

DIOCESE OF LAKE CHARLES
DIOCESAN POLICY STATEMENT
COMMUNION UNDER BOTH SPECIES

The *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, 283 states: “The diocesan Bishop may establish norms for Communion under both kinds for his own diocese, which are also to be observed in churches of religious and at celebrations with small groups.”

The Diocesan Bishop has chosen to establish the following norms governing Communion Under Both Kinds in the Diocese of Lake Charles:


1. Communion Under Both Kinds is permitted for the following celebrations at the discretion of the Pastor and the Celebrant: Saturday anticipated/Sunday Masses, the Holy Thursday Mass of the Lord’s Supper, the Easter Vigil, the Chrism Mass, the Masses of Holy Days, and Corpus Christi Mass;
2. Communion Under Both Kinds is also permitted at celebrations for smaller groups, such as weekday Masses, retreats and days of recollection;
3. Communion Under Both Kinds is furthermore permitted at diocesan celebrations;
4. Communion Under One Kind, that is the Sacred Body, is the norm of the following occasions: funerals, weddings (except for the reception of Holy Communion by the bride and groom who, if able, receive Communion Under Both Kinds), and secular state-wide or national conventions and gatherings, as well as Masses for schools, religious education programs and youth events;
5. The preferred manner for distribution of Communion Under Both Kinds is the use of chalices or blessed cups reserved for this purpose; however, it must be noted that intinction is an option but that self-intinction by the communicant is not permitted (cf. *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* #287);
6. After the distribution of Holy Communion with the Chalice, each minister and vessel return the Altar, the minister consumes the remaining Precious Blood, and then the vessel is left on the Altar or brought to the Credence Table to be purified.

The discretion of Communion Under Both Kinds is the Pastor’s prerogative.

On occasions when Communion Under Both Kinds is used, the celebrant must ensure that the vessels are properly purified. Only a priest or a deacon may purify the sacred vessels.

Promulgated: February 22, 2020

Effective: July 1, 2020


 + Glen John Provost
 Bishop of Lake Charles

DIOCESE OF LAKE CHARLES

DIOCESAN POLICY STATEMENT

OFFERINGS GIVEN FOR THE CELEBRATION OF MASS AND MULTIPLE
INTENTIONS

The General and Universal Law of the Church regarding “offerings given for the celebration of Mass,” or what is commonly referred to as “Mass Stipends,” is found in the *Code of Canon Law*, canons 945-985. The statements which follow are hereby made Diocesan Policy and Law:

1. Any priest celebrating or concelebrating a Mass is permitted to receive an offering to apply the Mass for a specific intention and priests should celebrate Mass for the “intention of the faithful,” especially the needy, even if no offering is given. (Canon 945)

In the Diocese of Lake Charles, all priests may accept an offering for a specific intention providing he, personally or through another, offers a Mass for that intention. However, no one shall be refused an expressed desire to have a Mass celebrated for his/her/their intention because of an inability to make an offering.

2. A priest who accepts an offering is obliged to celebrate and apply a Mass for the intention for which he has accepted an offering. (Canon 949) The duty to fulfill this obligation must be met within one year of the date that the offering was accepted. (Canon 953)

When a priest accepts an offering, there is both a moral and legal obligation which he undertakes to celebrate a Mass for the intention for which he has accepted the offering/stipend.

3. Only one offering or stipend may be accepted each day regardless of the number of Masses which a priest celebrates or concelebrates. (Canon 951)

Only one offering may be accepted by any priest on any given day regardless of the number of Masses which he celebrates.

4. The provincial council determines the appropriate offering/stipend to be given for the celebration of a Mass. (Canon 952)

For the Diocese of Lake Charles, the customary offering accepted within the Province of New Orleans is the appropriate offering/stipend. Currently, that is five dollars (\$5) per mass.

5. A priest may entrust to another priest the celebration of an intention that he has accepted and for which he has received an offering. It is the duty of every priest to note accurately the intentions which he has accepted and which he has satisfied. (Canon 955)

Each priest assigned to a parish or institution is to keep an accurate account of the number of Masses he has celebrated and for which an offering has been made. At the conclusion of each month, this accounting is to be presented to the individual designated by the pastor who will, in turn, issue a check from the "Mass Account" of the parish or institution, payable to the priest for the appropriate offering/stipend for the masses he has celebrated.

When a priest cannot celebrate a Mass for an intention for which he has accepted an offering or stipend, he is to transfer that offering/stipend, along with the stated intention, to the Diocese of Lake Charles so that a Mass can be celebrated for each intention which has been accepted.

6. A pastor or parochial administrator of a parish is bound to offer a Mass *pro populo* (for the people) on each Sunday and Holy Day of Obligation. If he is legitimately impeded from this celebration, however, he is to apply it on the same days through another or on other days himself (Canons 534 and 540).

Pastors and parochial administrators of parishes are obliged to celebrate a Mass *pro populo* each Sunday and on all Holy Days of Obligation. To fulfill this obligation, the pastor must offer a Mass for this intention alone and no stipend may be accepted in fulfillment of this obligation.

7. The Congregation for the Clergy by the Decree, *Mos Iugiter*, signed *in forma specifica* by Pope John Paul II on January 22, 1991, declared the single Mass with "collective" intention "is not to be said more than twice a week." If the single Mass with "collective" intention is celebrated, "the place and time for the celebration of this Mass" is "to be made public." (Article 2.1)

The single Mass with "collective" intention may only be celebrated twice a week according to the Mass book in each parish or other entity. Twice a week is to be understood as only two Masses per a week in each institution. These Masses are to be published along with the time these Masses will be celebrated.

8. On those days when a Mass is said for "multiple" or "collective" intentions, the celebrant is allowed "to keep the amount of the offering established by the diocese" and any "amount exceeding this offering shall be consigned to the ordinary as specified in canon law." (Article 3 of the Decree)

While there may be many separate intentions that are conjoined as a “collective/multiple” intention, only **one stipend of five dollars** may be accepted by the celebrant of the Mass with the multiple or collective intention. The additional stipends are to be transferred to the Diocese of Lake Charles so that a Mass may be celebrated for each intention.

9. In all matters regarding Mass Intentions, the faithful are to be instructed regarding “the deep theological meaning of the offering, the ascetical importance of almsgiving of which the offering for the celebration of Masses is an outstanding form, (and) the support of the sacred ministers and the fulfillment of the Church’s apostolic activity” which are accomplished by these donations. (Article 7)

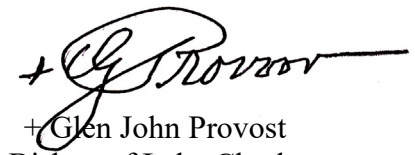
It is important that people be assisted in better understanding the rationale for Mass Intentions.

Regarding the distribution of the Mass Stipend to priests, the following is to be considered:

1. The norm of issuing a separate check for stipends is preferred rather than combining the check for salary and stipends. If, however, the checks are combined, then there must be a line item for the Mass stipend.
2. Regarding parishes and institutions, a Mass stipend may only be assigned to priests for scheduled Masses at the parish or institution. Stipends beyond these Masses may only be given at the request of the individual priest. Each priest must have an opportunity to celebrate those Masses for which he is obliged. If a priest were to be automatically given a stipend every day of the month, he would be unable to fulfill personally Mass obligations when legitimately inhibited, i.e. illness or travel.

Promulgated: September 14, 2012

Effective: September 14, 2012



+ Glen John Provost
Bishop of Lake Charles

DIOCESE OF LAKE CHARLES
DIOCESAN POLICY STATEMENT
TABERNACLE PLACEMENT

In November 2000 the National Conference of Catholic Bishops [presently known as the USCCB] published guidelines on art, architecture and worship. This document, *Built of Living Stones*, addresses the location of the tabernacle in paragraph 74:

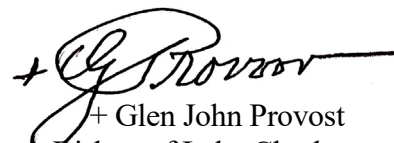
There are a number of possible spaces suitable for Eucharistic reservation. The revised General Instruction of the Roman Missal states that it is more appropriate that the tabernacle in which the “Blessed Sacrament is reserved not be on the altar on which Mass is celebrated.” [n. 315] The bishop is to determine where the tabernacle will be placed and to give further direction. (n. 74)

The Bishop has determined that the tabernacle is to be placed “in the sanctuary, apart from the altar of celebration” (*General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, #315), in a prominent, visible, and conspicuous location.

In the Diocese of Lake Charles, any request for the positioning or re-positioning of the tabernacle, as well as any other sanctuary renovation, must be submitted in writing to the Bishop for referral to the Office of Worship and final approval. If such positioning will require construction and costs, then the plans must be additionally submitted to the Diocesan Building Commission for recommendation and approval.

Promulgated: March 8, 2010

Effective: March 8, 2010


+ Glen John Provost
Bishop of Lake Charles

DIOCESE OF LAKE CHARLES

DIOCESAN POLICY STATEMENT

GUIDELINES FOR THE SACRAMENT OF PENANCE

SACRAMENT OF PENANCE

The Lord began his public ministry on earth by calling people to repentance and faith in him with the words, "Repent and believe in the Gospel" (Mk 1:15).

To continue this work of reconciliation in the Church, the Lord left for her the Sacrament of Reconciliation and Penance. The name of the sacrament conveys its meaning. First, the individual is reconciled with God through the confessing of sins and the expression of contrition. Second, the individual takes the penance prescribed by the celebrant of the sacrament and tries to amend the individual's way of life striving to better live the Christian life.

PREPARATION FOR THE SACRAMENT OF PENANCE FOR CHILDREN

The following are norms that are for the Diocese of Lake Charles in preparing children for the Celebration of the Sacrament of Reconciliation and Penance for the first time.

1. Every baptized child has the right to approach the Sacrament of Penance at the "age of discretion," which is understood to be the age of seven (7). Parents have the responsibility to teach even before that point the difference between right and wrong, the commandments of God and his Church, and how each person should often (even daily) express sorrow for sins and faults committed.

In cooperation with the parents, each parish under the leadership of its pastor has the responsibility of providing a program to prepare children for the first reception of this sacrament. Although a person is only required to celebrate this sacrament when in the condition of serious sin (Canon 988), emphasis should be placed on the confessing of venial sins, one's daily faults, and the need to follow the Lord ever more closely.

2. Catechesis should respect the age and ability of each individual child. The parochial First Penance Program should provide the children with texts, approved by the Bishop, which present the teaching of the Church concerning Penance. Catechesis for First Penance should:
 - a. Teach the relationship of the sacrament to one's life. This includes an understanding of personal sin, Original Sin, how each person has sinned, personal free will, choice and responsibility, and an understanding of the infinite love of God.
 - b. Teach that only God can forgive sin and that for the Christian the normative way of forgiveness is through the Sacrament of Reconciliation and Penance.
 - c. Teach the difference between right and wrong.
 - d. Teach the presence of good and evil in the world and their potential within each person's life.
 - e. Teach the importance of repentance of wrongdoing by turning to the forgiveness of Christ and the Church.

- f. Teach that faith is demonstrated in this sacrament by accepting forgiveness and forgiving others.
 - g. Teach the child to approach the sacrament freely and frequently.
3. "...Young children and persons with mental disabilities often are conscious of committing acts that are sinful to some degree and may experience a sense of guilt and sorrow. As long as the individual is capable of having a sense of contrition for having committed sin, even if he or she cannot describe the sin precisely in words, the person may receive sacramental absolution. Those with profound mental disabilities, who cannot experience even minimal contrition, may be invited to participate in penitential services with the rest of the community to the extent of their ability" (*Guidelines for the Celebration of the Sacraments with Persons with Disabilities* 15).
 4. Parents are the primary educators of their children. As such, they are responsible, together with parish priests, parish catechetical leaders, and catechists, for preparing their children for the Sacrament of Penance, and for determining the readiness of their children to celebrate the sacrament. Parents are expected to participate in the preparation program of their respective parish.
 5. Catechesis for the preparation for this sacrament is to remain clearly separate from introductory catechesis for the Sacrament of Eucharist. To emphasize this distinction, the programs of specific sacramental catechesis for each sacrament and the first celebration of each should be separated by a significant interval of time.
 6. The first celebration of penance may be within the context of a communal penance service as found in the *Rite of Penance*, Form II. Every effort should be made by the pastor, other involved priests, coordinators, catechists, and parents to provide a positive experience for these children.

FIRST RECEPTION OF PENANCE BY AN ADULT

Adult preparation for first reception of the Sacrament of Reconciliation and Penance should be included in the *Mystagogia* Period of the RCIA Process.

For those who are entering Full Communion with the Catholic Church, special effort should be made to ensure that adults receive first reception of the Sacrament before entering Full Communion. Pastors and Parochial Vicars should be able and willing to set aside extra time to ensure an integral and full confession.

ONGOING CELEBRATION OF THE SACRAMENT OF PENANCE

1. Catechesis for the Sacrament of Penance and the opportunity for the celebration should be regularly available for all in the parish, not only on weekends but also on weekdays. A well-publicized schedule of the appointed times for the celebration of the Sacrament of Penance should be available and include means by which the sacrament can be celebrated at other times and when needed.
2. Conversion is a life-long process; therefore, catechesis for this sacrament should be throughout the catechetical years, providing children with a fuller understanding and

appreciation for this sacrament and opportunities to receive the sacrament.

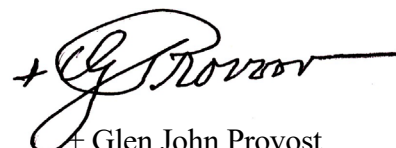
PARISH GUIDELINES

Parishes are to write and publish their own guidelines for the catechesis for the Sacrament of Penance in accord with these diocesan guidelines and in consultation with the Diocesan Office of Religious Education and the Dean. These guidelines are to include:

- a. Parents are expected to gather for the number of sessions determined by the pastor;
- b. Materials will be distributed to assist the parents to understand the teaching of the Church concerning the Sacrament of Penance;
- c. These texts and instructions will be given to the parents at the prescribed meetings;
- d. A required component of each parish program will be an interview with the child by the pastor or his delegate at the conclusion of the formation to ensure that a child has the required knowledge to properly participate in the Sacrament of Reconciliation and Penance.

Promulgated: February 22, 2020

Effective: July 1, 2020



+ Glen John Provost
Bishop of Lake Charles

DIOCESE OF LAKE CHARLES

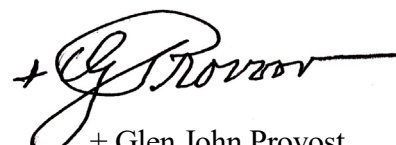
DIOCESAN POLICY STATEMENT

PREPARATION FOR THE SACRAMENT OF MARRIAGE IN THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

The marriage preparation guidelines, with specific norms for the Diocese of Lake Charles, are to be found in a separate section entitled, *Marriage Preparation Guidelines: Province of New Orleans with Specified Norms for the Diocese of Lake Charles, 2008*. This contains the particular law of the Diocese of Lake Charles with regard to marriage preparation and the celebration of marriage.

Promulgated: April 23, 2008

Effective: July 1, 2008



+ Glen John Provost
Bishop of Lake Charles

DIOCESE OF LAKE CHARLES
DIOCESAN POLICY STATEMENT
SEPARATION AND DIVORCE

A priest should have a great dedication to and respect for sacramental marriage, especially as a sign of love and the union between Christ and his Church. Knowing and respecting the Law of God and the Church, the priest avoids legalistic approaches, especially in the pain and crisis of marital strain and more so in marital breakup. The following policy is provided for priests and deacons for the pastoral care of those contemplating separation and/or divorce.

PRINCIPLES

1. A truly sacramental marriage is holy, permanent, and indissoluble.
2. To protect individual rights, both parties must be interviewed before any decision is made. Where one party is unavailable, the reason for unavailability must be shown.
3. Every reasonable effort is to be explored to provide, directly or indirectly, counseling toward reconciliation.
 - a. Pastoral counseling, by parish priest or other person with pastoral responsibilities, can be very effective.
 - b. The couple should be given an approved Evaluation for Marriage Instrument.
 - c. Where necessary, professional services (church and secular, public and private) should be used, either directly or for consultation.
4. The good of the children must always be considered, although at times a home without a father or a mother can be healthier than a conflict-laden one.
5. In search of less drastic and final measures, temporary separation is preferable to the legal separation required for divorce.

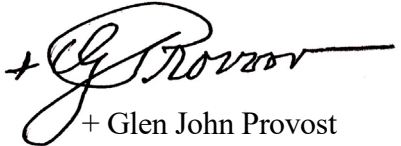
PROCEDURES

1. A search is to be made of what efforts and results toward reconciliation:
 - a. Have been made.
 - b. Are still reasonably possible.
2. Counseling designed to assist a person in determining whether separation is appropriate may be offered by the parish priest or other person responsible for pastoral care.

3. Persons in long-standing separations and/or divorces are to be sought out and welcomed to whatever levels of Church and sacramental life possible.

Promulgated: April 23, 2008

Effective: July 1, 2008



+ Glen John Provost
Bishop of Lake Charles

DIOCESE OF LAKE CHARLES
DIOCESAN POLICY STATEMENT
CHRISTIAN FUNERALS

“At the death of a Christian, whose life and 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. The Church also ministers to the sorrowing and consoles them in the funeral rites with the comforting word of God and the sacrament of the eucharist” (General Introduction, *Order of Christian Funerals*, 4).

The norms of canon law and liturgical law must be followed for Christian (ecclesiastical) funerals.

In keeping with the laws of the Church, the following directives are to be observed in matters of Christian funerals in the Diocese of Lake Charles.

THOSE TO WHOM AN ECCLESIASTICAL FUNERAL MAY BE GRANTED OR DENIED

The Christian faithful have a right to receive an ecclesiastical funeral (cf. can. 1176, §1). Therefore, Catholics ordinarily should not be denied one. Nonetheless, the right to an ecclesiastical funeral is not an absolute right. “If any doubt occurs, the local ordinary is to be consulted, and his judgment followed” (can. 1184, §2). According to canon 1184, §1, “Unless they gave some signs of repentance before death, the following must be deprived of ecclesiastical funerals:

- 1° Notorious apostates, heretics, and schismatics;
- 2° Those who chose the cremation for their bodies for reasons contrary to Christian faith;
- 3° Other manifest sinners who cannot be granted ecclesiastical funerals without public scandal to the faithful.”

If there is a doubt on how to proceed in a situation, then contact the diocesan bishop.

With their express intention to be received into the Catholic Church, catechumens are to be afforded the rite of Christian funerals according to the proper ritual provided in the *Order of Christian Funerals* (cf. can. 1183, §1).

The local ordinary permits ecclesiastical funerals at the discretion of the minister for unbaptized and still born children who have died and whom the parents intended to baptize (cf. can. 1183, §2).

The funeral rites may be used for those who choose to donate their bodies to science.

In the prudent judgment of the local ordinary, baptized persons of Churches or ecclesial communities which are not in full communion with the Catholic Church may be granted the rites of Christian funerals “unless their intention is evidently to the contrary and provided that their

own minister is not available” (can. 1183, §3). Such a funeral service would ordinarily follow the funeral liturgy outside Mass.

THE FUNERAL RITES

The *Order of Christian Funerals* provides the *Funeral Rites* to enable ministers to respond appropriately and pastorally when commending the dead to God and offering the living hope and a firm witness to the resurrection of the dead. It is for this reason that ministers are to be familiar with the rites provided by our tender Mother, the Church. Furthermore, it is to be noted that the celebration of the funeral rites does not exclude common practices such as the praying of the Rosary before or after the funeral rites.

1. *THE VIGIL AND RELATED RITES AND PRAYERS*

“The vigil 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 (nos. 69-81, 82-97) or of some part of the office for the dead (see Part IV, p. 296)” (*Order of Christian Funerals*, 54).

The related rites and prayers include three brief rites of which are highly encouraged and may be used as signs of the concern of the Christian community for the family and close friends of the deceased. The three rites and prayers are the *Prayers after Death*, the *Gathering in the Presence of the Body*, and the *Transfer of the Body to the Church or to the Place of Committal* (cf. *Order of Christian Funerals*, 98).

2. *THE FUNERAL LITURGY*

The funeral liturgy is the central celebration of the Christian community for the deceased and provides two forms of the funeral liturgy (cf. *Order of Christian Funerals*, 46). The two forms are the *Funeral Liturgy During Mass* and the *Funeral Liturgy Outside Mass*. The funeral liturgy during Mass is the preferred form of the funeral liturgy for Catholics. However, “when Mass cannot be celebrated (see no. 178), the second form of the funeral liturgy may be used and a Mass for the deceased should be celebrated, if possible, at a later time” (*Order of Christian Funerals*, 46).

3. *THE RITE OF COMMITTAL*

The rite of committal is the conclusion of the funeral rites. There are two forms: the *Rite of Committal* and the *Rite of Committal with Final Commendation*. “The first form is used when the final commendation is celebrated as part of the conclusion of the funeral liturgy. The second is used when the final commendation does not take place during the funeral liturgy or when no funeral liturgy precedes the committal” (*Order of Christian Funerals*, 47).

4. *THE CREMATION RITE*

“Although cremation is now permitted by the Church, it does not enjoy the same value as the burial of the body. The Church clearly prefers and urges that the body of the deceased be present for the funeral rites, since the presence of the body better expresses the values which the Church affirms in those rites” (*Order of Christian Funerals*, 413).

Nonetheless, “When extraordinary circumstances make the cremation of the body the only feasible choice, pastoral sensitivity must be exercised by priests, deacons, and others who minister to the family of the deceased” (*Order of Christian Funerals*, 415).

Furthermore, when a person or a family chooses cremation, the cremated remains should be treated with the same respect as is the human body. The vessel used should be dignified and worthy to carry the cremated remains. “The cremated remains should be buried in a grave or entombed in a mausoleum or columbarium. The practice of scattering cremated remains on the sea, from the air, or on the ground, or keeping cremated remains in the home of a relative or friend of the deceased are not the reverent disposition that the Church requires” (*Order of Christian Funerals*, 417). Although the practices of scattering the cremated remains of the deceased and keeping the cremated remains in a home are not in keeping with the reverent disposition of the Church, they are not considered reasons *per se* to deny an ecclesiastical funeral. If a person were to choose these practices for reasons contrary to the Christian faith such as pantheism, naturalism or denial of the soul, then he or she could be deprived of an ecclesiastical funeral.

With regard to the granting or denying of ecclesiastical funerals and cremation, the Code of Canon Law, canon 1184, §1, 2°, states that only “those who chose the cremation of their bodies for reasons contrary to Christian faith” must be deprived of an ecclesiastical funeral. Therefore, a minister must not deny those persons who choose cremation an ecclesiastical funeral for any reason other than a reason contrary to the Christian faith such as denial of the Resurrection of Christ or bodily resurrection.

However, the reverent disposition the Church requires is for interment of the body or cremated remains. Therefore, the “diocesan bishop will judge whether it is pastorally appropriate to celebrate the liturgy for the dead, with or without Mass, **with the ashes present**, taking into account the concrete circumstances in each individual case, and in harmony with the spirit and precise content of the current canonical and liturgical norms” (*Order of Christian Funerals*, 426). If a family follows the reverent disposition of the Church, permission is given at the discretion of the pastor to celebrate the funeral with or without the ashes present. If, however, the family does not follow the reverent disposition of the Church, the diocesan bishop must be consulted. The diocesan bishop would also be consulted if the interment of the ashes would be delayed for any length of time.

THE PLACE OF THE FUNERAL RITES

The place at which the funeral rites are to be performed must be according to the *Order of Christian Funerals* and at the discretion of the pastor, unless the law explicitly requires the permission of the diocesan bishop. Furthermore, civil law must be followed unless contrary to the teachings of the Church in faith and morals.

1. The vigil and related rites and prayers may take place in a home, a funeral home, a church, or some other suitable place (cf. *Order of Christian Funerals*, 55).

Wake services before the vigil or before the funeral liturgy may take place in a home, a funeral home, or a church. The location of the wake service will be requested by the family

and friends with consultation from the funeral home. However, the request, if it is for the wake service to take place in the church, is commended to the discretion of the pastor.

2. The funeral liturgy during Mass is to be celebrated in a church. However, in particular cases due to a grave and just cause, the diocesan bishop may permit the funeral liturgy during Mass to be celebrated outside of a church (cf. can. 932, §1). Furthermore, there are to be no funeral liturgies during Mass after the anticipated (vigil) Mass for Sunday or on Sundays or on Holy Days of Obligation or major solemnities or celebrations which would include Holy Thursday and the Paschal Triduum. Each priest is to follow the instructions within the *Ordo*.

The funeral liturgy outside Mass may be celebrated in a home, funeral home, or a church. However, the place of the celebration is preferably a church. Funeral liturgies outside of Mass may be celebrated on Sundays and according to the *Ordo*.

3. The rite of committal may be celebrated at the grave, tomb, or crematorium and may be used for official burials at sea as in the case of United States service personnel. “Whenever possible, the rite of committal is to be celebrated at the site of committal, that is, beside the open grave or place of interment, rather than at a cemetery chapel” (*Order of Christian Funerals*, 204).

PARTICIPATION IN CHRISTIAN FUNERALS

When a funeral occurs, the family and friends who gather are often from various religious practices, including other Churches and ecclesial communities. Due to different beliefs about life and death and Christian doctrine, the Magisterium has provided principles and directives which are to be followed when people from different traditions gather in prayer and share in the sacramental life.

With this in mind, the following directives from the diocesan bishop and the *Directory of the Application of Principles and Norms on Ecumenism*, also known as the *Ecumenical Directory*, given by the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity in 1993, are to be followed:

1. FUNERAL LITURGY DURING MASS

“The reading of Scripture during a eucharistic celebration in the Catholic Church is to be done by members of that Church. On exceptional occasions and for a just cause, the Bishop of the diocese may permit a member of another Church or ecclesial community to take on the task of the reader” (133).

The same principle for the reading of Scripture applies to the funeral liturgy outside Mass.

“In the Catholic Eucharistic Liturgy, the homily which forms part of the liturgy itself is reserved to the priest or deacon, since it is the presentation of the mysteries of faith and the norm of Christian living in accordance with Catholic teaching and tradition” (134). Therefore, the homily may never be delegated to anyone other than a cleric in full communion with the Catholic Church.

2. WORDS OF REMEMBRANCE

The words of remembrance provide an opportunity for the family and friends to share the faith life of the deceased, and not other anecdotal memories. These words should reflect on the loved one's life of faith, their life of care and nurturing, of prayer and fidelity to the sacraments, and their relationship with Christ and the Church. It is recommended that these words of remembrance be brief and offered by only one person on behalf of the whole family. The person should be gently instructed on the appropriateness of the words chosen and the purpose of offering these words. Furthermore, it is strongly encouraged for the person to write the words of remembrance and for them to be reviewed by the minister. The discretion of the pastor takes precedence in permitting words of remembrance and the application of these recommendations.

If the words of remembrance are offered, then it is recommended that the words of remembrance be offered at the Vigil following the Concluding Prayer and before the Blessing and Dismissal. If they are offered during the funeral liturgy during Mass, it is recommended for them to be given following the Concluding Prayer and before the Final Commendation. If during a funeral liturgy without Mass, then they may be offered after the Lord's Prayer and before the Final Commendation. They may also be given at the conclusion of the Rite of Committal.

MUSIC AND THE ORDER OF CHRISTIAN FUNERALS

In accord with the liturgical practices of the Church, music assists the faithful in increasing their degree of holiness (cf. *Sacrosanctum concilium*, 113). Therefore, great care should be given in preparing music for Christian funerals. "The Church's funeral rites offer thanksgiving to God for the gift of life that has been returned to him" (*Sing to the Lord*, 244). Music employed in the funeral liturgy should reflect this reality.

All prescripts in the Diocese of Lake Charles, *Policies and Guidelines*, policy 412, concerning sacred music should be adhered to with the following in mind:

1. "The psalms are given pride of place in the funeral rites..." (*Sing to the Lord*, 245). This reflects the givenness of the word of God and its power to assist the faithful in a time when words fail.
2. When other sacred music is engaged, it should reflect the reality of the Life, Death, and Resurrection of Christ, the Paschal Mystery, and the hope that the baptized have in it. Great care should be given to ensuring this, and only music of this character should be used (cf. *Sing to the Lord*, 246).
3. In accord with the document by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops in 2007, *Sing to the Lord*, 246, "secular music, even though it may reflect on the background, character, interests, or personal preferences of the deceased or mourners, is not appropriate for the Sacred Liturgy" and, therefore, is not to be used. Also, as the norm, recorded music should be avoided within the liturgical action (cf. *Sing to the Lord*, 93). This includes all liturgies of the Church (with or without Mass).

Furthermore, it is a laudable practice to develop a funeral choir in individual parishes to assist the mourners and lend their voices in praying for the dead.

DEATH REGISTER

Regarding the Code of Canon Law, canon 1182, universal law simply states that the register of deaths is to be made according to particular law, and in the Diocese of Lake Charles the following are to be observed.

The registering of death is to be done according to the deceased person's domicile or the parish in which a person was registered and received the sacraments frequently.

The register of deaths is NOT based on the priest's or the deacon's parish assignment. This protocol remains the same even when a funeral is celebrated in a funeral home outside of the deceased's domiciliary parish or parish of registration. For example, if a funeral is performed in a funeral home outside of the deceased's domiciliary parish or parish of registration, then the priest or deacon would send notification of the death to the domiciliary parish or parish of registration of the deceased.

If the deceased was a member of multiple parishes by registration, then the priest or deacon would send the notification to the parish in which the deceased frequently received the sacraments and the priest or deacon knew the person was registered. Such situations are complicated; however, they should not be made more complicated. Therefore, notification will be sent to only one parish of which the priest or deacon has knowledge of registration or domicile.

Finally, the minister of a funeral is responsible for the registering of the death, either personally or through delegation.

BEREAVEMENT MINISTRY

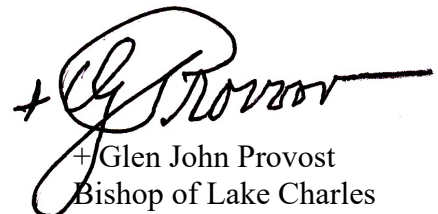
The period of mourning and the loss that comes from the death of a loved one often continues long after the funeral rites and burial. As part of the pastoral ministry of the Church, it is appropriate and strongly encouraged for pastors to establish a bereavement ministry in each parish or at least a joint effort among parishes. The bereavement ministry, which is an apostolic activity, could be composed of both clergy and laity who reach out to those who mourn in the weeks and months following the funeral.

This ministry might include but would not be restricted to home visits, a meal for the family of the deceased, contact with the family during the mourning period, financial assistance if needed, extending pastoral care with counseling or support groups, and to pray for the deceased, especially if Masses for the dead were not celebrated. In these ways the Church extends the comforting presence of the Lord.

Promulgated: November 1, 2013

Effective: November 1, 2013

Updated: July 1, 2020



+Glen John Provost
Bishop of Lake Charles

DIOCESE OF LAKE CHARLES
DIOCESAN POLICY STATEMENT

SACRED MUSIC

MUSIC AND INSTRUMENTS IN LITURGY

The Church has always employed music in the Liturgy of the Church. Although not essential for the worship of Christ in the Sacred Liturgy, sacred music increases the degree of holiness that accompanies a particular action in the Mass or other liturgical celebration (cf., *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 113).

The following are meant to be principles which will help to guide and understand the purpose and role of Sacred Music in the Diocese of Lake Charles.

1. Sacred Music as Given by the Lord and the Church

Sacred Music has longed been used even before the birth of the Church. In the Sacred Scriptures, the authors of the Holy Writ would employ song and instruments. The best example of this is found in the Book of Psalms. For this purpose, the primary source of Sacred Music in the Liturgy is found in the antiphons and their accompanying psalms. These may be found in the various liturgical books and rites of the Church especially the Roman Missal, the *Graduale Romanum*, the *Graduale Simplex*, and the various translated versions of the Psalms and their antiphons. It is praiseworthy for parishes to utilize these first and foremost.

The second source of Sacred Music is found in the official tradition of the Hymnody which dates to the Church Fathers and the Medieval Theologians of both the West and the East. These hymns are especially found in the Liturgy of the Hours and may also be utilized in the celebration of the Mass.

The Church in her tradition also calls for certain antiphons and hymns at certain places and on certain days. Among these that hold pride of place are the Entrance Antiphon, the Alleluia Verse, the Communion Antiphon, and the Sequences. Great care is to be made to be familiar with these and to know what is mandated and what is optional.

When the Church allows for options, the choice of music is given to those songs and hymns that reflect the proper antiphon or hymn of the part of the Mass or Liturgy in which it finds itself.

Since the priest celebrant has the duty and right of choice for Mass options, the priest (especially the pastor) has the right and obligation to ensure that the proper Mass parts are sung and are appropriate for the Mass or other liturgies.

Preference should always be given to the rich patrimony of Holy Mother Church in the choices for Sacred Music.

2. The Singing of the Mass

Although each priest may vary in skill, each priest should be able to chant (sing) at minimum the collect and other presidential prayers, the preface, the dialogues, and the blessing. Deacons

should likewise be comfortable to chant (sing) the dialogues and instructions appropriate to his ministry.

It is praiseworthy that an ordained minister chant (sing) the Easter Proclamation at the Easter Vigil.

Special effort should be made to have at least one Mass each Sunday and Holy Day of Obligation that includes the before mentioned with appropriate antiphons and hymns, a sung Responsorial Psalm or the appropriate Gradual, and the sung congregational Mass parts.

The singing of the Mass parts and the celebrant's parts are to be given highest priority. The choice for the setting should be selected so that it promotes the highest possibility of congregational singing.

3. Instruments and the Choice of Instruments

The Church instructs the faithful that the human voice is the primary instrument that is used in Sacred Music. Therefore, chant and sacred polyphony both of which highlight the human voice are the primary way to demonstrate sacred music especially in the Liturgy.

Among crafted instruments, the Church holds the pipe organ as first among all manmade instruments, because of its ability to support singing and because it can best imitate the human voice.

Other instruments may be used in the Liturgy and Mass, but only insofar as they support the human voice and congregational singing. Instruments which tend to solos and standing out from singing are to be avoided and prohibited in Sacred Worship.

4. Recorded Music in the Sacred Liturgy


Because the Sacred Liturgy of the Church is the expression of the living Church singing out to Christ the Bridegroom, recorded music is not permitted in the Sacred Liturgy of the Church.

5. Those who assist with Sacred Music

Those who assist in Sacred Music hold a special place within the Church. While not properly speaking ministers of the Church, choir members encourage and enable the singing to the Lord. Those who assist as Cantor or Psalmist do participate in the ministry of the Word and should conduct themselves in the same fashion as a Lector of the Church. They should dress in accord with particular law and have an understanding of the Word which they proclaim by song.

Promulgated: February 22, 2020

Effective: July 1, 2020


+ Glen John Provost
Bishop of Lake Charles

DIOCESE OF LAKE CHARLES

DIOCESAN POLICY STATEMENT

OFFICE OF LITURGY AND ITS DIRECTOR

The Office of Liturgy of the Diocese of Lake Charles serves the diocesan bishop and, in his name, the entire diocese, both clergy and lay. Although the primary collaborators of the diocesan bishop in the liturgical apostolate are his priests and deacons, the Office of Liturgy assists them by seeking to deepen the faithful's understanding of the meaning of the rites celebrated, their manner of celebration, and their implications for daily life. It offers sacramental catechesis for all the members of the diocese and promotes the liturgical formation of those who serve the liturgical assembly. The Office of Liturgy does all these things according to the Church's Magisterium, especially as it is articulated by the Second Vatican Council's document *Sacrosanctum Concilium* and set forth in the Church's liturgical books and Code of Canon Law.

The Director of the Office of Liturgy will plan all diocesan liturgies, arrange the sacred music when appropriate, and take an active role in assisting parishes in the administration of the sacraments conducted by the Bishop in individual parishes. The Director of the Office of Liturgy shall serve as the Master of Ceremonies or shall ensure that there is a Master of Ceremonies for all Episcopal and Diocesan Liturgies.

The Director of Liturgy shall serve *ex officio* on the Diocesan Building Commission. His role is that of liturgical consultant, so he is not required to take part in meetings concerning buildings the use of which is not chiefly the worship of God.

DIOCESAN CELEBRATIONS

Diocesan liturgical celebrations are held where the diocesan bishop deems appropriate. The Bishop's Office and the Director of Liturgy will contact the pastor of the parish in question to confirm use of the parish church. It is desired that the resources of the parish are made available for these occasions. The Director of the Office of Liturgy will give final approval upon consultation with the bishop.

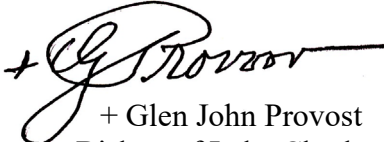
As the clergy and the lay faithful are the servants of the liturgy, the priority is always given to the rites of the Church and the assurance that they are carried out faithfully and fully in planning diocesan liturgies. It is not in the competency of any person outside of the Holy See to change or modify the liturgy. In accord with the Apostolic Letter *Vicesimus Quintus Annus*, no one may deviate from this norm. All Masses, Evening and Morning Prayer Services, Liturgies, and public acts of worship in the diocese are to be carried out with this principle in mind.

SPECIFICS ABOUT THE FEAST OF SAINT PETER CLAVER

The Feast of Saint Peter Claver, the Primary Patron of the Diocese of Lake Charles, shall be celebrated on the weekend following the actual memorial of Saint Peter Claver (September 9th) unless September 9th falls on a Sunday.

Promulgated: February 22, 2020

Effective: July 1, 2020



+ Glen John Provost
Bishop of Lake Charles

Updated: July 1, 2015

DIOCESE OF LAKE CHARLES

DIOCESAN POLICY STATEMENT

GUIDELINES FOR THE RITE OF EXPOSITION OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT AND
THE ESTABLISHMENT OF “ADORATION” CHAPELSDEFINITIONS, GENERAL PRINCIPLES, AND PURPOSE

This policy is meant for parishes, retreats, and other gatherings of the faithful in which the Blessed Sacrament is exposed in the Diocese of Lake Charles. The purpose of this policy is to ensure the worthy worship of the Eucharist in the Diocese of Lake Charles. This policy does not cover periods of exposition required by specific decrees from the Diocesan Bishop.

Holy Mother Church encourages all her faithful to adore Christ in the Most Blessed Sacrament. For this reason, the Church gives opportunity to her faithful different ways in which Christians may adore Christ in the Eucharistic Species.

For the sake of this policy, “adoration” is defined as the prayer given to the Most Holy Trinity and to Christ, the Eternal Son of God, in the Most Blessed Sacrament. “Exposition” is defined as a specific rite of the Church in which the Eucharistic Presence is exposed usually in a monstrance or in a ciborium on an altar. Adoration and exposition is to take place in a duly constituted church building, chapel, or oratory. Any exception to this necessitates permission from the Diocesan Bishop, an Ordinary of the Diocese, or the pastor in his parish territory. “Reposition” is replacing the Blessed Sacrament from the place of exposition back into the tabernacle. “Benediction” is the rite of the Church by which the faithful are blessed by the Lord’s Eucharistic Presence.

For the Rite of Exposition to take place, it must take place on altar with Corporal, monstrance, incense, proper hymns, and vestments and conclude with the Benediction. The liturgical rite of exposition can be found in the ritual books: *Holy Communion Worship of the Eucharist outside of Mass* and *Order for the Solemn Exposition of the Holy Eucharist*. When exposing and reposing the Blessed Sacrament, a cleric must be vested in the proper vesture: cassock and surplice or alb and cincture with stole and cope. The humeral veil should be worn as well in accord with the rituals named above.

PARTICULAR NORMS FOR PARISHES

1. When the Blessed Sacrament is exposed for a period of time, every effort should be made that at least two adorers be present. Before planning Exposition, the pastor is to make the effort to ensure that at least two persons sign up for each time slot and that there are alternates. Without this, exposition of the Blessed Sacrament should be postponed until this prerequisite is fulfilled or that proper alternatives fulfilled.

In addition, the proper liturgical etiquette should be observed. The Blessed Sacrament exposed is to be placed on a corporal that is used for Mass. In addition, at least four lighted candles should be employed. One may use six candles. Likewise, the exposed Blessed Sacrament is to be placed on an altar that is duly designated.

2. The Blessed Sacrament when exposed must never be left alone. In addition, no one may veil the Blessed Sacrament or move the Blessed Sacrament to another place out of sight. The use of a tabernacle with a glass opening for the viewing of the Blessed Sacrament is not permitted in accord with universal law and liturgical norms. (Cf. *Code of Canon Law*, 938 §3; *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, no. 314.).
3. The Blessed Sacrament must be renewed at least once a month in the lunette. In Church Parishes that have continuous exposition or prolonged exposition from time to time, the Sacrifice of the Mass must be celebrated at the altar of exposition. Prolonged exposition is defined as more than three continuous hours.
4. Prolonged exposition outside of religious communities which have their own constitutions and rules may only be conducted with the written permission of the Bishop. A pastor is to write a letter well in advance to the Bishop and state the plans that have been made (location, times, number of adorers, etc.).
5. If a location other than a designated church, chapel, or oratory is to be used for exposition for a prolonged period of time, the pastor is to consult the local dean. If the period is an exceptional event (only a onetime event), the dean may give permission for this occurrence. If the exposition for a prolonged period is for more than one time, the pastor is to seek the permission of the Bishop and follow the instructions of the Director of Liturgy and the direction that the Bishop gives.
6. Should the pastor or parish wish to have a Eucharistic Procession, the pastor must first request in writing to the Bishop permission to bring the exposed Sacrament outside of the Church and onto the streets. Also, the pastor is to ensure that all civil laws and ordinances are observed by contacting the proper civil authorities.

If there are temporary altars that are set up along the way of the procession with the exposed Sacrament, due reverence should be given and décor should be observed. The use of altar clothes, corporals, flowers, candles, etc. is to be observed when at all possible.

7. In the Diocese of Lake Charles, the Bishop designates an ordained minister to expose and repose the Blessed Sacrament for the Solemn Rites of Exposition and Benediction. If a pastor wishes to designate a member of the lay faithful to regularly expose or repose (without the Solemn Rites and without Benediction), the pastor must write to the Bishop with the reasons and may not assume permission until an answer is given.

In cases of emergency, the lay faithful should have access to the number or names of clerics who may repose the Blessed Sacrament.

8. The establishment of a chapel or oratory requires the direct permission of the Bishop in any location, including in a rectory. The process to obtain this permission is outlined as follows:

- a. A pastor is to establish a need and a spiritual good for the establishment of a chapel or oratory. The good may not be convenience. A pastor is always to assume that the Lord's divine Presence in the main tabernacle of the main altar of the church is the primary place for adoration of Christ in the Blessed Sacrament. Reservation of the Blessed Sacrament should not take place in more than location in the same church, chapel, or oratory (cf. *Code of Canon Law*, 938 §1).
- b. The pastor is then to consult the local dean to ensure that the particulars are observed in the law. The dean may write a report to the Bishop giving his opinion of the situation.
- c. The pastor is to write a formal letter to the Bishop which is copied to the Director of Liturgy to obtain the necessary permission. In the letter, he is to state the good and the need for the oratory or chapel and why the main church's tabernacle does not accomplish this.
- d. No action is to take place before the written response from the Bishop in the construction or plans for the chapel or oratory.

It must be noted that if the Blessed Sacrament is reserved or exposed in any chapel or oratory, Mass must be celebrated in the location at least once a month.

- e. If permission is granted, the pastor may begin construction and set up through the Office of Liturgy the proper liturgical blessings or dedications needed for the opening of the chapel or oratory.
- f. Permission to have a chapel or oratory does not mean that one may have prolonged or continuous exposition of the Blessed Sacrament.

The exception of this is for Holy Thursday and temporary chapels of reservation that are set up in accordance with liturgical norms surrounding Holy Week.

9. For continuous or regularly prolonged Exposition, a pastor must write for explicit permission from the Bishop. Continuous or regularly prolonged Exposition is not usually granted because it does not belong to the charism of diocesan priests or parishes. In the tradition of the Church, it is the charism of the contemplative orders to keep vigil always with the Lord in the Blessed Sacrament.

Should a pastor wish to have continuous or regularly prolonged Exposition, he must first write the Bishop and begin the dialogue until the Bishop makes a final determination.

In places that have continuous or regularly prolonged Exposition for more than three years prior this policy (2023), the practice may continue, but the pastor is asked to write to the Bishop to explain the current circumstances. The pastor is also to keep vigil that the dignity and honor of the Most Blessed Sacrament is always observed especially being mindful of the norms of this policy.

ADORATION AND EXPOSITION OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT IN TEMPORARY LOCATIONS

Retreats and other spiritual gatherings of the faithful with their pastors are essential and necessary for the renewing of the spiritual life. At these gatherings, there may be an occasion to reserve the Blessed Sacrament for Adoration and/or Exposition.

The following norms are to be observed in the Diocese of Lake Charles for these occasions.

1. The pastor or spiritual leader of the group of the faithful is the one who must seek all permissions and ensure all norms are followed. For the reservation of the Blessed Sacrament away from church grounds, the Bishop's permission must be sought in writing.
2. If the Blessed Sacrament is to be reserved, a temporary, but noble tabernacle must be used. The keeping of a sanctuary candle lit is to be observed.
3. Decorum must be maintained as well. It is against the dignity of the Sacrament to reserve the Lord next to an area that may be used for profane reasons (dancing, comedy, watching movies, restrooms, etc.) even though the profane reasons are not sinful.
4. What is true and necessary for the managing and décor of a permanent oratory or chapel is binding for a temporary oratory or chapel.
5. Prolonged exposition or continuous exposition requires the explicit permission of the Bishop as well.

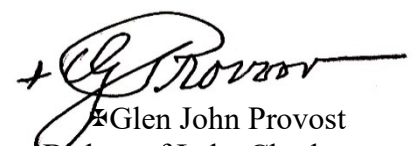
GENERAL NORMS AND PRINCIPLES

The following are to be observed at all times in regard to the Blessed Sacrament.

1. The tabernacle is to be securely fastened to a given location. It cannot be easily moved. The tabernacle is not to be regularly moved unless Policy 409 is observed.
2. The key to the tabernacle is to be placed in a location that safe-guards the dignity of Christ in the Blessed Sacrament and to prevent profanation.
3. As is proper, true candles, true flowers, and true altar linens are to be used. If doubts arise, the pastor is to consult the Director of the Office of Liturgy.

Promulgated: November 22, 2022

Effective: July 1, 2023


 ✠Glen John Provost
 Bishop of Lake Charles

Updated: July 1, 2023

BOOK V

The Temporal Goods of the Church



POLICIES AND GUIDELINES

UPDATED SEPTEMBER 2024

DIOCESE OF LAKE CHARLES
DIOCESAN POLICY STATEMENT
PARISH FINANCE COUNCILS

The Code of Canon Law requires each parish to have a Finance Council separate from the Parish Pastoral Council (cf., *CIC*, 537). Therefore, the Bishop of Lake Charles, hereby decrees that there is to be a Finance Council in every parish.

Once a finance council is established in a parish, it may not be dissolved, either temporarily or permanently, without permission of the bishop.

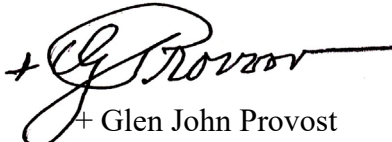
ORGANIZATION AND FUNCTION OF THE FINANCE COUNCIL

1. Organization of the Parish Finance Council – The Parochial Finance Council shall be organized under the following norms:
 - a. consists of seven members, and must include the lay trustees (2) of the parish civil corporation and the vice chairperson or member of the Parish Pastoral Council;
 - b. a quorum shall consist of four members;
 - c. members be appointed by the pastor and serve a term of five years; members may be reappointed for one additional consecutive term;
 - d. all members are to be lay and preferably parishioners;
 - e. initial appointments be staggered to provide continuity of membership;
 - f. minutes shall be kept of each meeting; and
 - g. there shall be at least four meetings each year.
2. Members of the Parish Finance Council shall:
 - a. be skilled in the areas of finance, law or administration;
 - b. not be an employee or spouse of an employee of the parish; and
 - c. not have extensive or exclusive business relationships with the parish that could be perceived as involving a conflict of interest.
3. Officers of the Parish Finance Council are to be elected by the members of the Council. The Officers are to be a vice-chair and a secretary both of whom may serve two terms.
4. The role of the Parish Finance Council is consultative. The meetings of the Finance Council are called by the pastor or administrator who approves the agenda. While it is expected that the pastor gives due consideration to the advice of the council, the pastor alone (in concert with the pertinent regulations of the diocese) has the ultimate responsibility for all decisions affecting the finances of the parish. In instances where the consultative process itself is violated; recourse may be made to the Dean.

5. Some specific responsibilities of the Parish Finance Council are:
- a. Aid and advise the pastor concerning the administration of parish goods within the limits of Canon Law, 1281 through 1288, and the directives of diocesan policies regarding finance, law, and insurance.
 - b. In cooperation with the Parish Pastoral Council, research, prepare and recommend to the pastor the annual parish budget for both operating and capital expenditures. The budget is to be based on the goals and objectives determined by the Parish Pastoral Council as the council discerns what is needed to carry out the mission of the parish in liturgy, education, and service.
 - c. Periodically review income and expenditures to determine if the parish is operating within the approved budget. Provide parishioners with periodic (quarterly, semi-annual, or annual) reports on the financial position of the parish. Approve annual and special financial reports for submission to the diocesan finance office.
 - d. Make recommendations to the pastor for increasing revenues to meet both parish and diocesan goals and priorities.
 - e. Coordinate all fund raising in the parish, emphasizing the biblical context of stewardship of time, talent and treasure.
 - f. Assist the pastor and parish staff in organizing the annual diocesan Bishop Services Appeal.
 - g. Review and approve all banking arrangements, capital expenditures, and long-term contracts.
 - h. Review the program for maintenance of parish buildings and grounds.
 - i. See that a current inventory of personal and real property of the parish is maintained, and that the documents and deeds of parish ownership are properly filed and safeguarded.
 - j. Occasionally the Parish Finance Council will be asked to study and approve what church law calls "acts of extraordinary administration." These acts are defined as such by church law and diocesan regulations. They include sale of parish property and major financial transactions. The pastor and the council should carefully study the law and the regulations in preparation for taking up such matters.
 - k. Provide aid and advice in other areas as requested by the pastor.

Promulgated: February 22, 2020

Effective: July 1, 2020


+ Glen John Provost
Bishop of Lake Charles

DIOCESE OF LAKE CHARLES
DIOCESAN POLICY STATEMENT
PARISH TRUSTEES

Because the Code of Canon Law says that the Catholic Church has right to temporal goods and properties for its independence and for the ordering of the Church towards its ends (cf., *CIC*, 1254, §'s 1,2); the Bishop of Lake Charles decrees that there is to be two lay Trustees in every parish to assist the pastor in the management of the temporal goods of the church.

The following will serve as guidelines and norms for Trustees in the Diocese of Lake Charles.

1. Each parish will have two lay trustees. The Pastor will recommend two candidates to the Bishop, and the Bishop will officially appoint the trustees. The trustees serve as members of the Board of Directors of the parish corporation along with the Bishop (President), a Vicar General (Vice-President), and the canonically appointed Pastor (Secretary-Treasurer). Likewise, trustees are *ex officio* members of the Parish Pastoral Council and share in a unique way the cares and concerns of the pastor and his governance of the parish.
2. Trustees must be members of the parish in which they serve, be 21 years of age or older, and not be in conflict of interest in matters of temporal or fiscal administration. Trustees are appointed by the Bishop for a two-year term by letter and the term may be renewed with the approval of the pastor.
3. A Pastor may freely replace a trustee when the term has expired. If a Pastor should wish to replace a trustee prior to the expiration of the named term, the Pastor must write to the Bishop and give the reasons for the request. The final decision will be made by the Bishop.

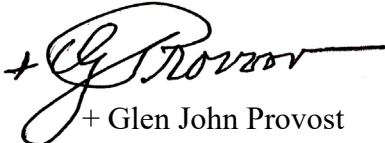
Should a trustee wish to resign, the trustee should make the request in writing to the Bishop giving the reasons for the resignation.

4. Before assuming office as a trustee, each trustee will make an oath to efficiently and faithfully carry out the duties of the office. At this time, the Pastor is to instruct the trustee of the duties incumbent of the office; give the pertinent diocesan policies and laws of the Church that govern the office; guide the trustee as to familiarize the individual with the civil articles of incorporation of the parish and its amendments; and share with the trustee any acts that may require a corporate resolution.

5. Although the main duty of the trustees is, in cooperation with the Bishop, the Vicar General, and the Pastor, in the representation of the parish as a legal corporation in the State of Louisiana, the trustees should not lose sight of the reason for the establishment of the parish, namely, the worship of God, the spiritual benefit of souls, and the sanctification of the world. Thus, these ecclesial principles should govern the civil decisions made.
6. All corporate resolutions required for certain acts of parish administration are to be adopted by the Board of Directors for the individual parish (the President, Vice-President, Secretary-Treasurer, and the two Trustees). These resolutions are only valid with the written approval of and signature of the Bishop.

Promulgated: February 22, 2020

Effective: July 1, 2020


+ Glen John Provost
Bishop of Lake Charles

DIOCESE OF LAKE CHARLES
DIOCESAN POLICY STATEMENT
DIOCESAN BUILDING COMMISSION

When projects or new expenditures pertaining to diocesan properties and entities are expected to exceed \$20,000 or 10% of the yearly taxable income, policy 503 is to be followed by all parishes and diocesan entities.

1. Before requesting permission from the Bishop, a pastor must discuss the proposal with parish trustees, the parish pastoral council, the finance council, and the dean.
2. A letter requesting permission signed by the pastor, parish trustees, and the dean is then directed to the Bishop, with a copy to the Chancellor. This letter should include the following:
 - a. Need for the project
 - b. Projected budget and plans for financing*
 - c. Source and terms of loan (if needed)
 - d. Ownership of building site (to be acquired or already owned)
 - e. Intended Architectural firm or contractor
3. After the Bishop has reviewed the letter of request, he will communicate in writing the next step to be followed by the pastor.

If THE BISHOP'S LETTER CALLS FOR THE CONSULTATION OF THE BUILDING COMMISSION, NUMBERS 4-9 ARE TO BE FOLLOWED BEGINNING WITH THE PRELIMINARY STAGE.

4. The pastor can communicate with their architect to begin the preliminary stage defined as follows:
 - a. **Preliminary stage** – the drawings of schematic plans by the licensed architect shall include basic site plan, conceptual floor plans, and exterior elevation or concept rendering. This stage gives a vision of the project to be completed with projected cost. These are NOT final/finished drawings and specifications.
5. When schematic drawings are ready, the pastor will seek an appointment with the Diocesan Building Commission for himself and the architect to present these preliminary plans and drawings. The Diocesan Building Commission will give their recommendations to the pastor and licensed architect for the project and provide a summary of the meeting to the Bishop.
6. The Bishop will send a letter to the pastor to begin the design stage.
 - a. **Design stage** – this is when the final drawings, specifications, and estimated cost for the project is prepared. At this point, the parish may enter a formal contract with the architect or contracting party. The pastor should have the contract reviewed by the Risk Management department before signing unless it is

preapproved by the diocese. The budget, as determined by the pastor, must be included in the contract, and all parties to the contract must abide by it.

7. Once the final drawings and specifications are completed, the pastor will request a meeting with the Building Commission to review the final plans.
8. After the Building Commission makes final recommendation to the Bishop, the Bishop in writing will give final permission to the pastor to proceed with bids. The architect will be copied in this communication.
9. Before physical work on site can begin, the diocesan Risk Management office is to review contracts, insurance, bonding, and liability for the contracting parties before they are signed.

Questions regarding policy 503 can be answered by the Building Commission Chairperson who is appointed by the Bishop. The interpretation of this policy is subject to the Bishop and the Chair of the Building Commission. Additionally, you may contact the Chairperson to schedule meetings with the Building Commission.

In the event of emergencies in the parish that require immediate attention, the pastor should use prudential judgment to address the situation, and the dean and Chancellor should be notified as soon as possible.

* If a loan is required for the project, half of the project's amount must be "cash on hand" to approve proceeding with the loan application from the bank. The dean must be notified, and the application for a loan is to be mailed to the diocese for approval.


THE DIRECTOR OF THE OFFICE OF LITURGY AS *DE FACTO* MEMBER OF THE DIOCESAN BUILDING COMMISSION.

When appointed as the Director of the Office of Liturgy, the director will serve as an ex-officio member of the Diocesan Building Commission. They will represent the Bishop's understanding of building construction, restoration, and renovation of places of worship. As a liturgical consultant, his role is limited to places of worship, and he is not required to attend meetings concerning buildings not primarily used for worship.

As a reminder, all projects involving the sanctuary space must follow policy 409 and receive permission from the bishop.

Promulgated: June 5, 2024

Effective: July 1, 2024


+ Glen John Provost
Bishop of Lake Charles

BOOK VI

Sanctions in the Church



POLICIES AND GUIDELINES

UPDATED SEPTEMBER 2024

BOOK VII

Processes



POLICIES AND GUIDELINES

UPDATED SEPTEMBER 2024

DIOCESE OF LAKE CHARLES
DIOCESAN POLICY STATEMENT
DUE PROCESS

The Office for Due Process in the Diocese of Lake Charles shall be established to protect the rights and freedoms of all persons within the Church, an obligation in justice as well as in charity. The call of the gospel is very clear with regard to disputes between members:

If your brother should commit some wrong against you, go and point out his fault, but keep it between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over. If he does not listen, summon another, so that every case may stand on the word of two or three witnesses. If he ignores them, refer it to the church. If he ignores even the church, then treat him as you would a Gentile or a tax collector. (Mt. 18:15-17)

The adequate protection of human rights and freedoms is a matter of concern for all members of the Church. These rights and freedoms are most effectively guaranteed when persons and institutions have a moral conviction of an individual's right to be treated fairly and with dignity.

Rights without legal safeguards are meaningless. The Code of Canon Law provides means by which these rights might be vindicated and protected within various processes for resolution of disputes within the Church community.

Two of the basic methods of due process are conciliation/mediation and arbitration. It is the belief of this diocese that persons of good will committed to the Gospel spirit of reconciliation can usually resolve disputes with the aid of a third party also committed to the Spirit. The process of arbitration is more formal and adds the important element of willingness of the parties to accept the decision of the arbitrators as final and binding.

It is our hope that these processes and procedures will be of assistance to all living in the spirit of the Gospel and will be a living witness to the Church's commitment to be a sign of justice and charity.

I. Conciliation/Mediation

- A. Conciliation/mediation is a process in which a third party tries to bring the parties to agreement by lowering tensions, improving communication, interpreting issues, providing technical assistance, exploring potential solutions and bringing about a negotiated settlement, either informally or, in a subsequent step, through formal mediation.
- B. The process of conciliation shall be available to resolve:
1. Disputes between a person and a parochial or diocesan administrator or administrative body within the diocese where it is contended that an act or decision (including administrative sanctions and disciplinary actions) has violated a right recognized as such in the law of the Church or in the documents of the magisterium.
 2. Disputes between a person and a parochial or diocesan administrator or administrative body within the diocese where it is contended that failure to act or failure to make a decision has violated a right recognized as such in the law of the Church or in the documents of the magisterium.

For the process of conciliation to be used, the dispute must be one in which the parties are directly involved, and only after good faith efforts to resolve the dispute at the local level using existing procedures to resolve disputes within the particular institution or agency have not been successful.

- C. The process of conciliation is not available to resolve:
1. Cases involving doctrinal matters of faith or morals.
 2. Cases involving the assignment of priests or deacons.
 3. Cases involving the infliction of penalties by canonical judicial sentence, and those requiring the special process for the removal or transfer of clerics in accord with the Code of Canon Law.
 4. Cases involving religious in their strictly internal affairs.
 5. Cases involving the alleged invalidity of the sacraments.
 6. Cases involving labor union contracts.
 7. Cases involving grievances against legislative acts of the Bishop.
- D. The Process of Conciliation
1. A person, group, or institution having recourse to the Office of Due Process shall be called the **petitioner**. The person, group, or institution with whom the petitioner is in conflict will be called the **respondent**. The dispute will be called the **issue**.
 2. The petitioner makes the initial contact with the Office of Due Process and gives the nature of the problem. The director of the office will determine if the issue falls within the jurisdiction of the Office. If it does, the director will send the

petitioner a **Petitioner Form** to be completed. This form includes a written summary of the facts, listing the efforts made to resolve the issue and stating the remedy to be sought.

3. Within ten working days of receipt of the form, the director shall consider the issue. Once the issue is accepted, the Director shall send the respondent the **Respondent Form** to complete and return within ten working days. This form seeks the same information as the Petitioner Form.
4. If the Respondent refuses to cooperate with the process, the Director shall notify the Petitioner and seek other possible solutions with him/her.
5. If the Respondent agrees to cooperate with the process, the Director shall submit to each party a list of conciliators from which they might choose a conciliator acceptable to both parties. The parties may strike out two names not acceptable to themselves. The Director shall assign one of the remaining conciliators with the problem within five days.
6. The **conciliator** should be a competent person, who would be informed of the facts involved in the petition, sensitive to the feelings of the parties, and capable of bringing both parties together in a face to face dialogue. This person should be a committed and respected member of the Catholic community who has some breadth of life experience and some human relations and communications skills. They should be mature and have good listening skills and the ability to discern and articulate true meanings. The conciliator should have as his/her primary concern the reconciliation of the parties.
7. The Conciliator shall review the forms of each party and contact the parties to set up a meeting with each party individually. Following these meetings, the conciliator shall meet with both parties together and attempt to guide them to a peaceful resolution of their problem. Ample opportunity should be given for each party to present their view of the issue and propose a remedy.
8. Following the discussions, the Conciliator shall orally summarize the resolution for the parties to insure an understanding of the agreement.
9. The Conciliator shall have no power to force participants to adopt a solution to the issue.
10. If the issue is resolved by mutual agreement, the Conciliator shall prepare a summary of the statement of the issue and its resolution, and shall submit it for the approval and signature of the participants.
11. If the issue remains unresolved after the three months, the Conciliator shall discuss with each party other solutions or options available to them, such as arbitration.
12. The meetings shall be held in private, without legal representation.

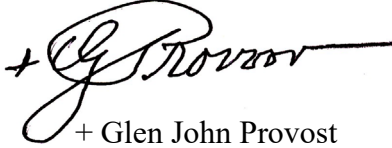
II. **Arbitration**

- A. Arbitration may take place only after efforts at conciliation have been attempted and have not been successful.

- B. When a dispute is submitted for arbitration, the parties shall sign beforehand a specific agreement to accept the decision of the arbitrator(s) as final and binding.
- C. The Director shall submit a list of arbitrators to each party, who make strike out two names. The Director shall select the necessary number of arbitrators from the remaining names.
- D. The following may attend the hearing:
 - 1. The parties themselves and those who have a direct interest in the arbitration.
 - 2. Legal counsel may be present, but only to assist the parties.
- E. The arbitrator shall appoint a time and place for the hearing and notify the parties not less than five days before the hearing.
- F. The Arbitrator shall hear and determine the issue upon the evidence produced. Parties may offer such evidence as they desire and shall produce additional evidence as the Arbitrator may deem necessary to an understanding and determination of the dispute. All evidence shall be taken in the presence of the Arbitrator and all of the parties. The Arbitrator shall judge the relevancy and materiality of the evidence offered.
- G. The hearing shall be conducted as follows:
 - 1. The hearing shall be opened by recording the place, time and date of the hearing, the presence of the Arbitrator(s) and parties, the presence of other persons, if any, and the receipt by the Arbitrator(s) of initial statements.
 - 2. The parties are entitled to present relevant proofs. The names and addresses of all witnesses and exhibits offered in evidence shall be made a part of the record.
 - 3. Once all the evidence has been presented, the Arbitrator shall declare the hearing closed. The hearing may be reopened by the Arbitrator on his/her own initiative, or at the request of either party, for a good reason, at any time before the final determination is made.
 - 4. The Arbitrator then makes the decision. In cases where three or more arbitrators are utilized, their decisions shall be made by majority vote.
 - 5. The decision and remedy shall be given in writing setting forth the reasons for the decision and the remedy rendered. The decision shall be signed by the Arbitrator and submitted to the parties for their signature.
 - 6. The decision shall be binding for the parties to the issue.

Promulgated: April 23, 2008

Effective: July 1, 2008


+ Glen John Provost
Bishop of Lake Charles

DIOCESE OF LAKE CHARLES

DIOCESAN POLICY STATEMENT

A SAFE ENVIRONMENT FOR THE PROTECTION OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

INTRODUCTION

Our society has grown acutely and painfully aware of the tragedy of child sexual abuse. The trauma and damage such abuse causes its victims, their families, and the community are compounded when the abuser is a priest, deacon, seminarian, or a lay employee or volunteer working for the Church. In these situations, not only the victims and their families, but also the parish, the Diocese and the universal Church are seriously compromised and jeopardized.

On June 14, 2002, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops approved a “Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People” (hereinafter charter.) The charter addresses the Church’s commitment to deal appropriately and effectively with cases of sexual abuse of minors by priests, deacons, religious or lay employees and volunteers. The bishops of the United States have promised to reach out to those who have been sexually abused as minors by anyone serving the Church in ministry, employment, or a volunteer position, whether the sexual abuse was recent or occurred many years ago. They will be as open as possible with the people in parishes and communities about instances of sexual abuse of minors, with respect always for the privacy and the reputation of the individuals involved. They have committed themselves to the pastoral and spiritual care and emotional well being of those who have been sexually abused and of their families.

In addition, the bishops will work with parents, civil authorities, educators, and various organizations in the community to make and maintain the safest environment for minors. In the same way, the bishops have pledged to evaluate the background of seminary applicants as well as all church personnel, who have responsibility for the care and supervision of children and young people.

These policies and programs, as set forth by the Diocese of Lake Charles, recognize that sexual and other abusive misconduct with minors is a special problem with a profound impact on the lives of those affected. They are in place to provide for a safe environment for all children and persons who come in contact with those who minister, are employed, or volunteer in service of the Church.

DEFINITIONS

For the purpose of this policy refer to Diocesan Policy 704, Definitions.

I. TO PROMOTE HEALING AND RECONCILIATION WITH VICTIMS/SURVIVORS OF SEXUAL ABUSE OF MINORS

ARTICLE I

Outreach

The Church's obligation with regard to all victims, whether alleged or substantiated, is for pastoral outreach to the victims/survivors and their families. The bishop, or his delegate, will reach out to victims/survivors and their families with a sincere commitment to their spiritual and emotional well-being. The first obligation of the Church with regard to the victim/survivor and their families is for healing and reconciliation.

***Policy:* The Diocese of Lake Charles will reach out to assist every person who has been the victim of sexual abuse as a minor by anyone acting in the name of the Church.**

The Diocese will reach out to victims/survivors and their families and demonstrate a sincere commitment to their spiritual and emotional well-being. The first obligation of the Church with regard to the victims is for healing and reconciliation. The Diocese is to continue its outreach to every person who has been the victim of sexual abuse as a minor by anyone in church service, whether the abuse was recent or occurred in the past. This outreach may include provision of counseling, spiritual assistance, support groups, and other social services agreed upon by the victim and the Diocese.

ARTICLE II

Coordination for Victim's Assistance

***Policy:* The Diocese of Lake Charles is to have policies and procedures in place to respond promptly to any allegation where there is reason to believe that sexual abuse of a minor has occurred by anyone acting in the name of the Church.**

The Diocese is to have a competent person to coordinate assistance for the immediate pastoral care of persons who report having been sexually abused as minors by clergy or other church personnel. The competent person is the Victim's Assistance Coordinator (VAC). The procedures for those making a complaint are to be readily available in printed form in the principle languages of the Diocese and be the subject of public announcements at least annually.

Review Board

***Policy:* A diocesan review board is to function as the bishop’s confidential consultative body in matters of sexual abuse of a minor.**

The Diocese is to have a review board that functions as a confidential consultative body to the bishop. This board is to advise the diocesan bishop in his assessment of allegations of sexual abuse of minors and in his determination of a cleric’s suitability for ministry. The board can review these matters both retrospectively and prospectively and give advice on all aspects of responses in connection with these cases.

The board is to meet a minimum of once a year. Also, the board is to regularly review diocesan policy and procedures for dealing with sexual abuse of minors. Regularly is to be understood as at least every two years.

The board is to be composed of at least five persons of outstanding integrity and good judgment. The majority of the review board members is to be lay persons who are not in the employ of the Diocese (see Norm 5 in Essential Norms for Diocesan/Eparchial Policies Dealing with Allegations of Sexual Abuse of Minors by Priests or Deacons, 2006); but at least one member is to be a priest, and at least one member should have particular expertise in the treatment of sexual abuse of minors. The members are to be appointed for a term of five years which can be renewed. The promoter of justice may attend regular meetings of the review board. However, the promoter of justice is to attend meetings when the review board meets to address an allegation of sexual abuse of a minor.

ARTICLE III

Confidentiality

***Policy:* The Diocese of Lake Charles is not to enter into any confidentiality agreements in cases of sexual abuse of a minor, unless brought forward by the victim or survivor, and which the request is to be clearly noted in the text of the agreement.**

II. TO GUARANTEE RESPONSE TO ALLEGATIONS OF SEXUAL ABUSE OF MINORS

ARTICLE IV

Reporting

***Policy:* The Diocese of Lake Charles will follow all applicable Federal and Louisiana State laws for reporting to public authorities when allegations and/or reasonable cause to suspect an incident of sexual abuse of a person who is a minor are made against persons acting in the name of the Church.**

The Diocese will comply with all applicable laws with respect to reporting allegations of sexual abuse of a minor. The Diocese will cooperate fully with public authorities about reporting even when the person is no longer a minor. In every instance, the Diocese will advise victims of their right to make a report to public authorities and support this right.

***Policy:* Any personnel who has actual knowledge of, or who has reasonable cause to suspect that an incident of sexual abuse of a minor has occurred (unless to do so would violate the priest/penitent relationship of the Sacrament of Penance), must follow all applicable laws for reporting and immediately report to the vicar general (cf. Diocesan Policy 704, General Standards, 4).**

ARTICLE V

Investigation

***Policy:* Once an allegation of sexual abuse of a minor is reported, an immediate investigation will take place.**

The allegation is to be reported promptly to the public authorities, and the Diocese is to cooperate in their investigation in accord with the law of the jurisdiction in question. Therefore, the diocesan attorney is to be informed to ensure compliance with all applicable laws. The Diocese is to inform the accused of his or her right to canonical and civil counsel. The Diocese will fulfill the requirements of the preliminary investigation according to the Code of Canon Law, canons 1717-1719 without hindrance to ongoing investigations, whether civil, criminal, or ecclesiastical.

Investigating allegations against personnel (not including clergy and members of institutes of consecrated life):

1. Once the allegation has been communicated to the vicar general, and the vicar general has informed the diocesan bishop, the diocesan bishop is to determine whether the matter is to be remanded to the diocesan review board for its recommendation. The diocesan bishop is to appoint a delegate to perform preliminary investigation.
2. The Diocese is responsible for making certain that pastoral care and solace are offered to all concerned. No medical, psychological or physical assistance may be offered without the approval of the diocesan bishop in consultation with the diocesan attorney.
3. After adequate and appropriate investigation, the vicar general is to make a determination about the credibility of the allegation and recommend appropriate action to the diocesan bishop. If the diocesan bishop deems it appropriate, the alleged offender will be immediately relieved of any position in the Diocese of Lake Charles and placed on administrative leave, pending the outcome of the internal investigation and any outside investigation. Administrative leave does not imply guilt on the part of the accused person.
4. Any personnel who admits to, does not contest, or is found guilty of an incident of sexual abuse of a minor is to be immediately terminated from employment, or service, or any position of responsibility within the Diocese.
5. Care will always be taken to protect the rights of all parties involved and appropriate action may be taken to protect the alleged victim, the alleged offender, or other affected persons during the investigation. When an accusation has proved to be unfounded, every step possible will be taken to restore the good name of the person falsely accused.

Investigating allegations against clergy and members of institutes of consecrated life:

1. Once the allegation has been communicated to the vicar general, and the vicar general has informed the diocesan bishop, the diocesan bishop is to determine whether the matter is to be remanded to the diocesan review board for its recommendation. The diocesan bishop is to appoint a delegate to perform preliminary investigation and coordinate with the major superior of the institute.
2. The accused is to be promptly notified of the results of the investigation. In accord with Norm 6 in the *Essential Norms for Diocesan/Eparchial Policies Dealing with Allegations of Sexual Abuse of Minors by Priests and Deacons*, when there is sufficient evidence that sexual abuse of a minor has occurred, the diocesan bishop is to notify the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. When the diocesan bishop informs the Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith, he will then apply any or all the precautionary measures mentioned in canon 1722.
3. The diocesan bishop or his delegate is responsible for making certain that pastoral care and solace are offered to all concerned. No medical, psychological or

physical assistance may be offered without the approval of the diocesan bishop in consultation with the diocesan attorney.

4. The alleged offender may be asked to voluntarily seek and comply with an appropriate medical and psychological evaluation at a facility mutually acceptable to the Diocese and to the accused.
5. Once the diocesan bishop has received a response from the Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith informing him how he is to proceed, the process will continue according to the instruction from the Congregation.
6. Care will always be taken to protect the rights of all parties involved and appropriate action may be taken to protect the alleged victim, the alleged offender, or other affected persons during the investigation. When an accusation has proved to be unfounded, every step possible will be taken to restore the good name of the person falsely accused.

Determination and Recommendations

***Policy:* Diocesan policy provides that for even a single act of sexual abuse of a minor, past or present, the offending cleric will be permanently removed from ministry, not excluding dismissal from the clerical state, if the case so warrants.**

When sexual abuse of a minor by a cleric is admitted or is established after an appropriate process in accord with canon law, an offending cleric will be offered professional assistance for his own healing and well-being as well as for the purpose of prevention of further sexual abuse of minors.

Also provided for in canon law are the following: A request by the cleric for dispensation from the obligation of holy orders and the loss of the clerical state or a request by the bishop for dismissal from the clerical state even without the consent of the cleric may be made.

If the penalty of dismissal from the clerical state has not been applied, the offender ought to lead a life of prayer and penance. He will not be permitted to celebrate Mass publicly or to administer the sacraments. He is to be instructed not to wear clerical garb or to present himself publicly as a cleric.

At all times, the diocesan bishop has the executive power of governance, through an administrative act, to remove an offending cleric from office, to remove or restrict his faculties, and to limit his exercise of priestly ministry. Because sexual abuse of a minor is a crime in all jurisdictions in the United States, for the sake of the common good and observing the provisions of canon law, the diocesan bishop is to exercise this power of governance to ensure that any cleric who has committed even one act of sexual abuse of a minor as described above is not to continue in active ministry or be transferred for ministerial assignment to another diocese or religious province.

ARTICLE VI

Code of Conduct

***Policy:* The Diocese is to have and publish a Code of Professional Conduct for personnel who have regular contact with minors.**

Persons in violation of the code of professional conduct are subject to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal. The Diocese is to distribute this Code of Professional Conduct to all entities under the supervision of the diocesan bishop.

ARTICLE VII

Communications

***Policy:* The Diocese of Lake Charles is committed to transparency and openness in cases of sexual abuse involving minors.**

Within the confines of respect for privacy and the reputation of the individuals involved, the Diocese is to be open with members of the community. This is especially so with regard to assisting and supporting parish communities directly affected sexual abuse of minors.

Any media contact or inquiries regarding an incident of sexual abuse of a minor by personnel must be directed to the person designated by the diocesan bishop as spokesperson for the diocese.

ARTICLE VIII

Office of Child and Youth Protection

***Policy:* The Diocese of Lake Charles is fully to cooperate with the National Office of Child and Youth Protection.**

ARTICLE IX

Education/Training

***Policy:* The Diocese will provide training in a safe environment program(s).**

The program(s) is to provide education and training for minors, parents, and personnel about ways to make and maintain a safe environment for the protection of children and young people.

ARTICLE X

Screening and Evaluation Techniques

Policy: Personnel whose ministry and duties includes ongoing, unsupervised contact with minors are required to undergo a criminal background check.

Criminal background checks must be completed and approved prior to personnel beginning their ministry or duties.

Policy: The Diocese is to employ adequate screening and evaluation techniques to determine the fitness of candidates for ordination (cf. United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Program of Priestly Formation* [Fifth Edition], 2006, no. 39).

ARTICLE XI

Transfer of Clergy

U. S. Bishops Policy: No priest or deacon who has committed an act of sexual abuse of a minor may be transferred for ministerial assignment to another diocese/eparchy or religious province. Before a priest or deacon can be transferred for residence to another diocese/eparchy or religious province, the bishop is to forward, in a confidential manner, to the local bishop/eparch or religious ordinary of the proposed place of residence any and all information concerning any act of sexual abuse of a minor and any other information that he has been or may be a danger to children or young people.

ARTICLE XII

Cooperation with Religious Communities

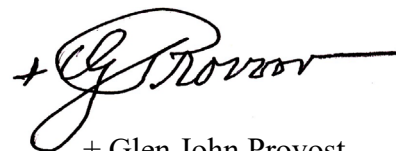
U. S. Bishops Policy: The diocesan bishops and major superiors of clerical institutes or their delegates will meet periodically to coordinate their roles concerning the issue of allegations made against a cleric member of a religious institute in a diocese.

ARTICLE XIII**Seminaries/Religious Formation**

U. S. Bishops Policy: We pledge our complete cooperation with the apostolic visitation of our diocesan/eparchial seminaries and religious houses of formation recommended in the interdicasterial meeting with the cardinals of the United States and the conference officers in April, 2002. These visits shall focus on the question of human formation for celibate chastity based on the criteria found in *Pastores Dabo Vobis*.

Promulgated: April 23, 2008

Effective: July 1, 2008

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Glen John Provost", with a cross symbol to the left of the first letter.

+ Glen John Provost
Bishop of Lake Charles

DIOCESE OF LAKE CHARLES

DIOCESAN POLICY STATEMENT

CODE OF PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT FOR ALL WHO HAVE CONTACT WITH MINORS

PREAMBLE

In response to the call by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops to create safe environments of care and protection for our children and young people, the Diocese of Lake Charles establishes the following standards of ministerial behavior in this Code of Professional Conduct.

This policy applies to personnel throughout the Diocese of Lake Charles. It applies whether these personnel serve in church parishes, schools, religious communities, programs, charities, and organizations, and with regard to all diocesan-related or parish-related events and activities. Policy 703 concerns all forms of abuse of minors not only sexual abuse as does Policy 702 and the USCCB Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People.

Personnel are responsible for adherence to this policy and those who violate or disregard it will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

DEFINITIONS

1. **Diocese of Lake Charles** – for the implementation and maintenance of Safe Environment programs and policies, includes departments and administrative offices, all parishes, missions, schools, institutions, agencies and other offices under its direct jurisdiction.
2. **Personnel** – persons eighteen years of age and older including clergy, employees, and volunteers within the Diocese of Lake Charles.
3. **Adult** - an individual who has reached the legal age of majority (18 years of age.)
4. **Minor** - an individual who has not reached the legal age of majority (has not turned 18 years of age.) For the purposes of this Code, the term “minors” also includes adults vulnerable to abuse due to habitual lack of the use of reason.
5. **Mandatory and permitted reporters** – as defined in Appendix 704, Summary of Louisiana Child Abuse or Neglect Reporting Laws.
6. **Abuse**
 - a. Any behavior that takes physical, sexual, or emotional advantage of minors as well neglect.
 - b. Physical abuse is non-accidental injury which is intentionally inflicted upon a minor causing of the deterioration of a minor to such an extent that the minor's health,

moral, or emotional well-being is endangered, as a result of relationships developed through a position while performing the work of the Diocese of Lake Charles.

- c. Sexual abuse is any contact of a sexual nature that occurs between persons when one party is non-consenting. It also includes any contact of a sexual nature that occurs between a minor and an adult. This includes any activity which is meant to arouse or gratify the sexual desires of the adult. Therefore, the acquisition, possession, or distribution of pornographic images of minors is considered sexual abuse.
- d. Emotional abuse is mental or emotional injury to another person that results in an observable and material impairment in the other person's growth, development or psychological functioning.
- e. Neglect – the failure to provide for a minor's basic needs or the failure to protect a minor from harm.

GENERAL STANDARDS

Personnel are expected to:

1. Exhibit and maintain the highest ethical, moral, and professional standards with personal integrity in order to create a safe environment free from abuse and immoral conduct.
2. Conduct themselves in a manner consistent with the discipline and teaching of the Catholic Church.
3. Know and follow all applicable laws for reporting (cf. Appendix 704, Summary of Louisiana Child Abuse or Neglect Reporting Laws).
4. Take seriously every allegation of suspected abuse and/or unprofessional conduct. Always report any reasonably suspected abuse of a minor to local law enforcement or to the Louisiana Department of Child Protection Services and your chief administrative officer.

In cases of allegations of sexual abuse of minors, after reporting to local law enforcement or to the Louisiana Department of Child Protection Services, immediately report to the vicar general:

- a. Louisiana Department of Child Protection: 855-452-5437.
 - b. Vicar General: Office Hours, (337) 439-7400; After Office Hours, (337) 477-1236.
5. Serve without regard to gender, creed, national origin, age, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status or political beliefs.
 6. Maintain an open and trustworthy relationship with appropriate boundaries with the minors they serve.
 7. Be vigilant and ever aware of their own and the minors' vulnerabilities.

8. Use a team approach when managing and implementing youth activities. There are to be two adults present during youth activities.

Personnel who minister to individual minors such as counselors are to conduct the ministry in appropriate settings and at appropriate times. Physical contact is never to be conducted in a private location.

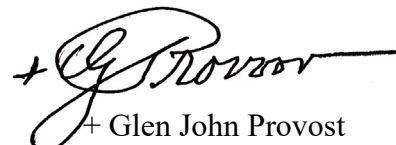
While functioning in an employment or ministerial capacity with minors, personnel are to refrain from:

- a. The illegal possession and/or use of drugs.
- b. The possession and/or use of alcohol.
- c. Providing shared, private, overnight accommodations for individual minors with the exception of family members, where there is no other adult supervision present. Clergy are not to allow minors other than family members to stay overnight in the cleric's private accommodation or residence.

In emergency situations, where accommodation is necessary for the health and well-being of the minors, extraordinary care should be taken to protect all parties concerned from the appearance of impropriety and from all risk of harm.

Promulgated: April 23, 2008

Effective: July 1, 2008


+ Glen John Provost
Bishop of Lake Charles

SUMMARY OF LOUISIANA CHILD ABUSE OR NEGLECT REPORTING LAWS (L.S.A., R.S. 14:403; LA. CHILDREN'S CODE ARTS. 601-616)

The following references to the laws of the State of Louisiana are not intended to be a comprehensive treatment of all laws pertaining to child abuse in this state, but rather to give you enough information so that you may know when and under what circumstances you have an obligation to report cases of suspected or actual child abuse and also to enable you to obtain further information from knowledgeable sources. The following, in some cases, are only portions of existing laws and the reader is advised to obtain all the provisions if you contemplate reporting or if you suspect actual cases of abuse.

Perhaps one of the most important ideas or concepts is that of the "Mandatory reporter", which is defined in **Article 603 (13) of the Children's Code**, which reads as follows:

- (13) "Mandatory reporter" is any of the following individuals performing their occupational duties:
 - (a) "Health practitioner" is any individual who provides health care services, including a physician, surgeon, physical therapist, dentist, resident, intern, hospital staff member, podiatrist, chiropractor, licensed nurse, nursing aide, dental hygienist, any emergency medical technician, a paramedic, optometrist, medical examiner, or coroner, who diagnoses, examines, or treats a child or his family.
 - (b) "Mental health/social service practitioner" is any individual who provides mental health care or social service diagnosis, assessment, counseling, or treatment, including a psychiatrist, psychologist, marriage or family counselor, social worker, aide, or other individual who provides counseling services to a child or his family. However, when a priest, rabbi, duly ordained minister, or Christian Science practitioner has acquired knowledge of abuse or neglect from a person during a confession or other sacred communication, he shall encourage that person to report but shall not be a mandatory reporter of that information given in confession or sacred communication.
 - (c) "Teaching or child care provider" is any person who provides training and supervision of a child, including any public or private teacher, teacher's aide, instructional aide, school principal, school staff member, social worker, probation officer, foster home parent, group home or other child care institutional staff member, personnel of residential home facilities, a

licensed or unlicensed day care provider, or any individual who provides such services to a child.

- (d) Police officers or law enforcement officials.
- (e) “Commercial film and photographic print processor” is any person who develops exposed photographic film into negatives, slides, or prints, or who makes prints from negatives or slides for compensation.

The definitions are very broad, particularly the definitions of "Teaching or childcare provider", which is any person who provides training and supervision of a child.

The definition of "Mandatory reporter" is distinguished from "Permitted reporter", which is not defined in **Article 603**, but which by its very terms is a reporter who is permitted but not required to report suspected or actual cases of child abuse.

If one is classified as a "Permitted reporter", then that person may report in accordance with **Article 610** but is not obligated under penalty of law to do so.

Also, of use is the definition of a "**Caretaker**", which is defined according to **Article 603 (3)** as follows:

"**Caretaker**" means any person legally obligated to provide or secure adequate care for a child, including a parent, tutor, guardian, legal custodian, foster home parent, an employee of a public or private day care center, or other person providing a residence for the child.

Article 609. Mandatory and permitted reporting

- A. With respect to mandatory reporters:
 - (1) Notwithstanding any claim of privileged communication, any mandatory reporter who has cause to believe that a child's physical or mental health or welfare is endangered as a result of abuse or neglect that abuse or neglect was a contributing factor in a child's death shall report in accordance with **Article 610**.
 - (2) Violation of the duties imposed upon a mandatory reporter subjects the offender to criminal prosecution authorized by R.S. 14:403 (A) (1).
- B. With respect to permitted reporters, any other person having cause to believe that a child's physical or mental health or welfare is endangered as a result of abuse or neglect, including a judge of any court of this state, may report in accordance with **Article 610**.

- C. The filing of a report, known to be false, may subject the offender to criminal prosecution authorized by R.S. 14:403 (A) (3).

Article 610. Reporting procedure

- A. Reports of child abuse or neglect or that such was a contributing factor in a child's death, where the abuser is believed to be a parent or caretaker, shall be made immediately to the local child protection unit of the department. Reports in which the abuse or neglect is believed to be perpetrated by someone other than a caretaker and the caretaker is not believed to have any responsibility for the abuse or neglect shall be made immediately to a local or state law enforcement agency.
- B. The report shall contain the following information, if known:
 - (1) The name, address, age, sex, and race of the child.
 - (2) The nature, extent, and cause of the child's injuries or endangered condition, including any previous known or suspected abuse to this child or child's siblings.
 - (3) The name and address of the child's parent(s) or other caretaker.
 - (4) The names and ages of all other members of the child's household.
 - (5) The name and address of the reporter.
 - (6) An account of how this child came to the reporter's attention.
 - (7) Any explanation of the cause of the child's injury or condition offered by the child, the caretaker, or any other person.
 - (8) Any other information which the reporter believes might be important or relevant.
- C. The report shall also name the person or persons who are thought to have caused or contributed to the child's condition, if known, and the report shall contain the name of such person if he is named by the child.
- D. If the initial report was in oral form by a mandatory reporter, it shall be followed by a written report made within five days to the local child protection unit of the department or, if necessary, to the local law enforcement agency.

- E. All reports received by any local or state law enforcement agency involving abuse or neglect in which the child's parent or caretaker is believed responsible shall be referred to the local child protection unit of the department. A local child protection unit shall refer abuse or neglect cases not involving a parent or caretaker to the appropriate law enforcement agency and also shall report all cases of child death which involve a suspicion of abuse or neglect as a contributing factor in the child's death to the local and state law enforcement agencies, the office of the district attorney, and the coroner.
- F. Any commercial film or photographic print processor who has knowledge of or observes, within the scope of this professional capacity or employment, any film, photograph, video tape, negative, or slide depicting a child who he knows or should know is under the age of seventeen years, which constitutes child pornography as defined in **Article 603**, shall report immediately to the local law enforcement agency having jurisdiction over the case. The reporter shall provide a copy of the film, photograph, videotape, negative, or slide to the agency receiving the report.

Article 611 of the Children's Code provides immunity from civil or criminal liability in certain circumstances:

- A. Any person who in good faith makes a report, cooperates in any investigation arising as a result of such report, or participates in judicial proceedings authorized under the provisions of this Chapter, or any caseworker who in good faith conducts an investigation, makes an investigative judgment or disposition, or releases or uses information contained in the central registry for the purpose of protecting a child, shall have immunity from civil or criminal liability that otherwise might be incurred or imposed.
- B. This immunity shall not be extended to:
 - (1) Any alleged principal, conspirator, or accessory to an offense involving the abuse or neglect of the child.
 - (2) Any person who makes a report known to be false or with reckless disregard for the truth of the report.

If one fails to comply with LSA-R.S. 14:403A (1), one may subject oneself to a prosecution:


403. Abuse of children; reports; waiver of privilege

- A. (1) Any person who, under **Children's Code Article 609(A)**, is required to report the abuse or neglect or sexual abuse of a Child and knowingly and willfully fails to so report shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and upon conviction shall be fined not more than five hundred dollars or imprisoned for not more than six months, or both.

This Addendum to the Child Abuse Policy of the Diocese of Lake Charles is also included to impress upon the reader the seriousness of the problem as more specifically articulated in the policy itself.

Accepted: April 23, 2008

Effective: July 1, 2008


+ Glen John Provost
Bishop of Lake Charles

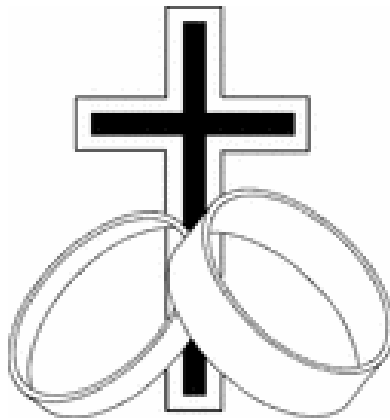
**Marriage Preparation Guidelines
Province of New Orleans
with Specified Norms for the
Diocese of Lake Charles**



POLICIES AND GUIDELINES
UPDATED SEPTEMBER 2024

MARRIAGE PREPARATION GUIDELINES

PROVINCE OF NEW ORLEANS



**WITH
SPECIFIED NORMS
FOR THE
DIOCESE OF LAKE CHARLES**

2008

MARRIAGE PREPARATION GUIDELINES

PROVINCE OF NEW ORLEANS



THESE REVISED GUIDELINES WERE APPROVED BY THE
ARCHBISHOP AND BISHOPS OF THE PROVINCE OF NEW ORLEANS
AND PROMULGATED FEBRUARY 10, 2008.

MOST REV. ALFRED C. HUGHES
Archbishop of New Orleans

MOST REV. SAM JACOBS
Bishop of Houma-Thibodaux

MOST REV. MICHAEL JARRELL
Bishop of Lafayette

MOST REV. ROBERT W. MUENCH
Bishop of Baton Rouge

MOST REV. RONALD P. HERZOG
Bishop of Alexandria

MOST REV. GLEN JOHN PROVOST
Bishop of Lake Charles

MOST REV. ROGER P. MORIN
Auxiliary Bishop of New Orleans

MOST REV. SHELTON J. FABRE
Auxiliary Bishop of New Orleans

REV. MSGR. EARL V. PROVENZA
Administrator, Diocese of Shreveport

MARRIAGE PREPARATION AND CELEBRATION

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	1
Marriage as Sacrament	1
Marriage Preparation	2
Theology of the Body	3
PARTICULAR LAW	6
I. Preparation	6
A. Couple Responsibilities	6
B. Pastor Responsibilities	6
C. Officiant Responsibilities	7
II. Celebration	7
A. Celebration Concerns	7
B. Banns of Marriage	7
C. Civil Marriage Prohibited	7
D. Liturgical Roles	7
E. Liturgical Roles Meet Requirements	7
F. Music Requirements	8
G. Liturgical Publications Approval	8
H. Conditions for Marriage Outside of Mass	8
I. Distribution of Holy Communion	8
J. Placement of Ceremony	8
K. Time for Celebration of Rite of Marriage	8
L. Fees for Ceremony	8
M. Invalid Marriage/Reception on Church Property	8
SPECIFIED NORMS <i>Diocese of Lake Charles</i>	9-A
Questions Regarding Marriage Preparation	9-A
Petitions Regarding Waivers or Exceptions	9-A
Requirements for Preparation	9-A
Approved Marriage Preparation Programs	9-A
Rite of Marriage	9-A
Proper Placement for Marriage Ceremony	9-B
Liturgy and Reception, Ceremony Outside of Mass	9-B
Marriage Between Catholics and Non-Catholics	9-B
Time of Weddings	9-B
Out-of-Diocese Clergy	9-C
Out-of-State Clergy	9-C
Minister from Another Church or Communion	9-C
Civil Law Requirements	9-C
PASTORAL GUIDELINES	10
I. Formation, Education and Discernment	10
A. Individual Responsibility	11
B. Pastor Responsibility – Environment	11
C. Pastor Responsibility – Parish Formation	12

II.	Stages of Formation	13
A.	Remote Stage	13
1.	Early Years	13
2.	Adolescent Years	13
B.	Proximate Stage	14
1.	Definition of Proximate Stage	14
2.	Discernment	14
C.	Immediate Stage	16
1.	Process and Steps	16
2.	Couple Responsibility	17
3.	Pastor/Parish Responsibility	17
4.	Parish Outreach	18
5.	Officiant/Pastoral Minister	19
III.	Pastoral Connections	19
IV.	Sacramental Life of Couple	20
A.	Cohabitation	20
	Definition	20
	Church Teaching	20
	Statistical References	21
B.	Convalidation	22
	Explanation	22
	Qualifications	22
C.	Marriage of Non-practicing Catholics	22
	“Teachable Moment”	22
	Level of Faith and Participation	23
D.	Marriage of Minors	23
E.	Pregnancy	23
	Explanation	23
	Eighteen Years of Age and Older	24
	Either Party Under 18 Years of Age	24
F.	Marriage (Mixed)	24
1.	Catholic and Validly Baptized Christian	24
2.	Marriage – Between Catholic and Unbaptized Persons	25
G.	Marriages (Remarriage)	26
H.	Marriage of Person with Disabilities	26
I.	Alcoholism, Chemical Dependency, Other Addictions	27
V.	Celebration	27
A.	Preparing for Liturgical Ceremony	27
B.	Couple Responsibility	28
C.	Pastor/Parish Responsibility	28
D.	Officiant	28
E.	Episcopal/Roman Catholic Marriages	29
F.	Marriage with Members of Other Churches and Unbaptized	29
G.	Mass Texts and Time	29
H.	State Licenses	30
I.	Liturgy and Reception	30
1.	Culture and Custom	30
2.	Liturgical Readings	30
3.	Appropriate Place for Celebrating Sacrament	31

J.	Continuing Outreach to Married Couples	31
1.	All Levels of Ministry	31
2.	Homilies, Other Communications	31
3.	Petitions of Prayer	31
4.	Recognizing Troubled Couples	31
5.	Reconciliation Opportunities	31
	CANONICAL REQUIREMENTS	32
1.	Couple’s Right to Marriage and Diriment Impediments	32
1.2	a. Age	32
b.	Impotence	32
c.	Disparity of Worship	32
d.	Sacred Orders	32
e.	Perpetual Vows	32
f.	Abduction	32
g.	Murder of Spouse	32
h.	Consanguinity	32
I.	Relationship of Affinity	32
j.	Relationship of Public Propriety	32
k.	Adoptive Relationship	32
2.	Freedom to Marry	33
2.1	a. Declaration of Nullity	33
b.	Freedom to Marry	33
c.	Investigation into Lack of Form	33
d.	Marriage of Catholic and Orthodox	33
e.	Conforming to Instructions	33
f.	Using Tribunal as Resource	33
g.	Non-Catholics Previously Married to Catholic	33
3.	Restrictions, Prohibition, Rider or Vetitum	33
4.	Previous Union, e.g., Death, Annulment, Lack of Form	34
5.	Diriment Impediments	34
5.1	Dispensed by Ecclesiastical Law	34
5.2	Requiring Promise on Catholic Party	34
5.3	Impotence, Prior Bond, Consanguinity	34
5.4	Dispensation by Holy See	34
5.5	Applications through Tribunal	34
5.6	Communication of Dispensation	34
5.7	Schedule of Wedding	34
5.8	Exceptions of Dispensations	34
5.9	Delay of Preparation Process	34
6.	Permissions for Licity	34
7.	Conditions for Permissions	35
7.1.	Transients	35
7.2	Marriage Not Recognized by Civil/Canon Law	35
7.3	Censure	35
7.4	Minor	35
7.5	Proxy	35
7.6	Based on Conditions	35

Special Circumstances	36
8. Possible Reasons for Delay of Marriage	36
8.1 Circumstances Not Diriment	36
9. Conditions Against the “Goods of Marriage”	37
9.1. Four “Goods of Marriage”	37
9.2 Total Simulation	37
9.3 Premarital Intentions	37
9.4 Exclusion of “Goods of Marriage”	37
9.5 Sterility	37
9.6 Requirement of Counseling	37
10. Cohabitation	37
10.2 a. Living as Roommates, Shared Dwelling	38
b. Living Together for less than Two Years	38
c. Living Together for More than Two Years	38
d. Attempted Marriage (Civil)	38
11. Mental Disabilities	38
11.1 Lack of Sufficient Reason	38
11.2 Mental Illness	38
11.2 Incapable of Contracting Marriage	38
12. Catholic Weddings Not Taking Place in the Proper Parish	38
12.1 Pastor Permission	38
12.2 Consultation Between Parishes	38
12.3 Wedding Outside the Diocese	39
12.6 Making Copies of Paperwork	39
13. Convalidation	39
13.1 Exchange of Consent Not Previously Recognized	39
13.2 As a Condition for Baptism	39
13.3 Requirement of Preparation	39
13.4 All Permissions/Dispensations Required	40
14. Couples Not Registered in a Parish	40
15. Cross-cultural/Interracial Marriages	40
16. Immigration	40
16.1 Multiple Situations	40
16.2 Understanding Immigration Laws	40
16.3 Seeking Legal Counsel	40
17. Personal Issues	40
17.2 Counseling	41
17.3 Previous Abortion	41
17.4 Sexual Abuse	41
17.5 Debilitating or Genetic Disease	41
17.6 Revealing a Precondition	41
17.7 Seal of Confession	41
18. Marriage of Minors – Not Yet 18	41
18.1 Laws of State Prohibition	41
18.2 Parental Opposition	41
18.3 Challenge Decision to Marry	41

19.	Premarital Pregnancy	41
19.1	Respectful Reception	41
19.2	Motivating Cause for Marriage	42
19.3	Pressure for Marriage	42
19.4	Relieve Sense of Urgency	42
19.5	Stress Positive and Morally Acceptable	42
19.6	Never Encourage Civil Ceremony	42
19.7	Support New Parents	42
20.	Extended Separation	42
20.1	Conditions for Separation	42
20.2	Parish of Wedding Determines Specifics	42
20.3	Preparation Through Referral and Followup	42
21.	Older Couples	42
21.1	Age or Previous Marriage	42
21.2	Bound by Natural Obligations	43
22.	Delegation	43
22.1	Delegation Required by Priests	43
22.2	Delegation Required by Deacons	43
23.	Verification of Status of Visiting Clergy	43

APPENDICES

PRENUPTIAL INQUIRY (ENGLISH)

PRENUPTIAL INQUIRY (SPANISH)

GUIDELINES FOR MARRIAGES OF ROMAN CATHOLICS AND EPISCOPALIANS



INTRODUCTION

Marriage as Sacrament

Those engaged in the pastoral preparation of couples for marriage should be well grounded in the Church's teaching on sacramental marriage. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* offers a good overview of the meaning of sacramental marriage (CCC, 1601 to 1617). Those involved in marriage preparation should familiarize themselves with this section of the Catechism.

Marriage, instituted by Christ and thus raised to the dignity of sacrament, becomes an efficacious sign of the covenant of Christ and the Church. This means the spouses themselves, in sacramental marriage, are a sign. They make Christ present to each other and to the community in powerful and mysterious ways. In a sacramental marriage, a couple communicates the union of Christ and the Church to all. God calls each couple to witness specifically to each other, to be faithful to each other, to be fruitful together, and gives the couple everything needed to make their marriage permanent for their lifetime. By its very nature marriage is designed for the good of the couple, as well as to the procreation and education of children.

Despite our unfaithfulness, God is continually faithful. As signs of the union of Christ and the Church, both husband and wife in the Sacrament of Matrimony are called to be faithful to each other in marriage. Their witness to fidelity reminds people of Christ's fidelity to us, the Church.

God's love is constant. God will never leave us and is always there for us in this life. Thus, husband and wife are called to love each other with full and constant devotion. The unity of a man and woman in marriage is indissoluble. Sacramental marriages and natural marriages serve as prophetic examples of permanence, at a time when our society challenges any and all forms of commitment. Should couples think this ideal is an impossible task, they must realize Christ never gives them something that is beyond their reach. On the contrary, Christ shares the strength and grace to live sacramental marriage.

Marriage Preparation

As we begin these reflections on marriage preparation, we point out that the entire Church is involved in varying ways in the formation of the engaged couples. In a special way, the following groups are involved in marriage preparation:

- Parents and family who create the environment in which selfless love is modeled.
- Married couples whose love and commitment to each other is a living example of what married life is all about.
- Catechists in both our Catholic schools and in our parish religious education programs. They contribute to the understanding of the Christian commitment within the youth that becomes the basis of marital love.
- Priests, deacons and laity who work with the engaged couples as they prepare for their lives together.
- Sponsor couples and other catechetical leaders who assist in the formation programs for engaged couples.
- Christian communities that join in prayer for those entering into marriage.
- Individuals who work with family life ministry, Engaged Encounter, Marriage Encounter, Retrouvaille, and other programs that support families. These efforts reflect the desire of the Church to be of assistance to couples throughout their married life.
- Counselors who assist couples at times of difficulty.

The success of our efforts to support married couples is not simply a matter of solid marriage preparation programs, but a result of the entire faith community working in various ways to proclaim the values that are basic to our understanding of Christian marriage.

Married life is an esteemed vocation in the church and those working with engaged couples should use every opportunity to encourage them in the use of their courtship and engagement to reflect deeply on the sacred calling that they are now considering.

We urge those working with couples in the preparation of marriage to be familiar with the teachings of On Human Life (*Humanae Vitae*), as well as Pope John Paul II's The Role of the Christian Family in the Modern World (*Familiaris Consortio*), and more recently, Pope John Paul II's teaching on "The Theology of the Body." Pope John Paul II has touched on various aspects of marital love throughout his teachings on marriage. In his collection of addresses known as "The Theology of the Body," he refers back to the words of *Humanae Vitae*:

Marital love is fully human, it involves the entire person.

Marital love is total.

Marital love is exclusive.

Marital love is faithful "till death do us part."

Marital love is open to new life.

Theology of the Body

The Theology of the Body of Pope John Paul II became the first major project of his fruitful papacy. This was a collection of 129 talks that he gave as part of his general audiences in Rome between 1979 and 1984. This teaching related to marriage and human sexuality has been described consistently as a counter-revolution in sexual teaching. George Weigel, in his outstanding biography of Pope John Paul, “Witness to Hope,” describes the Theology of the Body as a theological time bomb set to go off after the Pope’s death with dramatic consequences. The beloved Pope John Paul has already passed away, and the dramatic consequences predicted in that biography have begun to be realized.

In his teaching Pope John Paul II focuses on the beauty of God’s plan for the union of the sexes. This has provided the possibility of a Copernican revolution in the way the Church teaches about sexual ethics by shifting the discussion from a kind of legalism (How far can I go before I break the law?) to an understanding of true freedom (What is the truth that sets me free to love?). In the Theology of the Body, this is what salvation in Christ is all about.

For John Paul II there are two universal questions that must be answered. The first one is “What does it mean to be human?” The second one is related to the first, “How do I live my life in a way that brings true happiness and fulfillment?” In the context of those two questions, John Paul II proceeds to apply a distinctive and seasoned Christian humanism to the vocations of celibacy and marriage.

In answer to the first question, the Pope writes about three stages: 1) Our origin before sin in which he uses the Gospel passage of the rich young man (Mt. 19: 3-8). 2) Our history darkened by sin, yet redeemed by Christ in which he discusses part of the Sermon on the Mount (Mt. 5: 27-28). 3) Our destiny when God will raise our bodies in glory in which he discusses the resurrection of our bodies (Mt. 22: 23-33). In doing this, he incorporates an understanding of the human body which serves to manifest the Divine. This is precisely the connection between the body and theology, or saying it in a different way, this is precisely why we can speak of a “theology of the body.”

God created the human body as a sign of His own divine mystery. The human body, we have been given by God, makes visible the eternal mystery found in God. This is realized by the uniqueness of every human being as he or she is the pinnacle of God’s creation, and also through the beauty of the sexual differentiation and our call to union. For the late Pope the original experience of the body and sexual intimacy is a participation in God’s eternal love.

For most Catholic Christians if they would be told to fill in the blank after the word “original,” they would fill it in with the word “sin.” Yet, John Paul II gives us at least four words that we could use to fill in that blank other than sin and actually preceding the reality of sin! The following would be the Pope’s chronological sequence of the terms he would suggest to explain our original state as fully as possible: Original innocence is the state of communion with God prior to sin in which we communed with God’s original intent. We reach knowledge of this state by realizing how far we have fallen from it. We can understand what at one time would have been a sense of wholeness, by the brokenness we can experience today.

Original solitude would be the next notion to mention in which man recognizes his uniqueness in all of Creation and his need for another who would reveal this uniqueness as well. In the biblical quote from the book of Genesis “it is not good for the man to be alone,” (Gen 2:18) there is present a whole anthropology that shares the importance of the unique place of human beings in Creation. In Adam’s recognition of Eve as “bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh,” there is recognition of the other, and also a call to original unity through the complementarity of the sexes. Also in Genesis it is seen that there is an original nakedness in man and woman that allows them to look at each other without shame (Gen 2:25). In this the Pope sees the blessing of seeing the other as a subject and never as an object.

In the deep understanding of these new four “original” words, the Pope sees the profound understanding of the human body in a different way. It is a way in which the body has the capacity to give love to the other and receive love from the other in a nuptial way, which means in a marital way, just as God gives of His love to us. This is called by the Pope the “nuptial meaning of the body.”

It is only after sin enters the scene that there is a kind of fear and shame that enter human relations. Shame and fear are based on the fact that lust has become a factor in our relationships. Lust is the erotic desire void of God’s love and the objectification of the other which betrays true love. Shame comes in through sin because from that moment on human beings can understand that we can search for the sensation of sexuality apart from the true gift of the self and apart from authentic love.

According to the Theology of the Body of Pope John Paul II, this life is a journey to rediscover our original self. We can look forward to this newness of life that will be finally consummated in the Resurrection of our bodies when we will discover the ultimate experience of the nuptial meaning of the body, now possible with God Himself. According to the Pope, this will be a new experience, beyond anything we can imagine, yet not totally disconnected from the way it was “in the beginning.”

This has tremendous impact in the way we live our lives since we can see marriage not as the place to placate lust or to justify lust but as the unifying experience of man and woman meant to be one in God, without shame, and respecting the language inscribed in their bodies by no other Being than God Himself. Celibacy for the Kingdom is no longer a rejection of marriage but an anticipation of the ultimate marriage in Heaven: a foretaste of the wedding feast of the Lamb! This is the new and revolutionary context to understand the sexual morality taught by the Gospel and the Church!

There are tremendous implications related to sexual ethics coming from the Theology of the Body of Pope John Paul II. In line with the constant tradition of the Church, sexual intercourse within marriage is seen as only appropriate within a marriage covenant that reflects the original intent of the Creator. Only a man and woman who have committed their lives to each other in the sacred bond of matrimony are fit for sexual intercourse. In order to live this commitment openly and in a holy way, they must commit themselves to a life where chastity becomes a primordial virtue. By chastity is meant an understanding of sexuality in which the acts proper to the married life are

seen within the context of a higher call of personal integration and respect, as well as mutual understanding and quest for holiness of life.

The Theology of the Body teaches that there is a proper language of the body which in a way is different from what we call “body language.” The language of the body is not an external reality that manifests the way we feel or the way we react to others, but it is actually a language that has been inscribed in our bodies by none other than the Creator Himself. This language of the body reminds us that marital love and sexual relations should always communicate a love that is total, faithful, fruitful, and free. These qualities reflect the love of God for us since they come directly from God Himself. Anything that contradicts any of these conditions that relate to true love would be seen as a betrayal of the language of the body. That is how the Church can use the Theology of the Body to support her main teachings related to sexual morality.

Natural family planning is to be chosen as opposed to artificial contraception because the contracepted sexual act introduces a language that opposes the true language of the body which is meant to be fruitful and of the generative kind. It is impossible to justify an act of contracepted intercourse for the simple reason that it is impossible to justify the goodness of an act that intentionally goes directly against one of the primary goods of marriage, namely procreation.

Homosexual relations as well fail the test of the language of the body and the integrity of the sexual act since sexual intimacy by same sex people is a contradiction to the will of the Creator who saw marriage as a way of promoting the growth of love in the first created couple, and the way of cooperating with Him in the creative work begun by Him by the gift of fertility bringing about human procreation.

Extramarital relations become also a betrayal of the language of the body since they convey a lie. Namely the lie is related to the fact that during sexual intercourse the couple that is married manifests a total commitment to the spouse, which is impossible when there is no marriage covenant to celebrate. The act itself manifests something that is not present because there is no true commitment for life when sexual intimacy is celebrated outside of marriage. The only thing that an unmarried person who is willing to have sexual relations with another can know with certainty is that the person he or she loves is willing to have sexual relations with someone who is really not committed to any kind of love. This does not uphold the very dignity of the sexual act as created by God.

The richness of the Theology of the Body of John Paul II is a testimony unto itself in just the many applications that it can have as we consider the great gift of our sexuality not from the standpoint of the commandments given by God, but from the standpoint of the virtues and values that uphold such commandments. There lies the power of the time bomb that we have talked about.

MARRIAGE PREPARATION AND CELEBRATION

PARTICULAR LAW OF THE (ARCH)DIOCESES IN THE PROVINCE OF NEW ORLEANS

I. PREPARATION

A. Responsibilities of the Couple

1. It is normative for all couples to begin the marriage preparation process by contacting their appropriate pastor at least six (6) months before the proposed date of the wedding. The pastor will confirm the date of the wedding only upon completion of the initial preparation. [Refer to Specified Norms.]
2. Participate in the entire marriage preparation process determined by the pastor that is appropriate for their unique needs (e.g., canonical requirements or special circumstances). The basic process includes:
 - a. taking an objective, dialogical instrument (e.g., Prepare/Enrich/Mate, FOCCUS/REFOCCUS, or PMI) and participating in discussions of the data generated.
 - b. participating in a marriage preparation program including presentations by married couples/individuals approved by the diocese.
 - c. attending and participating in a course of Natural Family Planning if required by either the diocese and/or parish (based on availability).
3. Fulfill all the requirements of ecclesiastical laws for marriage.
4. Fulfill all the civil law requirements to contract marriage validly in the State of Louisiana.

B. Responsibilities of the Pastor (*Priests and deacons, with the assistance of others, trained in marriage preparation, working with engaged couples*)

1. Observe the requirements of all ecclesiastical laws and civil law.
2. Complete the diocesan-approved prenuptial investigation form; verify the couple's freedom to marry and obtain all necessary prenuptial documentation (e.g., certificates of baptism, rescripts, decrees of nullity, etc.).
3. Complete all other diocesan required forms providing for dispensations (for validity) and permissions (for liceity) and submit them to the appropriate diocesan office, or grant according to diocesan faculties.

4. Determine when any canonical requirements or special circumstances that may have delayed the marriage are no longer a factor.
5. Confirm the date and time of the wedding upon the couple's completion of the initial preparation.
6. Grant permission and the faculty to witness marriage to another officiant as necessary.
7. Preserve the prenuptial file in the parish archives.
8. Record the marriage in the appropriate register with proper notations; issue a certificate of the marriage as recorded to the couple; and inform both parties' Catholic churches of baptism concerning the marriage.

C. Responsibilities of Officiant

1. Must be registered in the State of Louisiana to witness marriages. Furthermore, if he comes from outside of the diocese, he must obtain a nihil obstat for ministry in this diocese in accord with ecclesiastical laws and be granted faculties by the pastor. [See SPECIFIED NORMS: Contact for State Registration.]
2. Alone receives the vows of both parties.
[See SPECIFIED NORMS: Process for clergy coming into the diocese from another diocese to perform a sacramental ritual.]
3. Gives one copy of the official State of Louisiana license to the couple and files the others at the issuing office within the time prescribed.

II. CELEBRATION

- A. All ecclesiastical laws as well as diocesan and parochial policies or customs concerning the celebration of marriage are to be followed under the direction of the pastor.
- B. There is no required announcement of banns of marriage prior to the celebration.
- C. A marriage intended to have merely civil effects is not permitted.
- D. A minister from another church or ecclesial communion takes part in any Catholic liturgy in accord with the norm of law. Episcopalian ministers and Catholic clergy participate with each other only in accord with the joint agreement approved for use in the State of Louisiana. [See Appendix for Guidelines for Marriages of Roman Catholics and Episcopalians for the Dioceses in Louisiana.]
- E. Those fulfilling liturgical roles are to meet the requirements of all ecclesiastical laws.

- F. Music meets the requirements of all ecclesiastical laws.
- G. Liturgical publications must not violate copyright laws and must be approved by the pastor.
- H. Marriage involving only one Catholic party should be celebrated outside of Mass in accord with the liturgical laws. [See SPECIFIED NORMS: Celebration outside Mass.]
- I. Holy Communion is to be distributed only during Mass (and only in accord with Canon 844).
- J. Marriage is only celebrated inside a Catholic church or oratory unless the proper dispensation from place has been obtained or unless one party is not baptized. (Canon 1118)
- K. The Rite of Matrimony can be celebrated at any time of the day and on any day of the week in accord with liturgical law. The Sacrament of Matrimony is allowed during Sunday liturgies but may not replace the Sunday Liturgy. [See particular diocese's SPECIFIED NORMS that govern ceremonies on Sundays, and the proper times for weddings.]

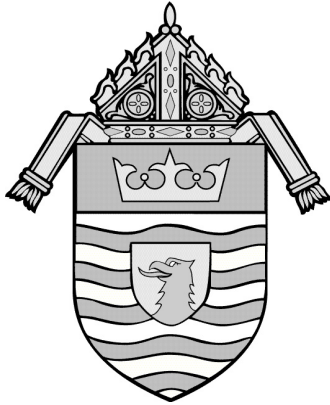
A pastor may establish a parochial policy concerning times and days when marriage cannot be celebrated, provided that it is equitably enforced (e.g., Most parishes do not allow weddings during Lent.).

Liturgical law states the Sacrament of Matrimony cannot occur on Holy Thursday, Good Friday, or Holy Saturday.

- L. There are no set fees for offerings on the occasion of marriage in the Province of New Orleans.
- M. The celebration of or the reception for an invalid marriage cannot take place on Church property.



**SPECIFIED NORMS
FOR THE
DIOCESE OF LAKE CHARLES**



All questions regarding marriage preparation and premarital counseling should be directed to the Office of Family Life of the Diocese of Lake Charles.

Petitions regarding waivers and/or exceptions are to be directed to the Diocesan Bishop for a ruling. All petitions regarding ecclesiastical laws or exceptions to ecclesial laws, marriage validity, liturgical questions and canonical concerns should be directed to the Judicial Vicar.

REQUIREMENTS FOR PREPARATION FOR THE SACRAMENT OF MARRIAGE

[SEE PAGE 16, PROCESS AND STEPS]

1. Meeting with priest/deacon/officiant six months prior to marriage.
2. Participating in the four phase process of marriage preparation

**APPROVED FORMAL MARRIAGE PREPARATION PROGRAMS
IN THE DIOCESE OF LAKE CHARLES**

[SEE PAGE 16, PROCESS AND STEPS]

Engaged Encounter
Only Love
Together for a Lifetime
Special Marriage Program (Convalidation/Cohabitation)
Approved Parish-based Programs

RITE OF MARRIAGE

[SEE PAGE 8, K.]

The priest/deacon is responsible for the liturgical rites of marriage. General procedures for the celebration of weddings should be developed by the pastor of the parish with careful reflection on the *Rite of Matrimony*, and due regard for the need for the specific preparation in each case. [See Page 27, V. CELEBRATION.]

PROPER PLACEMENT FOR MARRIAGE CEREMONY

Marriages between two Catholics may take place in the parish church of the bride or the groom.

A marriage between a Catholic and a baptized non-Catholic should take place in the parish church of the Catholic party unless a dispensation from canonical form has been granted.

A marriage between a Catholic and an unbaptized party should be celebrated in a church. If circumstances warrant and the priest/deacon recommends, the diocesan bishop may permit a marriage to be celebrated in a suitable place other than a Catholic Church or chapel. Such a determination must be left to the discretion of the diocesan Bishop. Inquiries should be sent to the Office of the Bishop. [See also Page 29, D.8.]

LITURGY AND RECEPTION, CEREMONY OUTSIDE CONTEXT OF MASS

[SEE PAGE 30]

MASS AT WEDDINGS BETWEEN CATHOLICS AND NON-CATHOLICS

[SEE PAGE 29, F.]

Weddings between a Catholic and an unbaptized person may not be celebrated within the context of Mass, nor may the Eucharist be distributed to those present.

Weddings between a Catholic and a baptized non-Catholic normally are to be celebrated outside of Mass. The Eucharist is not to be distributed to those present at such weddings. At the request of the officiant of the wedding and for appropriate pastoral reasons, the pastor of the place of the wedding may grant permission for the wedding to be celebrated within the context of Mass.

NOTE: Marriages entered between Catholics and unbaptized persons do not constitute a sacramental union. (Canon 1086)

TIME OF WEDDINGS

[SEE PAGE 29, G.]

Weddings may not be celebrated on Sundays, or during the Easter Triduum.

Weddings celebrated on Saturday evenings after the vigil Mass are celebrated according to the *Rite for Celebrating Marriage Outside Mass*.

PROCESS FOR APPROVAL FOR OUT-OF-DIOCESE CLERGY

[SEE PAGE 7, C.2.]

No priest/deacon may officially witness a marriage outside his parish without proper delegation from the resident pastor or diocesan bishop. It is the responsibility of the priest/deacon, who is witnessing the marriage, to obtain this delegation in writing.

All priests and deacons from outside the diocese must have their bishop or religious superior complete a *Testimonial for Suitability for Ministry* form prior to the wedding and submit it to the Office of Bishop of Lake Charles for permission to minister in the diocese. The Bishop's Office will forward a letter granting the permission to the pastor of the place of the wedding.

CLERGY FROM OUTSIDE THE STATE OF LOUISIANA

[SEE PAGE 7, C.1.]

Clergy from outside the state of Louisiana must register with the State to witness marriages in the State.

MINISTER FROM ANOTHER CHURCH OR ECCLESIAL COMMUNION

[SEE PAGE 7, II. D.]

Couples seeking the Sacrament of Matrimony when one party is non-Catholic or unbaptized and requesting a non-Catholic clergy to witness their vows must request a dispensation from **Canonical Form** which can be applied for through the Office of the Judicial Vicar.

**CIVIL LAW REQUIREMENTS TO CONTRACT MARRIAGE
VALIDLY IN THE STATE OF LOUISIANA**

[SEE PAGE 30, H.]

All clergy who perform weddings within the State of Louisiana must be registered. Any priest or deacon who is not registered is to do so as soon as possible.

PASTORAL GUIDELINES

I. FORMATION: EDUCATION AND DISCERNMENT

Marriage formation and preparation occur in three substantive stages: remote, proximate and immediate. To further clarify the terms of remote, proximate and immediate, the terms education, discernment and preparation will be used. These terms will more clearly define the roles of each stage.

The first stage is called remote and involves education and development. It begins at birth and includes all family and environmental factors that influence and prepare the person in positive and negative ways for marriage. Regarding preparation for marriage, this will primarily occur through lived example as well as enlisting the resources within Church and community.

Preparing children for the Sacrament of Matrimony must be different in content and technique than preparation for merely civil marriage. Within the parameters of the sacrament, there are major tenets, responsibilities and privileges that must be conveyed to all children.

The second stage is the proximate preparation period. This stage flows out of and is a deepening of the remote stage. This stage usually begins at a suitable age, young adulthood, and with “adequate catechesis, as in a catechumenal process—involves a more specific preparation for the sacraments, as it were, a rediscovery of them.” (FC, # 66) It is expected that during this period there is an integration of the religious formation of the young with the preparation for life as a couple. Marriage should be presented as an interpersonal relationship that is in need of continual development.

This proximate stage will, for benefit of clarification, be called “period of discernment.” As the term implies, this period is intended to allow individuals, already equipped with strong religious values, to further discern whether or not the vocation of marriage is suitable for them. It is also that period when individuals enter the final selection process regarding the right individual as a mate. In full intensity, the proximate stage comes to fruition in the last year before marriage. At this stage, the couple is moving beyond “should I be married vs. single, religious or priest?” to “should I be married to this particular person?”

When a couple comes to the decision that they should deepen their discernment, the Church and community must be prepared with resources of people, materials and time to assist them through this process. This proximate period, which began in young adulthood, ends six months prior to the date of the wedding. Engagement takes place during the proximate stage and clearly includes a discernment process. The Church though involved in all stages--remote, proximate, and immediate--intensifies its relationship with the couple during the proximate and immediate stages. Waiting until the immediate stage to enter into such a relationship with the couple is not sufficient.

A. Individual Responsibility

It is the individual's responsibility within the discernment process to seek a particularly well disposed person with whom to share the vocation of a chaste marriage.

1. Individual and Communal Prayer
2. Forming the mind, heart, and soul through education and formation of one's conscience
3. Attending the Sacraments
4. The goals are to:
 - a. Build awareness of dating and interpersonal relationships.
 - b. Increase knowledge about love and marriage.
 - c. Learn and practice communication skills.
 - d. Develop relationship skills.
 - e. Explore family of origin influences and issues.
 - f. Learn to manage money effectively thus avoiding credit problems.
 - g. Create realistic expectations of marriage and family life.
 - h. Learn important aspects of healthy and happy relationships.

As part of the catechetical education, it is necessary to emphasize that our faith and social sciences inform us that there are certain basic values—learned from earliest years—which are needed for a covenant marriage. These are:

1. Trust that we can entrust ourselves to another and expect to be cared for and loved.
2. Intimacy—with another—spiritually, emotionally, physically.
3. Love—the ability to make a loving self gift and to receive the long sought self gift of a spouse.
4. Commitment—the ability to keep a sacred promise with the expectation that such a promise will be kept by others.
5. Communication—the openness and honesty of communication patterns.
6. Sexuality/chastity—A genuine commitment to appreciating and living chaste love.
7. Respect for other's ability to relate—a commitment to a profound unity which transcends and respects rightful diversity.

B. Pastor Responsibility: Environment for Education

1. The pastor should establish ways and means for marital formation within the community entrusted to him, including catechists, prenuptial preparation, liturgical celebration of marriage and continuing formation for married couples and families.
2. A pastor should create a hospitable atmosphere for all couples approaching the parish community and its staff, making certain that the right to marriage is not denied a couple accidentally or arbitrarily. A pastor may wish to create a community of competent pastoral ministers composed of lay couples or singles, religious, official lay witnesses for marriage and clergy formed in marriage preparation and outreach ministry at the diocesan, vicariate, deanery, cluster, or parish levels. They may be members of the parish staff or parish volunteers. Some may be professionals in allied fields.

3. In these matters, a parochial vicar/ deacon acts in the name of his proper pastor and according to his mandate unless special provisions are made in the parochial vicar's letter of appointment.
4. Parishes provide catechesis on the Sacrament of Matrimony and natural (non-sacramental) marriage at all levels according to their resources.
5. Religious education in Catholic schools and educational programs provide grade and age-appropriate instruction on morality and marriage from books and materials as approved by the diocesan office of religious education.
6. Youth, college and singles groups, programs and educational settings provide formation in accord with Catholic teaching that is age-appropriate.
7. Methods used by and taught to clergy and pastoral ministers should not violate diocesan child protection norms or standard educational praxis.
8. The vocation to chaste marriage should be presented in the context of the other vocations to the chaste single and celibate life styles.
9. Each parish should institute formation, preparation and outreach programs as its resources permit. Pastoral ministers also should support and encourage participation in those offered at the diocesan, vicariate, deanery or cluster levels.

C. Pastor Responsibility: Parish Formation

1. The Church bears a responsibility to the domestic Church (the family) to support it in its task of rearing children as healthy human beings.
2. Through the passing on of the faith, the Church must take a leading role in communicating to the family the basic values needed for a sacramental marriage.
3. During adolescence, the Church is to give even more support to parents and youth ministers, helping them learn how to strengthen the values of young people in regards to sexuality, chastity and proper attitudes toward marriage.
4. It is the responsibility of the Church to enable its educators and ministers to help young people mature and prepare for sacramental marriage.
5. The diocese, vicariate, deanery or cluster provides formation programs for clergy and pastoral ministers.
6. The Church's dioceses and parishes are to take active roles in helping young adults discern their vocation. Included in these are both a discernment to marriage as a vocation in general and, eventually, a discernment of marriage to a particular person.

7. It is the responsibility of the local Church to strive to elevate the faith of the couple. The Church is to present resources such as workshops, retreats, or other means of discernment so that at least a year before marriage a couple's relationship with the Church may intensify.
8. Throughout the last part of the proximate stage (beginning one year prior to the marriage through six months prior to the marriage), the couple is encouraged to begin to attend Mass and other Church functions together. (This practice should continue through the immediate stage.)
9. The parish community becomes the focus of the relationship between couple and community. This relationship includes both support and challenges to the couple to grow.
10. Married couples may be assigned or may volunteer to mentor the engaged or dating couple at this time.
11. At the end of this proximate stage, the couple is ready to approach the priest for entrance into the immediate stage.

II. STAGES OF PREPARATION

Attitudes, values and a person's basic stance toward both life and relationships are formed in the earliest years of life. Although we can change at any period of life, the early years are the most foundational and permanent in the formation of character and personality.

A. Remote Stage

1. The Early Years of Remote Preparation

Primary care givers, who normally are family members, are the ones from whom children learn about life, self, and God. Much marriage preparation is still done for one generation by the next older generation. However, today even among happily married couples there are more questions about the permanence of marriage, the respective roles of a couple in a marital relationship, etc. Therefore, the church focuses on and supports the domestic church in its task of rearing children as healthy human beings.

2. Adolescent Years of Remote Preparation

Adolescence is a second equally formative period for a person's orientation toward life, self, others and God. Because of the multiple changes occurring in the prepubescence and adolescent person, a critical opportunity to influence the young person in values and faith occurs. During this time of sexual awakening and new self-awareness, young people can be taught that sexual activity is not a form of recreation, but an important part of commitment and fidelity. On the verge of young adulthood, these young people can be influenced more by peers and media than by family relationships. Therefore, this is

a time of trying out ideas, styles, dreams, and values. It is a most important time for the Church to support parents and youth ministers in an attitude of presence, of “being there for” the young person.

Human virtues necessary for sacramental marriage which are learned as one begins to mature and broaden one’s world are:

- a. Ability to make decisions and to live with the consequences of these decisions;
- b. Communication style which respects self, others, and relationships;
- c. Ability to compromise, adjust, be flexible and deal with change as long as moral truth is not at stake.

These are qualities that educators and ministers of the church would do well to observe in couples.

B. Proximate Stage

1. The second stage is the proximate preparation period. This stage flows out of and is a deepening of the remote stage. This stage usually begins at a suitable age, young adulthood and with “adequate catechesis, as in a catechumenal process—involves a more specific preparation for the sacraments, as it were, a rediscovery of them.” (FC, #66) It is expected that during this period there is an integration of the religious formation of the young with the preparation for life as a couple. Marriage should be presented as an interpersonal relationship that is in need of continual development.
2. The proximate stage begins with young adulthood, usually around age 18, as people struggle more consistently with the questions of vocation, career choice, and other life decisions. For some people, the proximate stage is very short, as they move into marriage at a relatively early age. For other people, the stage continues for some time, as they remain single, yet still open to the possibility of marriage into their 30’s, 40’s or even beyond.

Regardless of the age of the individuals, the Church needs to involve itself in ministry to these people who are continuing to discern throughout this period.

Certainly the message of the Gospel serves a critical role in helping any person address the following questions. We do not present them as if all responses are equal. Rather, we present these questions because the decision to live as a disciple of Christ implies that we have seriously considered its implications.

At the same time, we also ask our parishes and dioceses to offer whatever assistance they can in assisting young adults with this reflection.

- a. Do I experience God in loving self-gift as close to me; accessible; the Lord of my life? How important are faith, prayer, church involvement and service to others?
- b. To what life vocation do I sense that God is calling me? Do I experience myself as called to married life, single life, religious life or ordained?

- c. If I were to marry, how important would it be that my future spouse and I would agree on these issues?
- d. What impact would agreement or disagreement make for a decision to marry and have children?
- e. How important are success and material possessions to me? Am I willing to HAVE less in order to proclaim other values? What will come first, career or family?
- f. How committed am I to raising a family? Do I envision myself as a parent? What kind of parent do I expect my spouse to be? What kinds of personal sacrifices do I anticipate?

The young person who clearly knows what his or her commitments are is better prepared to determine whether or not a particular relationship with someone is headed in the right direction. The danger is that someone who has not reflected seriously on these issues will “fall in love” and decide to marry that person without thinking through all the ramifications of that decision. Sadly, we must report that we have met too many couples who have struggled in their marriages because they acted too quickly or too impulsively and only much later did they come to realize they should have acted more deliberately.

At some point, the discernment moves from “Should I be married or be a part of some other vocation such as the single life, priesthood, or religious life?” to “Should I be married to this particular person?” This time, which begins even before engagement, as members of the opposite sex, becomes an opportunity for the Church to present resources, offer workshops or retreats, and make other means of discernment available for its members. At least a year before the marriage, a couple’s relationship with the Church as a couple, not simply as individuals, should intensify. During this period, couples can use this opportunity to attend Mass and other religious functions together. This identifies their relationship to the Christian community, which can then affirm them or challenge them in areas in which they need to grow as a couple.

Married couples can become mentors to the engaged couples (or couples considering engagement). The couple begins to experience how the Christian community reacts to them as a couple and can learn from the internal feelings they experience as this occurs.

The Church has a rich treasury of tools for discernment, such as those in the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius of Loyola or Franciscan spirituality that can be utilized to help the individuals continue their discernment process.

Each of the stages of marriage preparation is meant to add to the overall development of the baptized Catholic individual. As each person progresses through each stage, they will find themselves better prepared to embrace, not just marriage as a societal phenomenon, but marriage in the Lord. They will have the opportunity to discover more about themselves in order to be better disposed to give themselves to each other in the Sacrament of Matrimony.

After the couple has sufficiently discerned, and has formalized their relationship in terms of an official engagement, then they are prepared to approach the Church with a request to enter into the immediate stage of preparation for the Sacrament of Matrimony.

C. Immediate Stage

The final stage is the immediate stage of preparation. It is within this time that elements of married skills and techniques and Catholic religious values are summarized. This stage will put the practical aspects of married life together with the theology and spirituality of marriage. It will also be the time-frame of connecting the couple closer to the Church community. It begins at least six months prior to the marriage when the couple begins making formal contact with the Church to prepare actively for their marriage.

This preparation stage will also include the collaboration on the nuptial liturgy with the officiant of the marriage. Music, cultural traditions, and detailed insight of the Rite of Matrimony will be covered during this time so that deeper appreciation for the wedding liturgy will be developed within the couple.

1. Process and Steps

During the immediate preparation for the Sacrament of Matrimony the following steps should be met, beginning with at least six months and ending no later than at least two months prior to the celebration of the marriage. [Refer to SPECIFIED NORMS for regulations in a particular diocese.]

Step 1 An initial meeting with priest, deacon or designated person.

Step 2 Prenuptial Inquiry is begun.

Step 3 The couple completes a premarital inventory (Prepare/Enrich/Mate, FOCCUS/REFOCCUS, or PMI) as soon as possible after meeting with clergy, no later than one month after the initial meeting.

Step 4 The formal educational process is completed by participating in approved parish or diocesan marriage preparation programs. [See SPECIFIED NORMS: Process for Clergy.] Reservations for these programs should be made within one month of the couple's first interview with the priest. Formal marriage preparation programs must be completed two months before the celebration of the Sacrament of Matrimony if at all possible to give the couple time to integrate the teachings into their marriage preparation. Less than two months prior to the wedding, the couple often finds it hard to concentrate on anything other than the details of the ceremony. It is important to keep the long term perspective on the sacramental nature of marriage, not the ceremony.

Step 5 Completion of all documents required by the diocese including prenuptial inquiry if not already completed. (Couples should be reminded that the civil license is governed by laws that impose time limits and they should check with the appropriate office in the city or civil parish.)

2. Couple Responsibility

- a. The couple is required to meet with the priest or deacon (or designated person charged with responsibility for marriage preparation in the diocese) a minimum of six months prior to marriage. Pastoral discretion in reducing this amount of time should lean heavily toward giving the couple ample time and opportunity to prepare themselves adequately for the proper reception of the sacrament. [Refer to SPECIFIED NORMS.]
- b. The couple has responsibility to actively participate in the Sacramental life of the Church. Frequent celebration of the Sacrament of Reconciliation/Penance and of the Sacrament of Eucharist during the marriage preparation process is to be encouraged for Catholic individuals and couples preparing for the Sacrament of Matrimony.
- c. The following items need to be completed at least two months prior to the wedding:
 - (1) Prenuptial inquiry.
 - (2) Premarital inventory (e.g., Prepare/Enrich/Mate, FOCCUS/REFOCCUS, or PMI).
 - (3) Formal education process (e.g., Pre-Cana, Engaged Encounter).
 - (4) Completion of all documents required by the diocese.
- d. The civil license needs to be obtained in the time frame governed by the appropriate city or civil parish.
- e. The couple themselves should participate actively in the processes not merely for the wedding day and celebration, but for the ability to live out the Sacrament.
- f. The couple should begin preparation by reflecting on their present and future relationship with the Church as well as their union reflecting the union of Christ and His Church and His universal love for the unbaptized or nonbeliever.

3. Pastor/Parish Responsibility

- a. The pastor is responsible for all marriages for individuals within his parish, whether or not he personally prepares the couples or witnesses their vows.
- b. The pastor must see that the marriage directives of the diocese are carried out for the individuals in his parish. [See Canonical Requirements.]
- c. Pastors cannot create impediments to marriages of their own initiative, although they may delay a marriage.
- d. Parish policies for marriage preparation should be in accord with all ecclesiastical laws.
- e. Any couple, even if a party has only one (1) month's residence, has a right to be married in their territorial parish.
- f. No marriage should be delayed over the phone; personal contact is vital to pastoral care.
- g. Children who grew up in the parish should also be welcomed to celebrate their weddings in the parish church.
- h. A cordial response to any young adult who has had no parish affiliation can significantly determine future association with the Church.

4. Pastor Responsibility: Parish Outreach

- a. All staff warmly welcomes any couple, recognizing that this first contact is an opportunity to have the couple develop a closer relationship with the parish and bring about a richer understanding of sacramental marriage.
- b. Preparation can be provided to each couple separately and in group settings by a pastoral minister according to the couple's particular circumstances and cultural heritage.
- c. Marriage preparation rightly enlists the effective Christian witness of married couples who speak from the heart with those preparing for sacramental and natural marriage.
- e. Careful preparation is essential to the well-being of the couple, especially in the first five (5) to ten (10) years of marriage. Relationships established during preparation may be the lifeline to assistance if marital problems develop in this critical time period.
- e. A pastoral minister who is the couple's primary contact conducts the first meeting and oversees the entire process with the couple.
- f. Establishes a rapport and relationship with the engaged couple and shows concern for them.
- g. Creates an atmosphere in which the couple can be motivated to sense the value of preparation and thus can commit themselves to it.
- h. Assists the couple in beginning to assess their strengths and weaknesses.
- i. Helps the couple examine their views and attitudes toward the Catholic Church.
- j. Gives an overview of what the entire marriage preparation process will involve.
- k. Explains to the engaged couple the canonical requirements to celebrate a marriage. [See Canonical Requirements.]
- l. Completes all forms for the necessary dispensations (for validity) and permission (for liceity) and submits or grants them as provided in the diocesan faculties and required in the directions for the various forms.
- m. Conducts the prenuptial investigation of each party individually in accord with the directions given in the diocesan approved form.
- n. Having informally assessed the needs of a couple, explains the options available for marriage preparation and comes to an agreement with them as to what they will do.
- o. If there are no canonical impediments to marrying in the Church, arranges a date for the wedding and places it on the parish calendar, bulletin calendar and all personal calendars.
- p. Determines the frequency and schedule of subsequent meetings, with whom the couple will meet, and the programs the couple is expected to attend in accord with their situation.
- q. The pastoral minister administers to the couple an objective, dialogical instrument (e.g., Prepare/Enrich/Mate, FOCCUS/REFOCCUS, or PMI).
- r. The pastoral minister conducts the follow-up sessions for the premarital inventory in accord with the appropriate Leader's Feedback Guide.
- s. If the officiant is not the primary contact, time is also scheduled for the couple to begin to establish a relationship with the person who will officiate.

5. Officiant/Pastoral Minister

- a. The priest or deacon who will witness the marriage is responsible for determining the readiness of the couple to marry.
- b. The priest or deacon who will witness the marriage normally oversees the preparation.
- c. Marriage preparation is conducted in accord with Canons 1063–1072 and the following norms for marriage preparation in the USA that were effective December 1, 2000.
- d. The couple should receive appropriate education and pastoral preparation through participation in a marriage preparation program approved by the diocesan bishop.
 - (1) Parties should be questioned as to their freedom to marry.
 - (2) Baptized Catholics should present a recently issued, annotated baptismal certificate.
 - (3) Where necessary, additional documentation (such as affidavits of parents) attesting to a Catholic party's freedom to marry should be presented.
 - (4) Baptized non-Catholics should present satisfactory proof of baptism and freedom to marry.
 - (5) Unbaptized persons should present satisfactory proof of freedom to marry;
 - (6) Preparation for marriage should be in conformity with the prescriptions of Canon 1063 (regarding what must precede marriage) and Canons 1064, 1071, 1072, 1086, §2 and 1125, which entrust certain situations to the special care of local ordinaries.
 - (7) Preparation for marriage should be in compliance with appropriate civil laws.
 - (8) The announcement of the banns of marriage is not required in the USA.
 - (9) A pastoral minister conducts a final meeting with the couple.
 - (10) If possible, the actual officiant should participate in this meeting.
 - (11) The couple reviews their strengths and growth areas noting the progress made and making concrete plans for post-wedding follow-up with the pastoral minister.
 - (12) The wedding details, liturgy-planning sheet, and all other matters related to the actual ceremony are reviewed and determined in final form.
 - (13) The times of the rehearsal and of the wedding are reviewed on the appropriate calendars.

III. PASTORAL CONNECTIONS

Couples coming to the Church requesting the Sacrament of Matrimony originate from a diversity of backgrounds and experience. Parish ministers and personnel, as a result of diversity, may be called upon to give special attention to the particular situations of the couples. It is within this section that policies will be discussed. Particular concerns may be addressed directly to the appropriate diocesan office.

The pastor is responsible for all marriage for individuals within his parish, whether or not he personally prepares the couple or witnesses their vows. The pastor must see that the marriage

directives of the diocese are carried out for the individual in his parish. Normally, the priest or deacon who will witness the marriage will do the preparation. It is his responsibility to determine the couple's readiness for the Sacrament. The priest doing the marriage preparation does well to make use of the liturgical preparation and celebration as teachable and experiential moments, a part of the evangelizing ministry of the Church. Couples have a right to marry when rightly prepared and properly disposed. Pastors cannot create impediments to marriage of their own initiative, although they may delay a marriage. The delay cannot be a refusal unless the marriage is impeded for canonical reasons in the universal law of the Church. (If there is a concern, review the "Canonical Requirements" beg. page 32 and consult a canonist.)

IV. THE SACRAMENTAL LIFE OF THE COUPLE

This section covers elements affecting the couple's predisposition to entering the Sacrament of Matrimony.

The Sacrament of Matrimony is part of the sacramental life of Catholic individuals. There is a deep connection between the Sacrament of Matrimony and other sacraments, including Eucharist. In addition to the Sacrament of Eucharist, celebration of the Sacrament of Reconciliation/Penance during the marriage preparation process is to be encouraged, as well as throughout the married life of the couple.

A. Cohabitation

Definition: Cohabitation, according to the Catechism of the Catholic Church, is the status of unmarried couples living together as sexual partners and sharing a household. The Church states this is gravely contrary to the dignity of the persons and of human sexuality which is naturally ordered to the good of the spouses and the generation and education of the children.

It is important to address the issue of cohabitation early in the marriage preparation process. The educational (remote stage) period should instill within each Catholic individual the directives of Church teaching regarding abstinence from premarital sex and/or cohabitation and help internalize the virtue of chastity.

This emphasis on Church teaching continues throughout both the proximate and immediate stages of marriage preparation. In particular, the Church offers its teachings on the meaning of marriage as Sacrament and the Theology of the Body as part of the wealth of information shared in these stages. To reiterate what the Church teaches, the preparing minister is to:

1. Challenge the couple to separate or, at least, to stay chaste until their marriage. (When children are involved the latter is preferable.)
2. Encourage the couple to reflect on this challenge over the months of immediate marriage preparation and to discuss with one another their feelings and thoughts.

3. Ask the couple to make a prayerful discernment regarding what is best for their relationship in terms of a sacramental marriage within the Catholic Church.
4. Reassure the couple that advice is given lovingly to strengthen their relationship and to help them achieve the best possible marriage.
5. Provide the couple with the resources* to avoid becoming one of the statistics that can be borne through cohabitation, which itself creates bad habits and certain risk factors that can be detrimental to the future marriage.
6. Help the couple to identify areas of bad habits and begin working through them long before they take on the total commitment required of each other in marriage.

In addition, the Church has a responsibility to provide the latest research studies concerning cohabitation and to consistently emphasize that premarital sex/cohabitation in any form is detrimental to subsequent marriages in the majority of cases. Despite the message of the media and other cultural pressures, neither premarital sex nor cohabitation is helpful to the involved individuals as a type of marriage preparation. Various sociological studies* support the Church teaching that cohabitation is not a training ground for marriage. Marriage must be permanent.

During the proximate and immediate stages, the teachings of the Church are to be reinforced. It is recommended by the Holy Father that each situation be examined on a case by case basis. Each couple is to be “tactfully and respectfully contacted” in order to “enlighten them patiently, correct them charitably, and show them the witness of Christian family life in such a way as to smooth the path for them to regularize their situation.” (*Faithful to Each Other*, p. 77)

Although cohabitation or premarital sex are not in themselves canonical impediments to matrimony, there is a need on the part of sexually active couples to be challenged to grow and a serious obligation on the part of the minister preparing them for matrimony to challenge them out of love for all concerned. Downplaying the damaging effects of premarital sex does a service to no one. What is needed is full appreciation for the merciful, healing love of Christ.

Preparation for couples cohabiting more than two years must take a different form than for couples not living together. It is important to recognize the different dynamics within the cohabiting relationship. It is recommended the REFOCCUS, Prepare for Cohabiting Couples, or an equivalent inventory be utilized to determine the quality of the relationship.

**The video study guide for Preparing Cohabiting Couples for Marriage by Sr. Barbara Markey quotes the following statistics: 1. About 50% higher risk of divorce for cohabiting couples—reference: a. Larry Bumpass and James Sweet, “Cohabitation, Marriage and Union Stability: Preliminary Findings,” Center for Demography and Ecology: University of Wisconsin, 1995; and b. David Hall and John Z. Zhao, “Cohabitation and Divorce in Canada: Testing the Selectivity Hypothesis,” Journal of Marriage and Family 57 (1995), pp421-427.*

B. Convalidation

If a couple has not been married according to the laws of the Church (e.g., lack of canonical form), a validation (i.e., marriage in the Church) is permitted only after the couple has satisfactorily completed the marriage preparation process appropriately modified to their condition and the expiration of one year. This preparation process may utilize Prepare/Enrich/Mate, FOCCUS/REFOCCUS, or PMI.

Couples, who have been civilly married, are required to complete the marriage preparation process according to the diocese. The years together should give an indication of stability, commitment and fidelity characteristic of a matrimonial covenant in which case the pastor may adjust the duration of the preparation period accordingly.

C. Marriage of Non-Practicing Catholics

In the case of non-practicing Catholics presenting themselves for the Sacrament of Matrimony, ministers should ask the couples to articulate their reasons for marrying in the Church. Should the expressed reasons include social convention, parental pressure or preference for setting, the minister should explain to couples that these alone are not adequate justifications for marrying in the Church. This opportunity should be taken as a “teachable moment” following the words of Pope John Paul II.

The faith of the person asking the Church for marriage can exist in different degrees, and it is the primary duty of the pastors to bring about a rediscovery of this faith and to nourish it and bring it to maturity. But pastors must also understand the reasons that lead the Church also to admit to the celebration of marriage those who are imperfectly disposed.

The Sacrament of Matrimony has this specific element that distinguishes it from all the other sacraments: It is the sacrament of something that was part of the very economy of creation; it is the very conjugal covenant instituted by the Creator “in the beginning.” Therefore, the decision of a man and woman to marry in accordance with this divine plan, that is to say, the decision to commit by their irrevocable conjugal consent their whole lives in indissoluble love and unconditional fidelity, really involves, even if not in a fully conscious way, an attitude which cannot exist without God’s grace. They have thus already begun what is in a true and proper sense a journey toward salvation, a journey which the celebration of the sacrament and the immediate preparation for it can complement and bring to completion, given the uprightness of their intentions.

It must not be forgotten that those engaged couples, by virtue of their Baptism, are already sharers in Christ’s marriage Covenant with the Church, and that, by their right intention, they have accepted God’s plan regarding marriage and therefore at least implicitly consent to what the Church intends to do when she celebrates marriage. Thus, the fact that motives of a social nature also enter into the request, it is not enough to justify the refusal on the part of pastors.

Despite the level of the imperfect faith exhibited, it is good to encourage and proper to expect that Catholic parties attend Mass regularly and strive to remain in the state of grace, particularly at the time of the celebration of the Sacrament. Instruction in the life of faith beyond what is required by the policies should also be made available and offered them. Whether and how couples are approached in this regard can mean the difference between continued alienation from the Church or renewed involvement. As Pope John Paul II stated above, pastors must understand the reasons that lead the Church to admit to the celebration of marriage those who are imperfectly disposed. The role of the ministers is to advance a spirit of love and understanding which will foster a renewed interest in the faith and sacraments.

However, when in spite of all efforts, engaged couples show that they reject explicitly and formally what the Church intends to do when the marriage of baptized persons is celebrated, the pastor of souls cannot admit them to the Sacrament of Matrimony (FC, # 68).

In all cases, a delay, but not a refusal to marry them, is within the right of the pastor. More catechetical work is required and it is highly recommended that a canonist is consulted to insure that the rights of the couple to marry are protected.

D. Marriage of Minors

The Code of Canon Law states that without special permission of the local ordinary, no one is to assist at a marriage of a minor (a person under the age of 18) when the parents are unaware of the marriage or are opposed to it for reasonable cause without permission of the local ordinary. Parents of minors must always be notified prior to the celebration of marriage. The Canons state that “A man before he has completed his sixteenth year of age and a woman before she has completed her fourteenth year of age cannot enter into a valid marriage.” Delay of marriage and not refusal is within the right of the pastor unless they cannot marry in accord with universal Church law.

When discussing this situation with the “minor(s),” great care should be taken to demonstrate utmost respect and sensitivity. Once a decision has been made by the pastor to proceed with the marriage preparation, the process should take place as usual.

E. Pregnancy

Although it understandably creates a sense of urgency in the minds of the couple or someone else, premarital pregnancy of itself does not constitute adequate justification for marriage or for abbreviation of the marriage preparation process. Factors that must be considered include the couple’s readiness for marriage, their freedom from parental and social pressure, capacity to manage the financial responsibilities of a family, and the possibility of adoption. Regardless of the age of the couple, marriage is never an acceptable option for a couple without the degree of personal readiness to accept freely and live the responsibilities of marriage. Experience teaches that many marriages entered after premarital pregnancy when there has not been an engagement prior to pregnancy fail. No clergyman is permitted to suggest a couple attempt a merely civil marriage as a “solution.”

Pregnancy must be considered equally as grave a reason for not contracting marriage as for contracting marriage. A couple needs the time and opportunity to assess their reasons and readiness for marriage exclusive of the pregnancy. Therefore, pregnancy of itself shall constitute no exception to these diocesan regulations concerning the setting of the date of the wedding. The following norms are to be followed:

1. Eighteen Years of Age and Older

If the couple made the decision to marry and were engaged prior to the pregnancy, the decision to proceed with the marriage preparation process may be given by the priest/deacon if he assesses the couple to be sufficiently prepared for marriage.

If the couple had not made the decision to marry before the pregnancy, they must enter into a diocesan approved evaluation process before they proceed deeper into the marriage preparation process. Consult your local diocesan office for the correct process to follow.

2. Either Party if Under 18 Years of Age

If the couple made the decision to marry and were engaged prior to the pregnancy, they must enter into a diocesan approved evaluation process. The priest/deacon, in consultation with the parents of both parties, will assess the couples' readiness for marriage before they proceed further in the marriage preparation process. If the couple did not make the decision to marry prior to the pregnancy, the priest/deacon, besides adhering to the above, must seek additional input from an approved diocesan consultant. In this case, the priest/deacon should strongly encourage the consideration of delaying the wedding until after the birth of the child. This is in order to help the couple build a proper foundation for their marriage.

After the birth of the child, the parents should be supported in all their duties for childcare, especially those assumed at the baptism of the child. Even if they have attempted a merely civil marriage, they should be encouraged to participate in the life of the parish insofar as they are able. [See section on Convalidation.]

F. Marriages (Mixed)

1. Catholic and Validly Baptized Christian

The difficulties of living in a mixed faith marriage should not be underestimated. For this reason, Catholics should strongly be encouraged to marry other Catholics. Despite the fact that some tensions may exist between the parties, there is also the hope that "all may be one" as Christ himself prayed (Jn 17:21). Pope John Paul II has noted, when both parties are faithful in their religious duties, "their common baptism and the dynamism of grace provide the spouses in their marriages with the basis and motivation for expressing their unity in the sphere of moral and spiritual values" (FC, #78).

Both parties should become acquainted with the religious traditions of the future spouse. The Catholic party has the duty of preserving his or her faith. It is never permitted to expose oneself to a proximate danger of losing it. Furthermore, the Catholic party in a mixed marriage is obliged—as far as possible—to see that the children are baptized and brought up in the faith. The other party is to be aware of the promises the Catholic party is to make.

When Catholics marry other validly baptized Christians not of the Roman Catholic faith, the aim for both parties is to:

- a. Continue to live devoutly within the tradition and discipline of their respective churches.
- b. Live and teach the apostolic faith with their marriage and their family.
- c. Work for closer relations between their churches.
- d. Be living witnesses to a sinful and broken world, and active instruments in that world, of Christ's redemptive power.

Premarital conferences should be arranged in both Churches, if the other Church has premarital conferences. All instructions required by the Catholic Church are to be fulfilled for the marriage to be recognized by the Catholic Church.

The relevant sections of the Code of Canon Law regarding mixed marriages should be carefully followed during marriage preparation.

Eucharist is not to be celebrated in cases where the Churches of the parties involved do not yet reach the point of full sacramental sharing, without the permission of the ordinary. The preparing pastor or deacon must seek this permission of the local ordinary if Eucharist is being considered.

2. Marriages Between Catholics and Unbaptized Persons

The number of marriages between Catholics and unbaptized persons continues to grow. They are not sacramental unions, even though they are to be respected as good and natural marriages.

“Unbaptized” refers to persons never baptized in any Christian faith tradition as well as persons affiliated with communities whereby “baptism” lacks the matter (water), the verbal formula (Trinitarian form), the intention of the one baptized and/or the intention of the minister of baptism. Sufficient investigation should take place if doubt exists concerning the validity of a person's baptism.

In some cases the unbaptized person professes another religion and in other cases, no religion is professed. In both situations, particular pastoral safeguards must be in place to ensure the Catholic spouse's free and uninhibited practice of the faith, including the raising of children in the faith. The non-Catholic party assents to understanding the promise that the Catholic party has made to baptize and rear the children Catholic.

The preparing pastor or deacon must contact the local ordinary or delegated office pertaining to the particular dispensations or permissions necessary to marry someone who is not baptized.

G. Marriages (Remarriage)

A thorough preparation is even more important in subsequent marriages since research concludes that marriages after previous unions fail at a higher rate than first marriages.

Particular pastoral concern is required to meet the special needs of couples requesting sacramental marriage in the Church following a previous union. It must be the responsibility of the priest/deacon/minister to ascertain carefully that both parties are canonically free to marry before proceeding with the marriage preparation, and that all responsibilities toward children of the previous union have been addressed. Immediate marriage preparation may not begin, nor may a date be set for a future marriage, until after these obligations have been satisfactorily discharged. In the case of a proposed marriage following the death of a spouse, care should be taken that the widowed person has recovered from the grief of separation. (It would be prudent to refer the couple to professional counseling for assistance in handling grief. Such counseling cannot be required.)

It is the desire of the Church to strengthen the faith and devotion of divorced and remarried Catholics, particularly when they have endured painful personal experiences that increase their desire for unity with the Church community. On the parochial level, pastors should welcome the opportunity to assist their brothers and sisters in the preparation of the documentation necessary for canonical review of a previous bond by the diocesan tribunal. On the diocesan level, a program should be developed to give special attention to couples in a remarriage situation.

H. Marriage of Persons with Disabilities

The local ordinary should make the necessary provisions to ensure the inclusion of persons with disabilities in marriage preparation programs. Through this preparation, all couples may become predisposed toward holiness and to the duties of their new state. In developing diocesan policies, the local ordinary should consult with men and women of proven experience and skill in understanding the emotional, physical, spiritual, and psychological needs of persons with disabilities. The inclusion of persons with disabilities in sponsoring couple programs is an especially effective way of supporting both the needs and the gifts of couples preparing for marriage.

For matrimonial consent to be valid, it is necessary that the contracting parties possess a sufficient use of reason; that they be free of any grave lack of discretion affecting their judgment about the rights and duties to which they are committing themselves; and that they be capable of assuming the essential obligations of the married state. It is also necessary that the parties understand that marriage is a permanent union and is ordered to the good of the spouses, and the procreation and education of children.

It should be noted, however, that paraplegia in itself does not always imply impotence, nor the permanence of such a condition, and it is not in itself an impediment. In case of doubt with regard to impotence, marriage may not be impeded.

(It may be necessary to consult the appropriate office of the diocese regarding the canonical aspects of the situation, particularly when professional experts and civil authorities consider the parties incapable of assuming responsibility for their own lives.)

I. Alcoholism, Chemical Dependency, Other Addictions

Special care and concern should be taken to assess the effects of personal alcohol and/or chemical abuse on the capacity of persons to enter sacramental marriage. Likewise, the impact of parental alcoholism and chemical abuse on the emotional and psychological stability of engaged men and women must be carefully evaluated. In some circumstances, a professional evaluation may be required. In the case of a chronically chemically-dependent person, the marriage may be delayed until a professional evaluation confirms that sufficient use of reason and discretion is present.

All addictions are systemic in effect and can wreak havoc on a marriage. Alcoholism and other forms of chemical dependency will require professional evaluation. It is crucial that both parties understand the devastating effects that can be brought into the marriage. Other things besides chemical dependency can be equally addictive, such as addictions to gambling, sex, pornography, or the internet. Sometimes the addicted individual abstains from addictive behaviors during the period of courtship and then once married, resumes the previous activities. This can perpetuate a kind of fraud in the relationship. Pastors are urged to take special care if the possibility of addictions are present in either or both parties.

V. CELEBRATION

A. Preparing for Liturgical Celebration

Preparation of the marriage liturgy is one aspect of the marriage preparation process in which every couple is interested. It provides the Church with a uniquely teachable moment.

In addition to its sanctifying role, the liturgy serves as a valuable teaching tool not only for the spouses but also for the whole community. The couple to be married should be actively involved in the preparation of the liturgy.

The priest/deacon is responsible for preparing for the liturgical rites of marriage with the couple, in conjunction with other parish staff according to local circumstances. General procedures for the celebration of weddings should be developed by the appropriate liturgical leaders of the parish (e.g., clergy, pastoral musician, parish liturgical committee) with careful reflection on the Order for Celebrating Marriage, and due regard for the need for specific preparation in each case.

B. Couple Responsibility

1. Couples that marry civilly may not use parish property for their reception or any other celebration of their civil marriage (pre- or post-). Allowing such usage may cause guests to erroneously assume that it is a valid Catholic marriage or at least condoned by the Church.
2. Ethnic and regional customs associated with celebration of marriage are to be incorporated into the liturgy in such a way that they respect the integrity of the liturgy.
3. Not all customs that have arisen in recent years are a part of the official rite of the Church. Final approval of such custom rests with the pastor of the Church in which the celebration of the marriage occurs unless the Bishop has established a regulation.
4. Times appropriate for celebrating the Sacrament of Matrimony are to be observed in accord with the local diocesan policy.
5. The readings of the day must be used on Sundays (if diocesan policy allows marriages on Sundays) in Advent, Lent, or on special solemnities, including Christmas and Easter. Otherwise, the couple may make selections in approved ritual books.
[See SPECIFIED NORMS.]

C. Pastor / Parish Responsibility

1. Each pastor is responsible for formulating guidelines in writing for his parish.
 - a. He is responsible for the enforcement or exceptions to those guidelines.
 - b. The written guidelines are available for couples preparing for marriage.
 - c. These parish guidelines shall be in accord with diocesan policies and clearly express in a positive way what the parish's regulations are regarding:
 - (1) Saturday evening weddings (Saturday evening and Sunday weddings are not prohibited by universal law. See SPECIFIED NORMS.)
 - (2) Marriages celebrated by outside clergy.
 - (3) Particular recommendations regarding sanctuary usage, flowers, photographers, music, or attendants.
 - (4) Instructions for interfaith marriages regarding Communion and participation of ministers of other denominations or faiths.
2. Marriages are to take place inside a church building.

D. Officiant

1. Couples that marry civilly may not use parish property for their reception or any other celebration of their civil marriage (pre- or post-).
2. Ethnic and regional customs associated with celebration of marriage are to be incorporated into the liturgy in such a way that they respect the integrity of the liturgy.
3. Not all customs that have arisen in recent years are a part of the official rites of the Church. Final approval of such custom rests with the pastor of the Church in which the celebration of marriage occurs.

4. Times appropriate for celebrating the Sacrament of Matrimony are to be observed in accord with the local diocesan policy.
5. The readings of the day must be used on Sundays (if diocesan policy allows marriages on Sunday) in Advent, Lent, or on special solemnities, including Christmas and Easter. Otherwise, the couple may make selections in approved ritual books.
6. Marriages are to be celebrated in a parish where either of the contracting parties has a domicile, quasi-domicile, or month-long residence or, if it concerns transients, in the parish where they actually reside. With the permission of the proper ordinary or proper pastor, marriages can be celebrated elsewhere.
7. A marriage between Catholics or between a Catholic party and a non-Catholic baptized party is to be celebrated in a parish Church. It can be celebrated in another Church or oratory with the permission of the local ordinary or pastor.
8. A marriage between a Catholic party and an unbaptized party can be celebrated in a church or in another suitable place. A Catholic Church remains the preferred place for the celebration. The selection is left to the discretion of the assisting minister.

E. Episcopal/Roman Catholic Marriages

1. The joint Episcopal-Roman Catholic Statement is published separately and is available from the appropriate Diocesan Office. It has the force of particular law in this diocese.
2. Catholics ordinarily are to marry Episcopalians outside of the Eucharistic Celebration.
3. Holy Communion is NOT ordinarily administered either within Eucharistic Celebration or outside of Mass by Catholic clergy or Episcopalian ministers.

F. Marriage with Members of Other Churches and the Unbaptized

1. The norm is that the Rite of Matrimony is not celebrated within Mass when Catholics marry validly baptized non-Catholics.
2. Mass is not permitted at all on the occasion of a natural (non-sacramental) marriage between a Catholic and an invalidly baptized or unbaptized person.
3. Validly baptized non-Catholics and/or members of the Orthodox Churches may not receive the Eucharist in accord with Canon 844.
4. When Mass is not celebrated, Holy Communion is not to be distributed to anyone.
5. Unions between Catholics and unbaptized persons are not capable of being sacramental.

G. Mass Texts and Times

The Order of Prayer in the Liturgy of the Hours and Celebration of the Eucharist for the Province of New Orleans of the year and date in question governs the texts that may be employed in the Mass during which the Rite of Matrimony is celebrated. It is the responsibility of the priest to celebrate the proper Mass according to the liturgical norms.

H. State Licenses

When a Catholic couple participates in the Sacrament of Matrimony, they also receive a legal marriage license issued by the State. The State of Louisiana offers two types of marriage licenses: Standard and Covenant. Couples are free to choose either license when they participate in the Sacrament of Matrimony. The Church's understanding of "covenant" marriage is that of sacramental marriage, which holds to a much higher standard and has the best interest of a couple in mind. Unlike a civil marriage, a sacramental marriage is indissoluble (cannot be broken). While Catholics recognize the good intentions of the state in seeking to strengthen marriages through a covenant license, they must recognize the calling to a sacramental marriage is well beyond the pledge the state asks couples to make in either type of civil marriage. Marriage, as instituted by God in the Sacrament of Matrimony, is a faithful, fruitful, exclusive and lifelong union of a man and woman.

I. Liturgy and Reception

Couples that marry civilly are not to be allowed to use parish facilities for receptions, or any celebration of post or future attempted civil marriage. Allowing such usage may cause guests to erroneously assume that it is a valid Catholic marriage or at least condoned by the Church.

1. Culture and Custom

Ethnic and regional customs associated with the celebration of marriage in the Catholic Church are to be respected and may be incorporated into the liturgy. The manner in which these or any other customs are incorporated into the liturgy must always respect the integrity of the liturgy and the universal principles articulated in the Rite of Matrimony. Care should be taken that the details of the marriage celebrations are characterized by a restrained, simple and authentic style. The true festive tone should not be disturbed by excessive display.

Some customs have arisen in more recent years and are not part of the official rites of the Church. Examples of such customs include: the "Unity Candle," delivering a rose to the parents of the bride and groom, or the tradition of saying a prayer before the statue of Mary. While such traditions are generally acceptable, they are not a part of the actual Rite of Matrimony and are not appropriate for every circumstance. Final approval of such customs rests with the pastor of the Church in which the celebration of the marriage occurs.

2. Liturgical Readings and Prayers

The readings and prayers of the day must be used on Sundays in Advent, Lent, or on special solemnities, including Christmas and Easter. Otherwise, the couple may make selections in approved ritual books.

3. Appropriate Place for Celebrating the Sacrament of Matrimony.

Marriages are to be celebrated in a parish where either of the contracting parties lives, lives part of the time, or has at least a month-long residence.

Transients should use the parish in which they actually reside. Either the Bishop or his delegate may give permission for the marriage to be celebrated elsewhere.

J. Continuing Outreach to Married Couples

1. At the diocesan, vicariate, deanery, cluster and parish levels, various programs, processes and counseling opportunities should be offered for the enrichment of couples.
2. Homilies and other means of communication in the parish should be used to encourage wholesome relationships between spouses and participation in events held to celebrate marriage anniversaries or promote good relationships.
3. Petitions in the prayer of the faithful for couples who are celebrating or who are suffering are mentioned frequently.
4. Recognizing that couples who are in serious trouble will often come to organized group events on marriage enrichment, inventories and questionnaires should be utilized on these occasions to help them personally to confront rather than deny the depth of their problems.
5. Programs such as Retrouvaille and marriage counseling should be publicized and offered to suffering couples regularly at the diocesan, vicariate, deanery, cluster and parish levels.



CANONICAL REQUIREMENTS AND SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES REGARDING MARRIAGE PREPARATION

CANONICAL REQUIREMENTS

The following norms take precedence over the usual route of preparation of a couple when any of the following “Canonical Requirements” is encountered. The preparation process may be radically changed according to these requirements and the needs of the couple.

1. Right to Marriage

A couple’s right to marriage and diriment impediments cannot be denied unless:

- 1.1 There exists a diriment impediment to marriage due to a prior marital bond (c. 1085);
or
- 1.2 There exists another diriment impediment to marriage:
 - a. Age: 16 for Males, 14 for Females (c. 1083);
 - b. Impotence: Antecedent or (and) Perpetual (Impotence) (c. 1084 note that sterility from any cause does not impede marriage);
 - c. Disparity of Worship (c. 1086);
 - d. Sacred Orders (c. 1087);
 - e. Perpetual Vows of Chastity in a Religious Community (c. 1088);
 - f. Abduction (c. 1089);
 - g. Murder of (One’s) Spouse (crimen, c. 1090; two forms);
 - h. Consanguinity (c. 1091; any degree in the direct line, to the fourth degree inclusive in the collateral line);

[Explanation adapted from Commentary of Canon Law: The relationship of consanguinity means the blood relationship between persons who descend, either legitimately or illegitimately, from a common ancestor. In the direct line are grandparents, parents and children. The collateral line includes aunts, uncles and cousins. First cousins are in the “fourth degree of the collateral line” and cannot marry without dispensation.]
 - i. Relationship of Affinity (c. 1092);

[Explanation adapted from Commentary of Canon Law: The relationship of affinity is similar to consanguinity except it is a relationship as the result of marriage. It arises only from a valid marriage and prohibits marriage only in the direct line. Therefore, a husband cannot marry his mother-in-law validly.]
 - j. Relationship of Public Propriety (c. 1093);

[Explanation adapted from Commentary of Canon Law: The relationship of public propriety is the same as affinity with the exception that it arises from an invalid marriage or even cohabitation. It prohibits the marriage of the parties to each other's relatives in the direct line.]
 - k. Adoptive Relationship (c. 1094).
- 1.3 No one except the Supreme Legislator may establish diriment impediments.

2. Freedom to Marry

The parish pastor and officiant are bound to determine if a party is free from a previous bond or another diriment impediment.

- 2.1 If a previous, putative marriage(s) for either party exists, the proposed marriage cannot be scheduled until either of only two (2) possible solutions is completed:
 - a. A declaration of an ecclesiastical annulment of each previous, putative marriage has been executed and any conditions attached to a future marriage are fulfilled; or
 - b. The freedom to marry is established during the prenuptial investigation because any previous attempted marriage by one or both parties is invalid due to a lack of canonical form.
 - c. The pastor conducts the investigation of the possible freedom of a party to contract marriage when a previous marriage lacked canonical form. (Please note: Canonical form only applies to members of the Catholic or the Orthodox churches.)
 - d. For the marriage(s) of Catholics or the Orthodox that have taken place outside their respective churches proceed with approved diocesan process.
 - e. The accompanying instructions and those printed on the form itself are to be followed.
 - f. The pastor himself makes the determination of freedom to marry, calling on the assistance of the office of tribunal.
 - g. Non-Catholics who were married to a Catholic outside the Catholic Church (and where no dispensation from canonical form had been issued) can also use this form. They must be able to prove the Catholic baptism of their former spouse, however, either through a baptismal certificate or the affidavits of people who know for certain about the Catholic baptism. The same holds true for marriages involving the Orthodox that took place outside the Orthodox party's church.

3. Restriction, Prohibition, Rider or Vetitum

If a party(ies) has obtained previous annulment(s), the decree(s) of the execution of each sentence is reviewed during the first interview. When a local ordinary has placed a restriction (sometimes called a prohibition, a rider, or a vetitum) on a person, it is stated in the decree and sent to the person. It should also appear on the person's baptismal record.

- 3.1 To lift the restriction the pastoral minister must contact the office of tribunal in a timely manner when the restriction is noted. Some sort of counseling is usually necessary in order for the prohibition to be lifted. This counseling may be either psychological or pastoral. A prohibition attached to a decree of nullity should always be taken seriously.
- 3.2 The office of tribunal lifts the restriction with a nihil obstat in writing when the requirements are met.

[Explanation: Nihil obstat is a statement to the effect that "nothing stands in the way" of proceeding with the marriage.]

- 3.3 No one is to schedule a wedding date, even tentatively until the nihil obstat is obtained.

4. Previous Union (e.g., Death, Annulment, Lack of Form)

- 4.1 Not all issues arising from the previous marriage are addressed even by the tribunal.
- 4.2 The requirements to obtain permission for a marriage when a party has obligations from a previous union in accord with Canon 1071, §1, 3^o (using the diocesan-approved form) also does not address all the issues that should be a part of marriage preparation in such cases.
- 4.3 A thorough preparation is even more important in subsequent marriages since such marriages are statistically more likely to end in divorce.

5. Diriment Impediments

Diriment impediments must be dispensed for validity before any wedding.

- 5.1 Impediments that are of ecclesiastical law (and that only affect Catholics) can be dispensed.
- 5.2 Dispensations requiring that a promise(s) be made by the Catholic party in accord with Canon 1125, cannot be processed without the promise(s) having been sincerely made and duly signed.
- 5.3 Dispensations are never granted from the impediments of impotence, prior bond or consanguinity in the direct line or in the second degree of the collateral line.

[Explanation adapted from Commentary of Canon Law: These impediments, when they truly exist, are considered prohibitions not merely by ecclesiastical law, but Divine law.]

- 5.4 Dispensations are granted only by the Holy See from the impediments of Holy Orders, public perpetual vows in a religious community of pontifical rite or crimen.
- 5.5 Application for dispensation for each impediment is made through the office of the tribunal utilizing the appropriately approved form and following the directions accompanying it.
- 5.6 The diocesan tribunal will issue a dispensation in writing if all is in order or will communicate a dispensation granted by the Holy See.
- 5.7 No one is to schedule a wedding date, even tentatively until the dispensation is obtained.
- 5.8 In accord with the clergy faculties, dispensations, normally granted by the diocesan tribunal, may be granted as an exception when all has been prepared and harm would arise from the delay of the wedding. The fact and reason that this faculty has been used must be reported to the diocesan tribunal.
- 5.9 Marriage preparation is delayed when a dispensation is required and the issues arising from the need for dispensation must be addressed during preparation.

6. Permissions for Liceity

Some permissions before marriage for liceity are required by Canon Law.

Marriage preparation can be delayed when permission is required and the issues arising from the need for permission must be addressed during the preparation process.

- 6.1 The following permissions require that a promise be made by the Catholic party in accord with Canon 1125, and cannot be processed without the promise having been sincerely made and duly signed:
 - a. For the marriage of a Catholic with a validly baptized member of another Christian communion (c. 1124).
 - b. For the marriage of a non-Catholic party, though baptized in the Catholic Church, who has become a member of another Church (c. 1071, §1, 4^o; §2).
 - c. When a Catholic wishes to marry a person who was baptized a Catholic but is commonly known to have abandoned the Church (c. 1071, §1, 4^o; §2).
- 6.2 For a marriage of a person who is bound by natural obligations toward another party or toward children, arising from a prior union (c. 1071, §1, 3^o).
- 6.3 The diocesan-approved form(s) is utilized following the directions accompanying it.
- 6.4 In accord with their faculties, clergy may grant the above-mentioned permissions for marriage anytime.

7. Conditions for Permissions

No clergyman or official witness is to assist at the following marriages without the permission of the diocesan bishop:

- 7.1 The marriage of transients (c. 1071, §1, 1^o).

[Explanation adapted from Commentary of Canon Law: Transients are those who completely lack a place of residence even for three months (cc. 100; 102).]

- 7.2 A marriage which cannot be recognized or celebrated in accord with the norm of civil law or one not recognized by Canon Law (c. 1071, §1, 2^o).
- 7.3 A marriage of a person who is bound by a censure (c. 1071, §1, 5^o).
- 7.4 A marriage of a minor (not yet 18) when the parents are unaware of it or are reasonably opposed to it (c. 1071, §1, 6^o).
- 7.5 A marriage to be entered by means of a proxy, mentioned in Canon 1105 (c. 1071, §1, 7^o).
- 7.6 A marriage based on a condition concerning the past or the present (c.1102, §§2-3).
A marriage based on a condition concerning the future, however, cannot be validly contracted and no one can grant such a dispensation or permission (c.1102, §1).

[Explanation adapted from Commentary of Canon Law: Conditional consent to marriage can invalidate it. If the consent to marriage is based on a future achievement or circumstance or even that something will not be the case, it always invalidates marriage and permission cannot be granted. In such a case, the person positing the condition wants the validity of the marriage to depend on something that is uncertain—no one can predict the future. It is possible to contract a marriage with a condition about the past or the present. The issue would arise because the party conditioning consent may harbor some doubt about the existence of some achievement or circumstance or even that something is not the case. Since facts about the present or the past can be verified, the marriage is delayed until the matter is investigated. Then, permission can be granted for the marriage if it is still desired by both parties.]

- 7.7 No one is to schedule a wedding date, even tentatively, until the requisite permission is obtained.

SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES

8. Possible Reasons to Delay Marriage

The following special circumstances are the only other reasons that a marriage can be delayed for a time.

8.1 The following special circumstances are not diriment:

[Explanation adapted from Commentary of Canon Law: Diriment (is a circumstance affecting a party to the marriage that would automatically make proposed marriage invalid in the eyes of the Church. This is a list of circumstances that are not diriment impediments, but sometimes erroneously are treated as though they are. Some may even invalidate a marriage or support such a conclusion, but that would have to be proven in an ecclesiastical tribunal after the marriage failed. The marriage MUST BE DELAYED until the situation can be addressed but these are never reasons to deny the couple the right to marriage. None of them can be dispensed. Delay is a pastoral approach in which the circumstance is addressed so that the marriage will not be invalid. The pastoral approach in this situation must be chosen with great care and understanding.)]

- a. Exclusion of the “Goods of Marriage”
- b. Cohabitation
- c. Persons with Mental Disabilities
- d. Catholic Weddings Not Taking Place in the Parish of Bride or Groom
- e. Convalidation
- f. Couples Not Registered in a Parish
- g. Cross-Cultural / Interracial Marriages
- h. Immigration Issues
- i. Personal Issues
- j. Marriage of Minors above the Canonical Age and Not Yet 18 Years of Age
- k. Premarital Pregnancy
- l. Extended Separation Before the Wedding
- m. Older Couples

8.2 The special procedures below are to be followed according to the literal meaning of the words employed and not expanded to cover other circumstances or impose restrictions not mentioned.

- a. No one is to establish other reasons for delaying a marriage or to extend the preparation time beyond the exact requirements set forth below.
- b. A delay of the wedding is only a postponement of the marriage until such time as all difficulties may be rectified, and must not be tantamount to a denial of the right to marry.
- c. No one below the diocesan bishop has the capacity to establish particular laws delaying a marriage.
- d. Only a local ordinary can prohibit the marriage of his own subjects wherever they are staying and of all persons actually present in his own territory, but only for a time, for a serious cause and for as long as that cause exists; but it is not invalidating (c. 1077).
- e. No one is to schedule a wedding date, even tentatively until a special circumstance is adequately addressed during preparation.

- f. Unless another provision is made in diocesan law, the pastor is to decide whether:
 1. The special circumstance is not of a serious enough nature to impede a couple's ability to enter into a successful marriage;
 2. Additional information is needed; or
 3. The special circumstance is of such a serious nature the wedding must be delayed for a time. To assist in making this determination the pastor may consult the tribunal. In such instances, the couple will be offered assistance to help them overcome the reason for the delay. No date for a wedding can be set until the circumstance has been removed and the pastor has decided to allow the marriage preparation to proceed. Informed of their right to appeal the decision to delay their wedding date to the Office of the Chancellor.

9. Conditions Against the “Goods of Marriage”

- 9.1 The three traditional goods of marriage are children, fidelity and permanence. More recently a fourth “good of the other spouse” is in ecclesiastical law. In jurisprudence, the exclusion of any one of these goods is a type of partial simulation.

[*Explanation adapted from Commentary of Canon Law:* The exclusion of the “Goods of Marriage” 1) can mean that neither party nor the couple intends to exclude children permanently from their marriage. 2) It also may mean that both parties intend to have a sexual partnership with each other to the exclusion of all others. 3) It can also mean that neither party intends to end the marriage with the option of marrying someone else; only physical death can end a marriage. 4) Finally, parties must marry each other with the intention always to work for the good of the other.]

- 9.2 Total simulation of the marriage is also a possibility.
- 9.3 A party's premarital intentions concerning these issues are investigated by questions in the diocesan-approved prenuptial investigation form. The issues may also be raised in the context of discussion.
- 9.4 The local diocesan tribunal should be contacted immediately if it is suspected that a couple intends to exclude even one of these goods of marriage itself by a positive act of the will.
- 9.5 Note that sterility for any reason whatsoever does not itself constitute an intention against children.
- 9.6 Pastoral counseling or catechesis may be required and may delay the marriage.

10. Cohabitation

- 10.1 The following teaching in *Familiaris Consortio* #82 should be observed:
There are ... Catholics who ... prefer to contract a merely civil marriage, and who reject or at least defer religious marriage. Their situation cannot of course be likened to that of people simply living together without any bond at all, because in the present case there is at least a certain commitment to a properly-defined and probably stable state of life, even though the possibility of a future divorce is often present in the minds of those entering a civil marriage. By seeking public recognition of their bond on the part of the State, such couples show that they are ready to accept not only its advantages but also its obligations. Nevertheless, not even this situation is acceptable to the Church.

The aim of pastoral action will be to make these people understand the need for consistency between their choice of life and the faith that they profess, and to try to do

everything possible to induce them to regularize their situation in the light of Christian principle.

- 10.2 Various possibilities describe cohabitation:
 - a. A couple lives only as housemates, perhaps with his or her family or with others in a shared dwelling (such a couple is not necessarily excluded from the sacraments of Reconciliation/Penance or Eucharist);
 - b. A couple lives together as though married for much less than two (2) years;
 - c. A couple lives together as though married for nearly two (2) years or longer (in this situation, psychologically the couple resembles those who have attempted marriage);
 - d. A couple lives together because they have attempted a civil marriage [also convalidation below].
- 10.3 In addition, a couple may already have a child(ren) who is their progeny or a child(ren) from a previous relationship(s).
- 10.4 Cohabitation may require more intensive marriage preparation and, perhaps, an extended period of time for the preparation.
- 10.5 It is not always advisable to suggest that a couple live separate and apart, especially when a child(ren) is involved. In *Familiaris Consortio*, the impetus is toward convalidation, not separation.

11. Mental Disabilities

- 11.1 Those who completely lack the sufficient use of reason are incapable of contracting marriage (c. 1095, 1°).
 - a. Causes may be
 - Severe to profound mental retardation
 - Severe autism
 - Organic brain syndromes that truly deprive a party of the use of reason
 - Accidental brain injuries that truly deprive a party of the use of reason.
 - b. When discovered, the local diocesan tribunal is to be contacted immediately. An appropriate expert is employed to offer a professional opinion. The marriage is not to be scheduled until a nihil obstat is granted. Parish ministers also remain involved to support the couple in a discernment process that may lead to marriage.
- 11.2 Those who suffer from or have a history of mental illness(es) or addiction(s) may be incapable of contracting marriage (cc. 1095, 2° - 3°).
 - a. Such difficulties admit of a whole range of variations that may or may not be canonically incapacitating depending on severity.
 - b. When discovered, the local diocesan tribunal is to be contacted immediately. An appropriate expert is employed to offer a professional opinion. The marriage is not to be scheduled until a nihil obstat is granted. The pastoral minister also remains involved to support the couple in a discernment process that may lead to marriage.

12. Catholic Weddings Not Taking Place in the Proper Parish (of the Bride or Groom)

- 12.1 Couples are to marry in either the parish of the bride or the parish of the groom. If they are going to marry elsewhere, their proper pastors are to be asked to give permission (c. 1115).
- 12.2 Marriage preparation takes place in consultation between the proper pastor(s) of the parties and the pastor of the place where the couple will wed.
- 12.3 When the couple is to wed outside of their local diocese, they cannot demand that other dioceses conform to their local diocese's policies; the couple must conform to the other diocese. All the requirements for marriage preparation in the diocese where the marriage is to take place must be met. The fact that such preparation is not required in one's diocese does not mean that it is not required elsewhere.
- 12.4 The proper office in the diocese of the Catholic party must grant any dispensations.
- 12.5 The proper office in the diocese of the Catholic party can always assist and grant the nihil obstat that may be required by another diocese.
- 12.6 Always make copies of all the papers before mailing them anywhere. Retain one copy and give the couple the other copy marked "Authentic Copy," signed, dated and sealed by the pastor. When dispensations or permissions have been received, the same copying procedure is to be followed.

13. Convalidation

There is no such thing as "Blessing a Marriage" to make it "right" with the Church.

- 13.1 When the Church does not recognize a prior exchange of consent because it was impeded or it lacked canonical form, there are only two (2) possibilities for rectifying the situation:
 - a. Simple Convalidation. The couple must intend truly to exchange new consent to marriage (and not simply renew consent that was previously given). They must have the proper knowledge, intention, and capacity for doing so. The following statement should be willingly signed after it is carefully explained and understood by both parties:

"We fully acknowledge the fact that probably our union until now has been null and void. We intend to give new and fresh marital consent at the time our marriage is celebrated in the Catholic Church as though we were never married."
 - b. Sanatio in radice. When one or both parties cannot or will not give the new consent required for simple convalidation, application for a sanation is made to the local diocesan tribunal utilizing the diocesan-approved form and following the appropriate directions. (When an impediment ceases such as in the death of a previous spouse, a sanation is reserved to the Holy See.)
- 13.2 A convalidation cannot be used as a condition for baptizing the child of a couple not married in the Church. Marital consent has to have both internal and external freedom in order to be valid. The baptism of a child can only be postponed in the event that there is no hope that the child will be raised in the Catholic Church. There is no provision in Church law for refusal of baptism.

- 13.3 A couple seeking to have their invalid marriage convalidated or sanated must participate in a complete program of prenuptial preparation tailored by the pastoral minister to their own circumstances. Convalidation or sanation is never to be used as a means to circumvent the usual duration or program of prenuptial preparation. The couple must have the proper capacity, knowledge, and intention for entering into marriage. They also must be giving their consent freely. The fact that they have been living together for a long period of time does not necessarily mean that they understand what Christian marriage is or that they are freely choosing it.
- 13.4 All canonical dispensations (for validity) and permissions (for liceity) are required in either type of convalidation.
- 13.5 The preparation of such a couple is also treated as though they have been cohabiting [see Cohabitation above].

14. Couples Not Registered in a Parish

- 14.1 Canon 1115 states that a marriage is to take place in a parish where either of the parties "has domicile, quasi-domicile, or merely a month-long residence." A person acquires a proper pastor (and hence a right to pastoral care) in two ways: by living in a place (or intending to do so) for five years (i.e., by domicile) or by living in a place (or intending to do so) for three months (i.e., by quasi-domicile).
- 14.2 No other requirements (e.g., registration or other membership) can be established by parish policy.
- 14.3 Rights in a territorial parish are not lost by registration in a personal, national or another territorial parish.
- 14.4 The presumption of the Church is that people have a natural right to marry. Therefore, the proper parish of either party is to provide a welcoming presence to a couple regardless of their circumstances.
- 14.5 The directives of the Rite of Matrimony itself should always be kept in mind: "Priests should first of all strengthen and nourish the faith of those about to be married."

15. Cross-Cultural / Interracial Marriages

- 15.1 When individuals from different cultures enter marriage, they may find married life even more complicated than might people of the same ethnic or racial background.

16. Immigration Issues

- 16.1 There are several situations that can occur:
 - a. A person is marrying in order to remain in the United States;
 - b. A couple wants to marry, while either or both of them is in the process of gaining permanent residency;
 - c. A couple wants to marry, but either or both are not here legally ("Out of Status").
- 16.2 It is important in all these situations to understand the laws of the United States and the consequences of violating these laws. The parties, the officiant and others may be viewed as accomplices in violation of civil law even if there is no violation of ecclesiastical doctrine or law.
- 16.3 Contact the Chancellor's office for assistance. A nihil obstat to proceed with the marriage may be granted only after legal counsel has been obtained.

17. Personal Issues

- 17.1 Personal issues include, but are not limited to:
- a. A previous abortion
 - b. Sexual abuse
 - c. Health concerns
- 17.2 Such issues may require the delay of a wedding as the individual or couple receives professional and/or pastoral counseling
- 17.3 The issue of a previous abortion may be raised by an individual or couple.
- a. The reaction of the pastoral minister will likely determine whether a positive relationship with the Church is restored and maintained.
 - b. For Catholics, the person may have incurred an automatic excommunication (see c. 1398; for mitigating circumstances see cc. 1321, 1323 and 1324). This difficulty should be examined in the context of the Sacrament of Reconciliation/Penance if possible. It is to be resolved in accord with the faculties of priests of the diocese.
 - c. Project Rachel or appropriate counselors should be recommended to the individual or couple.
[Explanation of term: Project Rachel is a kind of retreat program for those who are suffering because of their participation in an abortion.]
- 17.4 The issue of sexual abuse as perpetrator or victim / survivor may arise and may involve one or both parties.
- a. The Child Protection Policy of the diocese must be followed when the situation requires it.
 - b. These deep scars will very likely be a factor in a future marriage.
- 17.5 A debilitating disease or genetic anomaly (Muscular Dystrophy, Multiple Sclerosis, Parkinson's disease, ALS, STD, HIV/AIDS etc.) or a family history of any such disease may also arise.
- 17.6 As a precondition for marriage, a party to the marriage who is aware of a special issue cannot be required to reveal this fact to the other party. On the other hand, one party must tell the other, if that other party is known principally and directly to intend to marry only someone who has never experienced such a special issue.
- 17.7 Never is the clergyman or pastoral minister to reveal such special issues in the life of one party to the other party. The marriage must be scheduled if failure to do so would be tantamount to a revelation breaking the seal of confession or the confidentiality of a party.

18. Marriage of Minors above the Canonical Age and Not Yet 18 Years of Age

- 18.1 The laws of the State of Louisiana may prohibit such marriages. There may be consequences for violating these laws. It is important in all these situations to understand the laws of the State and the consequences of violating these laws. The parties, the officiant and others may be viewed as accomplices in violation of civil law even if there is no violation of ecclesiastical doctrine or law.
- 18.2 If one of the parents of a minor (not yet 18) is against the marriage, contact the diocesan tribunal immediately.
- 18.3 Due to the alarming failure rate of youthful marriages, a primary task of the pastoral minister becomes challenging their decision to marry. During prenuptial preparation, the pastoral minister is to raise all the significant issues about their relationship that will encourage the young couple to reconsider their decision to marry.

19. Premarital Pregnancy

- 19.1 The reception of the couple is to be respectful. It should be borne in mind that they have already made a decision in favor of the life of the unborn child when they could have chosen an abortion.
- 19.2 The pregnancy may or may not be the motivating cause of a marriage. If it causes the marriage or changes the wedding date, a couple is very likely marrying for inappropriate reasons. Otherwise, it may not be such a significant issue.
 - a. If the couple is engaged and has already had the initial appointment for marriage preparation prior to the pregnancy, then preparations for marriage typically would proceed under the usual conditions.
 - b. If one of the parents of a minor (not yet 18) is against the marriage, see the procedure for the marriage of minors above and contact the diocesan tribunal immediately.
- 19.3 The more pressure for the marriage at any age by one party or a parent of either party, the more necessary usually is the delay of the wedding. Such pressure does not usually amount to external force and grave fear, but is a cause for great caution. The desire for the marriage should be equal for both parties at the time of consent.
- 19.4 The pastoral minister must make every effort to relieve the sense of urgency by centering attention on the good of the couple and encouraging them to look at alternatives to marriage for the sake of the child. Marriage is not a solution to extraneous difficulties including those arising from a premarital pregnancy.
- 19.5 Finally, the pastoral minister should stress that there are positive and morally acceptable alternatives to marriage when a premarital pregnancy occurs. The couple needs to make as free and informed a choice as possible in resolving their difficulties.
- 19.6 A pastoral minister must never encourage a merely civil marriage or cohabitation as a “solution” to an unplanned pregnancy. It should be mentioned also that the baptism of the child does not require marriage by the parents. It is also inappropriate, therefore, to speak of future convalidation at this point.
- 19.7 After the birth of the child, the parents should be supported in all their duties for childcare, especially those assumed at the baptism of the child. Even if they have attempted a merely civil marriage, they should be encouraged to participate in the life of the parish insofar as they are able (see section on Convalidation).

20. Extended Separation Before the Wedding

- 20.1 Some couples requesting marriage in the Catholic Church are separated from their parish or from each other by long distances due to military placement, college attendance, employment, etc. Adequate prenuptial preparation cannot be overlooked even in these cases. Efforts should be made, insofar as possible, to provide such preparation to them when both are present together.
- 20.2 The pastoral minister at the parish where the marriage is to be celebrated determines the specifics of the preparation on a case-by-case basis.
- 20.3 The preparation may be done through referral and follow-up. Military chaplains, campus ministers, the parish where the couple now worships and the local diocesan office of family ministry are resources to the pastoral minister. Through collaboration, the necessary preparation should be provided without creating unnecessary difficulties for the couple.

21. Older Couples

- 21.1 Age or a previous marriage experience does not necessarily equate with readiness for a marriage. When one party is 50 years of age or more, couples have different marriage preparation needs. Some of the different elements to be addressed when older couples present themselves for marriage include a review of former marriages or alliances; the financial situation of each person; the attitudes of any children toward the future spouse; and health.
- 21.2 A marriage of a person who is bound by natural obligations toward another party or toward children, arising from a prior union, permission is required (c. 1071, §1, 3^o). [See Canonical Requirements above.]

22. Delegation

- 22.1 All priests are reminded that, if they are witnessing a marriage in any parish other than that in which they are assigned, delegation must be obtained if the wedding is to be celebrated validly. Thus, delegation to witness a given marriage between the given persons on a given day in a given church must be obtained in writing from the pastor of the parish in which the wedding is to occur.
- 22.2 All deacons are reminded that, if they are witnessing a marriage in any parish other than that in which they are assigned necessary delegation must be obtained from the pastor of the parish in which the wedding is to occur.

23. Verification of Status of Visiting Clergy

Any priest who is not assigned to ministry within a particular diocese and who is to witness a marriage within the confines of that diocese must present to the pastor of the parish where the wedding is to occur, at least one month prior to the scheduled wedding, the form utilized by that diocese determining his status in the diocese of incardination/service which is to be notarized by the Chancellor of that diocese. (If need be, such form can be prepared from a copy from existing forms of the diocese.)



Marriage Preparation Guidelines
Approved by the Archbishop and Bishops
of the Province of New Orleans, September 11, 2007
Promulgated February 10, 2008