



THE PRIESTS' HANDBOOK

**Supplementary Norms, Policies and
Procedures on the Ministry and Life of the
Presbyterate of the Roman Catholic
Diocese of Penang**

Prepared by the
PENINSULAR MALAYSIA ECCLESIASTICAL TRIBUNAL
(PENANG OFFICE)
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DECREE OF PROMULGATION

His Eminence, Cardinal Sebastian Francis, Bishop of the Diocese of Penang, hereby promulgates the supplementary norms, policies and procedures on the ministry and life of the presbyterate, in accordance with the provisions of the Code of Canon Law, in this handbook for the priests of the Diocese of Penang.

This handbook shall serve as a guide for priests in their daily lives while carrying out their ministries and activities, primarily for the care of souls and the proclamation of the Gospel. It also aims to provide priests with clarity and assurance on the canonical, ecclesiastical and civil norms, policies and procedures, in fidelity to the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, and is ordered for the good of the Church.

**Given from the office of the Bishop, Diocese of Penang on this
31st March 2024
"Easter Sunday"**

**CARDINAL SEBASTIAN FRANCIS, DD
Bishop of Penang**

**REV. FR. VICTOR LOUIS
Chancellor**

**REV. FR. DOMINIC SANTHIYAGU, JCL
Associate Judicial Vicar**

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**This work is dedicated to Almighty God
the Father, the Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit
our source of strength and inspiration;
and to the Blessed Virgin Mary,
the Mother of Vocations for the clergy**

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FOREWORD

"Through the sacraments of Holy Orders, priests share in the universal dimensions of the mission that Christ entrusted to the Apostles. The spiritual gift they have received in ordination prepares them, not for a limited and restricted mission, "but for the fullest, in fact, universal mission of salvation 'to the end of the earth,'...prepared in spirit to preach the Gospel everywhere."

(Catechism of the Catholic Church, no.1565)



My dear Reverend Fathers,

I am happy to present to you "the **Priests' Handbook**" for the clergy of the Diocese of Penang. The purpose of the handbook is meant to assist priests in having a broader understanding of the policies and norms regarding priestly life and ministry, parish personnel, the celebration of the Word and the Sacraments, administration, pastoral visitation, and procedures relating to pastoral matters of the Parish.

The introduction to this Priests' Handbook explains the nature and mission of the Church and the role of the bishop and priests in realising this mission and in bringing clarity and understanding to the priestly mission. With the help of this Priests' Handbook, it is my ardent hope that ongoing formation by the presbyterate will bring about better ministerial effectiveness. The Diocese of Penang is committed to supporting its priests in their ongoing human, spiritual, intellectual, and pastoral formation.

We acknowledge and give thanks for the work done in the 1989 edition of the 'Pastoral Directory for the Clergy of the Catholic Dioceses of Peninsular Malaysia', issued by the Bishops of Peninsular Malaysia, to which this Priests' Handbook is updated, revised and promulgated for the Diocese of Penang, in accordance with the provisions of the Code of Canon Law and reflects the universal principles as applied to local needs.

The synodal process is also very evident in the formulation of this Priests' Handbook. From 2021 to 2023, the clergy and laity journeyed closely together in consultation, collaboration, and discernment, and it has culminated in the successful publication of this Priests' Handbook.

Moving forward as missionary disciples, may we all be guided by the ever-present grace of the Holy Spirit. May the same Holy Spirit continue to bless all of you, in your faithful ministry to God's people.

'Be Disciples of Joy, Mercy and Hope'

In Christ,

Sebastian Francis

CARDINAL SEBASTIAN FRANCIS, DD
Bishop of Penang

INTRODUCTION

The promulgation of the Priests' Handbook of the Diocese of Penang exhorts our priests to grow in holiness, be appreciative of their vocations, and live out their priestly ministry, according to the canonical norms and the teaching of the magisterium. This local legislation incorporates and complements canonical norms. This handbook will provide consistency in the work and functional order of priests in the Diocese of Penang.

This Priests' Handbook serves as a manual and compass for the priests in their sacramental and sacred functions in the Diocese of Penang. The handbook is not intended or suitable for the laity or permanent deacons. However, there will be brief mentions of transitional and permanent deacons. The permanent deacons will have their own handbook to manage their spiritual and material affairs.

The collaborative collegial relationship between the Bishop and Clergy exemplifies the ecclesial reality of the sacred orders they have received. The policies and procedures tabled in this handbook will guide the Bishop in the exercise of his canonical and pastoral responsibilities throughout the Diocese of Penang.

Each section of the handbook contains an introduction before stating the policies and procedures that pertain both specifically and generally to the life and ministry of the priest in the Penang Diocese. This includes parochial administrative policies. This handbook touches on the rights, privileges and obligations of the clergy fostered through their work.

The synodal process is in the foundation in this updated and revised version. The handbook was formulated collaboratively by the laity and the clergy. Experts in different related fields were invited to review the final draft.

The practical dimensions in the life and ministry of a priest are as follows:

- a. His relationship with God
- b. His relationship with his Bishop
- c. His pastoral ministry
- d. His spiritual and temporal dimensions

While this handbook serves as the current norm for the priests in the Penang Diocese, clergy can expect updates and changes in keeping with the latest canonical norms within the context of the local Church. Nothing is more important than to remember the canonical equity, which is the salvation of souls. Juridical norms have no place in the Church if it is not related to Jesus Christ as the primary focus, followed by the related spiritual and pastoral dimension.

1. THE CHURCH

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The Church is founded by the Lord, as the means of our salvation. The Church is born from the pierced side of the crucified Lord, cleansed in His Blood, and given the fullness of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost. As the People of God, the Body of Christ, and the Temple of the Holy Spirit, the Church is both an outward expression as well as an inward participation in the very life in union with the Triune God. Just as Christ is light for all nations, the Church is called to bring that light to all.¹

1.2 HUMAN SOCIETIES BEFORE CHRIST²

Men need the company of their fellow brothers and God has willed that those men, living in society, should give witness to ecclesial communion through living together in brotherhood. Men are called to attain their common destiny, God himself, not as separate units, but as a people.

Man is a social being by nature and is a composite of the material and the spiritual. Clearly, he can only develop and society itself can only progress when the social order caters to man's material and spiritual needs. Therefore, every human society formed on earth was ordered for the religious and material good of the people. However, even in the time of Christ, there were tensions between man's religious needs and the demands of civil authority in every human society. Civil life came to be regarded as most important and the material needs of men were considered all-important. This resulted in the neglect of man's spiritual and immortal soul – the distinguishing feature which makes him like God and master of all earthly creatures.

1.3 THE CHURCH: AN INDEPENDENT AND SELF-GOVERNING SOCIETY³

For this reason, Jesus Christ, when founding his Church as a society, separated the religious concerns of man from the State, and transferred them to the Church. The Church was made independent of the State, to function as a self-governing society. For this reason, he said, "Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar's and to God the things that are God's."⁴

Christ founded his Church as an independent, self-governing society. He gave full power to his Apostles and their successors to teach, sanctify and rule. He entrusted

¹ *Lumen Gentium* - Dogmatic Constitution of the Church Nos. 1-4

² Pastoral Directory for the clergy of the Catholic Dioceses of Peninsular Malaysia, 1989, pg.1

³ Pastoral Directory, 1989, pg.2

⁴ Matthew 22:21

them with the power to make laws, to judge and to sanction. This power was so complete that it cannot be limited by reason of territory⁵, persons⁶, matter⁷ and time⁸. He made it quite clear that such a power could not be limited by any human authority when he said, "Whatever you bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven: whatever you loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven."⁹

1.4 THE CHURCH: A UNIQUE SOCIETY¹⁰

In a way, the Church is like any other society, in that she is made up of human beings who are members of the earthly city. She is in the world, lives and acts in it. To fulfil her mission, she needs help from the talents and industry of individuals and society as a whole. She is also equipped with what is suitable for her as a visible and social unity.

Yet the Church is not quite the same as a civil society. The purpose of her existence is unique: she is in the world to carry forward the work of Christ Himself – the salvation of all; to make God the Father and His Incarnate Son present and, in a sense, visible; to communicate divine life to all. The Church is not moved to action by earthly ambition but by a zeal to give witness to the truth. Her purpose is not to sit in judgement but to rescue, and not to be served but to serve. The Church as a society, therefore, has to use supernatural and spiritual means to fulfil her mission.

1.5 THE CHURCH: A MYSTERY

It is at this point that the Church goes beyond human understanding. It is both a visible assembly and a spiritual community. It lives in the world and yet, is not of the world. It is set apart from the civil order, and yet not separated. It is zealous in action and yet dedicated to contemplation; present in the world but as a pilgrim, conforming to proper laws but only in order to bring them into harmony with the spiritual order. The Church accepts the imperfections of the world yet tries to perfect it. She undergoes the same experience as other men but in it and through it expresses the newness of life in Christ. The Church, therefore, is not merely a society but a mystery.

The Church is called the Mystical Body of Christ because, like Christ himself, she is both divine and human. The human always looks to the divine and is subordinate to it. In all her life she looks not towards the earthly city but to the Kingdom of God for her laws and the inspiration to action. We know about this mystery of the

⁵ Matthew 28:20

⁶ *Ibid*, Matthew 28:19

⁷ Matthew 28:20

⁸ *Ibid*

⁹ Matthew 16:19, 18:18

¹⁰ Pastoral Directory, 1989, pg.3

Church only because it has been revealed to us. We cannot come to a full knowledge of the truth about her but only strive to understand more deeply her nature and penetrate it in order to share it more intimately. So, as a mystery, the Church cannot be defined but only described. Scripture gives us various images to help us understand better the nature of the Church. Four groups of such images come specially to mind: the Church as the Flock of Christ, the Vineyard of God, the Temple of the Holy Spirit, and the Spouse of the Immaculate Lamb.¹¹

The Church is the **FLOCK** of which God himself foretold that He would be the shepherd.¹² She is also a sheepfold whose only door is Christ.¹³

The Church is the **VINEYARD** of God.¹⁴ It is like a piece of land cultivated by Him and the True Vine is Christ, who gives life to His branches.¹⁵

She is the **TEMPLE** of the Holy Spirit¹⁶ of which Christ is the cornerstone.¹⁷

The Church is the **SPOUSE** of the Spotless Lamb¹⁸, for He loved her so much to give Himself up for her. He has created an unbreakable union with her, and He has filled her with heavenly gifts.

These images supplement one another and illuminate Christ's relationship with his Church. There are other metaphors that attempt to throw light on the nature of the Church. She is our **Mother** since she brings forth children to a new life, conceived by the Holy Spirit. The Church is called the **Community of the Faithful** as she is composed of all those who have received Christ in faith and love and are united among themselves in love and mutual service. The Church is the **new Israel**, the **new People of God** according to God's eternal plan for mankind. The Church is a **Sacrament** because she is a sign of salvation witnessing to Christ's saving mission.¹⁹

¹¹ *Lumen Gentium* - Constitution of the Church No.6

¹² Isaiah 40:11, Ez. 34:11

¹³ John 10:1-10

¹⁴ Matthew 21:33-43

¹⁵ John 15:1-17

¹⁶ 1 Corinthian 3:16

¹⁷ Matthew 21:42, Acts 4:11, 1 Peter 2:7

¹⁸ Revelation 19:7, 21:2-9, 22:17

¹⁹ *Lumen Gentium* - Constitution of the Church No. 11

1.6 MISSION OF CHRIST²⁰

The Father sent Christ into the world to teach, sanctify and rule according to His will. This mission did not end with His ascension into heaven but continues in the Church. From the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, the Lord Jesus lives in the Church in such a way that she lives by Him. Continually present to the Church, He will shepherd His flock until the Day of Judgment when He separates the sheep from the goats.²¹

1.7 MISSION OF APOSTLES²²

Just as He was sent by the Father, Christ sent His Apostles²³ to glorify the Father on earth and enrol new members into the Church, the Body of Christ. The mission will last till the end of the world²⁴. Thus, the Apostles appointed successors and passed on to them the duty of perfecting the work begun by them. This arrangement for appointing successors was to continue through the ages.

1.8 MISSION OF BISHOPS²⁵

Among the various offices, which have been exercised in the Church from the earliest times, the Office of the Bishop holds the most important role in the Church. The dignity and responsibility of bishops are by virtue of the unbroken succession going back to the apostolic lineage. Thus, according to the testimony of St. Irenaeus, the apostolic tradition is manifested and preserved in the whole world by those who were made bishops by the Apostles and sent by their successors down to our own time.²⁶

The Roman Pontiff, as the successor of Peter, is the source and foundation of the unity of the bishops and among the faithful. The individual bishop, however, is the visible principle and foundation of unity in his particular church, fashioned after the model of the universal Church. The universal Church is made up of the sum of these particular churches. Thus, each bishop represents a particular church, but all of them together in a union with the Pope, represent the entire Church in the bond of peace, love and unity.

²⁰ Pastoral Directory, 1989, pg. 6

²¹ Matthew 25:31-33 ff

²² Pastoral Directory, 1989, pg.7

²³ John 20:21

²⁴ Matthew 28:20

²⁵ Pastoral Directory, 1989, pg.7-9

²⁶ *Lumen Gentium* - Constitution of the Church No. 20

Bishops are to regard their priests as brothers and friends. They are to take the greatest interest in their welfare, both temporal and spiritual. They are responsible for encouraging the priests to grow in holiness.²⁷

1.9 PRIESTS: PARTICIPANTS OF THE ONE PRIESTHOOD OF CHRIST²⁸

Christ whom the Father set apart and sent into the world²⁹ has, through His Apostles, made their successors, namely the bishops, sharers in His consecration and mission; and these, in their turn, duly entrust in varying degrees, to various members of the Church, the exercise of their ministry. Thus, the divinely instituted ecclesiastical ministry is exercised to different degrees by those who even from ancient times have been called bishops, priests, and deacons.³⁰

1.10 PRIESTS: CO-OPERATORS OF THE EPISCOPAL ORDER³¹

All priests, whether diocesan or religious, share and exercise with the bishop the one priesthood of Christ. They are thus constituted providential co-operators of this episcopal order. The diocesan priest has a primary role in the care of souls, in the Church they are incardinated.³²

²⁷ *Christus Dominus* No.28, *Presbyterorum Ordinis* – Decree on the Ministry & Life of Priests No.7

²⁸ Pastoral Directory, 1989, pg.8

²⁹ John 10:36

³⁰ *Lumen Gentium* - Constitution of the Church No.28

³¹ Pastoral Directory, 1989, pg.9

³² *Christus Dominus* No.28

2. FRATERNITY

2.1 INTRODUCTION

By acknowledging the dignity of each human person, we can contribute to the rebirth of a universal aspiration to the fraternity between all men and women. "Here we have a splendid secret that shows us how to dream and to turn our life into a wonderful adventure. No one can face life in isolation. We need a community that supports and helps us, in which we can help one another to keep looking ahead. How important it is to dream together. By ourselves, we risk seeing mirages, things that are not there. Dreams, on the other hand, are built together. Let us dream, then, as a single human family, as fellow travellers sharing the same flesh, as children of the same earth which is our common home, each of us bringing the richness of his or her beliefs and convictions, each of us with his or her voice, brothers and sisters all".³³

2.2 BISHOP AND DIOCESAN PRIESTS³⁴

The relationship between the bishop and the diocesan priest should be based, before all else, on supernatural charity so that their unity of purpose will make their pastoral activity even more effective.³⁵

2.3 OBEDIENCE OF PRIESTS TO BISHOP³⁶

Priests for their part should keep in mind the fullness of the Sacrament of Holy Orders, which bishops enjoy. They should therefore be attached to their bishop with sincere charity and obedience, inspired by the spirit of cooperation. There is all the more need in our day for the union of priests with their bishop, and to carry out their mission by joining forces with other priests under the leadership of those who are leading the Church.³⁷

2.4 PRIESTS AMONG THEMSELVES³⁸ *Can. 275§1*

Diocesan priests should be united among themselves and genuinely concerned for the spiritual welfare of the whole Diocese. They should bear in mind that the worldly goods which they acquire through their ecclesiastical functions are closely connected with their sacred office, and they shall therefore contribute generously to the common needs of the Diocese, in accordance with the Bishop's directives.³⁹

³³ *Fratelli Tutti* - Encyclical Letter No. 8

³⁴ Pastoral Directory, 1989, pg.9

³⁵ *Christus Dominus* No.28

³⁶ Pastoral Directory, 1989, pg. 10

³⁷ *Presbyterorum Ordinis* – Decree on the Ministry & Life of Priests No.7

³⁸ Pastoral Directory, 1989, pg.11-12

³⁹ *Christus Dominus* No.28

Senior priests should sincerely accept the younger priests as brothers and help them in facing the first tasks and responsibilities of the ministry. They should make an effort also to understand their outlook, even though it may be different from their own. Young priests for their part are to respect the age and experience of the senior priests; they ought to consult with them on matters concerning the care of souls and willingly cooperate with them.⁴⁰

2.5 PRIESTS AND RELIGIOUS⁴¹

Religious, on their part, must give witness that they effectively and willingly belong to the diocesan family.⁴² They will do this not only by being available for the needs of the local church according to the charism of their institute⁴³ but even more so by sharing their charisms with the diocesan priests.

The diocesan priests need to draw from their contemplations, strength and support for their apostolate. When in need, the diocesan priests should seek help from experienced religious, on the various spiritualities that they may offer⁴⁴.

2.6 PRIESTS AND LAITY⁴⁵

Priests should acknowledge and promote the dignity of the laity and the role which is proper to them in the mission of the Church. They should listen to the laity willingly, consider their wishes in a fraternal spirit and recognise their experiences and competence in the different areas of human activity. Priests should also entrust the laity with duties in the service of the Church, allowing them freedom and room for action. Priests should encourage the Laity to undertake various ministries on their own initiative.⁴⁶

2.7 CIVIL AUTHORITIES⁴⁷

The needs of the pastoral ministry and for the common good of the earthly city demand that priests have contact directly or indirectly with those who govern the state or who direct political, socio-economic, or military affairs and people in similar positions.

⁴⁰ *Presbyterorum Ordinis* – Decree on the Ministry & Life of Priests No.8

⁴¹ Pastoral Directory, 1989, pg.12-13

⁴² cf *Christus Dominus* No. 24

⁴³ cf *Christus Dominus* No. 35

⁴⁴ The Contemplative Dimension of Religious Life, no.24-25

⁴⁵ Pastoral Directory, 1989, pg.13-14 cf Can. 295§2

⁴⁶ *Presbyterorum Ordinis* – Decree on the Ministry & Life of Priests No.9

⁴⁷ Pastoral Directory, 1989, pg.14

3. PRIESTLY LIFE

3.1 INTRODUCTION⁴⁸

By the Sacrament of Holy Orders, priests are configured to Christ, as servants of the Lord, so that as co-workers with the episcopal order, they may build up the Body of Christ, the Church. They are bound by reason of their special vocation, to acquire perfection according to the Lord's Word:

"You, therefore, must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect."⁴⁹

Priests are the ministers of the Word of God. They are to read and meditate on the Word. It is their responsibility to teach and share the Word with others. They are to strive to make the Word part of their daily lives, eventually, becoming perfect disciples of Christ. As St. Paul reminded Timothy,

"Practice these duties, devote yourself to them; so that all may see your progress. Take heed to thyself and to your teaching; hold to that, for in doing so you will save both yourself and your hearers."⁵⁰

By seeking more effective ways of conveying to others what they have meditated on, they will savour more profoundly the ***"unsearchable riches of Christ"***⁵¹ and the wisdom of God.

Priests as ministers of the sacred mysteries, especially in the sacrifice of the Mass, act in a special way in the person of Christ who gave himself as the victim to sanctify men. And this is why they are invited to imitate what they celebrate, so that as they partake in the mystery of the Lord's death, they may grow in holiness.⁵²

Priests, who are consecrated by the anointing of the Holy Spirit and sent by Christ, mortify the works of the flesh in themselves and dedicate themselves completely to the service of people, and so are able, in the holiness with which they have been enriched in Christ, to make progress towards the perfect man.⁵³

The very holiness of priests is of the greatest benefit for the fruitful fulfilment of their ministry.⁵⁴

⁴⁸ Pastoral Directory, 1989, pg.16 -18

⁴⁹ Matthew 5:48, *Presbyterorum Ordinis* – Decree on the Ministry & Life of Priests No.12

⁵⁰ 1 Timothy 4:15-16

⁵¹ Ephesians 3:8

⁵² *Presbyterorum Ordinis* – Decree on the Ministry & Life of Priests No.13

⁵³ *Presbyterorum Ordinis* – Decree on the Ministry & Life of Priests No.12

⁵⁴ *Ibid*

Among the virtues especially demanded by the ministry of priests is the disposition of mind by which they are always prepared to seek not their own will but the will of Him who has sent them. The divine task for the fulfilment of which they have been set apart by the Holy Spirit transcends all human strength and human wisdom; for

“God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong”^{55 56}

Therefore, the true minister of Christ is conscious of his own weakness and labours in humility.⁵⁷

3.2 SPIRITUAL LIFE

3.2.1 Obligations⁵⁸

a) To Seek Holiness

Priests should be **Men of God**. Hence, they have a special obligation to seek holiness in their lives.⁵⁹ “Priests who perform their duties sincerely and tirelessly in the Spirit of Christ arrive at holiness by this very fact.”⁶⁰ Priests are to be faithful to the pursuit of holiness through their commitment to the celebration of the Eucharist and the Liturgy of the Hours, the reception of the Sacrament of Reconciliation, prayer, meditation, retreat, spiritual reading and the study of the Scriptures. These disciplines are fundamental to the effective proclamation of the Gospel and the fulfilment of their ministerial responsibilities.

b) To Nourish Spiritual Life

They are to nourish their spiritual life at the two-fold table of sacred Scripture and the Eucharist.⁶¹ In all personal and professional relationships, priests will, by their words, actions and attitudes, reflect fidelity to the promises they made at ordination. A consistent fidelity to the Church’s teaching in pastoral practice and selflessness in pastoral service are essential dimensions of priestly life and ministry.

⁵⁵ 1 Corinthian 1:27

⁵⁶ *Presbyterorum Ordinis* – Decree on the Ministry & Life of Priests No.15

⁵⁷ *Ibid*

⁵⁸ Pastoral Directory, 1989, pg.18-22

⁵⁹ Can. 276 § 1

⁶⁰ *Presbyterorum Ordinis* – Decree on the Ministry & Life of Priests No. 13

⁶¹ Can. 276 § 2,2°

c) To Pray Daily

They are bound to the daily recitation of the Divine Office.⁶²

d) To Approach the Sacrament of Reconciliation Frequently

They are to approach the Sacrament of Reconciliation frequently.⁶³

e) To Make an Annual Retreat

They are required to make an annual five (5) day spiritual retreat.⁶⁴ The retreat should be scheduled, so as not to remove the priest from the parish during weekend Masses.

All priests are obliged to make an annual spiritual retreat⁶⁵ and participate in monthly recollections.⁶⁶ The days spent in retreat do not count as part of a vacation (*Refer 3.4.3*). No one shall be exempted from making a retreat, except in a particular case, for a just reason, and with the explicit permission of the Local Ordinary.

f) To Participate in Monthly Recollection

They are required to participate in clergy monthly recollections to grow in holiness and togetherness.⁶⁷

g) To Seek Spiritual Direction

Priests are encouraged to seek spiritual direction regularly.

h) To be Celibate

They are obliged to observe perfect and perpetual continence and are therefore bound to celibacy.⁶⁸ Priests make a promise of celibacy and are called to witness faithfully to this promise in all their relationships. They are to be aware of warning signs of potential problems regarding their personal and professional lives. They are to strive for greater self-awareness in order to recognise the unique dynamics at work in pastoral relationships. At the same time, they are to heed the warning signs which may indicate the imminent boundary violations.

⁶² Can. 276 § 2,3°

⁶³ Can. 276 § 2,5°

⁶⁴ Can. 276 § 2,4°

⁶⁵ Can. 276 § 2,4°

⁶⁶ Can. 276 § 2,4°

⁶⁷ Can. 276 § 2,4°

⁶⁸ Can. 277 § 1

i) To Act Prudently

They are to behave with due prudence in relation to persons whose company can be a danger to their obligation of preserving continence and to avoid all scandals.⁶⁹

j) To Show Reverence and Obedience

They have a special obligation to show reverence and obedience to the Supreme Pontiff and their own Ordinary.⁷⁰

k) To Remember the Dead

They have a special obligation to say masses for the Bishop or a priest from the Diocese, as soon as they know of his death, and say one Mass annually for all the departed bishops and priests of the Diocese.

l) To Refrain from Objectionable Groups

They are to refrain from establishing or joining associations whose purpose or activity cannot be reconciled with clerical obligations.⁷¹

3.2.2 Means to Achieve Spiritual Perfection⁷²

a) Union with Other Priests

They are to be united with one another in the bond of brotherhood and prayer. They should strive to cooperate with one another for the common good of the Church.⁷³

b) Community Life

Some manner of common life (e.g., sharing a meal, watching movies, outings) is highly recommended to priests; where it exists, it is as far as possible to be maintained.⁷⁴

c) Simplicity of Life

Priests should cultivate a simplicity of life and shun anything that smacks of worldliness.⁷⁵

d) Mental Prayer

Priests should engage regularly in mental prayer.⁷⁶

⁶⁹ Can. 277 § 2

⁷⁰ Can. 273

⁷¹ Can. 278 § 3

⁷² Pastoral Directory, 1989, pg.21-22

⁷³ Can. 275 § 1

⁷⁴ Can. 280

⁷⁵ Can. 282 § 1

⁷⁶ Can. 276 § 5

e) *Devotion to Mary*

Priests should honour the Blessed Virgin Mary with particular veneration.⁷⁷

f) *Spirit of Sharing*

Priests are exhorted to share their resources for the common good of society and charitable works.⁷⁸

3.3 INTELLECTUAL LIFE⁷⁹

3.3.1 On-going Formation

Priests should pay special attention to their own ongoing formation in the sacred scriptures, theological studies, and human formation which would help them to be more efficient in the exercise of their pastoral ministry.⁸⁰

All priests are expected to determine and plan their personal and ministerial growth, and to demonstrate their continued development in these areas.

Priests may be asked to relinquish their present ministry and take up professional studies to attain the necessary expertise in meeting the needs of the Church and the Diocese.

3.3.2 Study Programmes

Generally, any priest who has had the opportunity of continuing education and gaining skills should make himself available to the Diocese in general and to local parishes or institutions to share his expertise.

Therefore,

- i) all priests are to be sent for a renewal program every five (5) years. The duration of the programme may be from one to three (1-3) months;
- ii) all priests should go for higher studies after their fifth (5th) year in the priesthood or when necessary, according to the needs of the Diocese. The higher studies may be for a degree or master's programme.

The Bishop may ask a particular priest to pursue further studies or to begin extended study for the future benefit of the Diocese. The Bishop shall

⁷⁷ Can. 276 § 5

⁷⁸ Can.. 282 § 2

⁷⁹ Pastoral Directory, 1989, pg.22

⁸⁰ Can. 279 § 1-3

consider both the needs of the Church as well as the personal inclinations and abilities of the priest when he is making his decision. The "Priest Formation Committee"⁸¹ is to assist Bishop in identifying and selecting the priest for the relevant studies. The Bishop along with the chosen priest will determine the place, length, and programme for further studies.

3.4 MATERIAL LIFE

3.4.1 Temporal provisions

(a) Introduction

*"Since Priests dedicated themselves to the ecclesiastical ministry, they deserve the remuneration that befits their condition, taking into account both the nature of their office and condition of time and place. It is to be such that it provides for the necessities of their life and for the just remuneration of those whose services they need."*⁸²

(b) Diocesan Responsibility⁸³

Each priest is to be provided with a just and appropriate timely remuneration established and reviewed by the Diocese annually".

(c) Parish Responsibility⁸⁴

The allowances are to be paid by the parish (or other institution).

(d) Remuneration and Allowances⁸⁵

The priests will receive a fixed monthly remuneration and allowances which consists of meal, phone and miscellaneous expenses.

i) Fixed Monthly Remuneration

The fixed monthly remuneration will be reviewed and revised, when necessary, as determined by the Bishop.

ii) Status of the Priest

The priest who receives a fixed remuneration and allowances must be in active ministry and shall be assigned to a specific role at a parish, diocesan ministry, school, hospital or elsewhere as decided by the Bishop of Penang.

⁸¹ Consists of a group of not more than three (3) priests assisting the bishop in the formation of the diocesan priests.

⁸² Can. 281 §1

⁸³ Pastoral Directory, 1989, pg.23

⁸⁴ Pastoral Directory, 1989, pg.23

⁸⁵ Pastoral Directory, 1989, pg.24

Any computation of remunerations, gifts or other benefits due, will be done by considering the status and period of the priest being in active ministry.

(e) Holiday Allowance

A timely and appropriate holiday allowance is to be established by the Diocese and is to be reviewed regularly. The holiday allowance is to be paid by the parish.

(f) Free Will Gifts

Cultural gifts of “ang pow” and any other gifts given with a clear intention directly to the priest, shall belong to the priest.

(g) Financial Assistance⁸⁶

i) Financial Assistance Scheme

If the priest is in need of financial assistance for special circumstances, the Diocese will endeavour to provide assistance, subject to the terms of the diocesan policy. The repayment plan follows the time frame as agreed upon in the promissory note entered into by the parties.⁸⁷

ii) Special Circumstances

A request for financial assistance in special circumstances which includes the medical needs of aged parents, family difficulties, and/or other emergencies will be given due consideration.⁸⁸

(h) Procurement of IT Hardware and Software⁸⁹

A desktop computer, laptop or tablet and smartphone are to be provided to each priest to better serve the people of God in the diocese.

(i) Vehicle Ownership⁹⁰

Each priest ministering in the Diocese of Penang is entitled to a vehicle to serve and minister to the people of God. The purchase price of the vehicle is capped at a maximum value of RM60,000.00. This cap will be reviewed and revised, when necessary, as determined by the Bishop.

⁸⁶ Appendix 1 - Priest Financial Assistance Policy

⁸⁷ Appendix 1A - Promissory Note

⁸⁸ Appendix 1 – Priest Financial Assistance Policy

⁸⁹ Appendix 2 – Clergy Policy on IT Hardware & Software Procurement

⁹⁰ Appendix 3 - Clergy Vehicle Ownership Policy

They may seek vehicle replacement after the eighth (8th) year or 200,000 kilometres, whichever is sooner. The priest has the responsibility to maintain the vehicle in good condition for his own safety. The parish will provide funds for the operation and maintenance of the vehicle.

3.4.2 Physical and Mental Health

(a) Self-Care

Good physical and mental health are necessary to be able to serve the people of God. Priests are to exercise regularly and maintain a good and healthy lifestyle. Priests are responsible for their own spiritual, physical, mental, and emotional health. They are to strive to keep physically and emotionally healthy by getting the proper nutrition and adequate sleep, exercise, taking allotted days off and vacations, guarding against addictive or abusive behaviours and nurturing appropriate friendships outside pastoral relationships. Priests are also encouraged to seek counselling and guidance from spiritual directors or professionals for their mental well-being.

(b) Medical Check-Up

All priests are to go for annual medical check-ups.

(c) Care, Health and Medical Benefits⁹¹

The diocese is to provide medical insurance and hospital benefits for all diocesan priests and those serving in the Diocese of Penang. Proper accommodation will also be made available to priests having special health/medical care needs.

3.4.3 Vacation

(a) Day of Rest

Priests are entitled to one (1) day of rest in a week.

(b) Annual Leave

Priests that are assigned within the Diocese of Penang, are entitled to an annual leave of thirty (30) days. This leave cannot be carried forward to the following year.

⁹¹ Appendix 4 - Clergy Policy on Care, Health, and Medical Benefits

3.4.4 Last Will and Testament ⁹²

(a) Preparation of a Will

- a. A will is a legal document in accordance with the Wills Act 1959. To be valid it must comply with certain conditions:
 - The testator is the person distributing the estate. The name and address of the testator must be stated and must be of sound mind.
 - The executor is responsible for distributing the estate as instructed according to the Will. An executor must be named, and his/her address given.
 - The Will must be signed by the testator in the presence of the two witnesses. The witnesses sign the Will, with their full name, NRIC, addresses, and date on which it was made. Witnesses also sign on every page of the document. Please note the witnesses are not direct or indirect beneficiaries of the Will.

- b. Last Wills and Testaments made by priests belonging to religious orders or societies in accordance with their own constitutions, must conform to the civil laws of Malaysia.

- c. A copy of the will carefully sealed is to be kept by the diocesan procurator.

- d. To ensure legal validity, it is recommended that a local solicitor be consulted.

⁹² Appendix 5 – Declaration and Appendix 6 – Last Will & Testament, Codicil to Last Will

4. PRIESTLY MINISTRY⁹³

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Priests should look at their rights and obligations in light of the nature of the priesthood.

As rights arise from the dignity and responsibility of the priesthood, so also certain obligations follow consequently to their indispensable ministries all of which should be carried out as a continuation of the mission of Jesus Christ.

The obligations of priests, humanly speaking, may be burdensome. Nevertheless, for those who love Christ and his inseparable cross, for those who long to imitate Christ, for those whose only food is God's Will, shall find their priestly yoke light and the burden sweet.

4.2 PRIESTLY RIGHTS

4.2.1 Power of Orders

Only the priest can assume offices that require the power of orders.⁹⁴ Although the law allows deacons and lay persons to participate in pastoral ministry due to the shortage of priests⁹⁵ only a priest can be appointed to the full pastoral care of souls.⁹⁶

4.2.2 Associations

The diocesan priest has a right to join or associate with others in the pursuit of goals that conform to the priestly state.⁹⁷

4.2.3 Committee on the Grievances of Priests

Grievances should be treated seriously because of the potential damage which may be caused in day-to-day relationships. The grievances will be dealt with sensitively, fairly and as expeditiously as possible within the Church. It is a fundamental principle that all parties to the grievance should be reconciled if possible. Grievances can include but are not limited to the following types of issues:

- Change in office or status
- Personal financial matters
- Access to opportunities within the Church

⁹³ Pastoral Directory, 1989, pg. 29- 37

⁹⁴ Can. 274 §1

⁹⁵ Can. 517 §2

⁹⁶ Can. 150

⁹⁷ Can. 278 §1

- Relationship issues with fellow members of the clergy or parishioners or the diocesan bishop
- Unfair treatment
- Conditions of the parish house and/or the retirement home
- Health and safety concerns

All matters related to grievances can be referred to the office of the Judicial Vicar.

4.3 PRIESTLY OBLIGATIONS

4.3.1 Spiritual Perfection

Priests are to seek their own spiritual perfection using all the spiritual aids available to a priest.

4.3.2 Ministry of the Word

As co-operators with the Bishop, priests have to proclaim the Gospel of God.⁹⁸

Priests must regard preaching as a priority as much as their primary responsibility is the proclamation of the gospel to everyone.⁹⁹

They must see to it with the zeal that they stir up and teach the Christian faith, especially through the ministry of the Word.¹⁰⁰

4.3.3 Ministry of the Sacraments

Priests have the obligation to give the Sacraments to the faithful who are properly disposed and are not prohibited by law from receiving them.¹⁰¹

They are obliged to give the sacraments only to Catholics and are forbidden to give them to non-Catholics except in circumstances permitted in the law.¹⁰²

4.3.4 Faculties granted by Universal Law and the Diocesan Bishop

Diocesan faculties are granted to priests to empower them for ministry. They are meant for the spiritual benefit of the faithful and the communal benefit of the Church. Some faculties are typically bestowed by the universal law itself, either with a parish priest's appointment or ordination to the

⁹⁸ Can. 757

⁹⁹ Can. 762

¹⁰⁰ Can. 836

¹⁰¹ Can. 843 §1

¹⁰² Can. 844 §1

priesthood. While all priests possess these faculties, the parish priest is the presbyter who is in charge of ensuring the proper use and administration of all clergy faculties within his parish. Other faculties are conferred by the diocesan bishop as part of the priests' appointments to positions or upon request.

These faculties are often conferred in writing to a specific priest by name for the term of his ministry or appointment in the Diocese by the Bishop. The Universal Law grants diocesan written faculties to priests obtained by ordination and in good standing for ministry and is intended for the benefit of the faithful and the good of the Church. While all priests have these faculties, the parish priest is the presbyter that is responsible for the proper administration and proper use of all faculties of the clergy in his parish. Faculties will ordinarily be given in writing to a specific person by name either for the anticipated length of the priest's ministry or habitually for the duration of the ministry of a priest incardinated in the Diocese.

4.3.5 To Honour and Respect

Priests will honour the equality of all people, avoiding all forms of discrimination and respecting the dignity of each person by providing service without regard to economic status, age, gender, race ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, or physical or mental abilities.

Priests will reach out to all people in a spirit of humility, reverence, and respect, especially to those who feel estranged from the Church. Priests will take care to be approachable and available to help those who seek their assistance and to be sensitive to the good of the community as they respond to the diverse forms of spirituality and theology within it.

Priests should not restrict the rights of the Christian faithful beyond what the laws of the Church provide.

The priests of the Diocese of Penang will model a life consistent with the teachings of the Gospel, promoting through their own behaviour the way to love God and to love neighbour as self. The priests will also exhibit a deep commitment to the Church and loyalty to its traditions and teachings in the way that they interact with the lives and circumstances of the people they serve.¹⁰³

¹⁰³ Can. 273

4.3.6 Assignments

Unless legitimately prevented, priests are bound to assume and faithfully fulfil the assignment given to them by their Ordinary.¹⁰⁴

4.3.7 Absence

Priests may not be absent from their parish/ assignment for more than a week without the permission of the Ordinary.

4.3.8 Associations

They should avoid groups of associations whose goals and activities are not in conformity with clerical obligations or interfere with the fulfilment of their priestly responsibilities.¹⁰⁵

4.3.9 Attire

Priests are to wear suitable ecclesiastical attire in accordance with the norms of episcopal conference and local custom.¹⁰⁶

The following are the norms of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Malaysia, Singapore and Brunei:

(a) In Liturgical Celebrations

The prescribed vestments according to liturgical books shall be used.¹⁰⁷ However, a white cassock may replace an alb.

(b) In Para-Liturgical Celebrations, e.g., during Benediction

A stole shall be used over the alb or cassock.

(c) In Civil and Official Functions

Priests should wear a cassock or a shirt with a Roman collar as prescribed by the Episcopal Conference.

(d) For Ordinary Occasions

Priests should exercise discretion in their choice of attire. In addition, they should display simplicity, propriety and consider local customs and dress accordingly.

¹⁰⁴ Can. 274 §2

¹⁰⁵ Can. 278 §3

¹⁰⁶ Can. 284

¹⁰⁷ Can. 929

4.3.10 Unbecoming and Inconsistent Behaviours of the Priestly State

(a) In accord with local norms

They should completely avoid whatever is unbecoming of their state of life in accordance with local norms¹⁰⁸ e.g., gambling.

(b) Inconsistence with the priesthood

They should avoid those things which, though not unbecoming in themselves, are inconsistent with the priestly state.¹⁰⁹

4.3.11 Public Office

Priests are forbidden to assume public office, especially one which involves the exercise of civil power, without the permission of both the proper Ordinary and the bishop of the place where he intends to exercise administrative authority.¹¹⁰

4.3.12 Proprietorship and Guarantors

Without the permission of the Bishop, priests may not undertake the administration of property which belongs to lay persons or assume the office of a secular organisation. The priests are not to be trustees and executors of wills, guarantors for personal or corporate loans, or sureties for bail or bond undertakings. However, in extraordinary cases, they would need to consult the Bishop and get his approval.¹¹¹

4.3.13 Conducting Business

Without the permission of legitimate ecclesiastical authority, priests are forbidden to conduct business or trade either personally or through others, for personal gain or for the benefit of others.¹¹²

4.3.14 Political Factions

Priests may not take an active role in political factions or in the management of labour unions unless the judgment of the competent ecclesiastical authority and with its permission, it would be required for the protection of the rights of the Church and the common good.¹¹³

¹⁰⁸ Can. 285 §1

¹⁰⁹ Can. 285 §2

¹¹⁰ Can. 285 §3

¹¹¹ Can. 285 §4, Can. 289 § 2

¹¹² Can. 286

¹¹³ Can. 287 §2

4.3.15 Military Service

They may not enter military service without the permission of the Bishop.¹¹⁴

4.3.16 Protection of Minors

The Clergy, Church Personnel and Volunteers are to report or raise concerns on any suspected cases of the abuse and neglect of minors, and highlight any concerns about minor safety issues and problems, promptly to the Professional Standards Office of the Diocese of Penang¹¹⁵ and/or to the relevant State Authorities.

The Diocese of Penang has formulated the '**Keeping and Restoring Communion Child Protection Manual**'¹¹⁶ and the '**Standards of Pastoral Conduct**'¹¹⁷ which set forth clearly the norms, policies, standards, protocols, and reporting and handling procedures for complaints, individual standards, and expectations, for all those providing or supporting the pastoral care of minors in the Diocese of Penang. These norms acknowledge the Universal Laws of the Church, State Laws, and Diocesan Policies. All the clergy are to be aware of and committed to following these norms that govern the protection of minors.

¹¹⁴ Can. 289 §1

¹¹⁵ Professional Standards Office, Diocese of Penang – To contact the Bishop's Priest Delegate / Bishop's Lay Delegate under Diocesan Judicial Bodies, Diocese Directory.

¹¹⁶ Keeping and Restoring Communion – Child Protection Manual of the Diocese of Penang, promulgated on 6th February 2019

¹¹⁷ Standards of Pastoral Conduct, Diocese of Penang – To be read with acknowledgement of signature.

5. PARISH AND PRIEST

5.1 PARISH

5.1.1 Parish - Integral part of the Diocese

A parish is a certain community of Christ's faithful, stably established within a particular Church, whose pastoral care, under the authority of the diocesan Bishop, is entrusted to the parish priest as its proper pastor.¹¹⁸

The basic element of the parish is the existence of the group of the faithful who need spiritual help, but to whom the diocesan Bishop is not personally able to minister because of the great number of faithful in his Diocese, also called the particular church, for which he is responsible.¹¹⁹

The parish priests are in a special sense, collaborators with the Bishop. They are given, in a specific section of the Diocese, and under the authority of the Bishop, the care of souls as their particular shepherd.¹²⁰

5.2 PRIEST

5.2.1 Parish Priest

The appointment of a parish priest is for an indefinite period of time.¹²¹ However, the diocesan bishop may appoint him for a specific period of time as prescribed by the Episcopal Conference.

The parish priest is the proper pastor of the parish entrusted to him. He exercises the pastoral care of the community entrusted to him under the authority of the diocesan Bishop, whose ministry of Christ he is called to share, so that for this community, he may carry out the offices of teaching, sanctifying, and ruling with the cooperation of other priests or deacons and with the assistance of lay members of Christ's faithful, in accordance with the law.¹²²

A parish priest is to have the parochial care of one parish only. However, because of the shortage of priests or other circumstances, the care of a number of neighbouring parishes can be entrusted to one parish priest.¹²³

¹¹⁸ Can. 515 §1

¹¹⁹ Sweeny, E. A., *The Obligations and Rights of the Pastor of a Parish according to the Code of Canon Law, Society of St. Paul*, New York 2002, pg. 6.

¹²⁰ *Christus Dominus*, no.30 - 31

¹²¹ Can. 522

¹²² Can. 519

¹²³ Can. 526 §1

The functions are as follows¹²⁴:

- i) The administration of baptism:
- ii) The administration of the sacrament of confirmation to those in danger of death, in accordance with Can. 833, 3°
- iii) The administration of Viaticum and the anointing of the sick, without prejudice to Can. 1003 § 2 and 3, and the imparting of the apostolic blessing.
- iv) Assistance at marriages and the nuptial blessing.
- v) The performance of funeral rites.
- vi) The blessing of the baptismal font at a paschal time, the conduct of procession outside the church, and the giving of solemn blessings outside the church.
- vii) The celebration of masses offered by the people at specific times.
- viii) Priests are encouraged to celebrate daily mass except on their designated days of leave.
- ix) The more solemn celebration of the Eucharist on Sundays and holy days of obligation.

5.2.2 Parish Administrator

When a parish is vacant, or when the priest is prevented from exercising his pastoral office in the parish by reason of captivity, exile or banishment, incapacity or ill health, or some other cause, the diocesan bishop is to designate as soon as possible a parochial administrator, that is, a priest who takes the place of the parish priest according to the norm of Can. 540.¹²⁵

A parish administrator is bound by the same duties and possesses the same rights as a parish priest, unless the diocesan Bishop establishes otherwise.¹²⁶ The parish administrator is not permitted to do anything which prejudices the rights of the parish priest or harms parish goods.¹²⁷ After he has completed his function, a parish administrator is to render an account to the parish priest.¹²⁸

5.2.3 Assistant Parish Priest

Whenever it is necessary or opportune for the due pastoral care of the parish, one or more assistant parish priests can be joined with the parish priest. As co-operators with the parish priest and sharers in his concern, they are, by common counsel and effort with the parish priest and under his authority, to labour in the pastoral ministry.¹²⁹

¹²⁴ Can. 530

¹²⁵ Can. 539

¹²⁶ Can. 540 §1

¹²⁷ Can. 540 §2

¹²⁸ Can. 540 §3

¹²⁹ Can. 545 §1

Unless it is otherwise expressly provided in the appointment letter of the diocesan Bishop, the assistant parish priest is by virtue of his office bound to help the parish priest in the entire parochial ministry. Likewise, if the matter should arise in accordance with the law, he is bound to take the place of the parish priest.¹³⁰

The assistant parish priest is to report regularly to the parish priest on pastoral initiatives, both those planned and those already undertaken.¹³¹

They are to act for the parish priest when the latter is on short or long leave. They are also bound to reside in the parish.¹³²

Parish priests / assistant parish priests who have completed their 75th year of age or for some other grave reason, are unable to perform their duties adequately and fruitfully are earnestly requested to tender their resignations spontaneously, or when the Bishop invites them to do so.

5.2.4 Rectors

Rectors are priests to whom are entrusted the care of a church building (e.g., a shrine) or a parish¹³³.

5.2.5 Deacons

A seminarian is ordained to the diaconate and serves as a deacon for some time (often six (6) months to a year or more) before his ordination to the priesthood¹³⁴.

Transitional deacons are seminarians in the last stage before being ordained to the priesthood. Transitional deacons are to be initiated with the Priests' Handbook through proper formation before being ordained as priests.

Their functions are as follows:

If, because of a shortage of priests, the diocesan Bishop has judged that a deacon, or some other person who is not a priest, or a community of persons, should be entrusted with a share in the exercise of the pastoral ministry of a parish, he is to appoint a priest who, with the powers and faculties of a parish priest, will direct the pastoral care of the parish.¹³⁵

¹³⁰ Can. 548 §2

¹³¹ Can. 548 §3; officially or informally; e.g., over a meal

¹³² Can. 549

¹³³ Can. 556

¹³⁴ Can. 1031§1

¹³⁵ Can. 517 §2

All deacons, including permanent deacons, may conduct the following rites:

- i) administer baptism.
- ii) distribute Holy Communion at Mass and outside Mass.
- iii) conduct the rite of Viaticum¹³⁶.
- iv) impart benediction of the Blessed Sacrament to the faithful.
- v) assist at marriages, but only in the parish to which he is assigned.
- vi) administer sacramentals.
- vii) preside at wake, funeral and burial rites.
- viii) proclaim the gospel, read the scriptures, teach and preach to the faithful, and preside over prayer meetings and bible services.

A deacon may give blessings, as contained in the rites in which he is a minister.

5.2.6 Residence of the Priest

The parish priest is obliged to reside in the parochial house, near the church.¹³⁷

The assistant parish priest¹³⁸ and the transitional deacons¹³⁹ are bound to reside in the parish they are appointed to.

In particular cases, however, where there is a just reason, the local Ordinary may permit him to reside elsewhere, especially in a house common to several priests, provided the carrying out of the parochial duties is properly and suitably catered for.

It is a tradition and customary for a Catholic priest to live in the presbytery, religious institutions (e.g., the Little Sisters of the Poor - Home for the Aged), diocesan houses or a particular house approved by the diocesan bishop.

5.2.7 Priest in Residence

Those priests to whom the faculties of the Diocese of Penang have been given and who are in residence in a parish, whether in the parish house or other institutions in the Diocese, have the faculties to celebrate the Sacraments that is not contrary to the office of the parish priest.

¹³⁶ This does not include the apostolic pardon, sacramental absolution and anointing of the sick.

¹³⁷ Can. 533§1

¹³⁸ Can. 550§1

¹³⁹ For permanent deacons, refer to their own handbook.

5.2.8 Special Assignment

Those with special diocesan assignments enjoy the powers specified for those offices. In the parishes where they reside, they have the right to provide pastoral care for the people they are assigned to minister.¹⁴⁰

5.2.9 Assignments Outside the Diocese

Priests who are assigned to serve any ecclesiastical office or ministry outside the Diocese of Penang retain the faculties. However, the faculties of priests may be restricted by the local Ordinary of the receiving Diocese.

A yearly written statement of assignment should be sent to the diocesan Bishop. Recall or return to the Diocese should be preceded by a reasonable period of notice.

5.2.10 Types of Leave

(a) Study Leave

When the Bishop grants study leave to a priest, the duration of the study leave is the time taken to complete the particular course of study.

(b) Authorised Leave of Absence

When the Bishop grants a leave of absence, diocesan faculties are automatically withdrawn, unless otherwise indicated by the Bishop in his letter of authorisation. The priest may not exercise his ministry in public without the special authorisation of the Bishop.

(c) Unauthorised Leave of Absence

When a priest leaves his assignment of designated residence without the express permission of the Bishop, his faculties are automatically withdrawn. He is forbidden to exercise any function of his priestly ministry with the exceptions noted in Can. 976.

(d) Sabbatical Leave

A sabbatical is defined as time away from one's assignment for the purpose of personal and professional growth and renewal, through a program of study, work, prayer, and rest. A sabbatical is to be distinguished from special studies to meet diocesan needs, extended vacation, therapeutic leave, leave of absence from ministry, or leave for ministry outside the diocese.

- i) A Normal Sabbatical is three (3) months in duration, after which the priest is expected to return to his assignment. In consultation with the Bishop, the priest seeking a normal sabbatical is to make

¹⁴⁰ Cf Can. 518

arrangements for his pastoral responsibilities to be handled by others.

- ii) An Extended Sabbatical is longer than three (3) months but no longer than twelve (12) months in duration, after which the priest is expected to return to his assignment.

5.2.11 Protocol for Visiting Priests

The Bishop by ordination receives the fullness of the Sacrament of Holy Orders and becomes the successor of the Apostles. By ordination, priests are united with the bishops in the exercise of their pastoral functions and are called the Bishops' prudent co-workers" (CCC 1595)¹⁴¹. The priest promises obedience to the bishop in service to God's people. This rule applies to visiting priests.

When a priest visits the Diocese of Penang for official matters, it is prudent that the priest pays a courtesy call to the Bishop's Office or to make the Bishop aware of his presence in the diocese, informing the intention of his visit and the period of time he will be in the diocese. Reporting to a local bishop provides assurance that the visiting priests are in good standing.

Priests who intend to preach, celebrate public mass, administer the sacraments and/or exercise their priestly ministry must get permission from the Bishop of Penang.

Priests can visit their families or take holidays in another diocese, without any restrictions, provided they do not cause disharmony to the local church.

¹⁴¹ Catechism of the Catholic Church - CCC 1595 **Priests are united with the bishops in sacerdotal dignity** and at the same time depend on them in the exercise of their pastoral functions; they are called to be the bishops' prudent co-workers.

6. RETIREMENT OF PRIESTS

6.1 INTRODUCTION

The priesthood of Jesus Christ involves a lifelong call to ministry. Retired priests, therefore, remain part of the presbyterate and continue to share in its mission. To the decree that their health, energy, personal circumstances, and interest permit, retired priest are encouraged to continue some form of priestly ministry and participate in clergy monthly recollections.

6.2 RETIREMENT AGE AND LEGAL INSTRUMENTS

The retirement age for priests shall be seventy-five (75) years. In special circumstances, the priest can request in writing to the Bishop for early retirement from full-time ministry because of health issues, or other factors that suggest an earlier age for their retirement is more appropriate.

6.2.1 Upon retirement, the priest should execute a valid and updated will, and if necessary, a properly executed power of attorney for financial matters.

6.2.2 The names and addresses of the priest's next-of-kin and the telephone number of his emergency contact should be documented. Information should also be written concerning any arrangements regarding funeral, burial or cremation requests that he may wish to make.

6.3 ROLE OF THE RETIRED PRIEST

6.3.1 Retired priests are invited to stay fully informed of the activities of the Diocese of Penang through meetings, and regular communications via social media apps, e-mails or mobile phones.

6.3.2 If a priest chooses retirement from full-time ministry and resides in a parish house, whether in a parish in which he had previously served or another parish to which he is invited to move upon retirement, he may be invited to participate in the ministry of that parish and be given suitable opportunities to do so.

6.3.3 On retirement, the priest residing in a particular parish is expected to be cooperative and supportive of the parish priest/ parish administrator.

6.4 LIVING ARRANGEMENTS UPON RETIREMENT

6.4.1 The Bishop with the assistance of the Council of Priests will evaluate and review each request to determine the retiring priest's appropriate living

arrangements. The spirituality, emotional stability, physical health, and temperament of the retiring priest are important factors in the decision-making.

6.4.2 A retired priest may choose to live in the parish, St. Joachim's Home, in other diocesan institutions or a place of their choice, within or outside of the Diocese. The arrangement is to be made with the local ordinary.

6.5 RETIREMENT BENEFITS

6.5.1 For a priest retired in a parish; the diocese should provide for his daily sustenance.

6.5.2 Priests are to undergo an annual medical examination, and the medical expenses are to be borne by the Diocese. Sickly and dependent priests are to be given adequate nursing and medical care.

6.5.3 Upon retirement, barring unforeseen health or safety reasons, a retired priest is to be given a suitable vehicle by the Diocese. The Diocese is to cover the operation and maintenance of the vehicle.

6.5.4 An appropriate monthly allowance is to be given. Additionally, a lump sum gratuity payment will be given upon the priest's retirement.¹⁴²

6.6 SEVERANCE PACKAGE

Clergy leaving the priesthood upon the completion of at least one (1) year of service, will be given a severance package.¹⁴³

¹⁴² Appendix 7 – Retired Clergy -Gratuity Gift Policy

¹⁴³ Appendix 8 - Severance Package Policy

7. ADMINISTRATION

7.1 MATTERS RELATING TO DIOCESAN PRIESTS

7.1.1 A Parish Priest's Personal Bank Account and Money

The parish priest is to see to it that his personal bank account (*if any*), and money is administratively separate from the parish bank account.

7.1.2 When a Diocesan event is held in a parish, the hosting parish shall advance payments for such activities relating to the event using the parish funds. Thereafter the Diocese will reimburse these payments.

7.1.3 Advance payments using personal money is not allowed.

7.2 MATTERS RELATING TO PARISHES

7.2.1 Pastoral Administration

(a) Collaboration with the Bishop and Priest¹⁴⁴

Clergy in the parish are to collaborate with the diocesan bishop, presbyters and deacons in striving to achieve a vibrant parish community centred in Christ. He must bring the people to the point where they see themselves also as members of the Diocese and of the universal Church.

(b) Peace and Harmony

The Clergy should promote as much as possible the preservation of peace and harmony among all people.

7.2.2 Parish Administration

(a) Use of Parish Premises

The parish house is the private residence of the parish priest and other priests assigned to the parish. Parish employees are not permitted to live in the parish house. However, if accommodation is available in a part of the parish buildings separate from the priest's quarters, or in a separate property belonging to the parish, employees may be permitted to live there while they remain in the employment of the parish. Where board and/or lodging are provided, employees should be charged a small sum to be determined by the parish priest.

¹⁴⁴ Can. 519

To avoid legal complications, no house or property belonging to the parish may under any circumstances, be let, without the written consent of the Diocesan Financial Administrator.

(b) *Parish House*

The parish house is a place of residence for the parish priest and his assistant(s) who are clergy. Written permission of the Bishop is needed for those staying in the parish house other than those mentioned above.

(c) *Administrative Transactions*

In all juridical matters, the parish priest acts in the person of the parish, in accordance with the law. He is to ensure that parish goods are administered in accordance with Can. 1281 – 1288.

(d) *Alteration of Parish Boundaries*

Modifications of parish boundaries may be indicated for various reasons such as significant changes in population density, especially in the developing areas of the Diocese. Where such changes are deemed necessary, the parish priests of the affected parishes should reach a consensus and submit proposals for a redrawing of their parish boundaries to the Bishop. They will be officially informed in writing of any decision taken by the diocesan Bishop before it is made public.

(e) *Accurate Records*

Priests involved in parish ministry should have a good working knowledge of the day-to-day administration of the parish. They should therefore familiarize themselves with the parish registers and parish records, and books:

- i) Register of Baptism
- ii) Register of Confirmation
- iii) Record of Marriage
- iv) Record of Deaths
- v) Parish Accounts
- vi) Parish Inventory

Note:

In each parish there are to be parochial registers, that is, of baptisms, marriages and deaths, and any other registers prescribed by the Episcopal Conference or by the diocesan Bishop. The parish priest is to ensure that entries are accurately made and that the registers are carefully preserved.

In the register of baptisms, a note is to be made of confirmation and matters pertaining to the canonical status of the faithful by reason of marriage, without prejudice of the provisions of Can. 1133, and by reason of adoption, the reception of sacred order, the making of the perpetual profession in a religious institute, or a change of rite. These annotations are always to be reproduced on a baptismal certificate.

All amendments are to be made by deletion, not by erasure; and an amended entry is to be certified by the signature or initials of the parish priest who makes it.

In each parish there is to be an archive, in which the parochial books are to be kept, together with episcopal letters and other documents which it may be necessary or useful to preserve. On the occasion of visitation or at some other opportune time, the diocesan Bishop or his delegate is to inspect all of these matters. The parish priest is to take care that they do not fall into unauthorised hands.

Older parochial registers are also to be carefully safeguarded, in accordance with the provisions of particular laws.¹⁴⁵ Parishes must take steps to digitalise the parishes archival records and ensure their security and confidentiality.

(f) Parish Seal

Each parish is to have its own seal or rubber stamp. Certificates concerning the canonical status of the faithful, and all acts which can have juridical significance, are to be signed by the parish priest or his delegate and secured with the parochial seal or rubber stamp.

(g) Baptism and Marriage Records are to be kept in the Diocesan Archive

Canon Law¹⁴⁶ requires parish priests to send an annual record of the baptisms, confirmations, marriages and deaths entered in their parish registers to the Diocesan Archive.

¹⁴⁵ Refer to Diocesan Archives

¹⁴⁶ Can. 491§1

(h) Annual Parish Returns

The Diocesan Secretariat is required to supply each year up-to-date information concerning parishes, schools and Catholic welfare agencies to

- i) the Holy See, and
- ii) the editor of the Official Catholic Directory.

In addition, a summary of this information is included in the General Report on the Diocese sent to Rome every five (5) years on the occasion of the Bishop's ad limina visit.

Accordingly, all concerned are earnestly requested to complete the annual reports accurately and forward them promptly to the Diocesan Secretariat.

(i) Holy Oils

The parish priest has the responsibility of keeping custody of the Holy Oils obtained from the Bishop.

7.2.3 Financial Administration

(a) Fund Raising

Any person, whether priest, religious or lay, wishing to collect money for any pious purpose or to solicit funds for a Catholic institution (e.g. church, hospital, school, etc.) has to obtain the written permission of the Bishop. This refers to all means of collecting money such as bazaars, raffles, gala premiers, door-to-door calls, walkathons, and special sales. To avoid abuses and to ensure the proper coordination of fund-raising activities in the Diocese, the written permission of the Bishop is to be requested well in advance, each time these activities are to be carried out.

(b) Parish Bank Account

Only the Bishop may authorise a priest to operate a parish bank account. The bank will be chosen by the parish and approved by the Bishop.

(c) Reimbursements of Claims

Reimbursements of claims from either the Parish or Diocese by the clergy or laity is subject to the validity of the expenses incurred and within the period of 6 months from the date the expenses incurred.

(d) Priests on Transfer

Whenever a parish priest is on transfer, he shall hand over in the presence of the Bishop or his representative or the Financial Administrator, to his successor the following:

- i) the latest updated parish account and its books;
- ii) the latest bank statement and all receipts of fixed deposits;
- iii) cash belonging to the parish;
- iv) all outstanding bills;
- v) the parish programs, pastoral plans and other relevant documents;
- vi) parish or ministry inventory list.

Note

1. Parish account books are to be countersigned by both priests.
2. Parish account books and bank statements shall be made available at any time to the Bishop or his authorised delegate.

(e) Church Properties

Regarding Church properties (land and buildings) within the parish, the parish priest should conscientiously look after them for the Diocese. The written permission of the Bishop is required if the parish priest wants to use Church land for new buildings or any extension or renovation of existing buildings. No one should be allowed to stay on or use church land without the written permission of the Bishop.

(f) Works of Maintenance

No work of maintenance or extension exceeding the sum mentioned in the Bishop's latest directive is to be carried out without the prior written permission of the Bishop.

(g) Parish Projects

For parish projects and purchases (per unit) exceeding the sum mentioned in the Bishop's latest directive, the prior approval of the Bishop is required.

(h) Diocesan Solidarity Collection Fund

A percentage¹⁴⁷ of the parish's Sunday collections will be contributed to the Diocesan Solidarity Fund.

¹⁴⁷ Appendix 24 – Solidarity Collection Letter dated 9.9.2020

Note

This fund will be overseen by the Diocesan Finance Office and covers the deficits of parishes, medical needs of the clergy, the retirement of priests and the purchase of cars for the clergy and others.

APPENDICES - POLICIES ON THE CLERGY

PRIEST FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE POLICY

There will be times when a priest's personal financial resources are insufficient to enable him to meet his personal expenses that require an urgent response, e.g., a parental health crisis, family hardships, personal needs, or other emergencies.

The Diocese of Penang is willing to give financial assistance to its priests without interest, to enable the priest to elevate this emergency financial need, so that full attention can be attained towards his pastoral duties.

To apply for financial assistance, the priest must:

1. First, contact the Dean of the particular Deanery who will review the application and then, refer the matter to the Bishop of Penang.
2. Final approval of the financial assistance is reserved to the Bishop of Penang before the monies are disbursed.
3. The financial assistance application shall be decided within two (2) weeks of receipt of the application.
4. Once approval is given, the priest must supply supporting documentation for the financial assistance application to the Diocesan Financial Administrator.
5. The amount and terms of the financial assistance and a schedule for repayment, and the period of years, will be mutually agreed upon between the Diocese and the priest.
6. The terms of the financial assistance approved, will be incorporated into a promissory note to be signed by the said priest.

PROMISSORY NOTE

PROMISSORY NOTE

FOR AMOUNT: RM _____

Date:
Place:

I, _____ (NRIC) _____, make a commitment to pay the Titular Roman Catholic Bishop of Penang (TRCBP), the sum of RM _____.

The repayment is to be made in the form of _____ (nos. of months) of equal payments, without interest, payable on or before the 7th day of each month, beginning on _____ until the total amount of the monies owed is paid.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I set my hand with signature, this _____ (the day) of _____ (month), 20 ____ and I acknowledge receipt of a completed copy of this instrument.

Signature

Diocesan Financial Administrator

Name:

CLERGY POLICY ON IT HARDWARE & SOFTWARE PROCUREMENT

This policy is to provide a framework for the procurement of all IT¹⁴⁸ hardware and software by the clergy in the Diocese of Penang and to ensure the effective and prudent use of funds. The policy covers all IT-related purchases, as follows:

- (i) A desktop computer or laptop/tablet**
- (ii) A smartphone**

The policy herewith approves that:

1. Priests are limited to a single (i) desktop computer or laptop/tablet and (ii) a smartphone.
2. Priests may choose any brand of desktop or laptop/tablet and smartphone with the value of the hardware not exceeding RM3,000.00 for each equipment. This value to be reviewed and revised, when necessary, as determined by the Bishop.
3. The cost of the IT hardware will be borne by the Diocese of Penang paid for by the Solidarity Fund.
4. The desktop or laptop/tablet and smartphone will have an estimated lifespan of five (5) years, after which it can be disposed of for a new replacement.
5. All the above IT hardware will be under the name of the individual priest and will follow the priest if he is transferred to another parish or there is a change in his diocesan ministry.
6. Requests for the early purchase of IT hardware will be considered on an individual need's basis.

¹⁴⁸ Information Technology

CLERGY VEHICLE OWNERSHIP POLICY

1. The clergy in the Diocese of Penang are required to have adequate and proper vehicle transportation for their diocesan, parochial and personal use.
2. The vehicle will be purchased by the Diocese of Penang but registered in the name of the priest. It remains as the property of the Diocese of Penang.
3. The gross purchase price of a vehicle acquired under the Clergy Vehicle Ownership Policy will be capped at the maximum value of RM60,000.00. This cap will be reviewed and revised, when necessary, as determined by the Bishop.
4. Clergy wishing to acquire a new or replacement vehicle via the diocese vehicle policy will need to get the endorsement and approval of the Bishop before a vehicle is acquired.
5. The trade-in value of the existing used vehicle will pay towards the purchase of the new vehicle or be refunded to the Diocese of Penang.
6. Clergy must insure the vehicle on a comprehensive basis.
7. Clergy wishing to opt for a larger vehicle, costing above the diocese vehicle cap for medical reasons or comfort due to body size, or other determinations, will need to get the endorsement and approval of the Bishop before a vehicle is purchased.
8. If a vehicle above the price cap determined by the Clergy Vehicle Ownership Policy is purchased by the priest, the priest is responsible to pay the additional cost of the car purchase and the Bishop of Penang, and the Diocesan Financial Administrator must be informed.
9. In normal circumstances, a vehicle should not be changed in less than eight (8) years or 200,000 kilometres, whichever is sooner.
10. Parishes and/or diocesan ministries are expected to pay the operating expenditures of the vehicle and other expenses, including road tax and insurance.
11. The Diocesan Finance Office will review its Clergy Vehicle Ownership Policy every (8) years.

CLERGY POLICY ON CARE, HEALTH, AND MEDICAL BENEFITS

The Diocese of Penang will enable all clergy of the diocese to have proper and adequate medical, dental, and optical care for the priest in order that they may carry out their service in their mission to God within and beyond the Church. All the clergy in our diocese are encouraged to take regular time off and holiday breaks for the benefit of their health.

1. The Diocese undertakes to provide for medically challenged priests through the Diocesan or parish funds depending on the parochial duties of the priest.
2. The Diocesan clergy are required to undergo a medical check-up every year.
3. The Diocese will organise the hospitalisation, surgical and medical benefits through insurance coverage. For priests assigned to the parishes, the insurance premiums will be paid by the Diocese. Any medical or surgical expenses not covered by insurance will be borne by the parish or the Diocese.
4. Retired, disabled or ailing priests will be cared for at the:
 - (i) St Joachim's Home, Bukit Mertajam;
 - (ii) Little Sisters of the Poor - Home of the Aged, Penang;
 - (iii) Ozanam Retirement Home, Taiping;or
 - (iv) suitable private nursing homes
 - and
 - (v) available parish residences.

The priest can select the location and efforts will be made to fulfil his request.

5. Priests will be medically evaluated and provided with assisted living needs, nursing care or specialised treatments.

DECLARATION¹⁴⁹

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

I, Rev. Fr. (NRIC No.:)
(Name according to I.C.)

the undersigned, Catholic Priest of the Diocese of Penang do hereby declare that said
(lands, houses, mortgages, promissory notes, moneys in the banks), *(to list in order)*

.....
.....
.....
.....

which appear in my name, do not belong to me personally, but are held by me in trust
for the **TITULAR ROMAN CATHOLIC BISHOP OF PENANG.**

Date:

.....
Signature

¹⁴⁹ This is only applicable for Clergy holding property in the name of the Diocese of Penang.

CODICIL¹⁵¹ TO THE LAST WILL & TESTAMENT

I, (NRIC No.:) of the Diocese of Penang having made my Last Will and testamentary dispositions declare this to be a codicil the said Will dated the day of 20....

- 1. I bequeath all the monies in my account at Bank (*name of bank and account no.*):
 - (1) (A/c No.) to (NRIC No.);
 - (2)..... (A/c No.) to (NRIC No.)¹⁵²

2. I bequeath my ¹⁵³ which is in my possession to¹⁵⁴

3. I bequeath my property known as ¹⁵⁵ to

4. In all other respects I confirm my said Will dated day of 20

Dated: day of 20....

.....
Signature

Witness 1:
Signature

Witness 2:
Signature

¹⁵¹ A Codicil to the Will allows the Testator to make amendments or modifications to their Last Will and Testament.
¹⁵² Attach additional papers if necessary and sign.
¹⁵³ Vehicles Registration Card and Plate Nos, jewellery, collections, etc
¹⁵⁴ Attach additional papers if necessary and sign.
¹⁵⁵ Land Title Registration and property address

RETIRED CLERGY - GRATUITY GIFT POLICY

Code of Canon Law – Can. 538 §3

“When a pastor has completed seventy-five years of age, he is requested to submit his resignation from office to the Diocesan Bishop who is to decide to accept or defer it after he has considered all the circumstances of the person and place. Attentive to the norms established by the conference of Bishops, the diocesan Bishop must provide suitable support and housing for a retired pastor.”

1. Reasons for retirement:
 - a) Retirement due to old age;
 - b) Retirement due to health reasons.
2. Upon retirement, priests from the Diocese of Penang will receive a monthly allowance of RM1,500.00 (exclusive of food and miscellaneous expenses)¹⁵⁶.
3. The Diocese of Penang in recognition of the retired priest’s dedicated and loving service to the faithful in the diocese has agreed to contribute a gratuity gift made out by virtue of grace for the amount of RM20,000.00
4. The Retired Clergy - Gratuity Gift Policy is subject to be reviewed and revised when necessary, as determined by the Bishop.

¹⁵⁶ Presently, a retired priest is receiving an allowance of RM1,500 per month (inclusive of food and miscellaneous expenses).

SEVERANCE PACKAGE POLICY

For Clergy leaving the priesthood (*laicisation*) upon the completion of at least one (1) year of service, the following periods, a severance package will be calculated on the following terms.

Last drawn Monthly Allowance	Less than or equal to five (5) years of Service in Diocese after incardination	Severance Payment Allowance x six (6) months
RM***	6 months	RM*** x 6 months

Last drawn Monthly Allowance	Above five (5) years of Service In Diocese after incardination	Severance Payment Allowance x Years
RM***	[-] Years	RM*** x Years

2. The Severance Package Policy is subject to be reviewed and revised, when necessary, as determined by the Bishop.

APPENDICES – CONSTITUTIONS

CONSTITUTION OF PARISH FINANCE COMMITTEE

CONSTITUTION OF PARISH FINANCE COMMITTEE

PARISH OF

1. PREAMBLE

The Parish Finance Committee is set up by the Diocesan Bishop to help the parish priest in the administration of the goods of the parish. The administration is ruled by the universal law (Can. 1281 to 1288) and by the norms laid down by the Bishop. It comprises members of the faithful (Can. 537). The parish priest is to ensure that the parish goods are administered in accordance with these universal and diocesan norms.

2. NAME

The Committee shall be called (name of parish) Parish Finance Committee (PFC).

3. AUTHORITY

- 3.1 The parish priest shall have immediate competent authority over the PFC.
- 3.2 He or his delegate shall preside over the meetings.

4. OBJECT

The objects of the PFC are:

- 4.1 To maintain and administer the funds of the parish.
- 4.2 To ensure that the funds are judiciously used for:
 - (a) the regulation of divine worship
 - (b) the maintenance and welfare of the clergy
 - (c) the maintenance and welfare of the church workers
 - (d) the formation of the faithful
 - (e) evangelization
 - (f) the maintenance and various other needs of the parish
 - (g) the poor and needy of the parish.
- 4.3 To review annual accounts from various parish organisations.
- 4.4 To see to the maintenance and development of the temporal goods of the parish.

5. MEMBERSHIP

- 5.1 The PFC shall comprise members of the faithful who are active and practising Catholic.

CONSTITUTION OF PARISH FINANCE COMMITTEE

- 5.2 They shall be persons of integrity and competence with an interest in promoting the financial position of the Church.
- 5.3 The number of members of the Committee shall be not less than five and not more than ten.
- 5.4 All members are appointed by the parish priest. Persons related to the parish priest up to the fourth degree of consanguinity or affinity are excluded from the PFC. (Can.492)
- 5.5 All members will be required to take the oath of office.
- 5.6 All members shall serve for a period of three (3) years and may be reappointed for further terms.
- 5.7 The parish priest will notify the Diocesan Bishop of the names of members of the PFC and any subsequent changes in the membership.
- 5.8 The parish priest may fill in any casual vacancy for the remainder of the term.
- 5.9 Membership shall terminate:-
- a) On the expiry of the term of 3 years
 - b) On a member submitting his letter of resignation to and being accepted by the parish priest
 - c) If the parish priest decides that for a grave reason his membership should be terminated
 - d) If a member fails to attend 3 consecutive meetings without giving notice in writing.
- 5.10 In the event of any change of parish priest the members shall continue to serve until the expiry of their term of office.
6. **PRESIDENT OF THE PFC**
- The parish priest or his delegate shall be ex-officio the President.
7. **OFFICE BEARERS OF THE PFC**
- 7.1 The officers of the PFC shall be
- (a) the Chairman
 - (b) the Secretary
 - (c) the Treasurer
- 7.2 **CHAIRMAN**
- 7.2.1 He shall be elected by a simple majority vote.
 - 7.2.2 He shall conduct all meetings.
 - 7.2.3 In the absence of the Chairman, any one of the members present shall be elected by the members present to chair the meeting.

CONSTITUTION OF PARISH FINANCE COMMITTEE

7.3 SECRETARY

- 7.3.1 He shall be elected by a simple majority vote.
- 7.3.2 He shall attend to all the correspondences of the PFC.
- 7.3.3 He shall record and keep all minutes of meetings.
- 7.3.4 He shall prepare the agenda and fix the date of meetings after consultation with the Chairman and the President.
- 7.3.5 He shall issue notice of meetings, the agenda and minutes not less than seven days before the intended meeting.
- 7.3.6 In the absence of the Secretary, any one of the members present shall be elected by the members present to record the minutes of the meeting.

7.4 TREASURER

- 7.4.1 Where necessary, the Treasurer may be employed by the parish priest in consultation with the Parish Pastoral Council and the PFC.
- 7.4.2 The Treasurer shall keep accounts of all financial transactions of the parish and shall be responsible for their correctness.
- 7.4.3 The Treasurer shall prepare monthly accounts of the parish and lay them before the Committee for approval at the next meeting of the Committee.
- 7.4.4 The Treasurer shall prepare annual accounts of the parish and lay them before the Committee for approval not later than February 15 of the year following the year for which the Annual Accounts have been prepared.

8. FUNCTIONS OF THE PFC

The functions of the PFC are:

- 8.1 To establish accounting procedures and to provide a continuous and accurate recording of all income and expenditure of the parish.
- 8.2 To establish budgets for the operations of the parish.
- 8.3 Raising of funds through various sub-committees in order to finance parish projects.
- 8.4 To consider and approve emergency expenditure not budgeted for, in excess of \$2,000/-.
- 8.5 To get the approval of the Diocesan Finance Committee for any single expenditure in excess of \$10,000/-.
- 8.6 To approve the income and expenditure statements of the parish.
- 8.7 To submit the monthly and yearly accounts to the Diocese.
- 8.8 To submit the various contributions and collections due to the Diocese (Solidarity Fund, Holy Land, Good Shepherd Sunday, Social Communication Sunday, Peters Pence, Mission Sunday, Binated Masses, Unsaid Masses, Lenten Campaign, etc).

CONSTITUTION OF PARISH FINANCE COMMITTEE

- 8.9 To review and analyse the current financial operation of the parish for better efficiency.
- 8.10 To review yearly the function and scope of PFC. To recommend amendment/s if any to the Diocesan Bishop for approval.
9. MEETINGS
- 9.1 Meetings shall be held at least 4 times per year and as and when deemed necessary.
- 9.2 Any two members jointly may request for a meeting with the approval of the parish priest if there is a need.
- 9.3 Fifty percent of the members shall constitute a quorum. If no quorum is available within 30 minutes the meeting is dissolved, and shall be called at a later date.
- 9.4 All resolutions shall be by majority vote. In case of a tie, the Chairman will have a casting vote.
- a) Each decision must be promptly ratified or otherwise by the President or his delegate.
- b) If the President or his delegate does not ratify the decision of the PFC, and the reasons are not accepted by members, then the PFC shall appeal to the Diocesan Bishop for a review. The decision of the Bishop shall be final and binding.
10. REPRESENTATION AT PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL MEETINGS
- A member of the PFC will be nominated to represent the PFC at Parish Pastoral Council Meetings.
11. ACCOUNTS AND AUDIT
- 11.1 All accounting periods of the parish shall commence on January 1st and end on December 31st of each year.
- 11.2 All monies received and payments made by the parish shall be duly recorded and accounted for.
- 11.3 The Diocesan Bishop may appoint Auditor/s to audit the Annual Accounts of the parish or authorize the Committee to do so.
- 11.4 The Auditor so appointed shall be a Public Accountant pursuant to the Accountants Act, 1967, unless otherwise approved by the Bishop.
12. AUTHORITY TO OPERATE BANK ACCOUNT
- 12.1 The competent authority to open and operate current, savings and other accounts with a bank or licenced financial insitution for a parish belongs to the Diocesan Bishop.

CONSTITUTION OF PARISH FINANCE COMMITTEE

- 12.2 All monies received by the parish shall be paid into bank account/s of the parish and all withdrawals therefrom shall be signed by the parish priest and any one of the three members duly appointed.
- 12.3 The word "Fund" shall not be included when naming the bank account in the name of the parish.
13. **AMENDMENTS**
No amendments shall be made to the Constitution without prior approval in writing of the Diocesan Bishop.
14. **DISPUTES AND INTERPRETATION**
Disputes and interpretations concerning the Constitution shall be referred to the Diocesan Bishop whose decision shall be final.

I hereby approve this Constitution to be used in all the parishes of the Diocese of Penang with effect from the 1st of January 1993.



[Signature]
Bishop A. Selvanayagam

1st September 1992

CONSTITUTION OF THE PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL (PPC)

CONSTITUTION OF THE PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL (PPC)

DIOCESE OF PENANG

1. NAME

1.1 The Council shall be called the Parish Pastoral Council of _____

2. AIMS & OBJECTIVES

- 2.1 The Parish Pastoral Council is consultative in nature.
- 2.2 It will work at all times in close collaboration and consultation with the Parish Priest and assistant priest(s) of the parish, advising him (them) in matters pertaining to pastoral ministry.
- 2.3 It will identify, implement and evaluate pastoral initiatives and policies in line with the pastoral priorities of the Diocese and of the universal Church.

3. MEMBERSHIP

3.1 Ex-officio members:

- (a) The Parish Priest and assistant priest(s)
- (b) Full-time religious working in the parish
- (c) One (1) member representing each religious house situated in the parish

3.2 Elected members:

- (a) Representatives from the BECs or Zones
- (b) One (1) representative from the Pastoral Service Team
- (c) One (1) representative from each of the Specialized Sectors (Tamil/Chinese Apostolate, Youth, Migrants, Orang Asli etc.)
- (d) One (1) representative from the Parish Animating Team
- (e) One (1) representative from the Parish Finance Committee

3.3 Appointed members:

The Parish Priest may appoint a maximum of three (3) persons for their expertise.

- 3.4 The term of office shall be three (3) years. No member shall serve more than two (2) consecutive terms.
- 3.5 Any member failing to attend three (3) consecutive meetings without reasonable explanation shall be deemed to have resigned.
- 3.6 Vacancies shall be filled by co-option/selection/nomination.
- 3.7 More than half (½) of the members shall consist of elected representatives from no. 3.2
- 3.8 In order to function effectively, it is recommended that the Council consist of between fifteen (15) to twenty (20) members.

CONSTITUTION OF THE PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL (PPC)

4. OFFICE-BEARERS

4.1 The office bearers of the Parish Pastoral Council are:

- (a) The Parish Priest is the President
- (b) Chairperson (elected by the Council members)
- (c) Vice-Chairperson (elected by the Council members)
- (d) Honorary Secretary (elected by the Council members)
- (e) Honorary Assistant Secretary (elected by the Council members)
- (f) Honorary Treasurer (nominated representative from the Parish Finance Committee)

4.2 The office bearers may not hold the same office for more than two (2) consecutive terms or six (6) years.

4.3 The members of the incoming council shall at their first (1st) meeting vote among themselves for the office bearers. After nominations, voting shall be by secret ballot. The simple majority vote of members present shall determine the winners. Each office shall be taken individually to permit candidates not elected to be nominated for another office.

4.4 Elections are to be held in the month of **January** so that the incoming council can be prepared for the Annual Parish Assembly in September and can then represent the parish at the District and Diocesan meetings in October/November.

4.5 The duties of the **Chairperson** focus upon the effective operation of the Council in relation to the aims and objectives of the Council. His/her duties are:

- (a) to chair the meetings of the Council
- (b) to work closely with the Parish Priest in discharging the following responsibilities:
 - 1. to call special meetings
 - 2. to appoint members of special sub-committees
 - 3. to develop the agenda for all council meetings together with the Secretary
 - 4. to monitor the progress of programmes being carried out by the different groups/sub-committees

4.6 The **Vice-Chairperson** will assist the Chairperson in his/her duties and will deputize in his/her absence.

4.7 The duties of the **Secretary** are:

- (a) to keep accurate minutes of the council meetings
- (b) two weeks prior to the next council meeting, to mail the following materials to the members with the help of the Parish Secretariat:
 - 1. minutes of the previous Council meeting
 - 2. agenda for the next meeting
 - 3. any pertinent background information
- (c) to be responsible for all correspondence of the Council

4.8 The **Honorary Assistant Secretary** will assist the Honorary Secretary in his/her duties and will deputize in his/her absence.

CONSTITUTION OF THE PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL (PPC)

4.9 The duty of the Treasurer is:

to give the Income & Expenditure of the parish with emphasis on the nature and function of the Council's particular role in the parish.

4.10 Vacancies:

If a vacancy occurs among any of the office-bearers, a successor will be elected from among the council members to serve the remaining portion of the term.

5. MEETINGS

- 5.1 Meetings of the Council are to be held not less than three (3) times in a year.
- 5.2 The Parish Priest or his assistant shall preside at all meetings. No meeting shall be deemed valid without the presence of the priest.
- 5.3 The quorum needed to convene the meeting shall be two-thirds (2/3) of the Council membership.
- 5.4 As the Council conducts its business, the parish priest expresses his opinions preferably towards the end of the discussion. He does not however vote on the motion.
- 5.5 All decisions of the Council become final only with the approval of the Parish Priest.

6. PARISH ASSEMBLY

- 6.1 A Parish Assembly shall be convened annually in the month of September.
- 6.2 The Assembly will evaluate/review previous year's (September to August) pastoral plans and will give their views and recommendations for the coming year.

7. SUB-COMMITTEES

- 7.1 The Council may set up sub-committees to advise it on matters of special pastoral concern.
- 7.2 Recommendations from sub-committees are to be deliberated by the Council for approval or rejection.

8. THE PARISH PRIEST ON THE COUNCIL

- 8.1 As one of the people of God, the Parish Priest joins with the other members to make the Council a special family of persons bound together in friendship and support, personal sharing and mutual respect.
- 8.2 As a spiritual guide of the Parish, the Parish Priest calls for the work of the Council to grow from the action of the Holy Spirit. Through common prayer with the other members and a tone of gentle presence to the Spirit, he helps the Council see all their work as a service to God in their brothers and sisters.
- 8.3 As a leader of the parish, the Parish Priest brings a sense of vision and direction to the Council. He calls for commitment in the planning and conduct of programmes, affirms the gifts parishioners have received for the common good of the church and by his enthusiasm and care, motivates people to be involved and responsible.

CONSTITUTION OF THE PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL (PPC)

9. ON-GOING FORMATION OF MEMBERS

- 9.1 Study, reflection and in-service education on the nature and mission of the Church is of paramount importance for every member of the Council and is to be conducted at least twice a year.
- 9.2 This council should arrange for its members a vigil of prayer or a day of recollection at least twice a year.

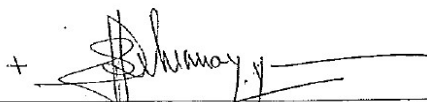
10. INTERPRETATION OF THE CONSTITUTION

- 10.1 In the event of a dispute over the interpretation of any clause of the Constitution, the Council shall refer to the diocesan Bishop for an objective interpretation.

11. AMENDMENT & RATIFICATION OF THE CONSTITUTION

- 11.1 Any part of this constitution to be amended must be presented to the Bishop for consideration and approval for deliberation.
- 11.2 Upon approval by the Bishop for deliberation, the Council may amend the constitution by a two-third (2/3) majority vote.
- 11.3 The amendments to the Constitution must be presented to the Bishop for ratification.

1. *This constitution is approved by the Bishop of Penang after consultation with the Council of Priests and comes into effect in the 1st of January 2000.*
2. *An interim period of one year is given for parishes to adopt this constitution.*
3. *With effect from 1st January 2001 all other statutes and constitutions will be abrogated.*

+ 

Rt. Rev. Antony Selvanayagam
Bishop of Penang

Feast of the Immaculate Conception
8th December 1999

N.B.

This Constitution should be read in consultation with the notes attached.

CONSTITUTION OF THE PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL (PPC)

NOTES TO THE PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL (P.P.C) CONSTITUTION DIOCESE OF PENANG

Preamble

Canon 536 §1 If, after consulting the council of priests, the diocesan Bishop considers it opportune, a pastoral council is to be established in each parish. In this council, which is presided over by the parish priest, Christ's faithful, together with those who by virtue of their office are engaged in pastoral care in the parish, give their help in fostering pastoral action.

§2 The pastoral council has only a consultative vote and it is regulated by the norms laid down by the diocesan Bishop.

Canon 536 designates the Parish Council as "The Parish Pastoral Council". It parallels the Diocesan Pastoral Council which advises the diocesan Bishop on matters related to pastoral ministry within the Diocese (Canon 511-514)

Aims & Objectives (Clause 2)

The constitution of the Parish Pastoral Council governs its operation, hence a carefully prepared constitution is essential in each parish.

Responsibility for the Mission of the Church is shared in differing but equally valid ways by those who are baptized and those who are ordained. The ministry of the members of the parish and its pastor are interdependent. This interdependence calls for the adoption of a new model of parish governance, one that includes broad consultation:

1. The P.P.C. is a representative body of Christ's faithful. Its purpose is the promotion of the vision and mission of the church in its entirety in the parish reflecting the mission of Jesus. It shall at all times work in close collaboration and consultation with the parish priest and assistant priest(s) of the parish, advising him (them) in matters pertaining to pastoral ministry (cc. 528-529). It shall act as visioner, evaluator, recommender, implementer and coordinator. This means it will ensure that all parishioners are provided the opportunity to share in the Church's vision and mission of spreading the gospel.
2. The P.P.C. realises the goals and objectives of the Diocesan Plan through parish plans and will implement and evaluate events and activities in the parish. Through these processes they will also contribute to the formulation of future diocesan goals and plan. The pastoral direction is towards evangelization through small communities (BECs) and is meant to enliven the faith life of all persons within the parish, and enable them to live fully the Christian vocation in the world.
3. The P.P.C. will ensure that relevant and important information are communicated to ALL parishioners through BECs, bulletins, church announcements etc. Equally important is to find ways to solicit information and opinions from the parishioners through creative ways in order to know and to serve better. The Parish Editorial Team can be of service.

CONSTITUTION OF THE PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL (PPC)

Membership (Clause 3)

It is assumed that between ten to fifteen families will form a BEC and between a minimum of three to a maximum of five BECs will then form a Zone. One person will be nominated from each Zone to represent his/her Zone to form the ZCT. Depending on the size, location, number of BECs and Zones the parish may adapt this criteria to suit their respective requirements, however, keeping in mind the benefit of laity participation.

The meetings (Clause 5)

1. It is assumed that the organisations or specialized groups will have their regular meetings. Thus the need to have monthly Council meetings does not arise.
2. The Agenda of the meeting shall include matters pertaining to the Mission of the Church i.e. a full range of pastoral activities which will enable this particular faith community to listen more attentively to God's Word and put into practice in its day to day challenges.
3. Because of the unique nature of the Council, a short period of each meeting should be given over to prayer and reflection on an appropriate section of God's Word and to seek consultation from God on issues to be discussed during that meeting. Consultation implies that the council seeks to "discern" the movement and the will of the Holy Spirit rather than simply voting on issues. Discernment and consensus are more appropriate to church structures, and are the hallmarks of the consultative process

The Parish Priest on the Council (Clause 8)

1. The roles mentioned apply only to the Parish Priest's relationship to the Pastoral Council. They do not attempt to describe his many other responsibilities towards the parish.

APPENDICES - BISHOP'S DIRECTIVES

Directive - Holy Communion, Liturgical Ministries

Bishop's Office

Pusat Keuskupan Katolik
290 Jalan Macalister,
10450 Pulau Pinang, Malaysia.
Tel : +604-2292742
Fax : +604-2285671
E-mail : penangdiocese@gmail.com



Diocese of Penang

11 February 2013 (**Feast of Our Lady of Lourdes**)

Dear Reverend Father (Parish Priest) - Diocese of Penang

Appointment of Extraordinary Ministry of Holy Communion

The faculty is granted to all Parish Priests in the Diocese of Penang to appoint and designate suitable persons to distribute Holy Communion in their parishes and on specific occasion when there is genuine necessity to do so.

The following norms are to be followed in appointing Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion:-

There must be a genuine need for such a ministry. A need exists when Ordinary Ministers (Priests and Deacons) are not available or a sufficient number of them are not present to respond to the faithful requesting Communion within a short period of distribution.

When such a need exists, the Parish Priest may select and appoint men and women, to be Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion for their own parishes.

Those chosen to be Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion are to be mature persons thirty years of age or older, confirmed, leading an exemplary Christian life and so recognized and respected by the faith community.

The Priest has the responsibility of providing instruction for both the Candidates for this ministry and those to whom they will minister to ensure acceptance, understanding and appreciation of the ministry.

Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion who function on a regular basis in their own Parish should be appointed either for a specific period of time, generally three years, and renewable.

The distribution of Holy Communion to the Sick and Homebound is to be considered a special and distinct ministry. Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion should be taught to see their role as sharing in the Church's ministry to the sick after the manner of Jesus.

The Parish Priest is responsible for the continued Spiritual growth of the Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion and it is recommended that they be formally commissioned in a ceremony witnessed by members of the faith community.

Thank you and God bless you.

Sincerely in Christ,

Sebastian Francis

Bishop Sebastian Francis

Directive - Basic Ecclesial Communities (BEC)

Bishop's Office

Pusat Keuskupan Katolik
290 Jalan Macalister,
10450 Pulau Pinang, Malaysia.
Tel : +604-2292742
Fax : +604-2285671
E-mail : penangdiocese@gmail.com



Diocese of Penang

14th February, 2013

To all Parish Priests,

Re: Basic Ecclesial Communities (BEC)

Greetings of Love and Peace!

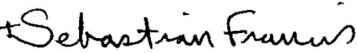
Please take note that following the principle of BEC as understood by the Church in Peninsular Malaysia, BECs are home based, understood as area based small communities made up of 10-15 families to provide time for prayer and it is primarily centered on the Word of God.

On the other hand, whenever the small communities gather for big functions such as Christmas, Cultural festivities or yearly BEC Eucharistic celebrations, it is only appropriate that the BECs gather in a hall/dewan when the number of people is large.

Therefore, I have decided that I will not approve of any purchase of any building or home in the name of the Parish or Diocese for the purpose and needs of BEC.

I hope and pray that we will keep to the spirit of building small communities and to form communion of communities towards the civilization of love and mission.

Thank you for your support and collaboration. May Our Lord grant us all the graces we need and desire this Lent!

United in Christ,

Rt. Rev. Sebastian Francis
Bishop of Penang

**THE TEN DIRECTIVES CONCERNING THE PASTORAL CARE OF BEC'S
IN THE DIOCESE OF PENANG**

(Adapted From The PMPA III BEC DIRECTIVES)

1. COMMUNITARIAN PASTORAL CARE OF BEC'S IS CENTRAL AND VITAL.

The Parish is a communion of BECs – 10 to 15 families divided geographically. They have monthly gatherings.

2. BEC's ARE RELATIONAL COMMUNITIES.

Small numbers enhance interpersonal relationship and sharing of faith.

3. ALL ARE INCLUDED.

The BEC Core Team regularly visits all families, especially those who need more attention. Everyone is given importance.

4. ACTIVE PARTICIPATION OF YOUTH.

All Youth, especially the Working Youth must take an active part at the BECs. The leaders of BECs will make plans to welcome all Youths for their gatherings.

5. A COMMON DESIGNATED WEEK (REGULARLY).

All BECs in the Diocese will have the second week of the month (Sunday – Saturday) for their monthly gathering. Priority will be given to BEC gatherings.

6. FORMATION OF THE ZONE COORDINATING TEAM (ZCT).

The PPC in collaboration with the relevant parish bodies (PAT/ZCT) will meet, animate, facilitate and give formation regularly for all BEC Core Teams. Prayer and the Word of God are important.

7. A BEC CORE TEAM IS IMPORTANT.

A BEC Core Team is made up of Leader, Assistant Leader, Messengers and Youth Representative.. They meet monthly.

8. COMMITMENT OF PARISH PRIESTS TOWARDS COMMUNITY BUILDING

A greater commitment is envisioned from Parish Priests whose important task is as community builders.

9. THE EUCHARIST AT BEC LEVEL.

The Eucharist will be celebrated only once a year at BEC level.

10. THE DIOCESAN PASTORAL TEAM ANIMATES AND COORDINATES BECS

The Diocesan Pastoral Team (DPT) with the help of the Asian Integral Pastoral Approach Team (AsIPA) helps in the animation, progress and formation of BECs.

Directive - Financial Management No. 01/2013

Bishop's Office

Pusat Keuskupan Katolik
290 Jalan Macalister,
10450 Pulau Pinang, Malaysia.
Tel : +604-2292742
Fax : +604-2285671
E-mail : penangdiocese@gmail.com



Diocese of Penang

DIRECTIVE No. 01/2013

21st February 2013

Dear Fathers,

Kindly be informed that the following will take effect from 1st March 2013 regarding financial management.

- 1) Limit for expenditure by Parish Priest has been increased to RM5,000-00.
- 2) For expenditure exceeding RM5,000-00, consultation and approval of the Parish Finance Committee or other relevant bodies is required.
- 3) Limit for expenditure by Parishes has been increased to RM50,000-00.
- 4) For expenditure exceeding RM50,000-00, approval of the Bishop is required.

All parties involved will show responsibility, transparency as required and accountability in the governance and administration of finances.

Thank you for your collaboration and support.

Sincerely in Christ,

Sebastian Francis

Rt. Rev. Sebastian Francis
Bishop of the Diocese of Penang

Directive - Altar Servers, Liturgical Ministries

Bishop's Office

Pusat Keuskupan Katolik
290 Jalan Macalister,
10450 Pulau Pinang, Malaysia.
Tel : +604-2292742
Fax : +604-2285671
E-mail : penangdiocese@gmail.com



Diocese of Penang

1st July, 2013

Dear Fathers,

Re: Altar Servers

I am pleased to inform you that after consultation, I have decided to put into practice the female Altar Servers in the Diocese of Penang. This will be implemented on the 1st Sunday of Advent 2013. As such, you will have five months to prepare the people for this occasion.

Please take note that the preferred terminology is **Altar Servers** and not Altar Boys or Altar Girls. The dress code for the Altar Servers is left entirely to the Parish Priest. However, the existing dress code is suitable for both male and female Altar Servers. In addition, the criterion for age could be the same as with the present male Altar Servers.

Wishing you the best in your ministry!

United in Christ,

Sebastian Francis

Rt. Rev. Sebastian Francis
Bishop of Penang

Directive - Finance Matter

Bishop's Office

Pusat Keuskupan Katolik
290 Jalan Macalister,
10450 Pulau Pinang, Malaysia.
Tel : +604-2292742
Fax : +604-2285671
E-mail : penangdiocese@gmail.com



2 April 2014

Dear Fathers,

Re: DIRECTIVE ON FINANCIAL MATTERS

The following Directive is for your immediate attention and action as applicable. Accountability is not optional. Good stewardship practices invite us to be accountable for all of the gifts we have been given, financial blessings among them. In view of this,

1. Clergy are not permitted to open any Bank Account for their Parish, Chapel or Ministries in their personal name. All Bank Accounts must be approved by the Bishop of Penang via a written letter of request with the list of signatories for the said Bank Account following the Diocesan procedures that is; *Clergy is to sign with any one of the three members of the Finance Committee.*
2. Any form of lease or tenancy that implicates the land, building and properties of the Church should be submitted to the Diocese for Bishop's approval. Thus, the Bishop signs the contract or tenancy since the Clergy has no *locus standi* (*place of standing*) meaning "the right or capacity to bring an action or to appear in a court."

However, if the above said has been carried out previously, whereby there are occupants, tenants in the compound or properties of the Church, kindly review and rectify the contracts/tenancy so as to comply with the Diocesan procedures.

3. *Can. 286* states that "*Clerics are prohibited from conducting business or trade personally or through others, for their own advantage or that of others, except with the permission of legitimate ecclesiastical authority.*"

As such, I strongly appeal that Clerics do not engage in registering a business company in one's name or in partnership with others even if it deals with religious articles, publications, pilgrimages etc. Furthermore, Clerics should not also be spiritual advisors for any form of business ventures even if it pertains to religious matters.

4. Lastly, no loans are to be given to any party from Church funds.

May Jesus and Mary bless and guide you in your ministry!

Sincerely in Christ,

Bishop Sebastian Francis
Diocese of Penang

Directive - Matrimony No. 1/2015

Bishop's Office

Pusat Keuskupan Katolik
290 Jalan Macallister,
10450 Pulau Pinang, Malaysia.
Tel : +604-2292742
Fax : +604-2285671
E-mail : penangdiocese@gmail.com



Diocese of Penang

Ref: 1/2015

NOTIFICATION

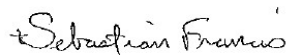
Dear Fathers,

Re: Documents for Dispensations involving Mixed Marriages, Disparity of Cult, Consanguinity and others.

With regards to the above, kindly send copies of these documents in your Parishes from 2012 onwards to the Bishop's Office for records. Chancery Office all around the world are asking for such documents for cases of annulment and therefore the records of these are necessary for efficiency. The pre-nuptial enquiries should be properly filed so that when these chanceries request for these documents, we can do the necessary.

Thank you for your collaboration.

Sincerely in Christ,



Rt. Rev. Sebastian Francis
Bishop of Penang

Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for all Building Projects

Bishop's Office

Pusat Keuskupan Katolik
290 Jalan Macalister,
10450 Pulau Pinang, Malaysia.
Tel : +604-2292742
Fax : +604-2285671
E-mail : penangdiocese@gmail.com



Diocese of Penang

Diocese of Penang

Standard Operation Procedure (SOP) for all building project

All building project for parishes/ministries/departments of the Diocese of Penang will be required to adhere to the following procedures:-

1. To submit an initial Project Proposal with the Estimated Cost and how the project will be funded to the Diocese for approval.
2. The written approval of the Diocese is required before submitting plans (for planning permission) to the local authorities.
3. All plans/drawings for submission are to be forwarded to the Diocese to be signed by the TRCB of Penang before submitting to the relevant authorities for approval.
4. Appointments of qualified and certified Architect, Quantity Surveyor (QS), Civil & Structural (C&S) Engineers, Mechanical & Electrical (M&E) Engineers, and Project Manager/Consultant will be the responsibility of the parish/ministry/department if the project is fully undertaken by them.

Promulgate by,

**Rt. Rev. Sebastian Francis
Bishop of Penang Diocese**

Date: 19th Jan 2015

Directive on Matrimony

Bishop's Office

Pusat Keuskupan Katolik
290 Jalan Macalister,
10450 Pulau Pinang, Malaysia.
Tel : +604-2292742
Fax : +604-2285671
E-mail : penangdiocese@gmail.com



Diocese of Penang

18 July 2016

Dear Fathers,

**Re: Translations of the 3rd Question in the Celebration
on the Rite of Matrimony**

Greetings of Peace!

Attached are the approved translations to be implemented with immediate effect. Booklets will be printed and distributed later.

Thank you for your cooperation and best wishes.

Sincerely in Christ,

Sebastian Francis

Rt. Rev. Sebastian Francis
Bishop of Penang

Directive on Matrimony

Translations of the 3rd Question in the Celebration on the Rite of Matrimony

Are you prepared to accept children lovingly in the marriage and be responsible for their upbringing and education?

Bahasa Malaysia

Sanggupkah kamu menerima anak-anak dengan penuh kasih sayang di dalam perkahwinan ini dan bertanggungjawab dalam pertumbuhan moral dan pendidikan mereka?

Chinese

你是否愿意接受在婚姻中所赐予的孩子，并负起道德熏陶与他们的教育？

Nǐ shìfǒu yuànyì jiēshòu zài hūnyīn zhōng suǒ cìyǔ de hái'zǐ, bìng fù qǐ dàodé xūntáo yǔ tāmen de jiàoyù?

Tamil

தமிழ்

இத்திருமணத்தில் உங்களுக்கு அருளப்படும் குழந்தைகளை நீங்கள் அன்புடன் ஏற்று அவர்களது நல்லொழுக்கத்திற்கும் கல்விக்கும் பொருட்பாபியிருப்பீர்களா?

Directive on Mass Intentions & Priest Allowance**Bishop's Office**

Pusat Keuskupan Katolik
 290 Jalan Macalister,
 10450 Pulau Pinang, Malaysia.
 Tel : +604-2292742
 Fax : +604-2285671
 E-mail : penangdiocese@gmail.com



Diocese of Penang

18 October 2016

Dear Fathers,

Re: Mass Intentions and Priests' Monthly Allowance

Greetings of Peace!

In view of the above and after reflection, I would like to remind us of the following from Vatican II, Vol. I regarding the DECREE ON THE MINISTRY AND LIFE OF PRIESTS, **PRESBYTERORUM ORDINIS** PROMULGATED BY HIS HOLINESS, POPE PAUL VI ON DECEMBER 7, 1965 no. 20 and Vatican II, Vol. II on the THE MINISTERIAL PRIESTHOOD, Synod of Bishops, **ULTIMIS TEMPORIBUS** on November 30, 1967 no. 4.

20. (Providing equitable remuneration for priests.) As those dedicated to the service of God and the fulfillment of the office entrusted to them, priests deserve to receive an equitable remuneration, because "the laborer is worthy of his hire," (Lk. 10:7)(61) and "the Lord directed that those who preach the Gospel should have their living from the Gospel" (1 Cor. 9:14). Wherefore, insofar as an equitable remuneration of the priests would not be provided otherwise, the faithful themselves-that is, those in whose behalf the priest labors-are truly obliged to see to it that they can provide what help is necessary for the honorable and worthy life of the priests. The bishops, however, should admonish the faithful concerning this obligation of theirs. And they should see to it whether each individual for his own diocese or, more aptly, several together for their common territory-that norms are established according to which suitable support is rightly provided for those who do fulfill or have fulfilled a special office in the service of the People of God. The remuneration received by each one, in accord with his office and the conditions of time and place, should be fundamentally the same for all in the same circumstances and befitting his station. Moreover, those who have dedicated themselves to the service of the priesthood, by reason of the remuneration they receive, should not only be able to honorably provide for themselves but also themselves be provided with some means of helping the needy. For the ministry to the poor has always been held in great honor in the Church from its beginnings. Furthermore, this remuneration should be such that it will permit priests each year to take a suitable and sufficient vacation, something which indeed the bishops should see that their priests are able to have. Special importance ought to be given to the office fulfilled by sacred ministers. Therefore the so-called system of benefices should be relinquished or at least so reformed that the place of the benefits, or the right to revenue from the endowment attached to an office, would be held as secondary, and the first place in law would be given to the ecclesiastical office itself. From this it should be understood that whatever office is conferred in a stable manner is to be exercised for a spiritual purpose.

Directive on Mass Intentions & Priest Allowance

Economic Affairs

4. *The remuneration of priests, to be determined certainly in a spirit of evangelical poverty, but as far as possible equitable and sufficient, is a duty of justice and ought to include social security. Excessive differences in this matter must be removed, especially among priests of the same diocese or jurisdiction, account also being taken of the average condition of the people of the region.*

It seems greatly to be desired that the Christian people be gradually instructed in such a way that priests' incomes may be separated from the acts of their ministry, especially sacramental ones.

The above texts will be our guiding principle with regards to the distinction between the remuneration of priests and the celebration of the Sacraments especially of the Eucharist.

Thus, in order that there will not be any more link between the priests' monthly allowance and the Mass offerings and intentions celebrated at the Parish, Chapels, outstation centers or BEC Masses, all of Mass intentions will be centralized at the Parish office. There can be multiple intentions for all Masses on weekdays as well as weekends as per request of the people. As a result, there will be no surplus Mass intentions, which are not celebrated, to be sent to the Diocese. Each Mass intention will remain at RM10.00 and this would mean that your Parish income would increase. Therefore, I strongly recommend that you use your discretion and use the surplus funds for formation, ministry to the poor and maintenance of the Parish.

With regards to the priests' monthly allowance, all priests will receive an increase from RM300.00 to RM 500.00, which is to be taken from the Parish funds. Also, the annual holiday allowance will increase from RM1000.00 to RM1500.00. These changes will take effect from 1 January 2017 and will also apply to the retired priests.

I thank you for your patience and collaboration. I wish you God's blessings always!

Sincerely in Christ,



Rt. Rev. Sebastian Francis
Bishop of Penang

Directive on Bahasa Malaysia Mass & Catechetics

Bishop's Office

Pusat Keuskupan Katolik
290 Jalan Macalister,
10450 Pulau Pinang, Malaysia.
Tel : +604-2292742
Fax : +604-2285671
E-mail : penangdiocese@gmail.com



Diocese of Penang

19 October 2016

Dear Fathers,

Re: Directives for Immediate Implementation

In the light of the recent deliberations of PMPC IV, I would like to suggest that every parish to have a **Bahasa Malaysia Mass** on the 1st Sunday for every month and the time for the Mass to be decided by the Parish Priest in collaboration with the Liturgical committee. Every parish will have the celebration of Mass in Bahasa Malaysia irrelevant of whether you have Bahasa speaking parishioner or not.

With regards to the **formation of catechists**, it is important that catechists from all languages to attend at least one formation per year that is offered in the Diocese. The Parish or Diocese could sponsor the catechists.

Thank you for your collaboration and support.

Sincerely in Christ,



Rt. Rev. Sebastian Francis
Bishop of Penang

Directive on Catechetics & Bahasa Malaysia Mass

Bishop's Office

Pusat Keuskupan Katolik
290 Jalan Macalister,
10450 Pulau Pinang, Malaysia.
Tel : +604-2292742
Fax : +604-2285671
E-mail : penangdiocese@gmail.com



15th February 2017

Dear Fathers,

Re: DIRECTIVES

Greetings in Jesus Christ, Our Life and our Hope!

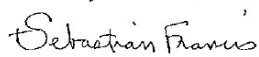
Below are the directives to be implemented by the parishes:-

1. Every Faith Formator (Catechism teachers, RCIA facilitators, Baptism/marriage instructors) is required to participate in at least one (1) formation a year organized at Parish level, Deanery Level or Diocesan Level.
2. Every parish is required to celebrate one (1) weekend Bahasa Malaysia Language mass once a month at Parish level.

These directives take effect from the 1st Sunday of Lent, 5th March 2017.

"Be Disciples of Hope"

Sincerely in Christ,



Rt. Rev. Sebastian Francis
Bishop of Penang

Directive on Submission of Final Account for all Major Projects



DIOCESE OF PENANG

Catholic Diocesan Centre
290 Macalister Road, 10450 Georgetown, Pulau Pinang, Malaysia.
Tel: +604-2292761 / 2292742 Fax: +604-2285671
E-mail: trcb@pgdiocese.org / penangdiocese@gmail.com
Website: www.pgdiocese.org

22 January 2018

Dear and Reverend Fathers,

Re: Submission of Final Account for all Major Projects

With reference to the above, please be informed that on the completion (upon issuance of CCC) final accounts for all major projects are to be sent to the Diocese for auditing.

Parishes do Not need to wait for the completion of liability period and payment of the final retention sum to submit the account.

Accounts for the Projects are to be submitted independent of the parish yearly account, meaning it does have to be at the end of the year but whenever the project is completed, which could be within any time of the year.

So far the Major Projects that has been completed are:-

1. Penang Diocesan Museum
2. Church of the Immaculate Conception - Parish Centre
3. Church of the Assumption - Restoration
4. Cathedral of the Holy Spirit - Classroom & Parish Centre
5. Taiping Catholic Church – Multi Purpose Hall with Administrative Office Block

Thank you.

Sincerely in Christ,

Rt. Rev. Sebastian Francis
Bishop of Penang Diocese

Directive on Solidarity Collection 10%



**THE TITULAR ROMAN CATHOLIC BISHOP OF PENANG
DIOCESE OF PENANG**

Catholic Diocesan Centre

290 Macalister Road, 10450 Georgetown, Pulau Pinang, Malaysia.

Tel: +604-2292761 / 2292742 Fax: +604-2285671

E-mail: trcb@pgdiocese.org / penangdiocese@gmail.com

Website: www.pgdiocese.org

9th September 2020

Dear Fathers,

Re: Solidarity Collection

With reference to the above, please be informed that due to the Covid-19 pandemic the Movement Control Order (MCO) was implemented and this has greatly affected the activity of Masses in the parishes.

With the controlled number of parishioners allowed at Masses, the collection at Mass has also been affected.

Therefore, the Diocese has decided that the rate of contribution for the Solidarity Collection due to the Diocese be fixed at a standard rate of 10% for all parishes with effect from September 2020 until further notice.

Kindly take note and do the necessary adjustment.

Thank you.

Sincerely in Christ,

Rt. Rev. Sebastian Francis
Bishop of Penang Diocese