July 1, 2015  
Wednesday  
The Memorial of Blessed Junípero Serra  

To the Clergy, Religious and Laity of the Diocese of Lake Charles:  

In accord with diocesan practice, I am redistributing the updated Diocesan Policies and Guidelines. Every five years the policies and guidelines are redistributed in order to ensure that all personnel have the updated material.  

These policies have the effect of particular law within the Diocese of Lake Charles.  

I take this opportunity to express my gratitude to all who worked so diligently in updating and preparing for the redistribution of the Diocesan Policies and Guidelines.  

Please note that the policy for marriage approved in conjunction with all the diocese 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,  

\[Signature\]  
Glen John Provost  
Bishop of Lake Charles  

Office of the Bishop  
414 Iris Street • Lake Charles, Louisiana 70601  
P.O. Box 3223 • Lake Charles, Louisiana 70602 • Phone (337) 439-7400 Ext. 204 • FAX (337) 439-7413
## Policies and Guidelines
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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

+ Glen John Provost
Bishop of Lake Charles

Updated: July 1, 2015
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.

Promulgated: April 23, 2008

Effective: July 1, 2008

+ Glen John Provost
Bishop of Lake Charles
DIOCESE OF LAKE CHARLES

DIOCESAN POLICY STATEMENT

DIOCESAN CELEBRATIONS

The Diocese of Lake Charles will have a Diocesan Liturgical Commission (DLC). The purpose and function of this commission will be to organize and coordinate liturgical celebrations on the diocesan level. Additionally, this commission will hold seminars and in other ways serve as a source of materials, support, and information for those in ministry throughout the Diocese.

The DLC will plan and coordinate diocesan level celebrations which include, but are not limited to the following: the feast of St. Peter Claver, Ordinations to diaconate and priesthood, the Chrism Mass, Diocesan Penance Services during Lent, and the Rite of Election and Call to Continuing Conversion.

No matter in which church parish the diocesan celebrations are held, it is the responsibility of the chairperson of the DLC to contact the pastor of the parish insofar as the proposed liturgy, date, availability of the church/facility, and other arrangements. The chairperson will make available to the pastor the names of the DLC consultors involved in the planning of the particular liturgy in order to facilitate the coordination between the parish and the DLC.

Insofar as possible and available, the resources, ministers, and staff of the host parish will be utilized first. The DLC will provide, in coordination with the parish, additional support for the liturgy.

See APPENDIX 103 for details.

Promulgated: April 23, 2008

Effective: July 1, 2008

+ Glen John Provost
Bishop of Lake Charles

Updated: July 1, 2015
DIOCESAN LEVEL CELEBRATIONS

From time to time the people of the Diocese of Lake Charles gather to celebrate certain events as a unified Church. Some events for which we gather are: the Feast of St. Peter Claver, patron saint of the diocese; ordinations to diaconate and/or priesthood; the Sacrament of Penance during Lent each year; the Rite of Election of Catechumens as part of the RCIA process; the Chrism Mass, and other celebrations designated by the Bishop.

PLANNING AND COORDINATION

The Diocesan Liturgy Commission (DLC) will have overall supervision of the planning and coordination of such events. It will be the responsibility of the chairperson of the DLC to contact the pastor of the parish in which the celebration is to be held. The initial contact will be made as early as possible and should include such information as to: 1) the desire of the Bishop and/or the Diocese to hold a celebration in the parish; 2) the date and time of the celebration; 3) and any other arrangements known at that time.

The chairperson of the DLC is to assure the pastor that the resources, facilities, ministers, and staff are to be given first priority in the planning and carrying out of the celebration. The DLC will provide the support needed to supplement the parish. Should a coordinator other than the chairperson be assigned, the pastor will be so advised.

Those involved in the planning of a celebration shall include, but not be limited to:

1. DLC internal consultant(s).
2. DLC external consultant(s).
   a. Pastor and/or his designated representative.
   b. Dean and/or his representative.
   c. Other persons as mutually determined by the Chairperson of the Diocesan Liturgical Commission, the Dean, and the local pastor whose input would be useful or helpful in planning the given event.
3. Those to be ordained when ordinations are planned.

The planning for the celebration shall include such matters as celebrant, homilist, concelebrants, deacons, master(s) of ceremonies, Ministers of Holy Communion, environment, and protocol and so on. Also, the planning and coordinating efforts shall include the reception following a celebration, the extension of invitations, news releases about the celebration, the proposed budget for the celebration, and an evaluation of each celebration.
The plans for the celebration shall be submitted to the Bishop for his approval at least three months prior to the scheduled event (example: 1 June for the Feast of St. Peter Claver which is in early September). The final decision for the selection of the site and the speaker/homilist will be reserved to the Bishop.

SOME SPECIFICS ABOUT THE FEAST OF ST. PETER CLAVER

The Feast of St. Peter Claver will be celebrated on the weekend preceding the actual feast day. When this is not possible, this celebration will be held on the weekend following the actual feast day.

Promulgated: April 23, 2008

Effective: July 1, 2008

+ Glen John Provost
Bishop of Lake Charles
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

Updated: July 1, 2015
Recognizing the problems caused by alcohol abuse in many households and wanting to promote a family atmosphere at parish/school fundraising events, the following policy is adopted:

THE SELLING OF ANY ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES IS PROHIBITED AT ALL PARISH OR SCHOOL FUNDRAISING EVENTS REGARDLESS OF VENUE.

In order to implement the Policy, the following points are to be noted:

1. If a parish or school or any parish or school related organization hosts a “fund raising dinner” or social at which food is served, alcoholic beverages may be served according to the specifications below:
   a. Open bars and free access to alcoholic beverages is prohibited;
   b. Alcoholic beverages may only be dispensed by a licensed bartender;
   c. No alcoholic beverages may be dispensed or given to anyone under the legal drinking age in Louisiana;
   d. Food must be served throughout the event that is taking place;
   e. Tickets for the consumption of alcoholic beverages must be issued to those in attendance. A maximum of 2 tickets may be used by each person;
   f. No alcoholic beverages are to be brought into the event and the only alcoholic beverages consumed are those being dispensed at the event;
   g. A pre-existing plan must be devised to care for individuals who have had too much to drink, including providing for transportation.

2. The distribution and use of alcoholic beverages at church or school facilities used for or rented for private or public use must observe the items listed above in #1, a, b, c, d, f, and g.

3. The guidelines listed above must be included in RENTAL AGREEMENTS between a Parish or School and those who rent the facility. These signed agreements must be received prior to the event.

Promulgated: May 19, 2011
Effective: July 1, 2011

+ Glen John Provost
Bishop of Lake Charles

Updated: July 1, 2015
INTRODUCTION

The St. Charles Borromeo Scholarship Fund is herewith established. This fund, named for Charles Borromeo, honors him as the first to carry out the desires of the Council of Trent by founding the Seminary of Milan. In order to assure an adequate preparation of young men for the sacred functions of the priesthood, this Council had decided to establish seminaries (Until then, future priests prepared themselves as best they could in presbyteral schools or under the guidance of a priest or monk.)

Another reason for choosing this name lies in the special historic relationship of St. Charles Borromeo to the See city of Lake Charles. This relationship is symbolized by the crown found in the heraldic achievement of the Diocese and is the traditional symbol of St. Charles.

HISTORY

When the Diocese of Lake Charles was separated from the territory of the Diocese of Lafayette in 1980, a portion of its patrimony included those seminary burses which were identifiable as having originated from the area of the new Diocese. Its share was approximately $200,000.00 of a sum totaling over $1,000,000.00. In its concern to increase the endowment of the new Diocese and to continue setting aside funds for the education of future priests, the Seminary Advisory Board proposed to the Senate of Priests and to the Diocesan Finance Board that a new seminary fund be established. This recommendation was approved by the Bishop for implementation on July 1, 1985.

RATIONALE

The methods used in gathering monies and disbursing scholarship grants are designed to give emphasis to the personal relationship of grantors and grantees. Throughout these efforts, parishioner-donors will be kept aware of the need to pray for, and actively recruit candidates and contribute to the education of their future pastor. (For instance, parish councils can encourage parish vocation clubs or committees, altar boy societies, etc., to help raise the annual sum to be invested in the scholarship fund.)

On his part, the seminary student, as a recipient of a scholarship grant, will be informed of the source of his grant. Thus, both donors and recipients will enjoy an active awareness of one another.
DESCRIPTION

Each year, the sum of $712.00 per priest assigned to the parish will be collected for all parishes. (A priest not in parish work will fund this amount from the source from which his salary is paid.) This yearly sum may be paid in two equal installments in January and July. This money will then be invested according to one of the following plans:

PLAN I: FUNDS FROM DIOCESAN PRIESTS

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.

PLAN II: FUNDS FROM RELIGIOUS ORDER PRIESTS

Parishes served by a religious order will make the same annual contribution of $712.00 per priest. This income, instead of being used to purchase life insurance will be invested outright. At the inception of this plan, all funds, including interest earned, will be left untouched until July, 1990. Thereafter, the interest which this accumulation generates will be divided annually by the number of active religious priests working in the Diocese. Equal shares per priest will be paid to the religious community to be used exclusively for the education of candidates for the priesthood. As long as a religious order or congregation serves the Diocese, that religious group will continue to benefit from the proceeds of this scholarship fund, in proportion to that group's numerical strength in the Diocese.

Hereafter, when the care of a parish is assumed by another religious group or is returned to the Diocese, a change in the distribution formula will correspondingly follow.

However, in all cases, the principle raised by religious parishes remains the property of the Diocese of Lake Charles, which in effect simply holds this money in trust for the people of the parishes who raised it.

GRANTS

1. Grants will be awarded in multiples of $500.00.

2. Each Grantee will be informed, when the grant is made, of the source of his scholarship.

3. A grantee will be encouraged to acknowledge in writing his gratitude to the relatives of the priest from whose generosity he benefits, and to the people of the parish with which that

Updated: July 1, 2015
priest was most closely identified.

DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

It shall be the duty and responsibility of:

1. The Director of Seminarians and the Seminary Advisory Committee to establish a funding schedule and criteria for awarding grants as well as to process all requests for scholarship aid. The decision of the Committee will be final.

2. The Diocesan Finance Board to oversee the investment of all seminary burses.

3. The Diocesan Fiscal Administrator is to:
   a. advise the Bishop, after annual earnings are determined from Plan I, of the amount available to the Advisory Committee for disbursement.
   b. determine the share inuring to the religious orders from Plan II; and to forward checks to religious superiors with individually prepared letters of transmittal, signed by the Bishop. Copies of all correspondence are to be sent to respective parish councils.
   c. collect and record all income as well as issue grants from the St. Charles Borromeo Scholarship Fund according to the decisions of the Advisory Committee.

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
Ecclesial communities are bound together by a lived experience of faith. 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 involving a Catholic bride or groom may be held in a Catholic Church hall or center only if the parties have followed the Catholic form of marriage. Wedding receptions involving two non-Catholic parties may be held in a Catholic Church hall or center providing the parties have observed a civilly legal form of 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: April 23, 2008

Effective: July 1, 2008

+ 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 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

Updated: July 1, 2015 2
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. In the event that 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.

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 and take 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.

Updated: July 1, 2015
5. Clergy are not to return to the Diocese or Parishes until the Civil Authority permits them to do so and upon return, clergy are to contact the Diocesan contact person to inform them of such.

6. During the term of mandatory evacuation, liturgies are not to be celebrated unless permission is granted by the proper authority (Bishop, Diocesan Administrator, etc.), including:
   a. Clarification in policy for catastrophe.
   b. Helping those who are in shelters.
   c. Clergy help for Liturgies.

7. Upon return and as soon as possible, make an assessment of property damage with photographs and report to appropriate person and insurance contact.

8. The Diocese of Lake Charles will be sending weekly faxes to assist and inform parishes of available help and assistance being provided. This will be the means by which the Diocese will know what is being done by your parish as well as you knowing what can be done to assist in the Diocese.

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

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.

______________________________                     ______________________________
Date                                                Signature

______________________________
Title

Seal

Updated: July 1, 2015
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.

_________________________________________  
Date  
_________________________________________  
Signature  
_________________________________________  
Title  

Seal

Updated: July 1, 2015
DIOCESE OF LAKE CHARLES

DIOCESAN POLICY STATEMENT

FACULTIES FOR PRIESTS

Priests within the Diocese of Lake Charles are hereby granted 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 to you by the universal law of the Church and is to be exercised with at least the presumed permission of the pastor or rector of the church in which you are preaching or the permission of the proper superior when you are preaching in a church or oratory of a religious institute. **This faculty permits you to preach throughout the world** unless a particular 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)

   In regards to 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 week days and three times on Sundays and holy days of obligation, and on the vigils of Sundays and holy days of obligation.** (c. 905, §2)

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 Mass outside a church on Sundays and

Updated: July 1, 2015
Holy Days, and their vigils.

6. To celebrate Mass in a suitable place outside a church edifice any day of the week if you are retired, on vacation, ill, or convalescing. (c. 932, §1)

7. To celebrate a Sunday or holy day Mass the afternoon before. (c. 931)

No anticipated Mass on Saturday or on the eve of holy days shall begin earlier than 4:00 p.m. The precept of participating in a Mass on Sundays and holy days of obligation is not satisfied by attending a Mass celebrated before 4:00 p.m. After a Committee of the Louisiana Catholic Conference, assigned by the Bishops of the State, studied the issue, an agreement was reached on a practical and common interpretation of the term "on the evening of the preceding day" (vespere diei praecedentis) in Canon 1248, §1. Our Diocese has accepted the Committee’s recommendation as approved by the Bishops and now adopts it as its own policy that anticipated or vigil Masses for Sundays and for other holy days should not begin before 4:00 p.m. on the eve in question. Consequently, attendance at a Mass which is celebrated earlier than 4:00 p.m. on the eve of Sundays and holy days does not satisfy the obligation whereby "the faithful are bound to participate in the Mass," as mentioned in Canon 1247.

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)

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 your pastoral care, wherever they may be at the time, as well as those who are visiting your parish or ecclesiastical institution. (c. 91)

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 you are an incardinated priest of this Diocese or have established a canonical domicile here (c. 102), this concession of habitual faculties to hear confession authorizes you to
hear confessions validly and licitly throughout the world unless you are specifically prohibited from doing so in a particular diocese by the ordinary of the place (c. 967, §2). Any priest, even without faculties for confession, may validly and licitly absolve any penitent who is in danger of death from all censures and sins, even if a priest with faculties is present (c. 976).

12. To grant to any priest in good standing the faculty to hear confessions for not more than a week provided the proper authorities cannot be reached. (c. 969, §1)

13. 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 you 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). The following excommunications are reserved to the Apostolic See: desecration of the Sacred Species (c. 1367); violence against the Roman Pontiff (c. 1378).

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 you possess 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 hereby generally delegated to perform all marriages within the limits of the territory of the parish to which they are assigned for the duration of their appointment. If yours is a personal parish you validly assist, within the confines of your jurisdiction, at marriages when at least one of the parties is your 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).

This faculty gives to the pastors of Black parishes and their associates delegation for the marriages of those of other races who are considered members of that parish.

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.**

The *Code of Canon Law* obliges priests "to fulfill the liturgy of the hours daily in accordance with the proper and approved liturgical books." (Canon 276, §2, 3º)

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

Effective April 23, 2008 any priest who believes that just and reasonable cause exists which would enable him to be dispensed and who desires to be dispensed, should address a letter to the Bishop indicating his reasons for such a request and his desire to receive the dispensation.

Once the letter has been received, the Bishop will consider the request and the reasons and issue a decision in the matter which will be communicated in writing to the priest.

Any dispensation from the recitation of *The Liturgy of the Hours* will be for a term of three (3) months. This term is renewable should the reasons persist.

At the expiration of the dispensation, should the priest desire to have the dispensation renewed, he should re-apply to the Bishop in writing.

2. **To absolve from reserved sins, censures, and penalties**

Bishop Provost, in virtue of his ordinary power, delegates to all priests enjoying the faculties of the Diocese of Lake Charles the power to absolve from all sins, censures, and penalties which are, by general law reserved to the Ordinary.

REVOCATION OF DIOCESAN PENALTIES, CENSURES, AND RESERVED SINS

The Second Vatican Council has emphasized a pastoral concern for those who may have publicly offended the Christian community and the community at large by way of serious scandal. In keeping with the spirit of the Council, it is incumbent upon the Bishop to be certain that all means of instruction, counseling and fraternal correction be exhausted before any penalty or censure, e. g., excommunication or servation of sin, be imposed. In this spirit, Bishop Provost hereby revokes all ecclesiastical penalties, censures, and reservations
of sins of whatever nature, imposed by Diocesan law or by special edict.

All priests of the Diocese must show the same pastoral concern demonstrated by the Second Vatican Council and for this reason this decree will be implemented by specific guidelines to develop means of instructions, counseling and fraternal correction in order to realize a change by means of Christian Faith and Charity, rather than by threat of penalty.

Promulgated: April 23, 2008

Effective: July 1, 2008

+ 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 a life-long endeavor. It is rooted in the traditional understanding of conversion as an ongoing process that touches all facets of one's life as a priest: intellectual, affective, social, spiritual, moral and ecclesial. The American Bishops 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 Continuing Formation Committee together with the Office of Continuing Formation provides programs and retreats for those serving in the Diocese. This policy deals with the following dimensions of continuing formation: spiritual growth, academic and professional growth, and accountability. (Please see Appendix 202 for guidelines concerning these issues.)

Part I: 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. Retreats

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 of their plans as close to the beginning of the fiscal year (July) as possible.

The Continuing Formation Committee is responsible for retreats. It is charged with searching for and recommending retreat masters to be invited by the Bishop. Priests will be informed in advance what to expect in each retreat.

B. Prayer Days

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

The Committee for Continuing Formation of Priests encourages membership in support groups. Each year at the annual convocation, the membership in these groups in reviewed and new groups are formed.

D. Spiritual Direction

Because priests are spiritual leaders in their community, it is important that they become competent as spiritual directors and possess a spiritual director for their own spiritual growth. Discernment in prayer and decision making are important skills for pastoral ministry.

E. Annual Convocation

Resulting from the Emmaus Program held in 1984-1985, the priests of the Diocese chose to meet in annual convocation on a topic of priestly ministry or spirituality. The Committee for Continuing Formation schedules and coordinates this event each year. Attendance is obligatory for all priests holding an assignment in the Diocese.

Part II: Academic and Professional Growth

Priests are encouraged to take advantage of the opportunities to continue their education through independent study, reading programs, tape libraries, seminars, workshops and formal courses. In addition to these programs, the Continuing Formation Committee offers the following:

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.

B. Special programs are held for specific seasons in a priest's life and ministry: an orientation program for the newly ordained, special seminars for new pastors, and pre-retirement sessions for those entering this time of ministry. Priests should participate in these as they are appropriate for their lives.

C. Sabbaticals range in length from one (1) to three (3) months. They are times for personal and professional study and prayer. A sabbatical should, however, be associated with institutions or programs aimed at providing this service. The Bishop must approve any request for a sabbatical, as well as the program itself.
Part III: Accountability

Each priest should give an account of his professional education. The minimum standard for priests working in the Diocese of Lake Charles is twenty (20) hours in continuing education a year. Clergy attending programs not sponsored by the Diocese should notify the Director of Continuing Formation upon the completion of a workshop.

Promulgated: April 23, 2008

Effective: July 1, 2008

[Signature]
+ Glen John Provost
Bishop of Lake Charles

Updated: July 1, 2015
DIOCESE OF LAKE CHARLES

GUIDELINES FOR RETREATS, WORKSHOPS & SEMINARS AND SABBATICALS

RETREATS

1. The primary purpose of a retreat is the spiritual renewal and growth of the individual. The Gospels attest to the fact that Jesus and His Apostles took time for themselves, time to be in communion with the Father. This would seem to be necessary for true Christian ministry.

2. Religious priests are invited, indeed urged, to make diocesan retreats in order to foster unity and cooperation in priestly ministry within the Diocese.

3. During retreats, adequate provision will be made for competent guidance and spiritual direction.

4. Costs of the retreat for priests active in the Diocese are paid from parish or departmental funds. Retired priests are invited and urged to attend as guests of the Diocese. In the alternate years of the mandated retreat, the amount allotted for the cost of a retreat is no more than $500.00, and is to be paid to the retreat facility.

5. A diocesan priest wishing to be excused from his annual retreat must make a written request to the Bishop.

6. It is widely recognized that a secondary value is achieved in group retreats, namely, that of growth in fraternal spirit among priests. However, different people have different needs, even in the spiritual life. Accordingly, different types of retreats have developed: group, private, directed, interactional, etc. The individual should choose the type of retreat which best suits his own needs in those years when he is free to do so.

WORKSHOPS

1. In addition to the annual retreat cost, each priest of the Diocese is authorized to spend up to $500.00 per year from parish or departmental funds to avail himself of continuing education opportunities. Authorization to spend larger amounts must be obtained from the Bishop.

2. Priests wishing to further their education are encouraged to enroll as part-time students in local universities or other local educational facilities.

SABBATICALS

Definition

1. Sabbaticals range from one to three consecutive months in length and are for personal and
professional study and prayer. Degree programs are not considered sabbaticals but come under the Postgraduate Continuing Education budget. Priests considering application for sabbaticals are encouraged to consult with the Director of Continuing Formation concerning available programs.

Procedure

2. Requests for sabbaticals are made to the Bishop. The applicant should state in writing the purpose of the sabbatical, its relationship to his personal and spiritual growth, its value to his ministry, its cost and location, and its length.

3. Application should be made by November 1 for sabbaticals during the following fiscal year (July 1 - June 30) because of budget-building schedules.

4. The Bishop refers all applications to the Continuing Formation Committee who will make their recommendations to him by December 15.

5. The Bishop will notify the applicant of his decision by January 2, concerning the request for sabbatical. If the priest is granted a sabbatical by the Bishop, he is to inform the Parish Council in writing of diocesan policy concerning the parish's responsibility for partially financing the sabbatical.

NOTE: For postgraduate studies, the same procedure as for sabbaticals should be followed.

Criteria for Sabbaticals

6. Degree of usefulness to the pastoral ministry of the Diocese.

7. Years of service, preferably to the Diocese.

8. Date of application.

9. Quality of the program.

Financing

10. At the discretion of the Bishop, the cost of the sabbatical will be shared by the Diocese, the applicant, and the parish or institution of assignment (U.S.C.C.B. document on Continuing Education of the Clergy). Ordinarily the Diocese will pay one-half of the required fees and travel. Requests for payment are made to the Director of Continuing Formation after permission for the sabbatical has been granted by the Bishop.

11. The parish or institution of assignment will pay one-fourth of the fees and travel expenses and continue full salary payments, including car allowance for the maximum period of three months. In the situation of the sabbatical occurring between assignments, as should
ordinarily be the case, the last place of assignment will pay the institutional portion of the costs. Should this present considerable hardship to the institution, the matter will be left to the Bishop's discretion.

12. The applicant himself will ordinarily be expected to pay the other fourth of his expenses.

13. The parish will also be expected to pay for the replacement of the priest on sabbatical, if such replacement is necessary.

14. For Postgraduate studies, the Bishop or his delegate will work out the financial arrangements with the applicant.

Replacements

15. Each priest, in consultation with the Bishop and the Personnel Board, will be responsible for finding his replacement while on sabbatical.

Eligibility

16. Ordinarily sabbaticals are to be taken between assignments. Priests in the Diocese are eligible for sabbaticals after every seven years of service to the Diocese and would be encouraged after the twenty-first year to take a sabbatical. Other applications will be considered only if budgeted funds are available.

17. At the conclusion of the sabbatical, an evaluation should be sent to the Bishop.

Promulgated: March 3, 2009

Effective: March 1, 2010

+ Glen John Provost
Bishop of Lake Charles
Postgraduate Continuing Education is defined as the pursuit of any graduate degree after ordination. This can be both at the master's and doctoral levels, and can be divided into three types:

A. Type A: That which is sought by a priest or deacon in the field, has direct bearing on his pastoral ministry, has a moderate cost, and would not necessitate his being away from his parochial assignment for more than a month.

B. Type B: That which the Diocese requests a priest or deacon to pursue and which will have direct bearing on Church life. This type could necessitate a person's either being absent from his pastoral assignment or meeting his pastoral responsibilities while pursuing the degree.

C. Type C: That which the individual priest wants to pursue would have less obvious need in the Diocese, and would necessitate the priest's being away for study.

Procedure and Criteria

The procedure and criteria for obtaining permission to pursue all three types of Postgraduate Continuing Education are the same stated in the "Guidelines for Retreats, Workshops, Seminars and Sabbaticals."

Financing

1. The procedure for financing Type A Postgraduate Continuing Education is the same as stated in the "Guidelines for Retreats, Workshops, Seminars and Sabbaticals" under the heading "Sabbaticals."

2. The cost of Type B Postgraduate Continuing Education degrees is paid entirely by the Diocese, including salary and all benefits, through the Administrative Budget of the Diocese. The priest or deacon falls under the direct supervision of the Chancellor.

3. The cost of Type C Postgraduate Continuing Education is divided. The Diocese pays the priest's salary and benefits, while the priest or deacon himself is responsible for all other costs connected with the degree.

Updated: July 1, 2015
4. All priests and deacons pursuing Postgraduate Continuing Education degrees regardless of the type are urged to seek grants and tuition scholarships to help pay their expenses.

Promulgated: April 23, 2008

Effective: July 1, 2008

+ Glen John Provost
Bishop of Lake Charles

Updated: July 1, 2015
DIOCESE OF LAKE CHARLES

DIOCESAN POLICY STATEMENT

ALCOHOLISM AND OTHER DRUG DEPENDENCIES

Alcoholism and other forms of chemical dependency or drug addition constitute one of the most serious health and social problems in contemporary American society. Because of its devastating effects in the spiritual, physical, psychological, and social lives of so many people, it must be of major concern in the healing ministry of the Church.

Like other illnesses, alcoholism and drug dependency have no respect for persons. It is, therefore, not surprising that reliable, accumulated evidence continues to indicate that this problem, particularly alcoholism, occurs at approximately the same rate of incidence in all segments of the population, including the clergy.

The Church's overriding concern in addressing this problem in the clergy is the obligation, in both justice and charity, to provide intelligent and compassionate assistance to the clergy who suffer from this illness, and to provide the best possible ministry to God's people whom they serve.

As recommended by a Committee on Alcoholism and Related Drug Problems and in order to make this concern an effective one, the Diocese has adopted the following policy with regard to alcoholism and related drug problems. To avoid unnecessary repetition, the term "alcoholism:" is used in this policy and in the procedures when referring both to alcoholism and to other drug dependencies. Similarly, "clergy," "cleric," and "clerical" are used to refer to both priests and deacons.

POLICY

1. Alcoholism is a human disease condition, as indicated by overwhelming medical evidence. Therefore, it is the policy of the Diocese to address the problem of alcoholism with informed and compassionate concern.

2. Although this disease generally manifests itself in a progressive impairment of body, mind, and spirit which, unless arrested, leads to irreparable damage, and even to death, it is essentially a disease and not a moral disorder. Therefore, it is the policy of this Diocese to direct its efforts on behalf of those who suffer from it towards proper understanding and professional help, and not towards those things which are designed primarily as remedies for sin.

3. Extensive evidence indicates that persons suffering from this disease are usually unable to recognize the developing symptoms in themselves, and are thus rarely capable of effective self-help. Therefore, it is the policy of this Diocese to provide proper understanding and professional help, which sufferers from this disease need and deserve, and from which they can benefit.
Procedures for implementation of this policy are contained in Appendix 205.

Promulgated: April 23, 2008
Effective: July 1, 2008

+ Glen John Provost
Bishop of Lake Charles
PROCEDURES FOR IMPLEMENTATION

In order to implement, in justice and charity, the diocesan policy regarding dependency on alcohol and other drugs, in fulfillment of the Church's obligation to relieve pain and suffering, for restoration of health and dignity, and to return to productive and rewarding work those members of the clergy who suffer from this disease: the following procedures have been adopted to facilitate (1) identification, (2) intervention, (3) treatment, and (4) recovery.

1. **Identification of a problem.** A drinking problem may exist when the individual's consumption of alcohol repeatedly:
   a. Impairs his interpersonal life among the clergy; or
   b. Interferes with the proper performance of his assigned duties; or
   c. Reduces his dependability; or
   d. Affects his physical, mental or spiritual health; or
   e. Reflects discredit on his clerical office.

   The problem is not determined in terms of volume or frequency of consumption, but rather in terms of its effect on behavior and function.

2. **Intervention.** Since an alcoholic is seldom able to diagnose the disease for himself, or volunteer for treatment, intervention will usually be necessary. This intervention will frequently amount to an exercise in constructive coercion undertaken out of love. The notion that it is not possible to help an alcoholic until he wants help is false; generally an alcoholic has to be helped in spite of himself.

   It is strongly recommended that no cleric undertake a personal confrontation with a confrere without first discussing the matter with the Bishop or Secretary for Clergy and Religious, observing, of course the appropriate discretion.

   Since alcoholism is a progressive and irreversible illness, **early** intervention and treatment are most effective. Sound procedure would insist that:

   a. Knowledge of **specific facts and events** that point to the existence of real dependency is of paramount importance for the effectiveness of intervention;
   b. Exaggeration, branding and occasional misuse of alcohol as an established habit, submitting statements that are simply not true, and reporting incidents with no intention of being responsible for the statements are abuse of the process and may be detrimental to the cleric in question;
   c. Since alcoholism and other drug dependencies constitute a sickness and not a moral
disorder, intervention is a means of getting proper treatment for a sick person, not an accusation of moral evil.

3. **Treatment.** Proper treatment for alcoholism will vary in detail 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.

Ordinarily, effective alcoholism treatment takes place in two stages: (1) the immediate and short range phase of detoxification and physical stabilization, and (2) the long range phase in which the individual is helped to renew his value system and embrace a life-style which will enable him to live without alcohol. The first phase will always be under proper medical supervision. The second phase may take place in a variety of settings, such as hospital, clinic, special sanitarium, half-way house, and/or the fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous.

4. **Recovery.** Upon satisfactory completion of primary treatment, the individual is guaranteed full and equitable consideration in matters of assignment, which will be based on the needs of the Diocese and the individual's capabilities. That is, the same consideration as any other cleric in the Diocese.

5. **Continuing education and other assistance.** The Committee on Alcoholism and other Drug problems will continue. Among its functions will be:

   a. To keep informed about alcoholism and other drug dependency problems, and to share such information with all the clergy;

   b. To assist the Health Panel in its operations and in making any changes that may be indicated;

   c. To move into the larger area of alcoholism and related drug problems as an area of pastoral concern, and to assist in the development of a workable pastoral program in this area;

   d. To maintain membership in, to cooperate with, and to implement the goals in the National Clergy on Alcoholism and Related Drug Problems.

6. **Resource persons.** Any cleric aware of a drinking problem may call on the Bishop or Secretary for Clergy and Religious for help for himself or for a confrere, with assurance of confidentiality and without fear of prejudice. The Bishop or Secretary for Clergy and Religious will make arrangements for consultation with other experts when it is deemed useful. When an alcohol or other drug dependency problem is identified, the Bishop will determine how to implement its recommendations concerning the problem and the treatment for the cleric involved. This may require assignment to a professional treatment center.

Promulgated: April 23, 2008

Updated: July 1, 2015
Effective: July 1, 2008

+ Glen John Provost
Bishop of Lake Charles
DIOCESE OF LAKE CHARLES

DIOCESAN POLICY STATEMENT

COMPENSATION FOR CLERGY WORKING IN THE DIOCESE

All pastors, parochial vicars, full-time chaplains, diocesan officials, and priests in full-time teaching 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 Finance Board, and the Presbyteral Council.

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

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.

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, 2015
DIOCESE OF LAKE CHARLES

COMPENSATION GUIDELINES FOR DIOCESAN & RELIGIOUS CLERGY

CLERGY SALARIES

Effective July 1, 2014, monthly salaries for pastors, parochial vicars (associate pastors) full-time chaplains and priests teaching full-time are as indicated in the following table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Salary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2014-2015</td>
<td>$1,840.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015-2016</td>
<td>$1,890.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016-2017</td>
<td>$1,940.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

PAROCHIAL VICARS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Salary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2014-2015</td>
<td>$1,740.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015-2016</td>
<td>$1,790.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016-2017</td>
<td>$1,840.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

INCREMENT FOR YEARS OF ORDINATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years of Ordination</th>
<th>Increment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-6 years</td>
<td>$ 25/month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7-12 years</td>
<td>$ 50/month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13-18 years</td>
<td>$ 75/month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19-24 years</td>
<td>$100/month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-30 years</td>
<td>$125/month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31-36 years</td>
<td>$150/month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36 and above</td>
<td>$200/month</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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 check, and (2) the business expense reimbursement (coded: 5322). The maximum allowable reimbursement is to follow this table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Reimbursement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2014-2017</td>
<td>$510/month</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Updated: July 1, 2015
The pastor of the parish is to maintain accounting records for the business expense reimbursement for himself and his parochial vicar(s). The records are the property of the parish and remain in the parish when the pastor assumes a new assignment.

When business expense exceeds the allowable reimbursement for any one month, the excess may carry over to the following month(s). If a reimbursement is not used within 120 days, it is to be returned to the parish.

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 Income Tax withheld from his monthly salary check and also 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 fair market value of housing in a rectory.

To assist in computing this payment, it is conservatively estimated that the rental value of such housing is $400.00 per month. This evaluation is for the purpose of 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 or a salary in the Diocese of Lake Charles.

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

CHAPLAINS

A chaplain shall be compensated by the institution he 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. The Dean, together with 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 and over please note: The Diocesan Health Care Plan applies only to hospitals approved by MEDICARE. Call the Fiscal Office for helpful information on clergy hospitalization and claims: (337) 439-7400, ext. 205.

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 a Diocesan priest from outside the Diocese of Lake Charles 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. These monies will be forwarded to his Diocese or Religious Community.

A priest serving in the Diocese who has come to us without an official arrangement between the Diocese of Lake Charles and his community/diocese and who is serving without a specific time commitment, must work in the Diocese for three years before payment can be made to his community or diocesan retirement program. Payments to his community or diocesan retirement program would be initiated after this three-year period.

All active priests of the Diocese of Lake Charles must participate in the retirement program administered by the Met Life Insurance Company. Diocesan priests must also be enrolled in Social Security in order to be eligible for the Diocesan program.

Updated: July 1, 2015
The parish or department/institution shall pay the entire retirement assessment for each priest assigned as of July 1 of each year. The cost for each priest to be paid out on July 1 is shown below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2014-2015</td>
<td>$3,125.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015-2016</td>
<td>$3,150.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016-2017</td>
<td>$3,175.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**ROOM & BOARD ALLOWANCE FOR ACTIVE PRIESTS IN RESIDENCE**

The Diocese or department will pay $400.00 per month to the parish for room and board of a priest simply in residence who renders no service to the parish.

**SUBSTITUTE & WEEK-END HELP**

Compensation for one (1) Mass and Confessions shall be $75.00. Regular compensation for a weekday Mass will be $35.00. Compensation for lesser or extra services will be negotiated by the parties involved.

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

A transitional deacon serving in a parish of the Diocese during an internship program shall be paid 75% of the salary as for 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 not an ordained deacon will receive 75% of the salary of a parochial vicar commencing at the conclusion of the month in which he is first employed in ministry.

A seminarian not in an internship program and serving in a parish will receive 50% of the salary as for a parochial vicar commencing at the conclusion of the month in which he is first employed in ministry.

Promulgated: July 1, 2014

Effective: July 1, 2014

+ Glen John Provost
Bishop of Lake Charles

Updated: July 1, 2015
DIOCESE OF LAKE CHARLES
DIOCESAN POLICY STATEMENT
PRIEST ABSENCES

VACATION

1. All absences with the exception of sick days, regular days out of the office (the “day off”), spiritual retreat, continuing education, official pilgrimage, 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 & 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.

Furthermore, no one is to be absent from their assignment for more than one consecutive month. The annual retreat, continuing education, and the official pilgrimage 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 major solemnities or liturgical celebrations such as All Saints Day and All Soul’s Day, Christmas, Ash Wednesday, Holy Week, Triduum, and Easter Sunday.

3. Absences requiring tickets for any form of transportation must have definite departure and return dates and times. Therefore, open ended tickets are not permitted.

4. When a priest will be absent more than a week (seven days), he is to report the absence to the diocesan bishop, the vicar general, and the vicar forane (cf. can. 533, §3). 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 administrator.

For an absence one week or less, each priest is to inform the parish secretary or administrator of the itinerary by letter including the date he will be away from the parish or office. 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. Substitute assistance should be acquired before the day(s) of the absence(s). A priest should have coverage for emergencies, etc. even for the regular day out of the office. When supply priests are employed, a list of names and contact numbers of those assisting should be included in the letter to the diocesan bishop, vicar general, and vicar forane. This information should also be included in the letter to the parish secretary or administrator.

Updated: July 1, 2015
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 the absence. He should include the dates of the absence. Pastors and parochial vicars are responsible for the pastoral care of the institution(s) during the absence of the chaplain.

OFFICIAL PILGRIMAGE

Each priest may request one official pilgrimage each year which will not be computed in the one month vacation period. The distinction exists between a pilgrimage which is recreational in nature and, therefore, vacation, and one which is official and not vacation. An official pilgrimage, either parish or diocesan, must receive the written approval and permission of the diocesan bishop. Therefore, in order for the diocesan bishop to respond in a timely manner, permission is to be requested once the pilgrimage itinerary is firmly established.

Promulgated: November 1, 2013
Effective: November 1, 2013

[Glen John Provost]
Bishop of Lake Charles

Updated: July 1, 2015
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.

Updated: July 1, 2015
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 at a later date. 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

The Diocese of Lake Charles desires to fulfill its obligations to the Universal Church by hosting student priests in one to three parishes (at one time) of the Diocese.

Applications for these positions of residence will be handled by the Bishop through his delegate, the Secretary for Clergy. The Secretary for Clergy will work with the Chairman of the Personnel Board 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 Secretary for Clergy and Religious, and the Chairman of the Personnel Board 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 “Incultration 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

Updated: July 1, 2015
discontinue studies other than at summer break, his status and residency will be reevaluated by his Pastor, Chairman of the Personnel Board and Secretary 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 with regard to 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 Secretary for Clergy and Religious which will determine his status for the Fall semester.

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

Promulgated: April 23, 2008

Effective: July 1, 2008

+ Glen John Provost
Bishop of Lake Charles
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." (JN 17:21)

The work of the clergy in the Church is to help bring about unity between God and people, and among people themselves. To accomplish this noble end, the cleric himself must strive for this union with God, with other people, and especially 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. As a leader of the People of God, the cleric and his relationships must be signs and examples of unity that people may follow and imitate.

In those parishes where more than one priest is assigned, one of the priests' primary ministries is to develop and manifest unity among themselves. This unity is one of faith, charity, and service to God and the people of the parish. This unity among clergy does not demand complete agreement of ideas and life-styles, nor does it discourage the use of one's individual talents and one's involvement in different ministries. The unity needed is to be according to the mind of the Lord and for the greater good of the Church. This unity, among brother-priests, should be marked by mutual respect, understanding, and compassion centered around the desire to serve. Unity among priests does not imply total uniformity, but encouragement to be faithful to the Lord's gifts - since "there is a variety of gifts but always the same Spirit; there are all sorts of different ways in different people, it is the same God who is working in all of them." (1 Cor. 12:4-7)

**Pastor**

1. Pastors have true authority over their parishes, that is, that authority of service exemplified by the supreme Pastor, Jesus Christ.

2. The role of the pastor in the parish is one of teacher, leader, and priest. Education, service, and worship are the strengths that the pastor should foster and encourage by his own personal interest. In these areas, it will be the duty of the pastor to give positive direction to the parish in ways that will facilitate the continuing growth of the parishioners in the Christian faith.

3. The pastor is the coordinator of the efforts of all the parish, especially the priests, deacons, and other members of the parish staff. The team ministry approach of shared responsibility and effective collegiality must permeate the various groups and committees working in the parish.

4. Priests unable to fulfill their role as Pastor or who cannot work effectively with other clergy
shall be reassigned, at the discretion of the Bishop, to tasks more in keeping with their talents. The same applies to parochial vicars.

5. The pastor is to see himself, and the parish in which he serves, within the larger context of the community and attempt to relate, in a Christian manner, to the needs and problems of the parish with concern and service.

6. The pastor is to integrate the parochial vicars into the life and activities of the parish in as constructive a fashion as possible, serving in the role of mentor, especially for those newly ordained.

PAROCHIAL VICAR

1. A Parochial Vicar is assigned to the parish, under the supervision and director of the pastor. His task is to coordinate his energy and enthusiasm with that of the pastor in a true spirit of fraternal cooperation.

2. Pastors and parochial vicars should together determine regular parish duties and assignments. Primary consideration must be given to the service of the people of the parish.

3. The pastor and the parochial vicar should have regular weekly meetings to determine parish policies and to evaluate current parish programs and to plan new ones. In these matters both pastor and parochial vicar should honestly attempt to reach a consensus. If a consensus cannot be reached, the pastor may proceed. If, however, the parochial vicar feels, in conscience, that the pastor has proceeded in a way contrary to the good of the Church, he is encouraged to refer the matter to the Dean, the Secretary for the Clergy and Religious, the Personnel Board, or the Bishop.

4. As a parochial vicar, the cleric should recognize that he often will have to subordinate his personal feelings for the good of the parish. Like the pastor, he must nourish the bond of charity in the rectory and serve the needs of the faithful.

5. The parochial vicar, along with the pastor, should feel a real personal sense of responsibility for the total life of the parish and act accordingly, seeking ways to show initiative as well as cooperation.

6. The parochial vicar and pastor should keep each other informed of their various parish and community involvements and ministries.

Promulgated: April 23, 2008

Effective: July 1, 2008

Promulgated: April 23, 2008

Effective: July 1, 2008

+ Glen John Provost
Bishop of Lake Charles
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 Constitution 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

CONSTITUTION 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 (on-the-job training);
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: In what pertains to the designation of members of the presbyteral council:

1. the priests themselves are freely to elect about half, according to the norm of the following canons and statutes;
2. according to the norm of the statutes, some priests must be ex officio members, that is, members who are to belong to the council by reason of the office entrusted to them;
3. the diocesan bishop is freely entitled to appoint others.

In the Diocese of Lake Charles, with regard to the designation of members:

1. Not less than half the membership are to be freely elected;
2. The Vicar General, the Vicar Judicial, Episcopal Vicars and Deans are ex officio members of the Council;
3. The Diocesan Bishop is free to name others at will; and
4. All members possess the right to vote.

Updated: July 1, 2015
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; and
2. Ex-officio members.

Section C

With regard to the elected members, two shall be elected from each of the following age group:

- 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 insure 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 Chairman 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 Chairman 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 at least once a year on issues before the Presbyteral Council and seek their input for decisions to be made; and
4. Work closely with the Deans on issues in their deanery, including the District Meetings.

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 Dean 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 succeed themselves. Newly elected members begin service on the Presbyteral Council at the August meeting.

ARTICLE IV  OFFICERS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Section A  There shall be two officers of the Council namely, the Chairman and Vice-Chairman/Secretary. The Chairman is elected at the August meeting by a simple majority of those present. The Chairman appoints the Vice-Chairman/Secretary. Both shall serve a one-year term.

Section B  Any member may be nominated as Chairman.

Section C  An “Executive Committee” shall be constituted from the Presbyteral Council and shall consist of the elected members of the Council with the Chairman of the Presbyteral Council serving as Chairman of the Executive Committee. Three members of the Executive Committee shall serve as representatives of the Diocese to the New Orleans Provincial Council.

Section D  The Chairman 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; and
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 at least ten (10) days of the scheduled meeting; and
6. Keep careful records with regard to membership, need for elections, etc and keep the Deans aware of this.

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 Chairman with the approval of the Diocesan Bishop.
Section B  Monthly meetings shall be held at the Chancery building on the first Tuesday of the month at ten o’clock a.m. Other places or times may be chosen at the discretion of the membership with the approval of the Diocesan Bishop.

Section C  A quorum shall consist of a simple majority of the members.

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 any member of the Presbyteral Council.

Section B  In order to be placed on the forthcoming agenda all proposals are to be submitted to the Chairman 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 time line given in each policy.

Section E  Any cleric working in the Diocese can request to address the Presbyteral Council; the determination with regard to such a request will be made by the Chairman 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, according to the norms of canon 501 §2. Within a year of taking possession of the diocese, the new bishop must establish the Presbyteral Council anew.

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 AND BY-LAWS

Section A  Amendments to this constitution and their effective date shall be made by the affirmative vote of a two-thirds majority of those present.

Section B  By-laws not in conflict with the constitution may be adopted by a simple majority vote of those present.
Section C  All amendments and by-laws must be approved by the Diocesan Bishop in order to become binding.

Promulgated: April 23, 2008

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+ Glen John Provost
Bishop of Lake Charles
INTRODUCTION

The Diocese of Lake Charles shall have a Personnel Board. The Personnel Board serves in an advisory capacity to the Ordinary, 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.

Specifics with regard to the Personnel Advisory Board are found in Appendix 211.

Promulgated: April 23, 2008

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+ Glen John Provost
Bishop of Lake Charles

Updated: July 1, 2015
DIOCESE OF LAKE CHARLES

GUIDELINES FOR THE PERSONNEL ADVISORY BOARD

MEMBERSHIP

1. The Personnel Advisory Board shall be composed of the Vicar General, Vicar Judicial, Deans, Secretary for Clergy and Religious and two priests elected at large, one of whom is to represent those aged twenty-four to fifty, the other to represent those fifty-one and above, and one priest of a religious community appointed by the Bishop.

2. A committee of two members of the Personnel Board will be responsible for proposing nominees. They will be responsible for placing occasional reminders in the Clergy Bulletin to solicit persons interested in serving on the Board. Interested persons could then contact the members of the Personnel Board Nominating Committee. The Personnel Board Nominating Committee will then place those names in nomination.

3. The Chairman shall send the necessary information for elections to the Secretary for Clergy and Religious one month prior to elections. The Secretary for Clergy and Religious will then notify the priests who have been nominated.

4. The election shall be conducted by the Personnel Board. Voting may take place by mail or at deanery meetings. The completed ballots are to be sent to the Chairman of the Personnel Board.

5. The ballots are to be tallied by at least two members of the Board. After tallying the ballots the priest with the most votes is elected and is to be notified.

6. The Chairman of the Board shall be elected by the Board at the January meeting each year.

TERM OF OFFICE

7. Members of the Board shall serve a term of three years.

8. Should service of a member on the Board be terminated for whatever cause, the Board shall solicit interested persons and propose candidates for election. These will be sent out on a ballot for election. Voting will be conducted by mail.

MEETINGS

9. The Personnel Advisory Board will hold regular meetings every month throughout the year as needed. The Bishop must be present for the Personnel Board to meet. Special meetings may be called by the Chairman after consultation with the Bishop.

10. The recommendations of the Board are communicated to the Bishop at the conclusion of all
PROCEDURE

11. The Board shall initiate a profile on the priests, deacons, and parishes through questionnaires and/or interviews in order to know better the particular needs, talents, and interests of each priest, deacon, and each parish.

12. All members of the Board must observe professional secrecy with regard to the information entrusted to the Board.

13. In the matter of appointment, seniority, competence and probity should be considered as determining factors.

14. Every priest should feel free to apply for any position that may be vacant. However, in making its recommendation, the Board is free to consider non-applicants as well.

15. Applications for special ministry which may require Sabbatical leave, including those for military chaplaincy and for further education, will be accepted for consideration by the Board. Recommendations will be made in light of the overall needs of the Diocese.

16. When called upon to develop its own rules of procedure, the Board will do so in the spirit of justice and charity toward all.

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

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+ 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.

**BAPTISM**

1. To celebrate the *Rite of Baptism* solemnly with adults and infants. (c. 861§1)

2. To baptize an adult, using the *Rite of Baptism for Children* when a grave and reasonable cause exists.

**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.)

**SCRIPTURE**

1. To proclaim the Gospel during the celebration of the Eucharist. (c. 757)

2. To conduct Scripture Services.

**PREACHING**

The faculty to preach a homily is granted by the Bishop in a separate decree. 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.

If granted, the faculty will include any or all of the following:

1. To occasionally preach the homily at Mass, aware that this is ordinarily the function of the presider or main celebrant. (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. The faculties to preach are given for a period of one year. Therefore, the faculty expires annually unless renewed by attendance of classes, workshops, practicums or seminars as may be designated by the Ordinary.

MATRIMONY

1. To witness the Rite of Marriage within the Rite for Celebrating Marriage During Mass, as well as the Rite for Celebrating Marriage Outside Mass, after receiving proper delegation in each instance. (c. 1108, 1111)

2. To impart the Nuptial Blessing within the Rite for Celebrating Marriage Outside Mass; however, when the Rite for Celebrating Marriage 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.
These faculties will be valid until revoked with exceptions of preaching faculties (see PREACHING, 3 above).

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Glen John Provost
Bishop of Lake Charles
Continuing education and formation for deacons is a life-long endeavor. It is rooted in the traditional understanding of conversion as an ongoing process that touches all facets of one’s life as a deacon: intellectual, affective social, spiritual, moral and ecclesial. The American Bishops 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 deacon himself. The Continuing Formation Committee together with the Office of Continuing Formation provides programs and retreats for those serving in the Diocese. This policy deals with the following dimensions of continuing formation: spiritual growth, academic and professional growth, and accountability. (Please see Appendix 213 for guidelines concerning these issues.)

Part I: 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 policy deals with five instruments of 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. However, they must notify the Office of Continuing Formation of their plans as close to the beginning of the fiscal year (July 1) as possible.

The Continuing Formation Committee is responsible for retreats. It is charged with searching for and recommending retreat masters to be invited by the Bishop. Efforts will be made to provide different types of retreats within the group retreat format. Deacons will be informed in advance what to expect in each retreat.

B. Prayer Days

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

C. Support Groups

The Committee for Continuing Formation of Deacons encourages membership in support groups.
Each year the membership in these groups is reviewed and new groups are formed.

D. Spiritual Direction

Deacons are spiritual leaders in their communities and must have ongoing spiritual direction for their own spiritual growth. Discernment in prayer and decision making are important skills for pastoral ministry.

Part II: Academic and Professional Growth

Deacons are encouraged to take advantage of the opportunities to continue their education through independent study, reading programs, tape libraries, seminars, workshops and formal courses. In addition to these programs the Continuing Formation Committee offers the following:

A. 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.

B. Special programs are held for specific seasons in a deacon's life and ministry. Deacons are expected to attend a workshop related to preaching each year in order to renew their license to preach. This obligation can be fulfilled by attending either the workshop that the Office of Continuing Formation offers for deacons on preaching or the general workshop on preaching the readings of the lectionary also offered by the Office of Continuing Formation.

Part III: Accountability

Each deacon should give an account of his professional education. The minimum standard for deacons working full-time in the Diocese of Lake Charles is twenty (20) hours in continuing education a year. Deacons attending programs not sponsored by the Diocese should notify the Director of Continuing Formation upon the completion of a workshop.

Upon request, the Director of Continuing Formation will provide the Personnel Board of the Diocese a record of the continuing formation pursued by each individual.

See Appendix 213 for Guidelines.

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+ Glen John Provost
Bishop of Lake Charles

Updated: July 1, 2015
DIOCESE OF LAKE CHARLES

GUIDELINES FOR RETREATS, WORKSHOPS & SEMINARS AND SABBATICALS
FOR DEACONS

RETREATS

1. The primary purpose of a retreat is the spiritual renewal and growth of the individual. The Gospels attest to the fact that Jesus and His Apostles took time for themselves, time to be in communion with the Father. This would seem to be necessary for true Christian ministry.

2. During retreats, adequate provision will be made for competent guidance and spiritual direction.

3. Costs of the retreat for deacons and their wives active in the Diocese are paid from parish or departmental funds. Retired deacons are invited and urged to attend as guests of the Diocese.

4. A diocesan deacon wishing to be excused from his annual retreat must make a written request to the Bishop.

5. It is also widely recognized that a secondary value is achieved in group retreats, namely, that of growth in fraternal spirit among deacons. However, different people have different needs, even in the spiritual life. The same person may have different needs at different times in his own life. Accordingly, different types of retreats have developed: group, private, directed, interactional, etc. The individual should choose the type of retreat which best suits his own needs in those years when he is free to do so.

WORKSHOPS & SEMINARS

1. In addition to the annual retreat cost, each deacon of the Diocese is authorized to spend up to $200.00 per year from parish or departmental funds to avail himself of continuing education opportunities. Authorization to spend larger amounts must be obtained from the Bishop.

2. Deacons wishing to further their education are encouraged to enroll as part-time students in local universities or other local education facilities.

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+ Glen John Provost
Bishop of Lake Charles

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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.

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. Upon ordination to diaconate, the deacon comes under the authority of the Bishop and Secretary for Clergy and Religious in all matters relating to assignment and further study as would any clergy.

It will be the further responsibility of the director(s) to discern and provide guidelines which will assure and enhance the process of recruitment, taking applications, and placement of students interested in studying for the priesthood.

DIOCESAN SEMINARIAN ADVISORY BOARD

The Diocese of Lake Charles shall form a Seminarian Advisory Committee for the purpose of helping the Director(s) of Vocations and Seminarians. This committee will hold interviews, evaluations, and critiques following the guidelines set out in Appendix 214 of this document. Other manuals and guides may be utilized by this committee provided these documents are approved by the Director of Vocations, Director of Seminarians and/or the Bishop as appropriate. The Advisory Committee may be called upon by the director(s) for other support, ideas, and guidance.

See Appendix 214.

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+ Glen John Provost
Bishop of Lake Charles
GENERAL

All information on applicants is to be sent to members of the Seminary Advisory Committee before meetings by Diocesan Director of Vocations, who is responsible for gathering material on new students. Once accepted, the Diocesan Director of Seminarians becomes responsible for students assigned to specific seminaries for the duration of studies for priesthood until they are ordained deacons. Upon ordination to the diaconate, the Bishop assumes the responsibility in all matters relating to these students.

PLACEMENT IN COLLEGE AND THEOLOGATE

1. The Diocese is committed to a provincial college seminary (St. Joseph Seminary College at St. Benedict, Louisiana) and to a provincial school of theology (Notre Dame Seminary, New Orleans, Louisiana). Every effort will be made to support these seminaries with our students as well as our finances.

2. On completion of college studies, the ordinary diocesan policy is that theology students are to attend Notre Dame Seminary in New Orleans.

3. The Bishop, evaluating the needs of the Diocese or consulting with the Director of Vocations and the Director of Seminarians, may assign a seminarian to whatever seminary fulfills those needs.

4. The ordinary policy of the Diocese of Lake Charles is that students for the Diocese go through the regular four-year college program offered by St. Joseph Seminary College and Notre Dame Seminary. Summer school, for the sake of finishing academic requirements in less than four years, is discouraged. However, exceptions to this policy may arise and discussion with the Diocesan Director of Seminarians is recommended prior to enrollment in any summer course.

5. All students 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.

6. At present, the major fields offered by Saint Joseph Seminary College and the graduate degree offered at Notre Dame Seminary are considered adequate to meet the needs of the Diocese of Lake Charles.

7. All seminarians must adhere to the policy regulations listed in the Diocesan Seminarian Handbook.
SPECIALIZATION

The decision to specialize in a certain field or ministry is to be determined by the needs of the Diocese and the Diocesan Bishop, not by the seminarian. It should be understood that seminarians are accepted by the Diocese of Lake Charles to serve the needs of the Diocese. These needs and their priorities are determined by the Bishop and the Personnel Advisory Board.

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

1. Reimbursement is to be requested at least for 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 of time may be invoked if there is evidence of instability.

3. Ordinarily, there will be no delay in the case of a student who does not remain with another diocese or religious order and seeks readmission into the Diocese of Lake Charles.

SCREENING SEMINARY APPLICANTS

1. All applications are to be submitted to the Diocesan Director of Vocations.

2. College applicants are to submit the proper forms and transcripts to the Director of Vocations. He will see to it that there is a personal interview with each college-level applicant by the director himself and members of the Seminary Advisory Committee. The Director of Seminarians informs the college seminary or theologate of the Committee's acceptance of the candidate.

3. All college applications must be completed and submitted before May 31st. Special consideration will be given in light of the deadlines set by respective seminaries.

4. If, in the judgment of the Seminary Advisory Committee and Director of Vocations, there is no obstacle to a student's admission, he will be informed of his acceptance by the Director of Vocations.

5. Copies of letters concerning the acceptance or rejection of any student are to be sent to the student's pastor.

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+ Glen John Provost
Bishop of Lake Charles

Updated: July 1, 2015
LEAVES OF ABSENCE FOR SEMINARIANS

The leave-of-absence from seminary studies must be understood in the total context of a student's sincere desire to truly discern what God is asking of him. Thus, to insure that growth, definite and explicit procedures are herein given.

PERMISSION FOR LEAVE-OF-ABSENCE

Request for permission for leave-of-absence from seminary studies must be submitted in writing to the Diocesan Director of Seminarians. The written request is to be personal, specific, and concrete. It should be considered as a kind of self-evaluation of needs, desires, and concerns. The request will be kept confidential. The written request will be submitted to the Diocesan Seminary Advisory Committee for recommendation to the Bishop. The Diocese will not be responsible for interest payments and/or State or Federal loan payments which arise because of the seminarian's leave-of-absence. Reconsideration of this particular point may be made in unusual situations and will be handled by the Diocesan Director of Seminarians.

AGREEMENT OF PROVISIONS OF CONDUCT DURING LEAVE

1. In order that the leave-of-absence would be an opportunity for positive personal, spiritual, and vocational growth, a spiritual director and/or advisory (priest) is to be seen regularly; he must be willing to submit a written report every three months as to the progress of the student to the Diocesan Director of Seminarians.

2. The Diocesan Director of Seminarians is to be informed of the student's choice for director and/or advisor.

3. At the discretion of both student and Diocesan Director of Seminarians, regular personal interviews should be maintained during the course of the leave-of-absence.

4. The student should participate in the liturgy of the Catholic community in which he resides and maintain and develop habits of private prayer and religious study. These efforts for growth are to be under the guidance or direction of the student's regular director and/or advisor.
DURATION OF LEAVE-OF-ABSENCE

The duration of the time of leave-of-absence shall be not less than six months or more than two years. However, longer periods of time away may be allowed if it seems advantageous to the student and is not simply due to a state of indecision.

RE-ENTRANCE INTO THE SEMINARY

If the student freely requests re-entrance into the seminary, a letter is to be submitted to the Diocesan Director of Seminarians recommending re-entrance for the student into the seminary by the student's spiritual director and/or advisor together with a letter requesting re-entrance by the student.

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+ Glen John Provost
Bishop of Lake Charles
DIOCESE OF LAKE CHARLES

DIOCESAN POLICY STATEMENT

VICARS, GENERAL AND EPISCOPAL

In the Diocese of Lake Charles there shall be constituted a Vicar General. Other vicars shall be appointed by the Bishop as he deems necessary and appropriate.

1. 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)

2. 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)

3. Other vicars that may be appointed by the Bishop possess the same executive power as that which belongs to the Bishop but only for the ministry, group, rite, or activity which has been entrusted to him. (c.479§2)

For faculties and other guidelines for Vicars General and Episcopal Vicars, see Appendix 216.

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Bishop of Lake Charles

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DIOCESE OF LAKE CHARLES

VICARS GENERAL AND EPISCOPAL

PROLOGUE

1. Each Bishop is called by God to shepherd the entire flock entrusted to his care and must, therefore be free to multiply as much as possible, his presence with every segment of his flock. To assist a Bishop in this, the Second Council of the Vatican provided for Episcopal Vicars to be "placed in charge of a designated part of the Diocese, or of a certain type of ministry, or of some rite or group." (Christus Dominus, #23, 27; Ecclesiae Santae, #14)¹ This legislation, along with a requirement that each Diocese have a Vicar General, is incorporated in the 1983 Code of Canon Law (Canons 475-481).

2. The Vicars General and Episcopal are collaborators of the Bishop allowing him to exercise the pastoral and administrative care of his Diocese more effectively. The office of the Vicar is primarily pastoral. He will make more proximate the pastoral vision and effective leadership of the Bishop in his designated area or ministry.² The Episcopal Vicar is, for a segment of the Diocese, or for the particular group, or ministry to which he is appointed, what the Vicar General is for the whole Diocese, and he serves in addition to the Vicar General. (c. 497§2)

3. The work of the Vicar must be direct and personal: recognizing individual differences, he will attempt to create personal rapport among the clergy, religious, and laity of the deanery (region), or group, or ministry with which he has been entrusted, respecting them, not as divisive units, but as unifying forces. By study, survey, and personal visits, he will develop first-hand knowledge of the personnel, resources, needs, and overall direction of the church within the deanery, or group, or personal ministry with which he has been entrusted.

4. In each deanery or group or ministry for which there is a Vicar, the Bishop as Chief Shepherd, through the Vicar, becomes ever more closely united in a common apostolate with clergy, religious, and laity. However, in case of particular needs, the Bishop remains accessible to those who prefer to confer directly with him.

5. Responsibilities of the Vicar are not merely supervisory, but creative. With the Bishop, the Vicar will help create diocesan unity, reflecting always the mind of the Bishop, implementing goals and policies of the Diocese. His role is to see that the teachings, laws, and traditions of the Church are observed as well as to help people experience the Spirit in their lives and times. He shares responsibility jointly with persons and groups within the deanery or particular ministry entrusted to him in the same spirit of collegiality and according to the same principle of subsidiarity that the Bishop shares throughout the Diocese.

6. To serve effectively in pastoral and unifying aspects of his role, the Vicar will normally

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serve in shared-time, pastoral ministry, with additional personnel (clergy and/or lay) to assist in vicarial and ministerial responsibilities. Engaged in specific ministry, parochial or other, he can better serve to unite the deanery, or particular group, or ministry entrusted to him in directions that are diocesan oriented.

TYPES OF VICARS AND FACULTIES FOR THEM

7. According to the Code of Canon Law, each Diocese is to have a Vicar General appointed by the Bishop; in circumstances where the correct governance of the Diocese require it, the same Bishop can appoint one or several Episcopal Vicars, whether for a determined region of the Diocese for a certain business, or for certain groups, or rites within the church (cc. 475-476).

8. In order to be appointed as Vicar General or Episcopal, one must be a priest in active ministry within the Diocese and appointed as such by the Diocesan Bishop. He must also be at least thirty years of age, in possession of a doctorate or licentiate in canon law or theology, or at least an expert in these, as well as be of sound doctrine, integrity, prudence, and experience. (c. 478).

9. The Code of Canon Law specifies that Vicars are to be appointed for a term according to a letter of appointment, unless these Vicars are Auxiliary Bishops. The appointment and removal of any Vicar other than an Auxiliary Bishop is done freely by the Diocesan Bishop.

10. In addition to the particular faculties granted to them in their letters of appointment, the Vicars General and Episcopal of the Diocese of Lake Charles enjoy the following facilities during the tenure of office:

   A. The power to dispense from universal disciplinary laws of the Church under the express conditions set down in the law. The three conditions stated in the law are:

      1. There is a danger of grave harm in delay;
      2. Recourse is difficult; and
      3. It is the type of law for which a dispensation is usually granted by the Holy See. (c. 87)

   B. The three conditions set down for dispensing from universal laws also must be fulfilled in regard to particular disciplinary law. (Ibid)

   C. The power to dispense from diocesan laws, but only when such action is based upon a just cause both for validity and lawfulness. (c. 90)

   D. The power to dispense from the laws of a provincial or plenary council in particular cases and for a just cause, which again is required for validity. If a penalty is attached to a law and he can dispense from the law, he can also dispense from the penalty. (c. 88)
E. To dispense where there is doubt of fact regarding the application of a law, and the law is one from which the Holy See usually dispenses. (c. 14)

F. The power to dispense from the form of marriage and certain marriage impediments in danger of death and in cases of *omnia parata*. (cs. 1079-80) He may also dispense from the other impediments as specified in canon 1078 in case of real necessity when recourse cannot be had in the usual manner.

G. The power to dispense from the observance of certain feasts, fasts, and abstinence, either for individuals or families subject to him, his own subjects even outside of the region and others within it, and to dispense the entire region or ministry from fast and abstinence because of a great concourse of people or for reasons of public health.

H. He enjoys ordinary jurisdiction for hearing confessions and can confer that jurisdiction by way of delegation in keeping with the requirements of the law. (c. 968)

I. He may make use of blessings and consecrations ordinarily reserved to bishops always making use of the approved ritual.

J. He may absolve, in the internal forum and in the act of confession only, from the censures reserved to the Ordinary, any who have procured abortion. This faculty may be subdelegated in individual cases.

K. He may absolve, even in public cases, in the internal forum and in the act of confession only, those who have joined the Masons or similar societies or parties which are hostile to the Church or legitimate civil authority such as the communists, provided they abjure membership in such societies.

11. The Vicars General and Episcopal will, at least in a consultative fashion, belong to all diocesan boards.

**SERVICE TO THE BISHOP**

12. As representative of the Bishop, the Vicars General and Episcopal enjoy the ordinary jurisdiction granted them by the universal law of the Church and the particular law of the Diocese. A copy of faculties and the procedure to be followed in exercising them will be given to each Vicar at the time of his appointment.

13. The Bishop may reserve certain cases to himself or the Vicar General or both, but never to the point where the Vicars would be merely a delegated functionary.

**SERVICE OF THE VICARS GENERAL AND EPISCOPAL TO THE DIOCESE**
14. The Vicar General and Vicars Episcopal are canonically appointed to the Diocesan Consultors together with members of the Presbyteral Council.

15. The Vicars General and Episcopal are to meet frequently and regularly with the Bishop to discuss and evaluate their work as Vicars, to assure accountability and to guarantee unity. Vicars may seek individual consultation with the Bishop.

16. The Vicars General and Episcopal are available to the Bishop and the Diocesan Personnel Board regarding assignment of diocesan clergy. They are available to any priest who wishes to discuss his assignment and they serve as agents of appeal to the Diocesan Personnel Board and/or the Bishop when necessary.

17. As stated in the Code of Canon Law, the office and jurisdiction of the Vicar General and the Episcopal Vicars cease by the vacancy of the diocesan see. By virtue of distinct canonical appointment, the office of Consultor continues until assignment of a new Bishop. The Bishop may revoke the appointment of a Vicar or Consultor according to the prescription of the law.

NOMINATION AND APPOINTMENT

18. The appointment of the Vicar General and Episcopal Vicars is the prerogative of the Bishop. It is the Bishop's concern in making the appointment to define accurately the scope of the Vicar's authority lest the jurisdiction of several persons overlap or become doubtful.  

19. The ordinary term of office is three years, which term may be repeated. As the three year term expires, the same process of nomination used originally may be conducted and the occasion used to evaluate the process.

20. Any priest who meets the requirements of universal law, who enjoys the faculties of the Diocese and is engaged in pastoral ministry in the Diocese is eligible for appointment, regardless of the place of residence at the time of nomination. If appointed and it is necessary, the priest will be transferred to the appropriate deanery or area where he will exercise this ministry.

21. Upon appointment, the Vicar will be installed by the Bishop in an appropriate ceremony.
ENDNOTES


2 The term "Deanery", familiar in the Diocese, is used for these designated areas; the term "Vicar" will refer to the person exercising jurisdiction for the designated area, as distinguished from Vicar General or Special Vicars.


4 Among concerns for this evaluation: (a) religious and lay participation in the nomination (beyond their involvement in the deanery council); (b) provision of staggered terms for Vicars; (c) questions re: realignment of deaneries.

Promulgated: April 23, 2008

Effective: July 1, 2008

+ Glen John Provost
Bishop of Lake Charles
DIOCESE OF LAKE CHARLES

DIOCESAN POLICY STATEMENT

VICAR FOR CLERGY

In the Diocese of Lake Charles there shall be constituted the Office of the Vicar for Clergy. The Vicar for Clergy possesses the same executive power as an episcopal vicar according to the Code of Canon Law, canon 479 §2, and the particular law of the Diocese of Lake Charles as given in the Diocese of Lake Charles, Policy and Guidelines, Appendix 216.

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.

Promulgated: November 1, 2013

Effective: November 1, 2013

[Signature]
+ Glen John Provost
Bishop of Lake Charles

Updated: July 1, 2015
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 shall appoint three deans, one for each deanery. Specific duties and faculties granted to a dean are found in Appendix 217.

Promulgated: April 23, 2008

Effective: July 1, 2008

+ Glen John Provost
Bishop of Lake Charles
DIOCESE OF LAKE CHARLES

DEANS (VICARS FORANE)

I TITLE OF THE DEAN

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/deanery. (c. 553§1)

In the Diocese of Lake Charles, there are three deaneries, namely, Central, East and West.

II APPOINTMENT OF THE DEAN

A. For the office of dean, which is not tied to the office of pastor of a certain parish, the bishop is to select a priest whom he has judged suitable, after he has considered the circumstances of place and time. (c. 554§1)

B. Unless particular law establishes otherwise, the diocesan bishop appoints the dean, after he has heard the priests who exercise ministry in the vicariate in question according to his own prudent judgment. (c. 553§2)

C. In accord with c. 554§2, Deans in the Diocese of Lake Charles will be appointed for a three year term.

D. In accord with c. 554§3, Deans serve at the will of the bishop and may be removed by him for a just cause.

III FACULTIES OF THE DEAN

A. The faculties given by law to the Dean are contained in c. 555, to wit:

1. The Dean has the duty and right:
   a. of promoting and coordinating common pastoral activity in the deanery;
   b. of seeing to it that the clerics in his deanery lead a life in keeping with their state and perform their duties diligently;
   c. of seeing to it that religious functions are celebrated according to the prescripts of the sacred liturgy, that the beauty and elegance of churches and sacred furnishings are maintained carefully, especially in the eucharistic celebration and custody of the Most Blessed Sacrament, that the parochial registers are inscribed correctly and protected appropriately, that ecclesiastical goods are administered carefully, and finally that the rectory is cared for with proper diligence.
Appendix 217

2. In the deanery entrusted to him, the dean:
   a. is to see to it that, according to the prescripts of particular law and at the times stated, the clerics attend lectures, theological meetings, or conferences according to the norms of canon 279§2;
   b. is to take care that spiritual supports are available to the presbyters of his deanery, and likewise to be concerned especially for those who find themselves in more difficult circumstances or are beset by problems.

3. The dean is to take care that the pastors of his deanery whom he knows to be gravely ill do not lack spiritual and material aids and that the funeral rites of those who have died are celebrated worthily. He is also to make provision so that, on the occasion of illness or death, the registers, documents, sacred furnishings, and other things which belong to the Church are not lost or removed.

4. The dean is obliged to visit the parishes of his deanery according to the determination made by the diocesan bishop.

SERVICES OF THE DEAN TO HIS DEANERY

1. The Dean must be knowledgeable of programs within the deanery, Diocese and country which serve the Church's mission of proclaiming the message, developing community and fostering service.

2. Departments of the Diocese can be called upon by the Dean for appropriate service at a deanery level, especially in inter-parochial programs. Deanery or branch officers of Diocesan agencies can be fostered by the Dean as a goal of decentralization of these agencies.

3. The Dean is to foster deanery council(s) within his deanery with discretion as to the number of council or sub-groupings needed for effective consultation. He is to communicate to them the policies and recommendations of the Bishop, Presbyteral Council, diocesan departments and agencies. He is to communicate to the Bishop and these same bodies the recommendations of the deanery council(s).

4. The Dean is to serve as a channel of communication for parishes of the deanery among themselves and is to provide a forum for sharing their needs and resources, eliciting representation from clergy, religious and laity. He is to foster shared responsibility in the Christian community at all levels.

5. The Dean should cultivate a close relationship with his "presbyterate" in the spirit of fraternal love. He should meet with them frequently to share experiences, discuss common pastoral, theological and liturgical questions, and explore new pastoral approaches. He should not initiate programs affecting his deanery without having consulted and received a favorable vote of a majority of the members.
6. The Dean is to foster the development of an effective parish pastoral council in each parish of his deanery. He is to establish means of communication between himself and the various parish councils, preferably through the deanery council(s).

7. The Dean is to promote, whenever feasible, self evaluation of parishes and ministries for continued growth and improvement. He is to review with the parish officers and staff the parish profile and annual report.

8. In addition to the specific service to the clergy of his deanery, the Dean is to (a) manifest special concern for religious women and men in collaboration with the Secretary for Religious, and (b) collaborate with religious men and women of his deanery to learn their needs and to employ them effectively.

8. The Dean is to make an annual report to the Bishop, indicating things favorable and unfavorable as they may exist. The Dean shall keep a special file for matters pertaining to his deanery and shall observe secrecy regarding his official findings and the contents of his reports to the Bishop.

Promulgated: April 23, 2008

Effective: July 1, 2008

+ 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 all the more necessary that the study of parish boundaries and the creation of future parishes be approached with great attention to proper planning. The following policies have been drawn up to chart the course of the Parish Boundaries Commission, in presenting its recommendations to the Bishop for his decisions.

1. **Responsibilities of the Boundaries Commission**
   a. To study revision of existing parish boundaries.
   b. To study areas of development for new parishes or opening new parishes or missions.
   c. To study the possible elimination of the dual parish systems for Whites and Blacks.
   d. To study the question of closing parishes or mission chapels which are no longer necessary.
   e. To contact each parish to determine that it has clear title and exact descriptions of all properties listed in the name of each parish.

2. **Mandate**

The Bishop has mandated the Parish Boundaries and Development Commission study each situation with the local church -clergy and parish pastoral councils- to develop, and implement effective measures to bring about unity among the people of the Diocese." (See page 101-1 for this "Unity Policy."

3. **Rationale of Commission**
   a. Service to the people of God.
   b. Definition of areas of responsibility. Boundaries are not walls but help give definition to areas of responsibility.
   c. To help build Community.
   d. To help bring available personnel into real service for more people.

4. **Decision Making Process**
   a. A local problem is brought to the Parish Boundaries Commission by the Bishop or any other member of the Church.
   b. The Commission meets over issue and makes written proposal.
   c. A Boundaries Commission member discusses proposal with respective pastor(s) and parish council(s).
   d. The Commissioner discusses the Commission's proposal with the Deanery Pastoral Council. The respective pastor(s) should be present at this discussion.
   e. The Commissioner makes final proposal in writing to Parish Boundaries Commission.
   f. Consultation with other diocesan commissions, if necessary, is made by Parish

Updated: July 1, 2015
Boundaries Commission in reaching final recommendation.

  g. The final recommendation is then presented to the Bishop who will study it and make a decision after having consulted the Presbyteral Council of the Diocese as required by Canon 515.

NOTES

  a. Throughout this process only the Bishop makes the decision. All other discussion and deliberation at all other levels is consultative.
  b. Action taken on motions made by the Commission is to be reported at the next commission meeting. The chairman is responsible for this report as unfinished business at the next meeting.
  c. There must be basic honesty from all parties concerned.
  d. There must be as much background information as possible, e.g. parish census, statistics from civil bodies, etc.
  e. The process may, at any point, be interrupted, changed, or terminated by the Commission.

5. JOB PROFILE OF COMMISSIONER

  a. The Commissioner is delegated by the Parish Boundaries Commission to be a facilitator and liaison for all action below the level of Parish Boundaries Commission.
  b. The Commission makes known the work of the boundaries commission to members of his region through whatever means possible.
  c. The Commissioner should feel responsibility for studying all parish developments within his area and feel free to bring problems to commission.
  d. The Regional Commissioners should collaborate in the study of their area.
  e. The Commissioner confers with pastors and people concerning groundwork for implementation of the "Unity Policy" [Policy 101], tracks the results, and reports regularly concerned this to the Commission.

Promulgated: April 23, 2008

Effective: July 1, 2008

+ Glen John Provost
Bishop of Lake Charles
DIOCESE OF LAKE CHARLES

DIOCESAN POLICY STATEMENT

PARISH PASTORAL COUNCILS

The importance of lay participation in helping foster the pastoral activity of a parish is indicated in the Code of Canon Law:

Can. 536, §1. After the diocesan bishop has listened to the Presbyteral Council and if he judges it opportune, a pastoral council is to be established in each parish; the pastor presides over it and through it the Christian faithful along with those who share in the pastoral care of the parish in virtue of their office give their help in fostering pastoral activity.

§2. This pastoral council possesses a consultative vote only, and is governed by norms determined by the diocesan bishop.

Therefore, the Bishop of Lake Charles, having heard the Presbyteral Council, and judging it to be opportune for the good of the church, hereby decrees that there is to be a pastoral council in every parish.

A pastoral council may not be dissolved, either temporarily or permanently, without permission of the bishop.

The pastoral council will function in accordance with the guidelines given in Appendix 219.

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+ Glen John Provost
Bishop of Lake Charles

Updated: July 1, 2015
DIOCESE OF LAKE CHARLES

GUIDELINES FOR ORGANIZATION AND FUNCTION OF PASTORAL COUNCILS

I. Each Pastoral Council shall be organized as follows:

A. Membership

1. Five (5) members, who are elected at large with the assistance of a nominating committee. These members shall have staggered three year terms, and may not serve more than two consecutive terms.

2. Ex-officio members by reason of their role or position:
   a. Vice Chairperson or member of the Parish Finance Council
   b. Principal of the Catholic School, if there is one in the parish
   c. Chairpersons of the Pastoral Commissions (see C below)
   d. The two Trustees of the parish corporation
   e. Associate Pastor(s)

3. Appointed members:
   a. Representative from the mission, if there is one in the parish.
   b. Other members may be appointed as deemed appropriate by the pastor.

B. Meetings

1. Pastoral Councils are to meet regularly. No council, regardless of how small the parish, should meet less often than four times a year.

2. The following officers are to be elected by Council members:
   a. Vice Chairperson
   b. Secretary

C. Structure

1. The Pastoral Council will operate with a system of commissions. Commission chairpersons are to be appointed by the pastor, since it is he, who according to Canon 536, presides over the Council.

2. The following commissions are recommended:
   a. Worship and Spiritual Life
   b. Religious Education
   c. Social Justice and Community Services
   d. Evangelization

II. The Pastoral Council offers help and advice to the pastor on matters that affect all parishioners, of whatever age, ethnic origin, gender, economic condition, and cultural and educational background.

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The Pastoral Council, to be successful in its work, must operate in a spirit of prayer and study.

III. Like the diocesan pastoral council which assists the bishop (can. 511), and which "investigates under [his] authority all those things which pertain to pastoral works, ponders them, and proposes practical conclusions about them," so does the parish Pastoral Council assist the pastor, and under his authority investigates those things in its own parish which pertain to pastoral needs, ponders them, and proposes practical conclusions at the parish level.

A. Thus the Pastoral Council advises the pastor about the needs of the parish, and assists him in determining priorities.

B. The members of the Pastoral Council make use of the information they gain from contact with other parishioners in advising the pastor about his needs of the parish.

C. It is recommended that the Pastoral Council conduct an annual evaluation of its work, and make suggestions to itself for possible future improvement.

IV. The Pastoral Council is a consultative body. Therefore, its functioning under the authority and presidency of the pastor, should be in the nature of true consultation.

A. Ordinarily, informal but structured discussion will lead to the advice the Council offers the pastor on issues under consideration.

B. In a particular instance, if the Council by unanimous or near-unanimous agreement makes a recommendation which the pastor feels he cannot follow, he should explain to them that he cannot; if confidentiality is not involved, he may explain his reasons why he cannot follow the recommendation.

C. In instances where the consultative process itself is violated, recourse may be made to the Dean.

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+ Glen John Provost
Bishop of Lake Charles

Updated: July 1, 2015
DIOCESE OF LAKE CHARLES
DIOCESAN POLICY STATEMENT
OFFICE OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

RESPONSIBILITY

Ultimate responsibility for catechesis in the Diocese of Lake Charles belongs to the Bishop.

DIOCESAN OFFICE OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The Office of Religious Education consists of a director, who is the administrator, and other staff positions as may be deemed appropriate. The purpose of the office 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.

PERSONNEL IN THE OFFICE OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The Director of the Office of Religious Education, appointed by the Bishop, is the administrator of the office charged with the promotion of catechesis in the Diocese. The Director shall have such compensation and terms of employment as determined by the Bishop. Other staff members shall have such compensation as determined by the Diocesan Finance Board and other terms of employment as the Director determines, all subject to the approval of the Bishop. Some specific functions of the Director are as follows:

1. Administration of the office, including supervision of secretary and consultants, preparation and overseeing annual budget, annual evaluation of office activities, setting of goals and objectives, and coordination of activities of this office with Christian Formation.

2. Assist parishes and schools in the development of quality catechetical programming for youth and adults.

3. 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.

4. Recommend to the bishop policies and guidelines regarding issues in catechesis.

5. Work with diocesan task forces that address issues of concern to catechesis.
6. Direct special programs and projects regarding catechesis.

7. Delegate authority to qualified persons for coordinating various programs, while assuming ultimate responsibility for such programs.

8. Develop leadership of parish and school leaders in catechetical programs.

9. Work with Christian Formation directors to develop quality educational programs for all ministers, including those in catechesis and youth ministry.

10. Act as chief liaison officer between the Diocese of Lake Charles and Loyola Institute for Ministry in Extension.

11. Direct the Holy Cross College Program in the Diocese of Lake Charles.

12. 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).

ADVISORY GROUPS IN THE OFFICE

Several advisory groups make recommendations regarding catechesis. These groups assist the Bishop in the formulation of policies regarding catechetical programs; in the determination of priorities and the establishment of goals for the Office of Religious Education. Recommendations made to the Bishop by the Director are critiqued in advance by these advisory groups. Specific groups change but always include representation from Administrators, Coordinators and Directors of Religious Education in our parish and school programs.

PARISH PASTOR RESPONSIBILITY TOWARD CATECHESIS

Pastors have specific responsibilities with regards to their catechetical role. “All believers have a right to catechesis; all pastors have the duty to provide it” (CT no. 64). Following the norms established by the diocesan bishop, pastors are to ensure that: (NDC 220-221).

1. Appropriate catechesis is provided and encouraged, with appropriate opportunities provided for youth and adults;

2. Appropriate catechesis is provided to properly prepare those receiving the sacraments, especially their first reception of Penance, Confirmation and Eucharist;

3. Catechetical formation is given to individuals with physical or mental impediments, insofar as their condition permits;

4. Catechesis for adults is a priority, recognized by the parishioners as the parish’s primary
catechetical mission;

5. Catechists are appropriately formed and trained;

6. All language groups within the parish are provided with catechetical formation;

7. The catechumenate process, which is the model for all parish catechesis, is implemented;

8. Facilities and resources for the catechetical program are provided;

9. A competent and qualified Catechetical Leader (or someone in the process of becoming qualified and competent) is appointed over the catechetical program (NDC 224).

Promulgated: April 23, 2008

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+ Glen John Provost
Bishop of Lake Charles
DIOCESE OF LAKE CHARLES

DIOCESAN POLICY STATEMENT

TESTIMONIAL LETTER FOR GUEST LAY SPEAKERS/PRESENTERS

The bishop is the moderator of the word in the particular church 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 make reference to this fact.

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+ Glen John Provost
Bishop of Lake Charles

Updated: July 1, 2015
RESPONSIBILITY

Ultimate responsibility for the educational apostolate in the Diocese belongs to the Bishop.

DIOCESAN OFFICE OF CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

The Office of Catholic Schools for the Diocese consists of a Superintendent of Schools, who is the executive officer, and other staff positions as may be deemed appropriate. The Superintendent shall have such compensation and term of employment as determined by the Bishop. Other staff members shall have such compensation as determined by the Diocesan Finance Board and other terms of employment as the Superintendent determines, all subject to the approval of the Bishop.

SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

The Superintendent of Schools, appointed by the Bishop, is 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. Some of the functions of the Superintendent are as follows:

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.
4. Report to the Bishop and Diocesan School Board on 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 officer between the Office of 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.
8. Evaluate periodically the instructional programs, the administration, and the facilities of all the schools in the Diocese.

9. Prepare a budget for the Office of Catholic Schools for approval by the Diocesan Finance Board and ultimately by the Bishop.

10. Delegate authority to qualified persons for directing various programs while assuming ultimate responsibility for such programs.

11. Plan surveys and collect data pertinent to programs operating within the schools of the Diocese.

DIOCESAN SCHOOL BOARD

The Diocesan School Board is established by the Bishop for the purpose of sharing in the educational mission of the diocesan Catholic schools.

In addition to assisting the Bishop in formulation of policies, the Diocesan School Board also assists the Bishop in determining priorities and in establishing goals.

Furthermore, the Diocesan School Board reviews and recommends approval or disapproval of policies and projects proposed by the Superintendent of Schools.

PARISH/PASTOR RESPONSIBILITY TOWARD CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

In those 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, and Trustees, shall provide adequate facilities in which to house such 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.

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Glen John Provost
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Continuing education and formation of the lay faithful is demanded by the gift of faith given at baptism. Concerning the education required of the laity, the Second Vatican Council said the following:

The lay person should learn especially how to perform the mission of Christ and the Church by basing his life on belief in the divine mystery of creation and redemption and by being sensitive to the movement of the Holy Spirit who gives life to the people of God and who urges all to love God the Father as well as the world and men in Him. This formation should be deemed the basis and condition for every successful apostolate. In addition to spiritual formation, a solid doctrinal instruction in theology, ethics, and philosophy adjusted to differences of age, status, and natural talents, is required. ([Apostolicam Actuositatem 29]).

As this is true of any lay person witnessing to the faith in the world, it is all the more true of those who serve in catechetical ministry. Accordingly, the Diocese of Lake Charles offers several areas of spiritual and doctrinal formation for credentialing purposes. Those areas include, but are not limited to, the following:

1.) **Foundations of the Catholic Faith** is an entry-level exposure to the basic story of the Catholic faith, as recounted in the Apostles’ Creed.
2.) **Catholic Identity** further enriches the learner with a survey of Catholic beliefs and practices, the moral life, and an introduction on developing a life of prayer.
3.) **Apostolate-specific courses** include more rigorous coursework in the areas of Philosophy, Sacred Scripture, Catholic Dogma, Church History, and Morality. Included in this section would be methods training suitable for catechists and those in catechetical leadership, as well as specialty training geared toward parish ministries and apostolates. This area also covers special training of critical importance for catechists and other professionals in Catholic ministry such as Sexual Morality and Theology of the Body.

**Continuing Education**

Everyone involved in catechetical ministry is required to pursue continuing education. In this way, our lay faithful may see that formation is ongoing and can never be considered “complete.” To assist catechists and lay faithful seeking continuing education, the Diocese itself will offer courses each year in the areas of Theology, Spirituality, and Methodology.
Center for Catholic Studies

A fourth level of continuing education is offered through the Center for Catholic Studies, which provides college-level coursework in theology. While similar to category 3 in the topics presented, these courses are more academically rigorous and provide continuing education for school teachers and others desiring degree credit. These courses may also be used for annual renewal in catechetical ministry.

The Center for Catholic Studies offers a Core Curriculum that includes the following courses, which are offered periodically:

- Faith and Reason
- Sacred Scripture
- Church History
- Fundamentals of Catholicism
- Catholic Morality

Additionally, elective courses are to be recommended by the Adult Education Committee and offered alongside the Core Curriculum.

Masters’ Program

The Diocese of Lake Charles offers support to individuals seeking a Masters 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 Office of Adult 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 student is employed will pay one-third, and the student himself/herself 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.

In the event that the number of students requesting assistance surpasses the amount budgeted for the program, the Adult Education Committee will make a recommendation on which applicants to approve.
Descriptions of Primary Catechetical Roles

For the purposes of this policy, a Catechist is defined as any lay person who gives instruction on matters of faith or morals in the name of a church parish or school. This includes, but is not limited to the following:

- Teachers in parish catechetical programs
- Full-time school teachers of theology
- School teachers of religion in self-contained classrooms (grades Pre-K-8)
- Instructors and facilitators of Christian Initiation for Adults
- Youth ministers and youth ministry core team volunteers
- Marriage preparation volunteers

Indeed, the Diocese of Lake Charles considers those who impart the Catholic faith to others in any official capacity worthy of the title, “catechist.” This title further underlies his or her responsibility toward continuing education.

Catechists so defined are required to complete the entry-level Foundations course described above in order to be certified. After completion of the entry-level course, catechists are to maintain their certification annually by attending at least one approved course pertinent to their catechetical role.

Further requirements for catechists in parishes are listed in Policy Appendix 303-C. Further requirements for catechists in schools are described in the Catholic Schools Handbook of Policies and Regulations.

Parish Catechetical Leader (PCL) is the person responsible for catechesis in parish religious education programs. The main responsibilities of the PCL include the following:

- Direct the entire parish catechetical program, including youth and adults
- Plan, implement, and evaluate the catechetical program.
- Select program textbooks and other materials.
- Recruit, form, train, and evaluate catechists.
- Prepare and follow an operating budget.
- Develop sacramental preparation programs, including planning parent meetings and assisting in the setup for liturgical celebrations.
- Maintain permanent records pertinent to students.
- Implement Diocesan and parish catechetical policies, including catechist certification, Safe Environment, and other requirements.
- Keep a record of certifications received and renewed by catechists.
- Provide catechists with information on continuing education and certification opportunities.
- Assist in liturgical planning pertinent to the catechetical program.
- Represent the parish at Diocesan sponsored functions including monthly PCL meetings.
Like other catechists, Parish Catechetical Leaders are required to complete the entry-level *Foundations* course described above. Additionally, these leaders must complete the *Catholic Identity* courses as well as the specialized training course heretofore named *Getting Started as a PCL* or *Religious Education Administration*. Thereafter, a PCL maintains certification through annual continuing education courses recommended by the Adult Education Committee.

**Directors of Religious Education (DRE’s)** are responsible for the religious education of a Catholic school.

DRE’s are required to have possess a Masters’ Degree in Theology or an approved comparable degree in the area of religious studies. They are to have a minimum of three years teaching experience, preferably in a Catholic School.

If a properly credentialed person is not available, the principal may appoint a DRE provisionally, provided that the person possesses a Bachelor of Arts or Bachelor of Science Degree, a minimum of three years teaching experience. The provisional DRE will have five years from the date appointed to obtain the required Masters’ Degree.

DRE’s are required to complete the *Foundations* course and receive annual renewal through approved courses.

**Administrators and Catechists in Catholic Schools of the Diocese of Lake Charles** take the *Foundations* course and continue their education by pursuing four *Catholic Identity* courses. Having completed this level, full-time administrators and departmentalized (non self-contained) 6-12 religion teachers must then pursue completion of the Core Curriculum at the Center for Catholic Studies by taking at least one course per year until completion. Upon completion, full-time administrators and departmentalized (non self-contained) 6-12 religion teachers continue to renew their certification annually through approved continuing education. Administrators and Catechists who are not full time religion teachers, having completed the *Foundations* course and the *Catholic Identity* courses, continue to renew their certification annually through approved continuing education.

Administrators and Catechists who possess a Bachelor or Master of Arts Degree in Theology or an equivalent amount of coursework in theology are not required to take the *Catholic Identity* courses or courses at the Center for Catholic Studies. They are still expected to complete the *Foundations* course and renew annually through approved courses.

Credit earned previously through the Diocese of Lake Charles or other approved institutions may suffice for completing all or part of the Core Curriculum. School DRE’s should review the transcripts and continuing education records of teachers to see what courses need to be completed.

Exceptions to these continuing education norms may be granted by the Office of Adult Education on a case-by-case basis in consultation with the Superintendent of Catholic Schools.
DRE’s, Catechists, and Administrators must be practicing Catholics.

Additional responsibilities and position requirements are listed in the Catholic Schools Handbook of Policies and Regulations.

Christian Formation of adults involves a wide variety of needs and expectations, which require specialized training. The Adult Education Committee annually designates courses required for initial certification and renewal in those roles.

If a properly credentialed person is not available to fill a catechetical role, a Parish Pastor or School Administrator may provisionally appoint a suitable person, provided that person seeks the appropriate credentials within 6 months or some other person becomes available in that time. Annual renewal is expected, as described above.

Certification in Catholic Sexuality

The Diocese of Lake Charles recognizes that everyone teaching others about God’s gift of human sexuality has a delicate and critical role. Those who do so in the name of the Church must understand this integrated teaching themselves before mentoring others. This would include Catholic school theology teachers, marriage preparation mentors, youth ministers and others identified by the Adult Education Committee. Accordingly, a listing of initial and secondary courses are identified and disseminated annually so that those catechists in need of certification in this area may continue in their roles.

Documentation of Certification and Continuing Education

Catechists and others attending adult education courses will receive a standardized certificate made available through the Office of Adult Education. Documentation of certification and continuing education of catechists is to be maintained in the parish or school served as well as at the Diocesan Office of Adult Education.

Office of Adult Education & Adult Education Committee

The Office of Adult Education is comprised of a Director appointed by the Bishop and support staff. The office is organized under the Secretariat for Christian Formation. The Office of Adult Education is responsible for providing continuing education opportunities and will determine the requirements for each of the various levels of certification.

The Office of Adult Education will publish these requirements as needed, and it will report to parishes and schools regularly on the various continuing education course offerings available.

This office is also responsible for managing the Masters’ Program, including tuition subsidies.
An Adult Education Committee will make recommendation of course offerings, certification requirements and other business pertinent to the formation and certification of adults. The committee has members *ex officio*: Diocesan Directors of Religious Education, Youth Ministry, and Family Life. It also seats “at will” members selected by the Director of Adult Education.

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+ Glen John Provost
Bishop of Lake Charles
RESPONSIBILITY

The ultimate responsibility for youth ministry in the Diocese of Lake Charles belongs to the Bishop. Therefore, all youth ministry, in whatever form, must have the full consent of the Bishop.

DIOCESAN OFFICE OF YOUTH MINISTRY

The Office of Youth Ministry consists of a director, who is the administrator, and other staff positions as may be deemed appropriate. The purpose of the office is to promote and develop youth ministry in the Diocese of Lake Charles.

PERSONNEL IN THE OFFICE OF YOUTH MINISTRY

The Director of the Office of Youth Ministry, appointed by the Bishop, is the administrator of the office charged with the promotion of youth in the Diocese. The Director shall have such compensation and terms of employment as determined by the Bishop. Other staff members shall have such compensation as determined by the Diocesan Finance Board and other terms of employment as the Director determines, all subject to the approval of the Bishop. Some specific functions of the Director are as follows:

1. Administration of the office, including supervision of secretary and consultants, preparation and overseeing annual budget, annual evaluation of office activities, setting of goals and objectives, and coordination of activities of this office with Christian Formation.


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 task forces 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.

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8. Develop leadership of parish leaders, adults and youth, in youth ministry programs.

9. Work with other Christian Formation directors to develop quality educational programs for all ministers, including those in catechesis and youth ministry.

10. Act as chief liaison officer between the Office of Youth Ministry and the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), the National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministry (NFCYM) and Region V Youth Directors.

ADVISORY GROUPS IN THE OFFICE

Several advisory groups make recommendations regarding youth ministry in the diocese. These groups assist the Bishop in the formulation of policies regarding youth ministry programs; in the determination of priorities and the establishment of goals for the Office of Youth Ministry. Recommendations made to the Bishop by the Director are critiqued in advance by these advisory groups. Specific groups change but always include representation from Administrators, Coordinators and Directors of Youth Ministry in our parish programs.

PARISH RESPONSIBILITY TOWARD YOUTH MINISTRY

All parishes are highly encouraged to provide a comprehensive youth ministry program for their young people. “A comprehensive youth ministry program includes the dimension of structured or formal catechesis” (NDC 226).

The parish is responsible for providing facilities and resources to enable a comprehensive youth ministry program.

Parishes are encouraged to name a Coordinator for Youth Ministry. “Coordinators of youth ministry should have theological formation as well as competence and experience in catechesis” (NDC 226).

Parishes are encouraged to provide on-going educational opportunities and training for all adults involved in the formation of young people. “Adequate training in the Church’s mission of evangelization and catechesis in general and youth catechesis in particular should be a minimum requirement for all youth ministers” (NDC 226).

To fulfill their responsibilities, Coordinators of Youth Ministry should work in collaboration with pastors and Parish Catechetical Leaders (NDC 226).

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Coordinators of Youth Ministry should be persons of maturing faith who participate in the life of the faith community. They should be mature and competent in the following areas: personal and spiritual growth, Catholic theology, pastoral praxis, and professional practice.

According to the *National Directory of Catechesis* (NDC 226), Coordinators of Youth Ministry should

- have theological formation as well as competence and experience in catechesis.
- be able to lead and guide young people to grow in the knowledge of the Catholic faith, in the practices of that faith in light of the principles of Christian morality and social justice, in the celebration of the sacraments, and in the development of their spiritual lives.
- be practicing Catholics who live the gospel in all aspects of their lives.
- be models of Christian living for the young people they serve and have the ability to speak credibly about their personal experience of the gift of faith.
- receive comprehensive training that employs all the principles of sound adult faith formation which includes adequate training in the Church’s mission of evangelization and catechesis.

**Parish Coordinators of Youth Ministry**

According to diocesan policy, all parishes are to have youth ministry programs and are strongly encouraged to name a person or persons responsible for these areas of ministry. “Whether coordinators of youth ministry work full-time or part-time, they should be provided compensation and benefits appropriate to their efforts” (NDC 226).

Coordinators of Youth Ministry are responsible for developing a comprehensive youth ministry program in their parish.

The tasks for a Coordinator of Youth Ministry include working with the pastor, other ministers, and appropriate members of committees, boards or councils to plan and set up policy for the parish youth ministry program. The main responsibilities of the Coordinator of Youth Ministry, under the direction of the pastor, ordinarily are to:

1. Direct youth ministry in the parish, including youth and adults.
2. Plan, implement, and evaluate the youth ministry program.

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3. Select program resources and materials that will provide the youth with a comprehensive youth ministry program.

4. Attend to bringing the youth to diocesan-sponsored events throughout the year.

5. Work in collaboration with the Parish Catechetical Leaders.

6. Prepare and follow an operating budget.

7. Represent the parish at diocesan sponsored functions.

8. Give attention to his/her personal and spiritual, theological, pastoral, and professional development (NDC 225).

There are three different types of Coordinators of Youth Ministry in our diocese.

1. Full-time employed Coordinator of Youth Ministry
2. Part-time employed Coordinator of Youth Ministry
3. Volunteer Coordinator of Youth Ministry

Certification Guidelines

Coordinators of Youth Ministry are strongly recommended to work toward certification in youth ministry by attending The Center for Ministry Development’s Certification in Youth Ministry Studies Program.

Overview and description of program below:

Overview

The Certificate in Youth Ministry Studies is a ministry education program for those in ministry with youth, ages 11 to 18 in both parish and school settings. It equips leaders with the knowledge, skills, practical tools and techniques needed for creative and comprehensive ministry with youth.

The primary aim of the program is to promote personal, spiritual, and ministerial growth.

Program Content

The Certificate in Youth Ministry Studies program includes eight courses. Each course consists of fourteen hours of instruction provided in two days. The courses are offered in a weekend format over two years.
First Year Courses focus on youth ministry principles and practices and leadership theory, processes, and skills.

Second Year Courses focus on fostering the faith growth of youth through evangelization and catechesis, prayer and worship, justice and service, and pastoral care.

Note: Courses DO NOT have to be taken in order.

Program Benefits

Confidence. Participants feel more confident in their youth ministry role because they have integrated and applied the most recent and innovative theories and approaches into their own settings and responsibilities.

Competence. The comprehensive sequence of courses provides a solid foundation of theory, theology and practical approaches, which can be applied in any parish or school youth ministry setting.

Credibility. This is a nationally recognized curriculum, offered in over 30 sites and sponsored by over 50 dioceses, whose graduates are in parish, school, and diocesan leadership positions all over the country.

In addition to a basic certification in youth ministry, full-time and part-time paid Coordinators of Youth Ministry are highly encouraged to work toward a certification equivalent to a Coordinator of Religious Education (CRE) Certification or Director of Religious Education (DRE) Certification as outlined in Section 303-A.

A Master’s Degree in Youth Ministry can be obtained from a university approved by the Diocese of Lake Charles such as Loyola University in New Orleans.

Catholic Sexuality Certification – In order to teach Catholic moral teachings on sexuality one must be certified through the diocesan Christian sexuality program.

Continuing Education – Coordinators of Youth Ministry are highly encouraged to continue their own spiritual and skill development through retreats, workshops, and conferences.

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DIOCESE OF LAKE CHARLES
DIOCESAN POLICY STATEMENT
EDUCATION IN HUMAN SEXUALITY

On November 21, 1990, the National Conference of Catholic Bishops approved a document entitled Human Sexuality: A Catholic Perspective for Education and Lifelong Learning to "guide our diocesan leaders in their service to parents, parishes and other church-related institutions as they design and implement programs of formal instruction in human sexuality from a Catholic perspective" (p. 2). The bishops affirmed the fundamental right and responsibility of parents to educate their children and also recognized that the Church has a serious responsibility to "supplement and enhance the education in sexuality which begins in the home." The policy and guidelines for the Diocese of Lake Charles are based on this document and on National Directory for Catechesis, a catechetical document approved by the United States Bishops in June 2003.

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 and administered according to guidelines issued by the Office of Catholic Schools.

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. These programs 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 On-Going 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.

See Appendix 3054 for Guidelines.

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DIOCESE OF LAKE CHARLES

GUIDELINES FOR EDUCATION IN HUMAN SEXUALITY

Education in human sexuality is to be seen as a cooperative venture, in which "parents or guardians, as primary educators, are assisted by schools, the Church, and the wider society, focusing on the physical, psychological, moral, social and spiritual development of each child or learner" (USCCB 69-70).

Parishes and schools are urged to consult the United States Bishops' Conference documents on this topic, especially Human Sexuality: A Catholic Perspective for Education and Lifelong Learning published by the USCCB, December, 1990, in the development of programs.

PURPOSE OF EDUCATION IN HUMAN SEXUALITY

The Bishops cite a three-fold purpose for education in human sexuality, whether formal or informal, which were taken from Educational Guidance in Human Love, by the Congregation for Catholic education, November 1, 1983.

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. (USCCB 74-75).

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. In families, education is more "caught" than "taught" meaning that when the attitudes, words and actions of parents are consistent, the message is most clearly understood by their children. Families go through difficult times and sometimes make mistakes and

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the Church is to support them. All parish programs are vehicles through which the Church helps people become holy, healthy, whole and productive (USCCB 72-73).

Parents need to be involved in the development of programs, policies and curriculum regarding human sexuality and assure that proper respect is given to their religious beliefs. Three rules are to be followed in the development of human sexuality programs in the Diocese: (1) begin with parental involvement; (2) include parents throughout the planning and execution of the program; and (3) involve parents in the evaluation process (USCCB 76).

It is proposed that parishes include sessions for other members of families, aimed at their own maturity and personal needs. Courses for parents and other adults should be part of parish programming (USCCB 77).

Parents have a responsibility and a right to be involved in the development of sexuality programs. Such a program should not be imposed automatically on all families (USCCB 78). The National Directory for Catechesis (NDC) states that leaders of catechesis should “recognize that parents have the basic right, duty, and primary responsibility to provide education in human sexuality for their children and to decide what kind of formal education in human sexuality is best for children, and that they may ask the Church to assist them in providing this education” (178). Although parents have the right to choose not to allow their children to participate in a school or parish based program, they do not have the right to stop such programs approved by other parents.

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 (USCCB 13, 79).

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. All materials are to be critiqued against the specific guidelines for instruction found in the USCCB document, pages 90-116. 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 for approval. 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.

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DIOCESE OF LAKE CHARLES

DIOCESAN POLICY STATEMENT

BAPTISM FOR 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. *The Catechism of the Catholic Church* [CCC] states that "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). From the earliest days of the Church, infant baptism has been a particular manifestation of the grace of salvation communicated in this sacrament.

Although it is the love and grace of God that is being celebrated in this sacrament, attention must be given to the responsibilities of the parents and the Church to provide for the proper initiation of children into the community of faith "shortly after birth." This will include adequate catechetical preparation for the parents so they will make sure that they are fully aware of their responsibility to teach and model the Faith for their children. It is stated in *The Code of Canon Law* that "the parents of an infant who is to be baptized and likewise those who are to undertake the office of sponsor are to be properly instructed in the meaning of this sacrament and the obligations which are attached to it; personally or through others, the pastor is to see to it that the parents are properly formed by pastoral directions and by common prayer ..." (canon 851, 2°). In the *Rite of Baptism*, the parents and godparents are entrusted with "the light of Christ" and to keep it burning brightly in the life of the child so that the child may keep the "flame of faith alive in his (her) heart." In the closing blessing, the mother and father are reminded that they "will be the first teachers of their child in faith."

Since the preparation of the parents and sponsors for the baptism of the child "leads only to the threshold of new life" (CCC, 1254), it is important for the pastor to provide adequate catechesis for the sacrament and continuing support to enable the continuing growth and formation of the whole family. The Guidelines in Appendix 401 are meant to inspire, encourage, and lead the pastor and the entire family of faith in the preparation and celebration of the Sacrament of Baptism.

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INTRODUCTION

The Code of Canon Law indicates in canon 851, 2° that preparation is necessary for the parents and sponsors of an infant who is to be baptized. This preparation is to include the meaning and obligations to be undertaken and should, as much as possible, include common prayer and visitation of the parents. Such preparation can be given either by the pastor personally or through others whom he appoints or delegates for this purpose.

PREPARATION AND FORMATION OF PARENTS AND SPONSORS

1. Each parish is to have a program of preparation for baptism pursuant to “The Unity Policy” [#101] of the Diocese. In those communities where two or more churches exist, they are encouraged to cooperate in developing a single joint program.

2. When a person calls the minister to begin preparation for baptism, an appointment should be scheduled with that person as soon as possible to discuss the parish program, expectation, and policies for baptism.

3. At least one and preferably both parents of the child to be baptized are to participate in a preparation program prior to the baptism of their infant. To the degree that it is possible, at least one godparent and preferably both should also participate.

4. The preparation program is best offered in a “small group” setting so that prayer and discussion among the participants may benefit all and give witness to the Church as a community of the faithful united in belief and service. Depending, however, on the size of the parish community and the needs of the parents and godparents, this instruction may be done privately either by the pastor or someone else.

5. The preparation program should cover the following issues:

   a. The Church’s understanding and theology of baptism: that it frees one from the power and bondage of sin, makes one a child of God, configures one to Christ, makes one a member of the Church, and obliges one to live in union with and be of service to God and the Church;
   b. The Church’s understanding of the role and responsibilities of parents in and after baptism (Introduction to the Rite of Baptism for Children [RBFC], #5)
   c. The role and qualifications of sponsors/godparents;
   d. The Church’s current teaching on the destiny of unbaptized infants (cf., The Catechism of the Catholic Church [CCC], 1261.)
   e. The ritual of baptism;
   f. Practical issues in the parish including:
      i. When baptism is conferred;

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ii. The time(s) of baptism;

iii. How arrangements are to be made; and

iv. Options for baptism including private baptism, communal baptism, and baptism within Mass.

6. If a parent or couple has attended a preparation course for an older child, they need not participate in another. However, if several years (five to ten) have elapsed since the last baptism, they should be encouraged to do so.

CELEBRATION OF BAPTISM

1. Canonical and liturgical regulations and the pastoral needs of those requesting baptism should all be given equal consideration in planning and celebration.

2. In respect for the calendar of the Church, baptism should occur at the Easter Vigil or on Sundays; other days may be chosen if there is serious need from the perspective of the parents or the faith community (c. 856). Inasmuch as the Lenten Season is a time of preparation for baptism, pastors are encouraged not to baptize during this season except in case of genuine need (*Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults* [RCIA]: Christian Initiation, General Introduction, #28, and RBFC, General Introduction, #28: “At all times, the celebration of the sacrament should have a markedly paschal character.”)

3. Baptism should occur “within the first weeks after birth” taking into account the welfare of the child, the health of the mother, and the pastoral considerations of preparation and other issues related to the Church’s calendar and season celebrations (c. 867 and RBFC, Introduction, #8).

4. Baptism is normally to be celebrated in the parish church of the parents and preferably “in a group” so that the communal nature of the sacrament may be evident. As stated in RCIA: Christian Initiation, General Introduction, #27: “Except for a good reason, baptism should not be celebrated more than once on the same day in the same church.”

5. Baptisms may be celebrated during Mass in order to better emphasize the communal nature of the sacrament and its association with eucharist (RBFC, Introduction, #9 and #10).

6. In the event a non-parishioner contacts a priest or deacon for baptism of a child, that person is to be instructed to get in touch with the proper pastor to obtain his permission for the baptism to occur in a parish other than that which is proper to the person (cc. 857, §1, 859).

7. The minister conferring baptism must make use of the proper ritual.

8. Baptism should occur only if there is “a founded hope that the infant will be brought up in the Catholic religion” (c. 868). Some indications of such a hope may be based upon the following:
a. Regular participation by the Catholic parent(s) at Mass;
b. The validity of the parents’ marriage or the stated intention to seek convalidation as such;
c. Participation in the parish religious education program by other children in the infant’s family;
d. A willingness on the part of the parents to participate in the parish baptismal preparation program;
e. Actual involvement by parents in Christian witness by words and deeds;
f. Sponsors who are exemplary in their witness to the faith and good role models for the child.

9. If a “founded hope” is not present, “baptism is to be put off and the parents are to be informed of the reasons” for such (c. 868, §1, 2°). It is for the parish priest to determine the time of an infant’s baptism if or when the parents are not yet prepared to profess the faith or to undertake the duties of bringing up their children as Christians (RBFC, Introduction, #8).

10. In the event that the parents do not agree with this decision, recourse is to be had to the Dean who will consult with both the parents and the minister who made the decision, but the final decision resides with the pastor (RBFC, General Introduction, #8, section 4).

11. Every infant to be baptized is to have at least one sponsor and not more than two, one of each sex (c. 873). These are to be chosen based upon their qualifications and an intention to fulfill the obligations of sponsors (c. 874).

a. The role of sponsor(s)/godparent(s) is:
   i. To be representatives of the Church community;
   ii. To assist the child in professing and living the faith;
   iii. To be an example to the child by their lives;
   iv. To profess the Church’s faith at the baptism; and
   v. In essence, to be spokespersons of the Church’s faith and mentors for the child to emulate.

b. The qualifications for serving as sponsor(s)/godparents(s) are:
   i. To be chosen by the parents or guardian of the child;
   ii. To have the proper intention;
   iii. To have completed one’s sixteenth year;
   iv. To be a confirmed Catholic who has received the Eucharist;
   v. To live a life in harmony with the faith, i.e., be a practicing Catholic;
   vi. Not be under a canonical penalty; and
   vii. Not be the natural or adoptive parent of the child.

12. It is not possible to replace a baptismal sponsor once a person has performed the role/function of godparent. If another person wishes to undertake the obligations of a godparent, this may be done in an unofficial way, but no alteration is to be made to the official record.
13. The pastor of the place where the baptism was celebrated is to record the baptism and information pertinent to it (c. 877). In the case of the baptism of a child whose parents are not married, the place for the **Name of the Father** in the Baptismal Register is to be completed with the words **Name Not Given**, unless the father has, by a legal document (Certificate of Live Birth/Document Acknowledging Paternity, Sworn and Notarized Statement) acknowledged his paternity.

**SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES**

1. Baptism may be performed by anyone and anywhere in emergency situations. (RBFC, General Introduction, #16).

2. Those employed in hospitals are often called upon in emergency situations to perform baptisms. It is the responsibility of the pastor of the territorial parish in which such an institution is located to see to it that adequate and appropriate catechesis about the necessity, method, and proper notification and recording of such baptisms are provided to the hospital personnel (RBFC, General Introduction, #17).

3. When baptisms are performed in a hospital or location other than the parish church, it is the responsibility of the person performing the baptism to notify the chaplain/pastor of the baptism including the date of such a baptism and name of the person who performed it as well as the reasons for this action.

4. The pastor of the territorial parish in which the baptism occurred is to properly record this information. A duplicate record of the emergency baptism may also be maintained in the baptized person’s own parish, if such is desired.

5. If a child is baptized by someone other than a validly ordained minister in a “non-emergency circumstance” and the baptism is valid (with the intention of the Church and employing the Trinitarian formula while pouring water), that baptism, with other significant notations included, is to be recorded in the Baptismal Register of the territorial parish in which it occurred once the pastor is made aware of it.

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+ Glen John Provost
  Bishop of Lake Charles
DIOCESE OF LAKE CHARLES

DIOCESAN POLICY STATEMENT

GUIDELINES FOR THE RECEPTION OF THE SACRAMENT OF CONFIRMATION

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, as follows:

   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 (c. 777). This catechesis takes place within, and involves, the whole faith community. (NDC 114)

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 faith community, 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 current 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. (NDC 119)

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

   a. Articulate some understanding of the role of the Holy Spirit in his/her life;
   b. Demonstrate some understanding of the sacraments of initiation: baptism, confirmation and eucharist;
   c. Demonstrate involvement in the Catholic Christian community;
   d. Approach the sacrament freely;

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3. Parents are the primary educators of their children (*Christian Education*, paragraph 3, Vatican II documents). 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 in 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.

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 father or the mother of the one to be confirmed;

   Parents may, however, present their children to the Bishop for the sacrament.

**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 and the Dean. 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 a Eucharistic liturgy, with the Bishop as celebrant. The Bishop may, however, appoint 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. Careful planning and coordinating of the celebration is required because of the solemnity of the occasion and its significance to the entire community. The pastor should be familiar with the *Rite of Confirmation* and materials made available through the Office of Religious Education and the Diocese, for assistance in preparing the candidates and celebrating the ritual(s) of confirmation.
3. In planning the liturgical celebration, every effort should be made to show the relationship between the three sacraments of initiation. *The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults* provides the model for catechesis and liturgical celebration.

4. The readings for confirmation are superseded by the readings of the day on Sundays of Advent, Lent and Easter; Ash Wednesday, during Holy Week or on solemnities; and by all anticipated Masses. To be able to better celebrate the liturgy of confirmation with its own readings, a day other than these should be chosen.

5. In confirmation, the Christian is signed with the gift of the Spirit and commissioned to assume responsibility for the building up of the Body of Christ on earth. The choice of music, therefore, should not be limited to hymns and songs to and about the Holy Spirit, but should also include songs related to baptism and Christian life as well as those which speak of witness and service in the world.

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.

1. According to ancient practice of the Roman Liturgy, an adult is not to be baptized
unless he or she receives confirmation immediately.

2. The model for preparation for confirmation of adults in the Catholic faith is the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults*.

3. 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 proper catechesis and before the distribution of Viaticum. (See *Rite of Confirmation* #52)

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.

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.

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+ Glen John Provost
Bishop of Lake Charles
SACRAMENT OF EUCHARIST

"Since the Eucharist is the 'source and summit of the Christian life”, (LG, 11), catechesis for the Eucharist recognizes it as the heart of Christian life for the whole Church, for the dioceses and parishes, and for each individual Christian. Dioceses and parishes should present lifelong catechesis for the Eucharist." (NDC 124)

According to the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (R.C.I.A.) the preparation and celebration of First Eucharist is to emphasize the relationship of Eucharist to baptism and confirmation, and to emphasize initiation into the Catholic Christian community. The parish community is to play a central role in the total initiation process.

PREPARATION FOR THE SACRAMENT OF EUCHARIST FOR CHILDREN

1. Every baptized person who is not prohibited by law can and must be admitted to Eucharist (c. 912). Parents/guardians and 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. “The criterion for reception of Holy Communion is the same for persons with developmental and mental disabilities as for all persons, namely, that the person be able to distinguish the body of Christ from ordinary food, even if this recognition is evidenced through manner, gesture, or reverential silence rather than verbally. Pastors are encouraged to consult with parents, those who take the place of parents, diocesan personnel involved with disability issues, psychologist, religious educators, and other experts in making their judgment. Cases of doubt should be resolved in favor of the right of the baptized person to receive the sacrament. The existence of a disability is not considered in and of itself as disqualifying a person from receiving the Eucharist.” (Guidelines for the Celebration of the Sacraments with Persons with Disabilities, 13-14)

3. General catechesis for the Eucharist is to be offered in the first and second grades.

Catechesis for children helps them “understand that the Eucharist is the mystery in which Christ’s sacrifice on the cross is perpetuated; that it is a memorial of Christ’s passion, death and resurrection; and that it is a sacred banquet in which the People of God share the benefits of the Paschal Mystery, renew the covenant that God has made through the blood
of Christ, and anticipate the heavenly banquet.” (NDC 124)

Catechesis should respect the age and ability of each individual child. Because children of this age tend to think in very concrete terms, catechetical programs should provide some opportunities for children to experience sharing, forgiving, listening, eating, giving, thanking, and celebrating. This will help the children understand the unity and belonging of this sacrament. The parish First Eucharist program should provide the children with texts, approved by the Bishop, which present the current 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, under both species, is not only the commemoration of Jesus’ last meal with his disciples, but is the living memorial of Christ’s sacrifice for our salvation;
d. Teach the children the importance of receiving Eucharist in a conscious and reverent manner. (NDC 127-128)

4. Parents are the primary educators of their children (Christian Education, paragraph 3, Vatican II document). Parents have a right and duty to be involved in the preparation of their children for this sacrament (NDC 127). Parents are expected to participate in the preparation program of their respective parish. Specifics of this preparation can be found in APPENDIX 403.

5. Catechesis for the preparation for this sacrament should prepare the children for reception of First Penance before that of First Eucharist. (NDC 127) The programs of specific sacramental catechesis for each sacrament and the first celebration of each should be separated by a significant interval of time. This will help avoid the misconception that Penance is always a pre-requisite for Eucharist.

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.

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. Frequent liturgical celebrations of the sacrament recognizing the specific needs of children should be encouraged and planned each year.

PARISH GUIDELINES

Parishes are to write and publish their own 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 and the Dean.

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.

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+ Glen John Provost
Bishop of Lake Charles
DIOCESE OF LAKE CHARLES

SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION FOR FIRST EUCHARIST

Children (those in Catholic Schools, those being home-schooled, those in Parish Religious Education Programs) must register in their own parishes during the specified registration period indicating they are to celebrate First Eucharist.

“Because they gave life to their children, parents have the most serious obligation and the right to educate them. It is therefore primarily the responsibility of Christian parents to ensure the Christian education of their children in accordance with the teaching of the Church” (Canon 226, §2). “The Church has in a special way the duty and the right of educating, for it has a divine mission of helping all to arrive at the fullness of Christian life” (Canon 794, §1).

“The diocesan Bishop is bound to teach and illustrate to the faithful the truths of faith which are to be believed and applied to behavior. He is himself to preach frequently. He is also to ensure that the provisions of the canons on the ministry of the word, especially on the homily and catechetical instruction, are faithfully observed, so that the whole of Christian teaching is transmitted to all” (Canon 386, §1).

In order to fulfill and respect the above norms, each parish will develop and implement a program of instruction for parents in which the following will be accomplished:

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 current teaching of the Church concerning the Eucharist;
c. The texts which present the current teaching of the Church concerning the Eucharist will be those approved by the Bishop for the instruction of children;
d. These texts and instructions will be given to the parents at the prescribed meetings;
e. 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;
f. Prior to the interview, parents will be informed that the results of the interview will determine the child’s participation in the celebration of First Eucharist.

Parents who disagree with the decision of the pastor or his delegate concerning the readiness of their child to celebrate First Eucharist may appeal to the Dean of the Deanery in which the parish is located. Since the preparation of the parents and sponsors for the baptism of the child "leads only to the threshold of new life" (CCC, 1254), it is important for the pastor to provide adequate catechesis for the sacrament and continuing support to enable the continuing growth and formation of the whole family. The Guidelines in Appendix 401 are meant to inspire, encourage, and lead the pastor and the entire family of faith in the preparation and celebration of the Sacrament of Baptism.

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+ Glen John Provost
Bishop of Lake Charles

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EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS OF HOLY COMMUNION

To be spiritually nourished through reception of the Holy Eucharist is a right won for the people of God through their redemption by His Son, Jesus Christ. Eternal life with Him is the primary goal won for us through the Redemption and the frequent nourishment by the Holy Eucharist is the method He taught us to use to achieve that primary goal. That we be assured of a sufficient number of ministers of Holy Eucharist, then, is the logical responsibility of the Holy Church He founded.

Canon 230, §3 of the Code of Canon Law states:

When the necessity of the Church warrants it and when ministers are lacking, lay persons, even if they are not lectors or acolytes, can also supply for certain of their offices, namely, to exercise the ministry of the word, to preside over liturgical prayers, to confer baptism, and to distribute Holy Communion in accord with the prescriptions of law.

1. In such situations where a need exists for ministers of Holy Communion, additional to clergy present, it shall be the responsibility of the pastor of the parish (and the administrator of an institution) to see to it that provisions are made for extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion.

2. Recognizing the importance of consultation, the choice of extraordinary ministers rests with the pastor in consultation with the parish pastoral council, and with their approval.

3. Those chosen to be extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion are to be mature persons (18 or older) leading an exemplary Christian life, recognized and respected by the Christian community they will serve. Those chosen to be extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion should conform to the guidelines of the Instruction Immensae Caritatis of January 29, 1973, issued by the Sacred Congregation of Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, and the Code of Canon Law, c. 910§2 and 230§3.

4. Special care should be shown in choosing those to minister to the "Community in Need." They should possess a charism for ministering to that particular segment of the Christian community they will serve. Extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion appointed by the parish to serve may be requested to serve the sick and elderly without additional procedure.

5. Extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion are appointed by the Bishop (or his delegate) on the recommendation of the pastor for a period of three (3) years. They may be reappointed but must request reappointment. To be appointed or reappointed, ministers must attend a workshop offered by the Office of Worship concerning duties and responsibilities of extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion.

6. After appointment by the Bishop, the extraordinary ministers should be formally commissioned by the Bishop or their pastor, or parochial vicar, in accord with the rite of
commissioning found in the *Book of Blessings* and in such a manner that a significant number of the people they serve can witness the commissioning.

7. The pastor is responsible for the minister's continued spiritual growth and appreciation of the Eucharist, as well as of this particular ministry, for the duration of the person's ministry. Periodic or annual "days of renewal" for extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion on a parish or inter-parish basis are strongly recommended.

8. On special occasions, when there is a need for additional extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion, the pastor or parochial vicar may commission suitable persons for that particular occasion. This should be done only in parishes or institutions where extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion have already been functioning. This should be done only by way of exception.

9. Since this is a ministry of the laity, Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion in the Diocese of Lake Charles are not to be distinguished from any other members of the congregation by their vesture.

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+ 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* #238 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.”

In reinstituting Communion Under Both Kinds, I have chosen, therefore, to issue the following norms for the Diocese of Lake Charles:

1. Communion Under Both Kinds is permitted and recommended for the following celebrations: 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 so defined;
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 or gatherings, as well as Masses for schools, religious education programs or 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 and that self-intinction by the communicant is not permitted (cf. *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* #287).
6. The Directives in Appendix 405 are applicable to these norms.

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+ Glen John Provost
Bishop of Lake Charles

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DIOCESE OF LAKE CHARLES
DIOCESAN POLICY STATEMENT
COMMUNION UNDER BOTH KINDS

The following are directives to assist with the implementation of Communion Under Both Kinds:

1. In the spirit of the General Instruction and the Norms for the Distribution and Reception of Holy Communion Under Both Kinds, we must be aware that congregations at certain large celebrations may be unfamiliar with the practice of Communion Under Both Kinds or lack proper catechesis; in such instances, Holy Communion should be distributed under one species alone, that is the Sacred Body;

2. Referencing the same Norms for the Distribution and Reception, etc. mentioned above, we read: “In practice, the need to avoid obscuring the role of the priest and the deacon as the ordinary ministers of Holy Communion by an excessive use of extraordinary ministers might in some circumstances constitute a reason either for limiting the distribution of Holy Communion under both species or for using intinction instead of distributing the Precious Blood from the chalice” (#24);

3. The Norms for the Distribution and Reception of Holy Communion Under Both Kinds from the USCCB with the approval of the Holy See and other documents from the Holy See remind us of the important distinctions in terminology that reflect our theological and liturgical understanding; the proper Eucharistic Ministers are bishops, priests, deacons, and those installed in the Ministry of Acolyte; anyone else given permission to distribute Holy Communion is termed an Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion and NOT a Eucharistic Minister; the term “extraordinary” implies three things:

4. a. No appointment to such a duty is without expiration. (Reminder: in the Diocese of Lake Charles Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion are appointed for a renewable three year term upon completion of a required workshop);
   b. An extraordinary minister never takes precedence over a Eucharistic Minister in the distribution of Holy Communion;
   c. The services of the extraordinary minister are by way of exception to answer a legitimate need, namely the absence of an adequate number of Eucharistic Ministers.

5. The terminology “Wine Minister,” “Bread Minister,” or any other use of “wine” or “bread” to describe the Sacred Species is misleading and is not to be used; we recommend the use of “cup” or “chalice” and “host”;

6. The General Instruction #281 states: “Holy Communion has a fuller form as a sign when it is distributed under both kinds. For in this form the sign of the Eucharistic banquet is more clearly evident and clear expression is given to the divine will by which the new and eternal
Covenant is ratified in the Blood of the Lord, as also the relationship between the Eucharistic banquet and the eschatological banquet in the Father’s Kingdom.”

As teachers and pastors, we have an obligation to instruct and to correct the notion that one must receive Holy Communion Under Both Kinds to receive “all” of communion or that communion with Our Lord is incomplete unless both kinds are received; Communion Under One Kind, that is the Sacred Body, “has been legitimately established as the most common form in the Latin rite”; reference should be made to the Catechism of the Catholic Church #1390;

7. Please note: in the norms stated in Policy 405, the choice of terminology is deliberate; norms #1-3 establish a distinct hierarchy and norm #4 restricts distribution to one kind; in keeping with the principle of subsidiarity and out of respect for the office, the pastor, respecting the hierarchy of norms, determines ultimately at what Masses, mentioned in the norms #1-3, Holy Communion Under Both Kinds will be distributed;

8. In the event of a change of pastors, the customary practice for the distribution of Holy Communion established by the previous pastor, if in accord with the norms and directives in Policy 405 and Appendix 405, are to remain in place and respected; if change within the stipulations of these norms and directives is contemplated, then the present pastor must consult with the Office of Worship and present a program of proper catechesis for the change; the Bishop, as chief liturgist of the Diocese, reserves the right to make a final determination.

9. The norm for the reception of Holy Communion is standing, with a bow of reverence before reception; no changes are to be made to an established practice for the reception of Holy Communion in any parish without consultation with the Bishop. Also, Holy Communion may be received either “in the hand” or “on the tongue,” and no one should refuse Holy Communion to anyone because of non-conformity to a posture, as long as that posture is not forbidden by liturgical law or propriety.

The pastor of the community where the celebration will take place is to answer any questions of definition contained in these norms. Any appeal is to be addressed to the proper Ordinary.

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+ Glen John Provost
Bishop of Lake Charles

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SACRAMENT OF PENANCE

"Jesus began His work on earth by calling people to repentance and faith; "Reform your lives and believe in the gospel." (Mk 1:15) Conversion means turning from sin toward Him - present in His Church, in the Eucharist, in His works, and in our neighbor - with love and a desire for Penance."

"Jesus began His risen life by giving His apostles power to forgive sins (Jn 20:23). The Sacrament of Penance continues His work of forgiving and reconciling. It celebrates the prodigal's return to the eternally merciful Father, renewing the sinner's union with God - and also with the community, inasmuch as our sins harm our brothers and sisters." (NCD 124)

PREPARATION FOR THE SACRAMENT OF PENANCE FOR CHILDREN

1. Every baptized child has the right to approach the Sacrament of Penance at the "age of discretion," (Quam Singulari, 1910). Each parish community has the responsibility of providing a program to prepare children for the first reception of this sacrament (Canon 777). Because any person is required to celebrate this sacrament only when she/he is in the condition of serious sin (Canon 988), the right of the child and his/her freedom not to confess, must be scrupulously respected.

2. Catechesis should respect the age and ability of each individual child. Through the catechetical process, the child should be able to:
   a. Articulate the relationship of the sacrament to his/her own life. This would include an understanding of sin and oneself as a sinner, an understanding of personal free will, choice and responsibility, and an understanding of the infinite love of God, with an emphasis on God's love and forgiveness. This sacrament is to be presented as a graced moment to celebrate that love and forgiveness.
   b. Recognize the difference between right and wrong.
   c. Repent of wrongdoing by turning to the forgiveness of Christ and the Church.
   d. Recognize that faith is demonstrated in this sacrament by accepting forgiveness and forgiving others.
   e. Approach the sacrament freely. (NCD, 125, 126)

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 (Christian Education, paragraph 3, Vatican II document). As such, they are responsible, together with parish priests, coordinators, 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. Specifics of this preparation can be found in APPENDIX 406.

5. Catechesis for the preparation for this sacrament is to remain clearly separate from introductory catechesis for the Sacrament of Eucharist, (NCD 122). 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. This will help avoid the misconception that Penance is always a prerequisite for Eucharist.

6. It is recommended that simple communal celebrations of sorrow and forgiveness to the needs and understanding of the young child be employed in this catechesis (cf. Rite of Penance, Appendix II, Section VI, VI). Catechists and parents may not only help plan these services but also preside at them. This catechesis is to be considered only the beginning of a developmental education process intended to continue into adult life.

7. The first celebration of penance should be within the context of a communal penance service as found in the Rite of Penance, Form II. It is recommended that such communal celebrations include adult participation in addition to the participation of children. Every effort should be made by the pastor, other involved priests, coordinators, catechists, and parents to provide a positive experience for these children.

ADULT FIRST RECEPTION

Adult preparation for first reception of the Sacrament of Penance should be included in the Mystagogia period of the RCIA process.

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.

2. Ongoing catechesis for the Sacrament of Penance should be an integral part of each year's catechetical programs.

3. Frequent celebration of the sacrament is to be encouraged as a means of ongoing conversion and growth in holiness. Therefore, the opportunity to celebrate the sacrament should be offered each year, through various parish and school programs.
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.

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+ Glen John Provost
Bishop of Lake Charles
SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION FOR FIRST Penance

Students (those in Catholic Schools, those being home-schooled, those in Parish Religious Education Programs) must register in their own parishes during the specified registration period indicating they are to celebrate First Penance.

“Because they gave life to their children, parents have the most serious obligation and the right to educate them. It is therefore primarily the responsibility of Christian parents to ensure the Christian education of their children in accordance with the teaching of the Church.” (Canon 226, §2)

“The Church has in a special way the duty and the right of educating, for it has a divine mission of helping all to arrive at the fullness of Christian life.” (Canon 794, §1)

“The diocesan Bishop is bound to teach and illustrate to the faithful the truths of faith which are to be believed and applied to behavior. He is himself to preach frequently. He is also to ensure that the provisions of the canons on the ministry of the word, especially on the homily and catechetical instruction, are faithfully observed, so that the whole of Christian teaching is transmitted to all.” (Canon 386, §1)

In order to fulfill and respect the above norms, each parish will develop and implement a program of instruction for parents in which the following will be accomplished:

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 current teaching of the Church concerning the Sacrament of Penance;
c. The texts which present the current teaching of the Church concerning the Sacrament of Penance will be those approved by the Bishop for the instruction of students;
d. These texts and instructions will be given to the parents at the prescribed meetings;
e. A required component of each parish program will be an interview with the student by the pastor or his delegate at the conclusion of the formation;
f. Prior to the interview, parents will be informed that the results of the interview will determine the student’s participation in the celebration of First Penance.

Parents who disagree with the decision of the pastor or his delegate concerning the readiness of the student to celebrate First Penance may appeal to the Dean of the Deanery in which the parish is located.

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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.

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+ Glen John Provost
Bishop of Lake Charles
A pastoral priest has a great dedication to and respect for sacramental marriage, especially as a lasting sign of love and the Christ/Church union. Knowing and respecting law 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.

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+ Glen John Provost
Bishop of Lake Charles
“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:

THOSE TO WHOM AN ECCLESIASITICAL 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 particular 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 internment 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

On the occasion of a funeral, 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:

Updated: July 1, 2015
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 giveness 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**

With regard to the Code of Canon Law, canon 1182, universal law simply states that the register of deaths is to be made according to particular law. Therefore, particular will be as follows:

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, we should not make them 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.

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+ Glen John Provost
Bishop of Lake Charles

Updated: July 1, 2015
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.¹

2. The term "altar boys" should be replaced by "servers". The term "server" should be used for those who carry out the functions of the instituted acolyte.

3. 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 for the first time and normally receive the Eucharist whenever they participate in the liturgy.

4. 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 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.

5. Since the role of server is integral to the normal celebration of the Mass, at least one server should assist the priest. On Sundays and other more important occasions, two or more servers should be employed to carry out the various functions normally entrusted to these ministers.

6. Servers should normally be vested. This is within the tradition of the Church and prevents difficulties regarding appropriate dress for these ministers. All servers should wear the same liturgical vesture;² cassock and surplice or alb.

¹Number 70, para. 1, the second sentence no longer applies (this restricted the liturgical functions in the sanctuary to men).

²The alb is preferred vestment for servers (cf, General Instruction of the Roman Missal. no. 298).

Updated: July 1, 2015
7. Servers carry the cross, the processional candles, hold the book for the priest celebrant when he is not at the altar, carry the incense and censer, present the bread and wine, and water to the priest during the preparation of the gifts or assist him when he receives the gifts from the people, wash the hands of the priest, assist the priest celebrant and deacon as necessary.

8. 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.

9. Servers should be seated in a place from which they can easily assist the priest celebrant and deacon. The place next to the priest is normally reserved for the deacon.

10. Servers may not distribute holy communion unless they have been mandated for this function by the bishop.

11. 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.

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+ Glen John Provost
Bishop of Lake Charles
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)

   With 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 a given 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.

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+ Glen John Provost
Bishop of Lake Charles
ADDENDUM

With regard to 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. With regard to 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 personally fulfill Mass obligations when legitimately inhibited, i.e. illness or travel.

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Glen John Provost
Bishop of Lake Charles
DIOCESE OF LAKE CHARLES
DIOCESAN POLICY STATEMENT

SACRED MUSIC

MUSIC AND INSTRUMENTS IN LITURGY

1. The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, Art. 112, 113 states:

"Liturgical action is given a more noble form when sacred rites are solemnized in song, with the assistance of sacred ministers and the active participation of the people."

"Therefore sacred music increases in holiness to the degree that it is intimately linked with liturgical action, winningly expresses prayerfulness, promotes solidarity, and enriches sacred rites with heightened solemnity. The Church indeed approves of all forms of true art and admits them in Divine worship when they show appropriate qualities."

a. Music should be performed at least at the level of the musical expectancy of the congregation. Musicianship beneath this level would merely tend to distract most people.

b. Music should be performed with sensitivity to the congregation. The people will be the ultimate judge of the effectiveness of the music used in worship.

c. Music should edify the congregation and not divide it. In the spirit of charity, no one group should impose its own tastes on the rest.

d. Music should be performed that can draw from the talents and creativity of the congregation. In this way, the congregation can come to be identified with its own music in worship, the product of its own members, and therefore, its own particular gift to the Lord.

2. The USCCB document, Sing to the Lord, states:

“God has bestowed upon his people the gift of song. God dwells within each human person, in the place where music takes its source. Indeed, God, the giver of song, is present whenever his people sing his praises.” (1)

“The Church is always at prayer in her ministers and her people, and that prayer takes various forms in her life. Authentic sacred music supports the Church’s prayer by enriching its elements.” (15)

3. Concerning instruments, the Instruction on Music in the Liturgy states: (March 5, 1967)

"In permitting and using musical instruments, the culture and traditions of individual peoples must be taken into account... Any musical instrument permitted in Divine worship
should be used in such a way that it meets the needs of the liturgical celebration, and is in the interests both of the beauty of worship and the edification of the faithful."

a. Church music can be beautifully accompanied by the proper use of musical instruments. There are no "religious instruments", there are no "secular instruments". The holiness of a thing comes from the way it is used in the liturgy. The liturgy receives its music and instruments from the people gathered together in prayer.

b. The only condition placed on the use of instruments is that they be played in a style which "meets the needs of the celebration, and is in the interest both of the beauty of worship and the edification of the faithful."

c. It is very important that the congregation be sufficiently prepared by an adequate catechesis for the use of non-traditional music and instruments in worship.

d. The musicians, too, whether choir members, song leaders, organists, guitarists, etc., must be well-trained in their role as leaders in song for Divine worship.

4. Concerning instruments, *Sing to the Lord* states:

“Of all the sounds of which human beings, created in the image and likeness of God, are capable, voice is the most privileged and fundamental. Musical instruments in the Liturgy are best understood as an extension of and support to the primary liturgical instrument, which is the human voice.” (86)

“Among all other instruments which are suitable for divine worship, the organ is ‘accorded pride of place’ [GIRM, 393] because of its capacity to sustain the singing of a large gathered assembly, due to both its size and its ability to give ‘resonance to the fullness of human sentiments, from joy to sadness, from praise to lamentation.’ Likewise, ‘the manifold possibilities of the organ in some way remind us of the immensity and the magnificence of God.’” (87)

5. Concerning recorded music, *Sing to the Lord* states:

“Recorded music lacks the authenticity provided by a living liturgical assembly gathered for the Sacred Liturgy. While recorded music might be used advantageously outside the Liturgy as an aid in the teaching of new music, it should not, as a general norm, be used within the Liturgy.” (93)
DIOCESE OF LAKE CHARLES

DIOCESAN POLICY STATEMENT

POSTURE OF THE CELEBRANT AT THE CELEBRATION OF THE EUCHARIST

To celebrate the Ordinary Form in the so-called ad orientum posture in the Diocese of Lake Charles requires the formal consultation of the priest (i.e., written request and written response) with the Bishop for his approval. Instruction and catechesis on this posture for celebration is required, and the Bishop will provide this instruction.

Promulgated: March 8, 2010

Effective: March 8, 2010

+ 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

Updated: July 1, 2015
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 being celebrated, their manner of celebration, and their implications for daily life. It offers sacramental catechesis for all the members of the diocese, as well as promotes the liturgical formation of those who serve the liturgical assembly. The Office of Liturgy does all of 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 diocesan bishop shall appoint the Director of the Office of Liturgy. The director shall be a de facto member of the Diocesan Building Commission. He will also serve as the de facto Master of Ceremonies for all diocesan and episcopal Masses and liturgies unless otherwise notified. 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 sacramental administration of those initiated into the Church.

DIOCESAN LITURGICAL COMMISSION

In accord with the Second Vatican Council’s Document on the Sacred Liturgy, Sacrosanctum Concilium, 45, the Diocese of Lake Charles will have a Diocesan Liturgical Commission. The chair of the commission will always be the Director of the Office of Liturgy. The Diocesan Liturgical Commission (under title of the Mediator Dei Commission and under the patronage of Venerable Pope Pius XII whose initiatives helped bring about the liturgical renewal) is considered a working commission. The commission will assist the diocesan bishop in serving the liturgy of the Church for the worship of God the Blessed Trinity.

The members of the Mediator Dei Commission will be nominated by the director and appointed by the bishop for a term of three (3) years. The commission will number no more than six (6) persons. The commission will meet bi-annually. The commission will consist of both clergy and lay members who have knowledge of the liturgy and the liturgical patrimony of the Roman Catholic Church, strive to implement the liturgical norms in a spirit of continuity with the mind of the Church, and remain faithful to the principles of the ars celebrandi.

The Director of the Office of Liturgy will nominate to the Mediator Dei Commission at least one priest who has parochial duties and one deacon serving in the Diocese of Lake Charles.

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

Updated: July 1, 2015
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 first 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 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: December 19, 2012

Effective: January 1, 2013

+ Glen John Provost
Bishop of Lake Charles
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:

Can. 537 -- Each Parish is to have a finance Council which is regulated by universal law as well as by norms issued by the diocesan bishop; in this council the Christian faithful, selected according to the same norms, aid the pastor in the administration of parish goods with due regard for the prescription of can. 532.

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.

The finance council will function in accordance with the guidelines given in Appendix 501.

Promulgated: April 23, 2008

Effective: July 1, 2008

+ Glen John Provost
Bishop of Lake Charles

Updated: July 1, 2015
DIOCESE OF LAKE CHARLES

GUIDELINES FOR ORGANIZATION AND FUNCTION OF FINANCE COUNCILS

1. The Parish Finance Council
   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
   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
   a. be elected by the members;
   b. should include a vice chairperson and a secretary; and
   c. the terms can be one or two years, renewable one time.

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 give due consideration to the advise 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.
Appendix 501

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: April 23, 2008

Effective: July 1, 2008

Glen John Provost
Bishop of Lake Charles
DIOCESE OF LAKE CHARLES
DIOCESAN POLICY STATEMENT
PARISH TRUSTEES

The Code of Canon Law states:

   Can. 1254, §1. The Catholic Church has an innate right to acquire, retain, administer and alienate temporal goods in pursuit of its proper ends independently of civil power.

   §2. The following ends are especially proper to the Church: to order divine worship; to provide decent support for the clergy and other ministers; to perform works of the sacred apostolate and of charity, especially towards the needy.

Therefore, the Bishop of Lake Charles, hereby 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.

Parish Trustees will function in accordance with the guidelines given in Appendix 502.

Promulgated: April 23, 2008

Effective: July 1, 2008

+ Glen John Provost
Bishop of Lake Charles

Updated: July 1, 2015
DIOCESE OF LAKE CHARLES

GUIDELINES FOR ORGANIZATION AND FUNCTION OF PARISH TRUSTEES

1. Membership

Two lay trustees for each parish, upon recommendation of the pastor, are appointed by the Bishop to assist the parish in its existence as a corporate entity in a secular world. They serve as members of the Board of Directors of the parish corporation, along with the Bishop (President), Vicar General (Vice-President), and Canonical Pastor (Secretary-Treasurer). They are properly ex officio members of the Parish Pastoral Council, and share in a special way the cares and concerns of the pastor.

2. Qualifications

Trustees must be members of the parish in which they serve, 21 years of age or older, and chosen in such a manner that there be no conflict of interest in matters of temporal administration.

3. Terms of Office

Trustees are appointed to a term of two years. Appointments are to be made in writing. A trustee wishing to resign should make that request, in writing, to the Bishop, outlining reasons for the request.

4. Removal

In the event that a pastor should wish to replace a trustee prior to the expiration of the term of office, the request must be made in writing to the Bishop who will consider the reasons given before making his decision.

5. Assumption of Office

At the beginning of term of office, each trustee is to make an oath to efficiently and faithfully carry out the duties of the position. Trustees are to be instructed by the pastors in their duties, and reminded that they are to follow Diocesan Policies and the general laws of the Church. It is also essential to familiarize oneself with the articles of incorporation of the parish, and any amendments thereof.

6. Duties of the Trustees

In general, the trustees cooperate with the Bishop, Vicar General, and Pastor in representing the parish as a legal corporation under the law of the State of Louisiana. At the same time, they are not to lose sight of the more basic and broader spiritual goals for which each parish is established. Their duties include attending meetings of the corporation, assisting the pastor in maintaining an accurate, itemized inventory of all parish properties, movable and immovable, and participating in consideration of acts and resolution of the corporation.

Updated: July 1, 2015
7. Corporate Resolutions

Certain acts of parish administration require resolutions adopted by the Board of Directors duly authorizing the specific transaction. Such resolutions of the parish corporations are valid only with the written approval and signature of the Bishop.

Promulgated: April 23, 2008

Effective: July 1, 2008

Glen John Provost
Bishop of Lake Charles
DIOCESE OF LAKE CHARLES

DIOCESAN POLICY STATEMENT

DIOCESAN BUILDING COMMISSION

To acquire, construct, renovate or repair church-owned properties where anticipated expenditures are over $10,000.00 or exceed 10% of a parish's yearly taxable income, permission of the Bishop is required. In acquiring this permission all parishes and diocesan departments, including the Chancery are held to the following procedure:

1. Before applying to the Bishop for permission, a pastor must discuss the proposal with parish trustees, the parish pastoral council and finance council and the dean.

2. A letter applying for permission signed by the pastor, parish trustees and the dean is then directed to the Most Reverend Bishop. This letter should include information about:
   a. need for the project;
   b. estimated cost and plans for financing;
   c. source and terms of loan (if needed);
   d. ownership of building site (to be acquired or already owned);
   e. architectural firm to be employed.

3. After receiving this application, the Bishop will consult with the Diocesan Building Commission, a group appointed by him to evaluate and make recommendations on construction proposals. In pursuing its study, the Diocesan Building Commission assigns a project to one of its lay professional members who will personally call on the pastor and/or building committee to confer on site conditions, the need for preliminary drawings, structural, mechanical, and electrical matters, etc.

4. When preliminary drawings are ready, the pastor will seek an appointment with the Diocesan Building Commission for himself and the parish architect to make a preliminary presentation.

5. The pastor will then be informed by letter (with a copy to the architect) of the Bishop's decision and of any recommendations made by the Commission. Once approval is received, the architect engaged by the parish is authorized to draw up working plans and specifications.

6. When working plans and specifications are complete, the pastor will seek an appointment for himself and the parish architect for presentation to the Diocesan Building Commission.

7. After the Commission recommends approval, the Bishop will grant permission by letter to proceed with bids and construction.
*An application for Loan form will be mailed unless original letter of application indicates there will be no need to borrow funds. If funds will need to be borrowed, one-half of the amount of the project must be “cash on hand” in order for the Loan application to be approved.

Promulgated: April 23, 2008
Effective: July 1, 2008

+ Glen John Provost
Bishop of Lake Charles
DIOCESE OF LAKE CHARLES

THE DIRECTOR OF THE OFFICE OF LITURGY AS *DE FACTO* MEMBER OF THE DIOCESAN BUILDING COMMISSION

Upon his appointment as the Director of the Office of Liturgy, the director shall serve as a *de facto* member of the Diocesan Building Commission. He is to represent the Church’s understanding of the construction, restoration, and renovation of buildings which will serve as places of worship as the bishop’s representative.

The Director of the Office of Liturgy will attend all meetings at which discussion or approval of the building, restoration, or renovation of a building used for sacred worship takes place with the Diocesan Building Commission. His role is that of a liturgical consultant, and so is not required to take part in meetings concerning buildings whose use is not chiefly the worship of God.

Promulgated: December 19, 2012

Effective: January 1, 2013

+ Glen John Provost
Bishop of Lake Charles
DIOCESE OF LAKE CHARLES

DIOCESAN POLICY STATEMENT

THE DIOCESAN PASTORAL COUNCIL

In accord with canons 511 through 514 of The 1983 Code of Canon Law, the Diocese of Lake Charles shall have a “Diocesan Pastoral Council” consisting of members of the Christian faithful, clerical and lay, whose purpose shall be to “investigate, consider and propose practical conclusions about those things which pertain to pastoral works in the Diocese.”

This “Diocesan Pastoral Council” shall be organized and function according to and under the provisions of “The Constitution of the Diocesan Pastoral Council” which follows in Appendix 504.

Promulgated: January 24, 2011

Effective: July 1, 2011

+ Glen John Provost
Bishop of Lake Charles
DIOCESE OF LAKE CHARLES

CONSTITUTION OF THE DIOCESAN PASTORAL COUNCIL

ARTICLE I NAME, PURPOSE AND FUNCTION

Section A The Name of this organization shall be “The Diocesan Pastoral Council of the Diocese of Lake Charles.”

Section B The Diocesan Pastoral Council is a consultative body to the Bishop with the purpose of “investigating, considering, and proposing practical conclusions about those things which pertain to pastoral works in the Diocese” of Lake Charles. (Canon 511)

Section C In order to fulfill its mandate, the Diocesan Pastoral Council will address issues presented to it by the Bishop after he has consulted with the Diocesan Presbyteral Council.

ARTICLE II MEMBERSHIP

Section A In accord with canon 512, The Diocesan Pastoral Council shall be composed of members of the Christian faithful including

1. Laity;
2. A woman religious; and
3. Clerics.

Section B With regard to the members of the laity, there shall be ten lay members of the Diocesan Pastoral Council. There shall be three representatives from each of the Deaneries within the Diocese and one from student member from the Catholic Student Center at McNeese State University.

Section C The members of the clergy who shall be ex officio members of The Diocesan Pastoral Council are the Chair of the Presbyteral Council and the Chair of the Deacons’ Council.

Section D A woman religious shall be selected by the Bishop as a member of The Diocesan Pastoral Council.

Section E All members of The Diocesan Pastoral Council have the same rights and all exercise the right to voice and vote.

Updated: July 1, 2015
ARTICLE III  NOMINATION TO MEMBERSHIP

Section A  The Chairmen of the Presbyteral Council and the Deacons’ Council are \textit{ex officio} members of The Diocesan Pastoral Council and will be informed of this by letter from the Bishop.

Section B  The Bishop shall freely choose any woman religious serving in the Diocese to serve as a member of The Diocesan Pastoral Council. He may choose to consult with the women religious for suggestions or nominations prior to appointing someone to The Diocesan Pastoral Council.

Section C  With regard to the members of the laity, the following procedure is to be followed:

1. Nominations are to be sought from the Pastors in each Deanery;
2. This will be done by means of a letter from the proper dean which will include a “Nomination Form” which details the qualifications for membership;
3. Upon receipt of the nominations from his Deanery, the Dean will select not more than six names to be sent, along with the completed “Nomination Form” to the Bishop; and
4. The Bishop will choose the ten persons whom he will name to The Diocesan Pastoral Council;
5. These ten individuals will be notified by letter from the Bishop of their nomination and requested to serve for a three year term.

ARTICLE IV  MEETINGS

Section A  The Diocesan Pastoral Council shall be convened by the Bishop at least twice a year.

Section B  In addition, the Bishop may convene The Diocesan Pastoral Council at his pleasure.
ARTICLE V  CESSATION

Section A  The Diocesan Pastoral Council ceases to exist when the Diocesan See is vacant.

Section B  The Bishop may, at his discretion, disband The Diocesan Pastoral Council.

Promulgated:  January 24, 2011

Effective:  July 1, 2011

+ Glen John Provost
Bishop of Lake Charles
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

Updated: July 1, 2015
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.

Updated/Amended: July 1, 2015
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 of 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 by 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 to cooperate to the fullest extent 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

+ 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 704 concerns all forms of abuse of minors not only sexual abuse as does Policy 703 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:

b. Vicar General: Office Hours, (337) 439-7400; After Office Hours, (337) 436-7223.
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

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+ 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 of 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 child care 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

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.

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# Marriage Preparation and Celebration

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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 Guidelines

Introduction

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.
Marriage Preparation Guidelines
Introduction

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 ecclesiastical 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.
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.
d. 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
Marriage Preparation Guidelines
Pastoral Guidelines

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.

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 Episcopalian 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 illegally, 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° (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°; §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°; §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°).

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°).
   [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°).

7.3 A marriage of a person who is bound by a censure (c. 1071, §1, 5°).

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°).

7.5 A marriage to be entered by means of a proxy, mentioned in Canon 1105 (c. 1071, §1, 7°).

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 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°). [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.)