

DIOCESE OF ST. JOHN'S-BASSETTERRE



PRAXIS PAROCHORUM

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Foreword

This Praxis Parochorum is dedicated to the Pastors and all who minister in this Diocese, who by their way of life and their work, their devotion to God and their efforts to serve humanity, have made the Church's universal practice alive in this culture and among our people. This is the work of the Incarnation of Christ. In keeping with the church's tradition, this document offers guidelines and practices which when adhered to will bring order, stability, and strength to the evangelization work of the diocese and all who minister herein.

Over the years certain pastoral practices have matured through the wisdom of the ages under the guidance of the Holy Spirit and the passage of time and therefore must be taken seriously. Obedience to tradition is part of our Catholic heritage and way of life. If as clergy and religious we have a common practice of our ministry to the people of God, this facilitates communion and spiritual growth that is beneficial to all.

This handbook is an updated version and revision of the General Pastoral Directives and Special Faculties document produced in 2003 for the Diocese of St. John's-Basseterre. In preparing this current handbook, the priests were consulted for input, but in the main, a labour of love was undertaken by the Vicar General Fr. Pierre Tevi-Benissan, SVD to whom we are especially grateful. With the publication of this handbook all other versions of Diocesan Policies are now abrogated.

To all the Clergy and Religious of the Diocese we are eternally grateful for your dedication and sacrifice.

In His Service,

+ Bishop Robert A. J. Llanos
Diocese of St. John's-Basseterre

DIOCESE OF ST. JOHN’S-BASSETERRE

GENERAL PASTORAL DIRECTIVES AND SPECIAL FACULTIES

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1. PREAMBLE

1. The Ministry of the Parish Priest

- a. In the Catholic Church, a priest appointed by the Diocesan Bishop to oversee a Parish, is referred to as the Parish Priest or the Pastor.

A religious (Brother or Sister) or a Lay person, in the absence of an ordained minister, can be appointed by the Bishop to be responsible for the day-to-day management of the parish community. However, this person will be accountable to the priest who will in fact be The Parish Priest.

- b. Parish Priests, to whom are entrusted the pastoral care of a Parish, are responsible for the building up of that Christian community as well as strengthening the role of the Catholic Laity. By virtue of his office, the parish priest is bound to ensure the catechetical formation of adults, young people, and children ... (C. 776).

- c. They also have responsibilities to the wider community which varies from Parish to Parish

The Revised Code of Canon Law has much to say about the role of the Parish Priest. The following is a list of quotations taken from the 1983 Revised Code and offered as part of the preamble to this document. Kindly refer to the specific canons for more in-depth information and details.

I. Proclamation of the Word of God C.528, #1

- Ministry of the Word (in strict sense): Preaching (Sundays and Holy Days) Catechetics
- Ministry of Social Justice and the spirit of the Gospel
- Catholic education for children and youth
- Evangelisation (with the help of the faithful) - those who have left the practice of their faith, the unchurched and those who do not profess the faith.

II. Liturgical and Spiritual Ministry C 528, #2

- The Eucharist is the centre of the Parish
- Sacramental celebration and frequent reception of the Eucharist and Penance
- Direction in prayer, especially family prayer and active participation in Liturgy
- Preside over the liturgy under the direction of the Bishop, guard against liturgical abuse.

III. Pastoral Care C 529, #1

- Parish and Family visitation: Comforting the grieving and those with other cares and problems providing moral and religious counsel
- Minister to the sick and dying, sacramental ministry and prayer
- Ministry to those in need: Poor, oppressed, lonely, migrants and others in special need
- Family life ministry & Christian life: Married couple, Parents.

IV. Leadership Development C 529, #2

- Mission and Ministry: Promote the proper role of the members of the congregation the Mission of the Church especially in group or corporate action
- Communion (Koinonia)
- Promote a sense of parish community, diocesan community, universal (Catholic) community in cooperation with the Bishops and other Presbyters.

V. Liturgical Presidency C 530

The Pastor presides over:

- Solemn celebration of the Eucharist on Sundays and Holy Days
- Sacraments of Initiation (Baptism, Confirmation)
- Blessing the Baptismal Font at Easter; Processions and Solemn Blessings outside the Church
- Assistance at marriage and marriage blessings
- Viaticum and anointing the sick
- Funerals

VI. Parish Management

C 532

- The Pastor acts as agent of the Parish in all legal matters.
- The Pastor oversees the administration of the Church property and finance in accordance with church law and policy.

VII. Parish Planning (Consultation)

- The Pastor presides over the Pastoral Council C 536
- The Pastor presides over the Administration/Finance Council C 537

VIII. Miscellaneous Obligations

- Residency C 533
- Mass for the People C 534
- Parish Books and Archives C 535

2. THE AREAS OF PARISH LIFE

The areas of Parish life for which Parish Priests are responsible for include:

a) SACRAMENTS

- The preparation for
- The celebration of
- The keeping of proper records

b) EVANGELISATION

c) LITURGY

d) LAY APOSTOLATE/SOCIAL MINISTRY

e) THE PARISH OFFICE

f) MAINTENANCE (of the church's property)

g) FINANCES

h) PARISH PASTORAL COUNCILS

C. 536

i) PASTORAL VISITATION

j) SCHOOLS

2a. THE SACRAMENTS

Parish Priests are expected to:

- i. Arrange weekend Worship for the parish faith communities
- ii. Arrange Mass and devotions on weekdays for the needs of the faithful
- iii. Make themselves available at fixed times for the Sacrament of Reconciliation and counselling
- iv. Ensure that the faithful understand the significance of the sacraments and their place in the life of the Church community and the individual Christian
- v. Ensure that the sick and the aged (the shut-ins) receive the Sacrament of the Eucharist regularly, using duly appointed MINISTERS OF COMMUNION to supplement their ministry. They are however to provide the SACRAMENT OF THE SICK with Anointing on a regular basis to all the shut-ins
- vi. Keep proper records of the Sacraments of Baptism, First Communion, Confirmation, Marriages and of funerals

2b. EVANGELISATION

Pastors will provide Evangelisation and Catechesis for:

- i. Parents of infants to be baptized
- ii. Adults/teenagers preparing for Confirmation
- iii. Children preparing for Eucharist and Reconciliation
- iv. Adult Converts and lapsed Catholics
- v. Those preparing for Marriage
- vi. Those attending Catholic schools in their area
- vii. Catholic children attending state schools and those of other denominations.

2c. LITURGY

In the celebration of the Liturgy, parish priests are required to entrust lay persons with their specific responsibilities:

- i. Lectors
- ii. Choir Leaders
- iii. Hospitality Team and Collectors
- iv. Altar Servers and
- v. Auxiliary Ministers of the Eucharist

Liturgical Lay Ministers are those who, in the absence of the clergy, will be required to lead weekday and Sunday services and Funerals. These Lay ministers' function after they have been publicly commissioned by the Bishop, Vicar General, or Parish Priest.

2d. LAY APOSTOLATE/SOCIAL MINISTRY

Pastors are expected to foster the growth of a vibrant lay apostolate and effective social ministry by:

- i. Ensuring that parish organisations are faithful to their purpose and charism
- ii. Setting up those parish organisations which are needed in the parish to ensure that the needs of all are looked after
- iii. Ensuring that all conflicts within the parish community and between the parish and other groups within the community are settled amicably and with justice.

(If and when necessary, help should be sought from another authority.)

2e. THE PARISH OFFICE

The Pastor is expected to establish an office through which the official business of the parish is responsibly administered. This will require:

- i. Office hours on fixed days with fixed times for the Pastor (and secretary or assistant) to be available to the people.
- ii. Keeping of proper parish records of the sacraments celebrated, the various meetings, groups' and community activities and other aspects of parish life
- iii. Attending to the necessary and important correspondence to the parish.

2f. MAINTENANCE

- i. Buildings for worship in the parish are to be used for community worship, devotions, and prayer meetings.
- ii. If there is no other suitable place, meetings of the parish and its various groups may be allowed in the churches or chapels, after consultation with the Bishop or Vicar General.
- iii. The church may be used for sacred concerts, but permission must be obtained beforehand from the local ordinary.
- iv. Authorisation for community meetings and other functions should be sought from the local ordinary. If permission is given, the Blessed Sacrament may have to be moved to a suitable place.
- v. The maintenance of all the properties of the church in the parish falls under the general responsibility of the pastor. To assist him in the exercise of this responsibility, this task should be entrusted to a special committee within the parish.

2g. THE FINANCES OF THE PARISH cf. C 537, 1281-88

- i. The parish is part of The Corporation Sole and, as such, does not own the financial resources in its own name but in the name of:
The Roman Catholic Bishop of St. John's-Basseterre
- ii. The parish priest is expected to give a concise account of his stewardship in this regard to Chancery every year.
- iii. The parish priest must have a Finance Committee in the parish, to assist with the overall financial responsibilities.
- iv. The pastor is expected to appraise the chancery regularly of the:
 - Parish's financial situation
 - The physical state of parochial buildings in the parish

2h. PARISH PASTORAL COUNCILS

The parish priest is required by Canon Law to establish a Council of Representatives of the church community to provide him with the consultation necessary for the effective discharge of his duties to the entire parish. The decisions of this council must reflect THE SPIRIT AND DIRECTIVES of the diocese. They are to be taken very seriously by the parish priest. Some guidelines are hereby listed for the Parish Priest.

2h-1 Competence

- i. The competence of the Parish Pastoral Council is advisory. The parish follows all universal and diocesan (church) law. On matters unique to a specific community, and on issues not governed by law, certain decisions can be taken
- ii. The council is expected to be concerned about:
 - Parish Worship Life
 - Education in the Faith
 - The apostolate /outreach...mission of evangelisation
 - Social concerns
 - Other ministries
 - Relation of the parish with other communities...religious and secular

- iii. The members of the council are appointed for a period of three years.
- iv. In the event of the appointment of a new parish priest, the Parish Pastoral Council will continue to exist for a period of not more than six (6) months to assist the new parish priest to learn the traditions and patterns of the parish community.

After six months the new parish priest will have to appoint a new council or confirm the present council as beginning a new period. He may seek to keep some of the members and replace other members as another option.

2h-2 Membership

1. The membership should include:

- a) A delegate of the official apostolates of the parish (e.g. schools, etc.);
- b) Delegates of other parish organisations
- c) A member of the finance committee
- d) Persons appointed by the parish priest to balance the overall membership of the council.

2. Membership of the Council should vary between a minimum of six (6) and a maximum of ten (10), depending on the size of the parish community.

3. The officers of the council could be either elected - (a) by the wider parish community as a parish executive or (b) by the members of the council.

4. The officers should be elected for a period of three (3) years.

Some parishes may choose to change the officers every year.

5. The officers should be:

- A Chairperson to conduct the meetings and to maintain a spirit of harmony and commitment among all the members.
- A Deputy Chairperson who can serve as a 'personnel officer'

- A recording secretary who will ensure that the minutes of all the meetings are properly recorded and circulated to all the members of the council within twelve (12) days of the meeting.
- An assistant recording secretary who will work along with the secretary

There is no treasurer, and all financial matters will be addressed by the representative of the Parish Finance Committee.

2h-3 Meetings

1. The council should meet regularly on a day that is fixed and known to all parishioners and parish group members.
2. The agenda should be determined beforehand by the officers (or the executive). The agenda also should leave room for any other business that may arise.
3. Discussions should lead to conclusions...decisions/recommendations
 - Discussions should not be continued if relevant facts, data, or other information is not available.
 - At no meeting and at no time should the faults and failings of persons be discussed in their absence or without their knowledge
 - It must be very clear as to which person will be responsible for what decisions and persons must be held accountable to the council for giving progress reports on their assignments.
4. General meetings of the entire parish community should be held at a maximum of two times annually. The ideal is at least ONE WHOLE DAY ASSEMBLY which some parishes have been calling a 'Covenant Day'.

DIOCESE OF ST. JOHN'S-BASSETERRE

GENERAL PASTORAL DIRECTIVES AND SPECIAL FACULTIES

- a. Any visiting priest who is in good standing (cf. Canon. 903), and after a proper vetting, may celebrate Mass, preach, and administer the sacraments in accordance with Canon Law and the Liturgical law of the Church. He may, therefore, hear confessions, if he has faculties for this by virtue of his office or by the concession of his Local Ordinary, by incardination or domicile. During his stay in the Diocese, he may make use of the special concessions contained in this document, but no visiting priest may officiate at a marriage in the Diocese of St. John's-Bassterre, unless he has been appointed a Marriage Officer by the appropriate Government Ministry, or fulfills civil law by having a Marriage Officer present. The Marriage Officer alone signs all civil documents.
- b. * If you have (by personal indult or through your Religious Institute) faculties which contain a clause requiring for their exercise the consent or approbation of the Local Ordinary, that consent or approbation is hereby given.
- c. * Salva Identitate Ritus, you have for members of the Oriental Rites the same faculties you have for Latin Catholics.
- d. The Diocese of St. John's-Bassterre will organize a Cultural Orientation Workshop for Clergy, Religious and Seminarians new to the Region in order to facilitate their integration and pastoral ministry in the diocese.

NB: * When an "asterisk" appears in these pages, it indicates that the Bishop of St. John's-Bassterre has granted the faculty indicated, and so it can be exercised within this Diocese.

DIOCESAN AND CIVIL PROCEDURES AND RECORDS

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

1. Records of Baptism, Confirmation, Marriage, Holy Orders, Solemn Profession, Laicization, Annulments and Death are to be entered in the appropriate Parish Register. Notifications of such entries should then be sent to the Parish of a person's baptism.
2. Pastors have the responsibility for keeping all Parish records accurate and up to date (C. 535, 1, and 2) and informing the Chancery, where applicable.
3. Records should never be changed. Any authorized corrections are to be noted in the "REMARKS" column and supporting documents should be cited.

I. THE SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM

According to the Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC), 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]. Because Baptism is the "first of the Sacraments", the Church takes care in evangelising those persons who desire to become members of the household of faith. This process includes the sharing of the faith and formation in the regular practice of this faith; this is the responsibility of the entire Parish Community through the leadership of the Pastor.

1. Adults

- a. Adults [in this context, those who have reached the age of reason, (C. 852, 1)] should go through a catechumenate (C. 851, 1) and have the intention to be baptized, (C. 865, 1). Those who have been baptized as Catholics or as members of another Christian denomination but have failed in religious practice, should also join the catechumenate. In such cases, a clear distinction must be made between the baptized and

unbaptized. Young catechumens still under parental care obviously will follow a modified catechumenate programme.

- b. Adults who have gone through the catechumenate are to receive Baptism, Confirmation and the Eucharist during the Easter Vigil. (cf. The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults #55 & C. 866).
For pastoral reasons, those who are not yet 13 years of age should be confirmed only after participating in the approved course of Confirmation.
- c. * The referral of the reception of adults to the Bishop (C. 863) is hereby dispensed with. (use of C. 87).
- d. Those received into full communion with the Catholic Church are to be entered into the Baptismal Register as having been received without baptism or conditional baptism.
- e. * Without recourse to the Local Ordinary, priests of the Diocese may admit to the Church converts to Catholicism as well as baptized Catholics returning from temporary membership in any other religion. If necessary, a notation of return to the Church after formal defection is to be made in the Register of Baptism (cf. C.1117, C. 1086.21).
- f. In the case of converts (i.e., those born and baptized outside of the Roman Catholic Church and now desirous of embracing the Catholic Faith) there is not required an abjuration of heresy or absolution from excommunication, but only Profession of Faith (Directory Concerning Ecumenical Matters: Part One, May 14, 1967. #19). If there is a doubt about the fact or validity of Baptism, the Sacrament should be conferred conditionally and in private (C. 869). The Diocesan norm of the reception of adult converts is R.C.I.A. However, the new formula for the reception of converts supposes that they shall normally be received during Mass, be confirmed by the priest who receives them into the Church and receive Holy Communion.

- g. In the case of Catholics who have culpably deserted the Catholic Faith to join another religion, and who now repent and seek reconciliation, there is still required abjuration, Profession of Faith and absolution from excommunication “in foro interno et in foro externo” (C. 1364, 1). (cf. #12 *infra*).

2. Infants

- a. Parents and sponsors supply the faith lacking in the infant and in the interest of the infant. Therefore, they, especially parents, are to be suitably instructed about the nature of Baptism and the obligations attached to it, including their own. (cf. Rite for Baptism of Children #5, 1 and C. 851). Parents and Sponsors are required to attend pre-baptismal instructions. The Pastor is to see to it that parents are properly formed by pastoral directives and by common prayer, gathering several families together and where possible visiting them. (See also Canons 774 {2} and 776).
- b. For the requisites for lawful baptizing of infants, see Rite of Baptism of Children #8, 4 and also C. 868, 1, 2. There must be a well-founded hope of upbringing in the Roman Catholic Faith and, outside of danger of death, if this is lacking, Baptism must be postponed, i.e. not just refused. Where Baptism is postponed, pastoral follow up is necessary.
- c. An infant of Catholic parents, indeed of non-Catholic parents may, in danger of death, be baptized even if the parents are opposed to it. (C. 868, 2). Prudence should be exercised in such cases.
- d. If a child is adopted, the names of the adopting parents are to be recorded, and also, if possible, the names of the natural parents (C. 877, 3). Since legal adoption now is the reason for an impediment to marriage (cf. C. 1094), it is important that adoption be recorded in the Register of Baptism.

- e. During pregnancy, parents and sponsors may participate in the required preparation programme.

3. Venue for Baptism

- a. Apart from a case of necessity, the proper place for Baptism is the Parish Church of the parents of an infant. (Rite of Baptism of Children #10 & C. 857). When a baptism takes place outside of the proper Parish, then the Parish Priest should be consulted in advance.
- b. Except in case of necessity, it is unlawful for anyone without due permission to confer Baptism outside of his own parish even in the case of his subjects. (C. 862).

4. Revised Rite of Baptism

- a. * Anointing with Oil of Catechumens (#51) may be omitted.
- b. * Ephphetha may be omitted (365).
- c. A baptized non-Catholic may be admitted only as a Christian witness in company with Catholic Sponsors who live a life of faith that befits their role (C. 874, 2).
- d. The preparation for and reception of all sacraments is to take place within the child's parish community.

5. Adult Converts

- a. If there is reason to believe a person is validly baptized in a Christian Faith Community, a copy of the baptismal certificate must be obtained. If there is any doubt, the Chancery should be notified. We accept the validity of Baptism in the Orthodox, Anglican, Methodist, Moravian, Lutheran and Presbyterian Churches. Any person in these Faith Communities is to be received into the Church, without neglecting proper catechesis. The person must produce a copy of their baptismal certificate. Others should be conditionally baptized. In respect to the other Churches, consult Chancery.

- b. After a person's reception in the Catholic Church, the priest should enter into the Parish Baptismal Register: the name of the person, the name(s) of the Sponsor(s), the date and place of Baptism, and the name of the Priest or Minister who baptized. Special care should be taken to record this information when persons are received into the Church through the R.C.I.A. process.
- c. Whenever an adult convert is baptized conditionally or absolutely, regular entries are to be made in the Parish Records.

6. Godparents / Sponsors

- a. Must be at least sixteen (16) years of age;
- b. Must be a Catholic who has been confirmed, has already received the Sacrament of Holy Communion, and leads a life in harmony with the faith and the role to be undertaken;
- c. If married, the Sponsor's marriage must be recognized by the Church as being valid;
- d. Must not be the father or mother of the one to be baptized.

N.B.: A MEMBER OF A NON-CATHOLIC RELIGION MAY SERVE AS A "WITNESS" TO THE BAPTISM AS LONG AS A CATHOLIC SERVES IN THE ROLE OF GODPARENT/ SPONSOR. ONLY TWO SPONSORS' NAMES SHOULD BE RECORDED IN THE BAPTISMAL REGISTER. A NON-CHRISTIAN MAY NOT SERVE AS A GODPARENT/ SPONSOR OR WITNESS UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES. (C. 874, 2).

II. THE SACRAMENT OF CONFIRMATION

Baptism, the Eucharist, and the Sacrament of Confirmation together constitute the "sacraments of Christian initiation", whose unity must be safeguarded. It must be explained to the faithful that the reception of the Sacrament of Confirmation

is necessary for the completion of baptismal grace. For, by the Sacrament of Confirmation, the baptized are more perfectly bound with a special bond of the Holy Spirit. Hence, they are, as true witnesses of Christ, more strictly obliged to spread and to defend the faith by word and example.

7. Minister of Confirmation

- a. The ordinary minister of Confirmation is the Bishop. A Priest can also confer this Sacrament if he has the faculty to do so, either by the general law of the Church or by way of a special grant from the competent authority: (Rite of Confirmation #7; C. 882). A Priest has by law the faculty to administer Confirmation: 1) Who lawfully baptizes an adult or who admits a baptized adult into full communion with the Catholic Church (Rite of Confirmation # 7b; C. 883, 2); 2) A Parish Priest or any Priest in respect of those in danger of death. (Rite of Confirmation #7, C. 883, 3). In addition, when called upon to do so by the Bishop, Priests who assist him at a Confirmation. (Rite of Confirmation #8; C. 884, 2).
- b. A record of all Confirmations should be sent to the Chancery for insertion in the Bishop's Confirmation book. Information should include: the name of the person confirmed; the age of the person; names of the father and mother and sponsor; place and date of baptism; Church where the sacrament was administered; and the name of the Bishop or priest who confirmed. Entries should be made in the Parish Confirmation and Baptismal Registers. **If the person was baptized in another Parish, notice should be sent to that Parish.** Such notification forms can be obtained from the Chancery.

AGE: In the Diocese, the age for Confirmation is at least fourteen (14).

PREPARATION:

- Secure the candidate's Baptismal Certificate to ensure that he/she has been baptized;
- There is a two-year Confirmation Programme in which those at least twelve (12) years of age are enrolled for the necessary formation leading to Christian maturity and responsibility in the Church Community and the society. For pastoral reasons, any exception from the two-year programme may be considered only after conclusion of the approved course of confirmation.
- Failure to comply with the requirements of the programme (e.g., occasional retreats, outreach activities and regular service and ministry) would indicate the candidate's lack of readiness to become an "adult member." In such a case, a postponement would be in the best interest of the candidate and of the Church Community that is in need of good committed Christian witnesses.
- Candidates retain their baptismal name to show that Confirmation completes the process begun in Baptism.

SPONSORS:

SPONSORS MUST BE CONFIRMED, BE PRACTISING CATHOLICS IN TERMS OF LIFE-STYLE AND CHURCH ATTENDANCE, INVOLVEMENT, AND MUST BE COMMUNICATING MEMBERS. IF MARRIED, THE MARRIAGE MUST BE IN ACCORD WITH THE TEACHING OF THE CHURCH.

Given this basic eligibility, selection of Sponsors is preferred as follows:

- a. A person who "undertook the role of sponsor at baptism" (C. 893);
- b. A non-parent (C. 874: 5);
- c. A parent only as a last resort.

N.B.: PARENTS AND SPONSORS, LIKE THE CANDIDATES, ARE TO BE ACTIVELY INVOLVED IN THE PHASES OF CO FIRMATION PREPARATION. FROM THE VERY BEGINNING OF THE PROGRAMME THE SPONSOR FOR EACH CAND DATE SHOULD BE CHOSEN WITH THE INTENTION OF JOURNEYING WITH HIS/HER CANDIDATE ALL THROUGH THAT PERIOD OF PREPATION. THERE CAN BE NO LAST MINUTE SELCTION OF SPONSOR.

III. THE BLESSED EUCHARIST

The Holy Eucharist completes Christian Initiation. Those who have been raised to the dignity of the royal priesthood by baptism and configured more deeply to Christ by Confirmation participate with the whole Community in the Lord's own sacrifice by means of the Eucharist.

8. Celebration and Concelebration of Mass

- a. The celebration and distribution of the Eucharist may take place on any day or at any hour, except those that are excluded by Liturgical Laws. (C. 931).
- b. Though normally one should seek to celebrate with the participation of the faithful, personal devotion is considered to be a reasonable cause for celebrating even if no member of the faithful is present.
- c. * When in your prudent judgment, it is for the spiritual benefit of the faithful, you may binate or trinate even on week days. (Extension of C. 905, 2). In this case, only one stipend can be kept by the celebrant. [See 12. d. below].
- d. A priest who celebrates the Eucharist twice or three times may consume something before the second or third celebration even though there is not an hour's interval. (C. 919, 2).

- e. * You may concelebrate Mass, even if this involves binating or trinating, on any day when you consider it useful for your own personal devotion or for that of the faithful. Those who concelebrate are to wear alb and stole.
- f. C. 932, 1 – The Eucharistic Celebration is to be carried out in a sacred place, unless in a particular case, necessity requires otherwise; in which case the celebration must be in a fitting place.
- g. C. 932, 2 – Outside of a sacred place, an appropriate table may be used, with an altar cloth and corporal. (So, no altar stone or antimensium is required)
- h. * With the permission of the priest in charge of the Parish and for the benefit of the faithful in general (without discrimination), you may celebrate Mass in private houses, especially for the benefit of the sick. Except for the latter, it is preferable that such Masses be celebrated only during the week, and not on Sundays.
- i. * You may say Mass with any kind of altar light or even without such lights in case of necessity. (cf. C. 87).
- j. For a reasonable cause and with due regard to Liturgical propriety, you may use vestments of any liturgical colour in the celebration of any Mass. (cf. C. 87).

9. Preparation for First Holy Communion and Reception of Holy Communion

- a. Preparation for and reception of all Sacraments are to take place within the child's Parish Community. For pastoral reasons, children should be encouraged to receive first penance at a reasonable time before first Communion so that children can appreciate the benefit of each sacrament. This will allow for adequate Catechesis regarding both sacraments.

- b. AGE: in the Diocese of St. John's-Basseterre, children being received to the First Holy Communion should be at least 7 years of age.
- c. Anyone who is conscious of grave sin may not celebrate Mass or receive the Body of the Lord without previously having been to sacramental Confession, unless there is a grave reason and there is no opportunity to confess; in this case the person is to remember the obligation to make an act of perfect contrition, which includes the resolve to go to Confession as soon as possible (C. 916).
- d. One who receives the blessed Eucharist may receive it again on the same day but only within a Eucharistic Celebration in which the person participates. (C. 917). A person may receive again in danger of death. (C 921, 2).
- e. The normal Eucharistic fast is one hour before reception, but water and medicine do not break the fast. The sick and the elderly as well as those who care for them may receive even if within the preceding hour, they have consumed something. (C. 919).
- f. Ordinarily, Holy Communion is given either in the hand or on the tongue. Those who indicate a desire to receive Holy Communion by accepting the Host in the hand, must consume it immediately and not take it back to their seat. Communion by intinction is not to be encouraged except for pastoral reasons, see "g" below.
- g. The normal practice in the Diocese of St. John's-Basseterre is Communion under both species. However, in Parishes where there are difficulties, Parish Priests are encouraged to give Communion under both species on occasions permitted by the General Instructions on the Roman Missal # 242 and whenever, in your judgment, this can be done with proper reverence to the Blessed Sacrament and it is for the spiritual good of the faithful.

When the Eucharist is administered by intinction (cf. G.I.R.M. #283), both ministers of the bread and the chalice position themselves in close proximity to one another, the minister of the Eucharist dips the bread in the chalice and, showing it to the communicant says: “The Body and Blood of Christ.” The communicant responds: “Amen.” In this case Communion is received on the tongue. It may be necessary for the host to be thicker than usual when intinction is practiced. It is to be noted very carefully that it is the minister of the Eucharist who dips the bread, not the communicant. Intinction is the least favored form for the distribution of the Eucharist. Intinction by the communicant is never permitted. AGAIN, THE PREFERRED WAY IS TO DRINK FROM THE CHALICE.

- h. * For reasonable cause on a particular occasion, especially when the faithful are accustomed to find Holy Communion available, you may authorize a Religious (man or woman) or a lay person to give Holy Communion either to assist the Priest or deacon or in the absence of any priest or deacon, to give Holy Communion alone. This can be of special value in arranging for Holy Communion to be given to the sick in their homes or in hospital. However, whenever anyone is to be designated for this ministry, the person should be properly prepared and commissioned, and for a specific period of time, by the Bishop or his delegate (cf. Eucharistic Worship outside Mass #17 & C. 230 #3).

N.B. Each commissioning shall have a term of four (4) years, which may be renewed once, taking into consideration the availability of personnel and at the discretion of the Pastor.

- i. * In all Churches and Chapels of the Diocese, and in other places where Mass is customarily offered for the faithful, three successive Masses beginning at midnight may be celebrated on Christmas Day.

10. Services During the Sacred Triduum

On Holy Thursday, the Mass with procession to the altar of repose may only be celebrated in places where there is to be the celebration of the Passion of Good Friday. * But for pastoral reasons, a simple Mass may be said in the evening (and this even at an earlier hour in a place where there is to be a Mass with procession to the altar of repose) and Mass may also be said on the morning in cases of real necessity.

On Easter Eve, Mass may not be celebrated without the Rites of the Vigil, and the Vigil Liturgy is to be celebrated **during the hours of darkness** either at night or in the early morning.

* A priest may celebrate the full Liturgies of the Sacred Triduum in different places for pastoral reasons.

11. Reservation of the Blessed Eucharist and Benediction

- a. As far as possible, a priest is to celebrate Mass at least twice a month in places where the Blessed Eucharist is reserved. (C. 934). Convents and Monasteries are to take special notice of this.
- b. Every effort must be made so that participants at Mass will receive hosts consecrated at the Mass. Consecrated hosts are to be frequently renewed and reserved in a Ciborium or other vessel, in a number sufficient for Communion of the Sick and others outside Mass. [G.I.R.M. No. 6 (h)].
- c. There is to be a tabernacle lamp lit before the Blessed Sacrament reserved, to indicate and honour the sacramental presence of Christ (cf. C. 940). The nature of this light is no longer specified in the law of the Church. However, in this diocese, the traditional colours of white or red should be used for the tabernacle light.

- d. A Religious (Brother or Sister) may expose and replace the Blessed Sacrament (but without giving the blessing) when there is good reason. (cf. Eucharistic Worship outside Mass #91, B and C. 943).

12. Directives/Guidelines Regarding Stipends

- a. Separate Masses must be applied for the intentions of those for whom an individual offering, even if small, has been made and accepted. (C. 948).

Canon 948 notwithstanding, one Mass can be applied for several intentions. However, the celebrant can only retain one stipend. The other stipends must be applied to the Pastoral Ministry of the Parish.

- b. One who is obliged to celebrate and apply Mass for the intentions of those who make an offering is bound to this obligation even if the offering received is lost through no fault of his. (C. 949).
- c. The number of Masses to be said in respect of stipends sent from abroad, without a number being specified, is to be reckoned on the basis of the offering prescribed in the place where the donor resides, unless the donor's intention **must** lawfully be presumed to have been otherwise. (C. 950).
- d. C. 951 allows a stipend to be accepted for all Masses except when a priest on the same day concelebrates (i.e., not the principal celebrant) at a second Mass. So, a stipend may now be accepted for second and third Masses even though a Mass has to be said Pro Populo. The stipend for such additional Masses may not be retained for the priest himself but must be transmitted for purposes prescribed by his Ordinary.
- e. Priests are reminded that Mass Stipends belong to the celebrant. Offerings for other Sacraments are Stole Fees, and as such they are Church Revenue.

- f. Stipends For Clergy On Pastoral Duties Outside Their Habitual Parishes
1. Weekend supply from another Island: payment of airfare, (departure tax to and fro if not included in airfare), and a stipend of EC\$150.00/US\$50.00 which includes the stipend(s) for the Masses celebrated by the visiting priest.
 2. Supplying priest from the same Island (other than exchange of pulpits): EC\$50.00/US\$20.00 per weekend.
 3. Associate priest not residing at the Presbytery, but who celebrates Masses during the week and performs other duties: EC\$1,000.00/US\$370.00 per month.
 4. Mass Stipends: EC\$20.00/US\$10.00 is proposed; however, discretion must be exercised in dealing with the poor who cannot afford that amount.

IV. THE SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION

Those who approach the Sacrament of Reconciliation or Penance obtain pardon from God's mercy for the offenses committed against Him and are, at the same time, reconciled with the Church, which they have wounded by their sins and which by charity and by prayer labours for their conversion.

13. Confessions and Penitential Services

- a. Individual and integral confession and absolution constitute the sole ordinary means by which a member of the faithful who is conscious of grave sin is reconciled with God and with the Church (Rite of Penance #31; C. 960). Physical or moral impossibility alone excuses from such Confession, in which case reconciliation may be attained by other means: e.g. Act of Perfect Contrition; General Confession of sins and receiving General Absolution.

- b. Any priest may validly and lawfully absolve, from censures and sins, any penitent who is in danger of death.
- c. Those who have faculties to hear confessions whether by virtue of their office, or by concession of their Local Ordinary, by incardination or domicile can exercise this faculty **everywhere** unless the Ordinary of the particular place, objects. (cf. C. 967, 2).
- d. It is the duty of those who have spiritual care of the faithful to make themselves available to hear confessions when reasonably requested and at suitable times (cf. Rite of Penance #10, b, C. 986). Specific times should be designated to Confession and should be well advertised.
- e. Services of Penance will be found a helpful means to encourage the faithful to go to Confession. Such Services are to be planned during the Advent and Lenten Seasons.
- f. An appropriate place in every Parish should be designated for hearing confessions. Such a place should be so designed as to enable penitents to celebrate the Sacrament in the spirit of the revised rite; i.e. face to face and imposition of hands. Provisions should also be made that the faithful can receive the Sacrament anonymously (cf. C. 964).
- g. Should a penitent approach the Priest for Confession at a time and place outside the normal, [**designated time and place**], the Priest should receive the Penitent and celebrate the Sacrament with him/her but in a public area. [**Refer to the AEC Sexual Abuse Prevention Guidelines and recommendations, especially in the case of minors**]

- h. The priest who hears confessions must remember that he is both judge and healer/minister of the Divine Justice and Mercy (C. 978, 1). He must adhere faithfully both to the teaching of the Magisterium and norms laid down by competent authority (C. 978, 2).

14. General Absolution

- a. The judgment about the presence of a grave need and the decision concerning the lawfulness of giving general sacramental absolution are reserved to the Bishop of the Diocese. (cf. Rite of Penance #32).

* In the absence of the Bishop, permission may be granted by the Vicar General. If both are unavailable and there is real pastoral need, that permission might be presumed, but in such a case the Bishop should be informed afterwards in writing.

- b. In order that the faithful may profit from sacramental absolution given to several persons at the same time, it is absolutely necessary that they be properly disposed. Each one should be sorry for his/her sins and resolve to avoid committing them again. He/she should intend to repair any scandal and harm caused and likewise resolve to confess in due time each one of the grave sins that he/she cannot confess at present. These dispositions and conditions required for the validity of the sacrament, should be carefully recalled to the faithful by priests. Those who receive pardon from grave sins by a common absolution are to go to individual confession as soon as they have the opportunity, before they receive this kind of absolution again, unless they are impeded by a just reason. They are strictly bound, unless this is morally impossible, to go to confession within a year. The precept which obliges each of the faithful to confess at least once a year to a priest all the grave sins which he/she has not individually confessed before also remains in force. (cf. Rite of Penance #33, 34 and C. 963).

N.B. Pope John Paul II on May 2, 2002 issued 'Misericordia Dei'. In this document he emphasized once again that confession of sins and absolution must be done on an individual basis. Conditions of 'grave necessity' required for General Absolution should be based on a judgment by the diocesan Bishop, not that of an individual Pastor. The Bishop should explain his decision to the Episcopal Conference, which should then notify the Vatican Congregation of Divine Worship.

15. Absolution From Censures

- a. * Those authorized to hear confession in the diocese have the faculty within the diocese to absolve from censures *Latae Sententiae* not reserved to the Holy See both in foro interno and in foro externo. This is a delegation of the power granted to the Local Ordinary by C.1355, 2.
- b. Excommunications *Latae Sententiae* reserved to the Holy See are: Violation of the Sacred Species (C. 1367), Physical attack upon the Pope, (C. 1370, 1), Absolution of a partner in sin against the Sixth Commandment (C. 1378, 1), unauthorized Episcopal ordination (C. 1382, 1), and deliberate violation of the seal of Confession (C. 1388, 1).
- c. Excommunications *Latae Sententiae* not reserved to the Holy See are: Apostasy, heresy and schism, (C. 1364) and actually procured abortion (C. 1398).
- d. C. 1357 provides details of what confessors can do for a penitent who has incurred a censure *Latae Sententiae* reserved to the Holy See.

- e. False Denunciation to ecclesiastical authority of a confessor innocent of the crime of solicitation to a sin against the Sixth Commandment is no longer a sin reserved to the Holy See, but absolutions for this may only be given under certain conditions (C. 982).
- f. There are no sins or censures reserved by Diocesan Law in this diocese.

16. Frequent Reception of the Sacrament

Though the precept of Confession once a year refers only to those guilty of grave sin (cf. C. 989), the Sacrament of Reconciliation or Penance should be a normal part of the spiritual life of the faithful. It is the sacrament of **continued** conversion and should be received frequently and regularly through life. Accordingly, the faithful should be led from childhood to develop a regular confessional practice that is suited to age, development and personal needs. Children need every encouragement to approach the Sacrament of Reconciliation frequently.

V. THE SACRAMENT OF MATRIMONY

The Matrimonial Covenant, by which a man and a woman establish between themselves a partnership of the whole of life, is by its very nature ordered towards the good of the spouses and the procreation and education of offspring; this covenant between baptized persons has been raised by Christ the Lord to the dignity of a sacrament.

17. The Officiant

- a. Any priest or deacon who assists at a marriage must be appointed a Marriage Officer by the appropriate Government Ministry for

the purpose of civil validity, or must perform the ceremony in the presence of a Marriage Officer, who alone signs the civil documents.

- b. All priests and deacons habitually assigned to the Diocese (including those assigned to apostolates other than a parish) without prejudice to (a) above, are granted for the duration of their assignment, the general faculty to assist validly at marriages celebrated in Churches within the Diocese. However, for the licit exercise of this faculty, they have the obligation to obtain the permission of the Pastor, or Associate Pastor in charge of the parish in which the marriage takes place (cf. C. 1111 & C. 1114).
- c. It is the serious responsibility of the priest or deacon who will perform the marriage, to make sure that the couple have participated in the required Pre-Marital Enquiry and Preparation, see to the proper drawing up of ecclesiastical and civil documents and ensure that the civil banns are called or a licence obtained (C. 1114).

In the case where there is a Lay Administrator of a Parish, a priest or a deacon should be appointed to see to the proper drawing up of all required ecclesiastical and civil documents.

- d. When a marriage is performed in a parish or mission other than that of the residence of either the bride or the groom, licit assistance at the marriage requires the permission of the parish priest or priest in charge of the place where a Catholic party resides (C. 1115).
- e. In keeping with the tradition throughout the West Indies, a priest who has the necessary delegation, provided that 17.a. is observed, should be accorded by the appropriate Pastor the courtesy of being permitted to officiate at the wedding of a relative or friend, when requested to do so.

- f. The American novelty of a “mini bride” is prohibited.

18. Special Cases

- a. **Canons 1079 and 1080** grant special powers of dispensation, in danger of death or when impediments are discovered at the last moment, to those authorized to assist at marriages and to confessors. These canons should be consulted when necessary.

*The powers granted to those authorized to assist at marriages and to confessors (C. 1080, 1 & 2) for occult cases are extended to include public cases. Occult impediments are those that cannot be proved in the external forum (C. 1074). If a dispensation is granted in a public case (i.e. provable), the priest or deacon granting it is to see that it is properly recorded.

- b. At a mixed marriage between a Catholic and a baptized non-Catholic, a Nuptial Mass may be celebrated after due pastoral consideration of the circumstances. At any mixed marriage, the nuptial blessing is normally to be imparted.

N.B.: According to the Ecumenical Directory, the baptized non-Catholic party may receive the Eucharist at the Nuptial Mass, but she/he must voluntarily make the request known beforehand, and must believe in the Real Presence.

IN DEFERENCE TO THE NON-CATHOLIC PARTY OF A MIXED MARRIAGE, THE ORDINARY CELEBRATION TO BE ENCOURAGED IS NON-EUCHARISTIC WITH THE NON-CATHOLIC PARTY’S MINISTER INVITED TO PARTICIPATE BY DOING A READING OR PRAYERS.

- c. Marriages may not be celebrated during Holy Week and especially on Holy Saturday, except in the case of danger of death.

19. The Proper Place For Marriages

- a. Marriages are to be celebrated in the Parish in which either of the contracting parties has a domicile or a quasi-domicile or a month's residence or, if there a question of Vagi, in the Parish in which they actually reside. C. 1115 & C. 1118). The New Canon Law does not specify the Parish of the bride as did the old code. Permission of the proper Ordinary of the Parish Priest is required for the marriage to take place in another Parish (C. 1115).
- b. Marriage is normally celebrated in the Parish Church. The Local Ordinary or the Parish Priest may permit the celebration of marriage in any of other church or oratory, unless civil requirements regulate otherwise. Permission of the Local Ordinary is required for a marriage to take place in a Convent, Oratory or in a place not specified above, provided there is no contravention of civil requirements (cf. C. 1118). Marriages being convalidated are controlled solely by ecclesiastical requirements - re: venue. Marriages may not be celebrated in hotels, gardens, caves or on the beach.

N.B.: Check and become familiar with the Civil Requirements in effect on the Island where the marriage is to take place.

20. Restricted Marriage Cases and Requirements For Permission of the Bishop

- a. Except in the case of necessity, no one is to assist without the permission of the Local Ordinary at:
 - i. The Marriage of those who have no fixed residence.
 - ii. The marriage not recognized by, or not in accordance with civil law.
 - iii. The marriage of a person for whom a previous union has created natural obligations to a third party or towards children.

- iv. The marriage of a person who has notoriously rejected the Catholic Faith.
 - v. The marriage of a person who is under censure.
 - vi. The marriage of a minor whose parents are unaware of it or are reasonably opposed to it.
 - vii. A marriage by proxy. (cf. 1071, 1)
 - viii. The marriage of a teenager (cf. Diocesan Regulations).
- b. *In its responsum to a dubium regarding “the blessing of the unions of persons of the same sex”, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith declares that “the Church does not have, and cannot have, the power to bless unions of persons of the same sex”.* Consequently, Clergy and Marriage Officers in the Diocese of St. John’s-Basseterre, are prohibited from blessing such unions.

21. Marriage Preparation

- a. Diocesan policy requires at least a **six-month** preparation for marriage. If there is reason for a dispensation from this, application is to be made to the Chancery in duplicate by the Parish Priest or Deacon, stating clearly the reasons. The couple are not to be sent to the Bishop personally to seek this dispensation. If granted, the written request for dispensation and the response are to be kept on file with other premarital documents.
- b. **The Priest/Deacon fills out the Preliminary Investigation forms;** determines their freedom to marry and their relation to the community. If it is discovered that the person is not confirmed, the Priest should instruct him/her for Confirmation and confer the sacrament. The Pastor should also see to their reception of the Sacrament of Reconciliation.
- c. Only after conducting the Pre-Nuptial Investigation and

being satisfied that there are no obstacles to marriage should the Priest or the Deacon have the couple enroll for the Parish Marriage Preparation Course. Competent married couples should be on the Team. This course is to assist the Pastor or Deacon in preparing the couple. It is not a substitute for the Pastor's or Deacon's responsibility to prepare the couple for a fruitful celebration. The course should include: Finance/Budgeting/Stewardship); Communication Skills to minimize conflict situations; Trust etc...A more detailed list of topics can be found in Appendix C. In keeping with the Antilles Episcopal Conference, Pre-Cana/Engaged Encounter or any comparable recognized preparatory course is acceptable provided the above topics are covered in such courses.

- d. Instruction in doctrine - re: Sacrament of Matrimony and any other pertinent teaching of the Church that should be imparted to the parties.
- e. In case of a mixed marriage or when there is Disparity of Cult, only the Catholic party makes the promises and sign the document. (Cf. 23.c. below)
- f. Secure permission of the proper Pastor, if necessary (e.g.: ceremony to take place in another Parish, which is usually given).
- g. Apply to the Chancery for any necessary dispensations at least three (3) weeks before the date of the marriage. **Application should be made in duplicate.**
- h. Consult the Ordinary or his delegate in cases required by the law, e.g. when either party has received a decree of nullity in a previous marriage.
- i. Have two (2) witnesses at the marriage.
- j. Record the marriage in the Marriage Register and proper Baptismal Register. Fulfill civil requirements for registration.
- k. When the marriage is completed, all documents are to be

filled in the appropriate Parish where the marriage took place.

- l. Notification of Marriage is to be sent immediately to the Catholic Party's Parish of baptism.

22. Documents To Be Procured

- a. Recent Baptismal Certificates (issued within the past six (6) months).
- b. Preliminary Investigation Forms for both parties to the marriage.
- c. Necessary dispensations
- d. Proof of freedom to marry
- e. Certificate of Marriage Preparation Course where applicable
- f. The Publication of Banns for three consecutive Sundays in the Church Bulletin and from the pulpit or a Civil Marriage Licence. In case of a Civil Marriage Licence for Residents, a dispensation/permission is to be sought from the Chancery.
- g. **In cases involving a former marriage:**
 - i. A certificate of death of a former spouse (if applicable) or
 - ii. A copy of the Decree of Nullity from an Ecclesiastical Court, should the marriage have been declared invalid. In every case of a Formal Decree of Nullity, the Priest or Deacon must (either directly or through the Local Tribunal) contact the Tribunal which issued the Decree to find out if a monitum (condition) or vetitum was added and, if so, to get it officially removed; or
 - iii. The appropriate documents in cases such as: Ratum e Non Consummatum; Pauline Privilege, etc...

23. Dispensations and Permissions

- a. In a Mixed Marriage (i.e. between a Catholic and a validly baptized non-Catholic), the Dispensation can be granted by the Parish Priest. In this case, a copy of the dispensation along with copies of Baptismal Certificates or equivalent, certain proof of Baptism for both parties must be sent to the Chancery.
- b. When impediments are present, (e.g. **Disparity of Cult or Blood Relationship up to and including first cousins cf. C. 1091**), dispensations must be sought from the Chancery. Blood Relationship should be carefully investigated via Baptismal Registers, etc... Legitimate and illegitimate persons are equally bound by consanguinity. Legal adoption creates an impediment, to the 2nd degree of the collateral line (brother, sister). In these cases, the parties should be counseled by a psychologist or psychiatrist as to any possible eventuality of such close unions, especially in respect of offspring.
- c. Where there is either a Mixed Religion or Disparity of Cult, the Catholic party must sign the required promises. The non-Catholic party makes no promises and need not sign, but should be informed and understand what the promises of the Catholic mean.
- d. As mentioned above, applications for permissions/dispensations should be made at least three (3) weeks before the marriage. In fact, if possible, the marriage date should **not be set until the dispensation** is granted as it may occasionally be refused. All pertinent forms, properly filled out, should accompany the request for such dispensations/permissions.
- e. **Please note that all application for Dispensation to the Chancery should be submitted in duplicate.**

24. Dispensation From Canonical Form

- a. Although the Dispensation from Form should not be considered automatic, for pastoral and ecumenical reasons, the Priest or Deacon may suggest that the Catholic party request a dispensation.
- b. The request for such a dispensation should be made in writing by the Catholic party, giving the reason for such a request. This should be supported with a written statement by the Priest or Deacon who is preparing the couple for marriage.

This dispensation will not be granted unless all the usual preparation for marriage have been made, including the promises required in a Mixed Marriage. The “Petition for Dispensation” form lists the steps to be followed in requesting this dispensation.

The dispensation from Canonical Form is to be granted with the following understanding:

- i. All documentation, investigation and preparation which are required for all marriages is taken care of in advance of the wedding.
- ii. It is the Priest's/Deacon's obligation to see that the marriage is properly recorded in the Register of the Parish from which the application for this dispensation was made and to see that all the marriage papers are properly filed at the Parish where the marriage took place.
- iii. The Parish Priest will notify the place of baptism after the marriage has taken place. However, if the marriage is cancelled after obtaining the dispensation, it is the Priest's/Deacon's responsibility to notify the Chancery.

- iv. A certificate from the minister attesting to the fact that the marriage has taken place should be obtained by the Priest/Deacon and filed with the other marriage papers.
- v. If the marriage is to take place in another Diocese with a dispensation from Canonical Form, the dispensation Form must be granted by the Local Ordinary of the party requesting dispensation. The Chancery of this Diocese will notify the Chancery of the Diocese in which the marriage is to take place that the dispensation from Canonical Form has been granted by the Bishop of St. John's-Basseterre.
- vi. It is understood that there will be only one ceremony. If, in the case of a dispensation from Canonical Form, the Priest/Deacon is invited to participate in the non-Catholic marriage service, he may do so to the extent of offering additional prayers, blessings or words of greetings and exhortation. If the marriage is not part of the Lord's Supper or the Principal Liturgical Service of the Word, the Priest/Deacon may, if invited, read a lesson or/and give a homily.
- vii. Only the non-Catholic Marriage Officer signs the Government Marriage Forms.
- viii. The Catholic party in this marriage should be informed that in the event a Catholic ecclesiastical record is ever needed in the future, it should be sought from the Parish within whose boundary the marriage took place.
- ix. After the celebration of such a marriage with dispensation from Canonical Form, all pertinent information should be inscribed in the Church Marriage Register at the Parish of the Catholic party whose Pastor made the investigation concerning their free state. If necessary, the Catholic spouse is bound to inform the Pastor as soon as possible of the celebration of the marriage, the place of celebration and the public form that was observed. The Catholic party is obliged to supply a copy of the marriage certificate to the Pastor for inclusion in the Marriage Folder. It is the

responsibility of the Priest/Deacon who conducts the Pre-Marital Investigation to advise the Catholic of this obligation. (C. 1121).

- x. In the case where a deacon or a priest using a Catholic Rite officiates at wedding in a non-Catholic Church, a dispensation from the Canonical Form is to be requested from the Chancery. The name of the Church where the actual wedding took place should be put on the certificate and Government forms, but all documentation should be sent and kept in the Parish within whose boundary the marriage took place.

25. Authorization To Assist At Marriages

In accordance with C. 1111, the Bishop of St. John's-Basseterre has granted **General Delegation** to assist at marriages throughout the Diocese to all Priests and Deacons habitually assigned to this Diocese. Other priests or deacons need specific delegation from the Parish Priest or the Bishop. Obviously, courtesy requires consultation of the Parish Priest of one of the parties (or of the Catholic in a mixed marriage), should the marriage take place outside his Parish.

26. Registration of Marriages in the Church Register of Marriages and the Civil Register

Every marriage is to be entered into the Marriage Register of the Parish in which the marriage takes place, noting the special requirements for marriages with dispensation from Canonical form, as indicated above. The Pastor/Administrator of that Parish shall see to it that the marriage is also entered into the Baptismal Registers of both parties. If they are from other Parishes, he is to send written notification of the marriage. The Church Register should be carefully maintained.

27. Petitions For Nullity

The Diocese of St. John's-Basseterre is now part of the Eastern Antilles Interdiocesan Tribunal (EAIT) which processes all Petitions for Nullity. There is an **Instructional Office** in each diocese that makes up the EAIT. The Judicial Vicar of the EAIT or the Interdiocesan Tribunal Officers in the Diocese can be contacted for necessary forms and directives on Tribunal matters. Any priest or deacon assigned to this diocese or any authorized Tribunal Officer can do the preliminary interview which is then forwarded to the Instructional Office at the Chancery. However, Priests, Deacons and all Tribunal Officers are urged to observe the following cautions:

- a. Please do not pre-process or pre-judge cases: e.g. do not tell couples they have no case, or that they have a good case.
- b. Direct the Petitioner to the Tribunal Officers. If possible, a preliminary written outline of the case could be sent. This could be helpful. Preliminary Petition forms are available.
- c. Do not contact or question the Respondent or potential witnesses unless asked to do so by the Judicial Vicar or his delegate. If and when asked to do so, be sure that answers are given in detail, giving full, exact, and specific responses. Simple "yes" or "no" are normally not very helpful.
- d. Copies of Baptismal, Marriage, Divorce documents and government issued id's are to be obtained by the Petitioner and must be included in the petitions to the Tribunal.
- e. When a decision of nullity is reached, that should not be construed as a "carte blanche" for a new marriage or validation. In every case the tribunal must be first consulted, since the decree of nullity usually carries *monita* (conditions) or *vetitum* that can be removed only by a Bishop or his delegate. Hence, no date for a new marriage is to be set until the decree of nullity has

been confirmed and permission to set a date has been received from the Bishop or his delegate.

- f. Before a new marriage, the usual preparations are to be made. These can be made even before a date is set, at the discretion of the Pastor.
- g. When, after a decision of nullity, a second invalid marriage is to be rectified, a careful pastoral decision is to be made whether this should be by way of a “simple validation” (cf. C. 1166) or by way of a “retroactive validation” (‘sanatio in radice’), (cf. C.1161). Particularly if the new marriage is a mixed marriage, consultation with the Tribunal might be useful.
- h. Special attention should be given to possible scandal in certain cases.

28. Civil Law Regarding Marriages

- a. Marriage Officers: Only duly appointed Marriage Officers can legally (civilly) perform marriages and sign the necessary civil documents. Any priest, coming to serve in the Diocese of St. John’s-Basseterre, should apply to become a Marriage Officer. Ordinarily this is done through the Chancery. (Cf. V 17: The Officiant.)

Should a priest, who is not a Marriage Officer, wish to officiate at a wedding, he can do so (legally) only if he performs the ceremony in the presence of a Marriage Officer. In that case, all civil documents are signed by that Marriage Officer and not by the actual Officiant. (As indicated on the Government Marriage Form, “by me” refers to the Minister performing the ceremony who may or may not be a Marriage Officer. “Before me” refers to the Marriage Officer whose presence is required by Civil Law. Marriage Officers are required to read the civil statutes regarding marriages in the territories comprising the Diocese of St.

John's-Basseterre. Copies of the current marriage laws should be obtained from the Government Publications Offices of the respective Islands.)

- i. A Marriage Officer's change of address must be reported. The Chancery will notify the Registrar General's Office in such a case.
 - ii. If you are a Marriage Officer in the Diocese of St. John's-Basseterre, and it is certain that you will not return to the Diocese, you are required to notify the Chancery prior to your departure so that the proper authority can be notified that you will no longer be functioning as a Marriage Officer in the Island.
- b. Age: Civil law requires that:
- i. Persons under 18 years of age must have the written consent of parents or guardians. Forms are available for this purpose.
 - ii. **No child under the age legislated by the laws of the land can marry in these Leeward Islands and the B.V.I.**

N.B.: Although the age requirements according to Church Law is 16 for males and 14 for females, (C. 1083), Civil Regulations are to be investigated and must be followed.

29. Civil Licence and Registration

Before any marriage can take place, **EITHER** a civil licence must be obtained, **OR** banns must be called by the Church for three (3) consecutive Sundays.

If marriage is by Civil Licence, the couple themselves will apply directly to the Attorney General or other Governmental Officer responsible for granting such licences.

Altogether, on the day of the marriage, FOUR entries are to be made:

(a) one in Civil Marriage Register;

(b) one copy for the couple;

(c) the “Duplicate” Form for the Registrar General’s Office;

(d) the entry in the Sacramental Registers [Marriage and Baptismal where applicable].

Note that the first three forms must be signed by the contracting parties, their witnesses and the Marriage Officer. The signatures of the witnesses and the Marriage Officer should be clearly and easily legible, with no abbreviations. Witnesses are to print their names.

- a. Residence: THIS IS TO BE IN ACCORDANCE WITH REGULATIONS OF EACH ISLAND OF THE DIOCESE.
- b. Marriages are to be performed between 6:00a.m. and 8:00p.m. (THIS IS TO BE DOCUMENTED AND CITED FOR EACH ISLAND OF THE DIOCESE)
- c. Marriage Registers: These are either official public records or official Church Records. Therefore, there is a moral obligation to keep them properly and distinctly. Also, there are civil requirements about keeping civil registers open for inspection, keeping them in a safe place, and not making any erasures or alterations, except as the statutes provide.
- d. Formula Civilly Required: In certain territories, before the Marriage Vows, and in the presence of the Marriage Officer, each of the parties shall declare: **“I do solemnly declare that I know not of any lawful impediment why I, A.B., may not be joined in matrimony to C.D.”** At an appropriate time, after the vows, each of the parties shall say to the other: **“I call upon these persons here present**

to witness that I, A.B., do take (or have taken) C.D. to be my lawful wife (or husband)”. Where this is the law of the land, these declarations are to be inserted as part of all marriage ceremonies performed in this Diocese. The first declaration is to be inserted just **BEFORE** the Church ceremony, and the second declaration is to be inserted just **AFTER** the Church ceremony.

It is not enough that this be done privately; it must be done during the PUBLIC Ceremony, as the law states. (We are, of course, not allowed to alter the Church Ritual, nor is this the intent of the civil statute.) [THIS HAS NOT ALWAYS BEEN FOLLOWED; THERE IS NEED TO VERIFY THE LAW IN EACH TERRITORY].

30. Marriages Involving Persons From Overseas

[N.B.: “Guidelines for Marriage of Couples Coming from Abroad” are available at the Chancery

- a. When a Catholic, living in this Diocese wishes to marry a Catholic coming from overseas, the form for the Pre-Marital Investigation should be sent to the Parish Priest of the place where the extra-diocesan party lives, so that the necessary investigation may be made. If the overseas party is not a Catholic, the Parish Priest should also be asked to explain the obligation of the Catholic in such a marriage and to certify that this has been done. In either case, whether Catholic or non-Catholic, the overseas Parish Priest should then send all the documents, including proof of free state and testimony of participation in a programme of preparation for marriage (which fulfills the requirements both of this Diocese and of the overseas Diocese) to his Chancery. The latter then sends the documents, together with Testimonial Letters, directly to the Chancery Office in St. John’s, Antigua so that it may grant a Nihil Obstat and a Dispensation, if necessary; only after this, will all documents be sent to the Parish Priest where the ceremony is to take place.

- b. When a Catholic residing in this Diocese is to go abroad to be married to a Catholic overseas, the Parish Priest concerned in this Diocese should complete the Pre-Marital Investigation Form and send this, together with a Baptismal Certificate, a Certificate of Confirmation and any other proof of freedom to marry and details of participation in a course of preparation to our Chancery Office in St. John's for the issuing of Testimonial Letters. Our Chancery Office then sends the documents to the Chancery of the Diocese where the marriage is to take place.
- c. When a Catholic residing in this Diocese is to be married to a non-Catholic overseas, any necessary dispensation will normally be granted by this Diocese. Hence, the Parish Priest of the place where the non-Catholic resides overseas should be asked to undertake the Pre-Marital Investigation, to explain the obligations of the Catholic in such a marriage, and to issue a Certificate that he has done so. He should also then return the papers, together with proof of freedom to marry, to the Parish Priest of the Catholic party in this Diocese. The Parish Priest will then forward the papers to our Diocesan Office with a request for a marriage dispensation. Our Diocesan Office then issues the Dispensation (or permission) and sends it to the Diocesan Chancery of the overseas party, which passes them, with a Nihil Obstat, to the priest who is to perform the marriage.
- d. When both parties wish to come from overseas and be married in this Diocese:
1. Church Requirements: It is essential, when a Priest in this Diocese is asked to officiate at such a marriage, that he makes it quite clear that the parties must be informed at once that they must be interviewed by the Parish Priest of one of them, so that all the necessary investigations may be made and so that the Parish Priest

may give permission for the marriage to take place in this Diocese (cf. C. 1115 and C. 1118). It will be for the overseas Parish Priest concerned to undertake the investigation, obtain a dispensation, if required, and he should also be asked to provide information about participation in a pre-marriage preparation programme. All these should be sent to the Chancery of residence of the Catholic who will send these, along with Testimonial Letters, to our Diocesan Office. A Nihil Obstat is to be obtained from the Ordinary of this Diocese for the marriage.

2. Civil Requirements: A letter from each party is to be produced attesting freedom to marry. This may be done by their parents or by close relatives or friends who have known the person for most of their lives. This affidavit must be signed by two (2) witnesses. Such letter can also come from their Parish Priests or a Civil Authority.

VI. THE ANOINTING OF THE SICK

By the Sacred Anointing of the Sick and the prayer of the Priests, the whole Church commends those who are ill to the suffering and glorified Lord, that He may raise them up and save them. (cf. Jas. 5:13-16). And, indeed, she exhorts them to contribute to the good of the People of God by freely uniting themselves to the Passion and Death of Christ.

31. Blessing and the Use of Oil of the Sick

- a. When it is seen to be advantageous, priests may bless the Oil of the Sick during the administration of this Sacrament. (cf. Rite of Anointing of the Sick #21, b; 126; C. 999)

(N.B. The New Canon Law suppresses the practice of adding unblessed oil to the blessed oils when supplies run low).

- b. In case of necessity, a single anointing on the forehead or even on another part of the body suffices while the full formula is recited. (cf. Rite of Anointing of the Sick #23; C. 1000, 1).

- c. The minister is to anoint with his own hand unless a grave reason indicates the use of an instrument. (C. 1000, 2)
- d. Pastors and those who are close to the sick are to ensure that the sick are helped by the Sacrament in good time. (C. 1001).
- e. The communal celebration of anointing of the sick, for a number of the sick together, who have been appropriately prepared and are rightly disposed, may be held periodically. It is recommended that such communal celebrations be held in Parishes several times a year, particularly for the benefit of shut-ins who normally cannot get to Sunday Mass except for such special occasion.
- f. Any Catholic priest can validly anoint. (cf. Rite of Anointing of the Sick #18; C. 1003, 2).
- g. Any priest may carry the Holy Oil with him so that in case of necessity he may anoint. (C. 1003, 3)
- h. Anointing can be administered to any member of the faithful who, having reached the use of reason, begins to be in danger by reason of illness or old age. (cf. Rite of Anointing of the Sick # 8; C. 1004).
- i. Old people may be anointed if they are in a weak condition even though no dangerous illness is present. (cf. Rite of Anointing of the Sick # 11).
- j. The Sacrament may be repeated if the sick person, having recovered, again becomes seriously ill or if, in the same illness, the danger, becomes serious. (cf. Rite of Anointing of the Sick #9; C. 1004, 2).
- k. If there is doubt (including doubt about actual death), the Sacrament is to be administered. (C. 1005).
- l. The Sacrament is to be conferred on sick people who, although they have lost consciousness or the use of reason, would, as Christian believers, have at least implicitly asked for it when

they were in control of their faculties. (Rite of Anointing of the Sick #14 and C. 1005)

- m. Sick children are to be anointed, if they have sufficient use of reason, to be strengthened by this Sacrament. In case of doubt whether a child has reached the use of reason, the Sacrament is to be conferred. (Rite of Anointing #12 and C. 1005).
- n. The anointing is not to be conferred upon those who obstinately persist in a manifestly grave sin. (C. 1007).
- o. Regarding the Anointing of the Sick and administration of the Sacrament of Reconciliation and the Eucharist to other Christians who are not in full communion with the Catholic Church, confer C. 844.

VII. GENERAL NOTANDA

32. Liturgy of the Hours

- a. * After twelve noon, you may anticipate the Office of Readings for the next day. Any further anticipation seems inconsistent with the spirit of the Liturgy of the Hours and is therefore not authorized.
- b. * For sufficient reason of health or pastoral necessity you may dispense or commute your own office or that of a fellow priest. (Const. Lit. No. 97).

33. Holydays of Obligation and Sundays

- a. Holydays of Obligation in this Diocese are January 1 (Feast of Mary, Mother of God), March 19 (Solemnity of St. Joseph) and December 25 (Christmas).
- b. The Solemnities of Epiphany, the Ascension of Our Lord, Corpus Christi and the Assumption of Our Lady are other Holydays to be observed on the Sunday closest to the actual date, with the appropriate solemnity. The titular feast of the Church should also be observed on the Sunday, provided

there is no clash with Solemnities or the directives of the Universal Ordo.

- c. The obligation of assisting at Mass is satisfied wherever Mass is celebrated in a Catholic Rite either on the Holyday itself or on the evening of the previous day. (C. 1248, 1). It will be well, therefore, where the spiritual good of the faithful calls for this, that Masses be celebrated on the evening before such Holydays or Sundays, beginning after 5:00p.m. or later. The Mass should be of the Holyday, with a homily, Prayer of the Faithful – and as much solemnity as possible. The same holds also for Sunday itself.
- d. Attention is drawn to the new outlook with regard to work on Sunday and Holydays of Obligation. “On Sundays and other Holydays of Obligation, the faithful are obliged to assist at Mass. They are also to abstain from such work or business that would inhibit the worship to be given to God, the joy proper to the Lord’s Day, or due relaxation of mind and body.” (C. 1247).
- e. * You may, in particular cases and for just reason, dispense individuals or individual families from attendance at Mass on Sundays.

34. Easter Duties

C. 920 states that the precept of annual reception of the Holy Eucharist must be fulfilled during the Paschal time, unless for a good reason it is fulfilled at another time of the year.

35. Instruction on the Practice of Penance

- a. All Christians are obliged by God’s Law to do penance. In order that all Catholics throughout the world may be united in a common practice of penance, the Church has prescribed each Friday of the year and the whole season

of Lent as special times of penance. (cf. C. 1249, CC. 1250-1253).

On these days, Catholics are to devote themselves in a special manner to prayer, works of piety and charity and to deny themselves by fulfilling their obligations more faithfully and especially by observing the prescribed fast and abstinence.

The observance of Fridays, in the year and in the Lenten Season, as special times of penance constitutes an obligation for Catholics.

Lent is a special season to do penance, and by doing penance we share in the Paschal Mystery, putting to death the life of sin in us. Thus, we open ourselves to a fuller sharing in the new life of the Risen Lord in the Community of the Church.

- b. Prayers and Works of Piety Recommended as Acts of Penance
 - i. Daily recitation of the Morning Offering, and, if possible, morning and evening prayers of the Church.
 - ii. Daily recitation of the Rosary, preferably as a family.
 - iii. Daily Spiritual reading, especially the Bible. Also, encourage the use of the Weekday Missal as a tool to mediate on the reading given for Daily Mass.
 - iv. Daily Mass.
 - v. The Stations of the Cross.
 - vi. Receiving the Sacrament of Reconciliation.
 - vii. Full participation of the Sunday Liturgy with due preparation beforehand.

c. Fast and Abstinence

Abstinence and fasting are to be observed on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday. (C. 1251). The Law of Abstinence binds those who have completed their 14th year. (C. 1252). Furthermore, Abstinence from meat is to be observed on all Fridays (cf. CC. 1250-1253) [See exceptions below].

The sick, pregnant women, persons of unsound mind, manual labourers and the frail are excused from the Law of Fast and Abstinence.

The Law of Fasting binds those who have attained their 18th birthday and have not yet reached their 59th birthday. Fasting requires that a person take only one full meal during the day. Two smaller meals are allowed, and no solid food should be taken between the meals. (C. 1252).

Where fasting and abstinence from meat are not practicable, due to economic circumstances or other factors, the Antilles Episcopal Conference has determined that other forms of self-denial may be substituted, e.g.; abstaining from alcohol, tobacco and entertainment, etc... Works of piety and charity may also be substituted.

Parents are urged to encourage their children, who are not yet held by the law of fasting and abstinence, to undertake some form of penance.

d. Works of Charity

During Lent and on Fridays, penance should not be only internal and individual, but also external and social. Charity, which is the mark of the true Christian, must find a special outward expression on days and times of penance.

Families may wish to consider “The Family Fast”, i.e., periodically contributing to their Parish or Diocesan Charity what they have saved as a result of their fast,

abstinence or other forms of self-denial.

- e. Persons suffering from chronic illnesses are encouraged to unite themselves with the suffering of the Lord, thus obtaining graces for those most in need of these graces.
- f. C. 1245 grants that Parish Priests may in particular cases and for just reason grant a dispensation from the observing of a Holyday of Obligation or a day of penance or commute the obligation into some other pious work.

36. Missa Pro Populo

Pastors are obliged to celebrate Mass for their people on all Sundays and Holydays of Obligation in this Diocese. (C. 534 #1). If lawfully impeded, a Pastor may arrange for another to apply Mass on these days or apply Mass on other days. If the obligation is not discharged, it is to be made up. (It is the obligation of Pastors who are to be absent from their Parishes to arrange who is to carry out the obligation during their absence, i.e. whether they themselves are to undertake the obligation or whether it is to be undertaken by the Priest supplying).

37. Blessings and Indulgences

- a. Priests may consecrate chalices and patens in accordance with the formula prescribed in the Roman Ritual (Pastorale Munus #27).
- b. Priests may bless objects of piety with a simple sign of the cross. The faithful who piously use such objects gain a partial indulgence. (Indulg. Doctr. Normae No. 17).
- c. Priests may erect the Station of the Cross according to the Rites prescribed by the Church. (Pastorale Munus #30).

38. Church Funerals

- a. Church Funerals are dealt with in Canons 1176-1185, but note especially: C. 1176, #2. In funeral rites the Church prays for the spiritual support of the dead, it honours their bodies and at the same time it brings to the living the comfort of hope.
- C. 1176, #3 – Cremation is not forbidden unless chosen for reasons which are contrary to Christian Teaching.
- C. 1177 – The funeral is normally to be celebrated in the Parish Church of the deceased, but another Church may be chosen (by the deceased or those arranging the funeral), with the consent of the Parish Priest. The Parish Priest of the deceased is to be informed.
- C. 1183, #1 and #2 – In regard to funeral rites, Catechumens are to be reckoned among Christ's faithful and children intended for Baptism may be allowed Church funeral rites by the Local Ordinary.
- C. 1183, #3 – Provided their own minister is not available, baptized persons belonging to non-Catholic Church or Ecclesial Community may, in accordance with the prudent judgment of the Local Ordinary, be allowed funeral rites in the Catholic Church unless it is established that they did not wish them.
- C. 1184 – Church funeral rites are to be denied to notorious apostates, and those who for anti-Christian motives chose that their bodies be cremated and manifest sinners to whom a Church funeral could not be granted without public scandal to the faithful. In case of doubt, the Local Ordinary is to be consulted and his judgment followed.
- b. Funerals are ordinarily conducted either by a Priest or Deacon. The official Catholic Rite of Funerals is to be observed. A culturally adapted Funeral Rite is to be found in the Appendix.

- c. Eulogies are not to be delivered during the official Church Service. However, prior to the Service, a short Ceremony of Bereavement and Leave-taking conducted by the Laity, is allowed in the Church. In such case, there should be a lapse of time between the Ceremony and the Official Church Service. The Pastor should vet such a ceremony to ensure that nothing contrary to Catholic belief or practice is present.

VIII. CIVIL STATUTE ON REGISTRATION OF DEATHS.

[THIS NEEDS RESEARCHING ON ALL ISLANDS OF THE DIOCESE]

- a. A note of the death is to be made in the Baptismal and Death Registers.

IX. PARISH VISITATION

It is required by Church Law that there be an examination of the Parish Registers (C. 535, 4). The Bishop or his delegate, will visit all of the Parishes in the Diocese where such records are kept. This visitation involves the Baptismal, Confirmation, Marriage and Death Records. The Financial Records are also to be scrutinized; the Diocesan Finance Council and the Diocesan Finance Officer will supervise the Financial Records, including the Budget and Annual Financial Report.

The Parish Visitation by the Bishop or his Delegate should take place periodically, at least once every other year. The visitation should also look into the various parish groups/organizations, areas that are not being well served, help parishes look into other ministries etc. ...

A report and feedback are to be sent back to the parishes following each visitation.

X. ANNUAL MISSION/STATISTICAL REPORT

The Annual Mission/Statistical Report is sent out by the Chancery each year. Pastors/Deacons/Administrators are required to fill out and return the form to the Chancery Office on or before 28th February. A copy of the completed report should be kept in the Parish files.

XI. PARISH ADMINISTRATION

a. Parish Seal

The Parish Seal is usually the embossing type rather than a rubber stamp and is to be used on all documents, especially ones that have legal importance. (C. 535, 3).

b. Parish Council

The Parish Pastoral Council presided by the Pastor is established and governed in accordance with the norms provided in the Code of the Canon Law, Can. 536 and the diocesan Bishop. Please refer to the Generic Diocesan Guidelines for Parish Pastoral Councils.

c. Parish Finance Committee

Every parish in the diocese is required by law to have a functioning Parish Finance Council. Please refer to Canon 532 and the Diocesan Guidelines on Parish Finance Council.

d. Relationship Between the Parish Council and the Parish Finance Committee

Since the Parish Finance Council (PFC) relates to the administrative responsibilities to the pastor/administrator, it should not be a part of the Parish Pastoral Council structure (PPC). However, an officer from the PFC may serve as ex-officio of the PPC and this is highly recommended and encouraged.

Communication between the two councils is essential to share information regarding the parish finances in order to implement pastoral plans and priorities.

Appropriate means of communications should be developed between the PFC and the PPC so that the PFC does not enter into areas of policy and mission, which are the prerogative of the PPC. The PFC advises on the adequacy of resources to accomplish the mission and specific ministries of the parish. The PFC reviews the draft of the parish annual calendar prepared by the PPC. Cf. Diocesan Parish Finance Council Booklet, 2018.

The Parish Council and the Parish Finance Committee are two distinct entities that are crucial in the overall mission of Evangelisation of the Parish. And although they are consultative bodies that help the Pastor in the administration of the Parish, these two councils are guided and regulated by specific canons and diocesan guidelines. They are therefore called to cooperate and journey together so that under the leadership of the Pastor, the Parish may dispense and fulfill its ministry.

XII. BUSINESS OFFICE

39. Financial Reports

The Financial Reports (Receipts/Income, Disbursements Ependiture and Bank Reconciliations) are to be forwarded to the Chancery as soon as possible, preferably from January 1 but not later than March 31 for the Annual compiling by the Diocesan Finance Council. If any Parish needs assistance in this area, please contact the Diocesan Finance Officer, c/o Chancery.

The Diocesan Financial Commission shall, in an exemplary manner and as required by Canon Law, (C.1287) provide and make available a detailed yearly financial report, no later than June 30.

40. Projected Parish Budget

The Projected Parish Budget is to be forwarded to the Chancery every year by November 30. The fiscal year ends on December 31 each year and the new fiscal year begins on January 1. The Pastor and the chairperson of the Parish Finance Council should sign the Budget.

41. Assessment Programme

At the present moment a monthly assessment (20%) is to be paid to the Chancery Office by each Parish in respect of all plate collections of the Parish (excluding donations and collections given for a specific purpose). It is to be paid on the first business day, but not later than the tenth (10th) of the following month.

42. Collections for Rome

All Parishes are encouraged to support the work of the Pontifical Mission Societies through a spirited animation for the purpose of the Mission Societies which are represented by the Society for the Propagation of the Faith, Society of St. Peter Apostle, Society of the Missionary Children and Missionary Union of Priests and Religious. When we support these Societies, we, too, receive assistance in time of need. The Collections for **Peter's Pence** (for the Holy father's Charities), **Holy Childhood**, **Holy Land** (taken up as the ONLY COLLECTION on GOOD FRIDAY), **Mission and Ecclesia Sanctae** have designated dates on the Church's calendar and are also listed on the MEMORANDA for this Diocese. While the Diocese does not have a fixed date for a Holy Childhood Collection, the Diocesan Director is encouraged to promote missionary awareness and cooperation from among the Catholic Schools for this Society. The Diocese has no option in these collections, and they serve to remind the faithful of the universality of the Church, and the care of the Holy Father for the local Churches: for example, assistance to

the Diocese in the wake of natural disasters.

These collections are to be paid to the Chancery on the first business day, but not later than the tenth (10th) of the following month. If a single cheque is used, please state allocations clearly on accompany note.

The One percent (1%) Plate Collection due to Rome is mandatory for each Parish. This collection is calculated from the first collections of January to December of the current year and is submitted to the Chancery with Rome collections on or before the 10th January of the next calendar year. (Refer to the Diocesan Finance Guidelines.)

43. Diocesan Collections/Appeals

The rationale for the **Diocesan Stewardship Drive** is to help address the needs in the Diocese such as Seminary/Formation, Catechists, Diocesan Priests, Parishes with special and urgent needs, Diocesan Youth and Hispanic Apostolate, Diocesan Charities and Catholic Schools.

Within the Diocese there are three Diocesan Collections:

1. **The Advent Stewardship Drive** begins on Christ the King Sunday with the distribution of envelopes and ends on the fourth (4th) Sunday of Advent with the collection of envelopes. For the Advent Stewardship Drive, 75% goes to the Parish and 25% to the Diocese.
2. **The Diocesan Clergy Special Collection** commences in early June with appropriate introduction and motivation along with the distribution of envelopes and ends on Father's Day each year.
3. From Ash Wednesday to Passion/Palm Sunday, **Diocesan Lenten Stewardship Drive** promotion is encouraged. The distribution of envelopes commences on the first (1st) Sunday of Lent and the collection of envelopes is taken on

Passion/Palm Sunday. For the Diocesan Lenten Stewardship Drive, 75% is sent to the Diocese while 25% goes to the Parish.

There are special envelopes distributed by the Chancery to the Parishes for these collections. The amount of the percentage due to the Diocese from each collection is forwarded to the Chancery on the first business day, but not later than the tenth (10th) of the following month. (Refer to the Diocesan Finance Guidelines for details regarding dates for these collections.)

Should there be a special need of a Parish or Diocese for support due to a disaster or catastrophe, the Bishop will give permission in writing for a special appeal to be made on their behalf.

44. Group Life, Health and Medical Insurance with Sagicor Life Inc.

The monthly premium at present varies depending on the salary, wages or stipend. The Chancery pays SAGICOR LIFE INC (formerly The Barbados Mutual Life Assurance Society) this monthly premium. Clergy including the laity employed by the Church, who work in Parishes, should reimburse the Chancery out of parish funds. Life, Health and Medical Insurance is available to Clergy and laity; rates and information can be obtained from the Chancery Business Office.

45. Pension – N.B.: This is Matter of Justice.

Enrolment into the pension plan is **mandatory** for all Parochial/Diocesan employees. The contribution required is 2 ½% of the employee's salary, matched by an equal contribution from the employer. This is paid monthly and should be regulated or monitored by a Commercial Bank in the respective territory.

N.B.: Arrangements should be made to have a regular Performance Review of Diocesan and Parish Staff. As a matter of justice, it is recommended that salaries of employees be above the national minimum wage and that a salary increase should

be considered every three or four years.

Also, stipends for Clergy and Religious, assessment paid to the Chancery, fees etc... should be reviewed periodically and raise/increase when necessary.

46. Parish Bank Account Policy

All Bank Accounts should bear the name of the “Bishop of St. John’s-Baseterre” / (Name of the Parish). When opening a bank account, or there is a change of personnel at Parish or Organization level, you should ensure that the necessary forms and corporate authorizations are completed. This form will indicate that you are authorized to open an account in the Bank in question for your parish and that the Bishop has delegated certain financial powers to you. It is also the policy of the Diocese that the Bishop and the Vicar General are signatories on all accounts. Only bank accounts authorized by the Bishop/Diocese may be held by a Parish Group or Organization. No person, group or parish organization/club may use the words “Catholic”, “Roman Catholic” or the name of any Parish, School or Diocesan Committee/Organization, to hold any bank account, deposit or loan account without the direct written permission and authorization from the Ordinary.

Permission to open parish group and activity accounts is only granted upon the recommendation of the Pastor and the Parish Finance Council. Such accounts would also bear the name of “Bishop of St. John’s-Baseterre” / (Name of the Organization) and should have the aforementioned signatures.

47. Vacation and Travels

Annual Vacation

All priests working in the Diocese of St. John's-Basseterre, have the right to an annual vacation of 30 days paid for by the individual. The vacation period should be scheduled early in consultation with the Chancery Office to ensure that pastoral ministry to the faithful is not interrupted.

Home Leave

Home leave or vacation back to one's home country where it applies will be once every three years and in accordance with the contracts with those concerned. However, for Non-Native diocesan Priests, that is, outside of the Caribbean, home leave will be every three years for a period of eight (8) weeks.

Retreat

All priests are required to make a 5-day- annual retreat either with the diocese or individually. All diocesan priests are encouraged and expected to join the Provincial annual clergy gathering.

Travels by Clergy and Religious

The Chancery Office should be informed at least one week in advance of any travel out of your usual place of residence or ministry. In addition, the Bishop should keep informed and advise his clergy of his travels within and outside the Diocese.

XIII. ADMINISTRATION OF CHURCH PROPERTY

- a. Each parish and Mission should try to support itself by Church collections and other receipts accruing from Church activities: bazaars, entertainments, gifts for missions etc...

Financial reports should be shared with the Parish preferably each quarter, but at least twice per year.

- b. Permission/Consent from the Ordinary must be sought for expenditure over US\$10,000.00/EC\$27,000.00. Amounts

exceeding this should be included in your annual budgets and once the budget is approved, this expenditure is approved, unless otherwise stated on your budget approval.

Estimates should also be submitted with your request to the Chancery Office for all capital items in excess of this amount.

- c. Each Parish or Mission should possess an inventory of all Church property and appurtenances thereof (indicating clearly that which is the personal property of the Priest himself or of the Religious Community of which the individual is a member); a copy of this inventory is to be forwarded to the Ordinary. Additions or deletions should be indicated annually in the Annual Report (C. 1283, 2, 3).
- d. Pastors, by reason of their office, administer ecclesiastical property in the name of the Ordinary.
- e. It is most important that each diocesan priest draws up a Last Will and Testament in proper order and transmit a copy to the Ordinary for safe-keeping.

XIV. SCHEDULE OF OFFERINGS

- a. The usual stole fee for weddings is EC\$500.00 for Locals and US\$500.00 for destination weddings. This amount belongs to the Church and is shown in the Parish Books as “Income”. This stole fee is handed to the Parish of which the couples are members and have domicile. The Pastor of this Parish is responsible for the preparation of the couple and the gathering of all necessary documents.
- b. When the Pastor gives permission for the couple to be married in another Church, a donation equivalent to the amount charged for church use is made to that Church for the use of electricity and other sundry expenses.

- c. The normal stole fee for funerals is EC\$250.00/US\$100.00.

Most couples arranging a marriage or relatives arranging a funeral ask for the services of the organist and/or choir. The services of organist/choir are not included in the above-mentioned fees.

- d. Choir and Organist: Please be guided by the following recommendations:

- A donation of EC\$150.00 is to be given to the Choir.
- A donation of EC\$100.00 is to be given to the organist who receives a regular monthly salary from the Church.
- A donation of EC\$150.00 is to be given to the organist who is not salaried by the Parish.

The Parish Priest will indicate whether the organist is salaried by the Parish or not. Please be advised that the above figures are recommendations and Pastors should take into consideration the reality of their parish in determining what is appropriate. Also, US equivalent may be used where it applies.

Special consideration must be made for those who are financially deprived. People should not be refused Church Services because they cannot afford to pay the amounts stipulated.

XV. QUESTIONABLE ISSUES/PROCEDURES

- a. We need to consider the value of sending duplicate Baptismal Records to the Chancery for safe-keeping in the event there is some disaster that destroys the Parish Records. If this is decided, the page and number of the Baptismal Record as found in the Parish Baptismal Record Book should be clearly indicated. It is also important that the place of birth be noted. Other method of keeping Parish Records safe should be considered. For example, creating a database and digitizing parish records by scanning such records or by other means.

- b. When someone requests a Baptismal Certificate, please send the person to the Parish of Baptism and not to the Chancery. If the Baptism took place in another Island, the Priest who is approached is responsible for getting the certificate if the person requesting it is not able to do so.
- c. Certificates of Baptism and Freedom of State for matrimonial purposes are not issued on the basis of the record at the Chancery, but by the Priest in charge of the Parish of Baptism, based on the Baptismal Register. Chancery files are used as an authentic record only if the original books have been destroyed or if a record cannot be obtained from the Parish.
- d. Anyone presenting a child for Baptism must present a birth certificate for that child. The serial number on the birth certificate should be noted on the Baptismal card as well as noted in the Baptismal Register. In the event there is no number on the birth certificate, the date of the document as well as the person signing the document are to be noted on the Baptismal Register. The name must correspond on both the birth and baptismal certificates.
- e. Civil Law requires that if a child is to take the name of the father, in cases where the parents are not married, the father must register the child through the Registrar General's Office, or else sign an affidavit, which must be drawn up by a Lawyer, or a Justice of the Peace. When this happens a duly notarized record should be made in the Baptismal Register, and on the duplicate record sent to the Chancery.

APPENDIX A

FORMAT FOR FUNERALS

[In addition to the Official Ritual]

Greetings and Blessing of the Body

Opening Hymn:

{Two verses to be sung as the Priest walks to the entrance of the Church to greet the body. Then two more verses of the same hymn are sung after the initial Rites.}

Ceremony of the Paschal Candle (At this time, light the Paschal Candle).

Celebrant: Behold the light of Christ.

All: Thanks be to God.

Celebrant: I am the Resurrection and the life; whoever believes in me, though they die, shall live; who ever is alive by believing in me will never die.” Do you believe this? (Jn. 11:25-26)

All: Yes, we believe that Jesus is the anointed one, the Son of God, He who is to come into the world (Jn.11:27)

Celebrant: While it is day we must do the work of the One who sent me; for the night will come when no one can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world; the one who follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.” (Jn. 9: 4-5; 8-12)

Celebrant: The Lord be with you.

All: And with your spirit.

Celebrant: Let us pray:

All: Amen.

Liturgy of the Word

First Reading

Responsorial Psalm

Second Reading

Gospel Acclamation: Alleluia

Gospel

Homily

Prayers of the Faithful

IF ONLY A LITURGY OF THE WORD, CONCLUDE WITH:

- THE LORD’S PRAYER
- FINAL COMMENDATION
- RECESSIONAL HYMN

Liturgy of the Eucharist

Collection Hymn

Offertory Procession: (If Funeral Mass is celebrated.)

Hosanna

Eucharistic Acclamation

Great Amen

The Lord’s Prayer

Peace Song

Lamb of God

Communion Hymn

Meditation

Final Commendation:

{DO NOT USE HOLY WATER IF ALREADY USED AT THE START OF INITIAL RITES.}

Recessional Hymn

N.B. While escorting the body from the Church, we do not use Holy water. The use of Holy water at the initial rites signifies one baptism.

Refer to the ORDER OF CHRISTIAN FUNERALS for the appropriate rite if asked to pray at the home or Funeral Home and to escort the body to Church for the funeral Mass or Service. (See Related Rites and Prayers: Transfer of the body to the Church)

APPENDIX B

POSTURES/GESTURES AT SUNDAY MASS AND SOLEMNITIES

STAND:	From the beginning of the Entrance Hymn until the conclusion of the Opening Prayer
SIT:	For the 1st Reading; Responsorial Psalm; 2nd Reading.
STAND:	Alleluia; Gospel.
SIT	Homily
STAND:	Creed and Prayers of Intercession. As Gifts are brought to the Celebrant.
SIT:	Preparation of Gifts.
STAND:	Pray, brothers and Sisters....
KNEEL:	After "HOLY, HOLY, HOLY" until after the Consecration.
STAND:	"The Mystery of Faith" until after "Agnus Dei."
KNEEL:	At the time of Communion.
SIT:	Meditation.
STAND:	Closing Prayer
SIT:	Announcements.
STAND:	Blessing and Dismissal

APPENDIX C

SUGGESTIONS FOR MARRIAGE PREPARATION TOPICS

- Marriage in the Scriptures/The Sacrament of Matrimony
- Building Your Marriage /Making God the Centre of your Marriage
- Beliefs and Spiritual Growth
- Cultural Values/Biases
- Stewardship/Financial Issues
- Managing Conflicts
- Romance, Intimacy and Sex
- Making Decision/Legal Issues
- Improving Your Communication
- Life Cycle Issues
- Daily Living
- Life After Wedding



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