



Dearest Friends in Christ,

I am delighted to share with you the enclosed norms and instructions to establish a Deanery structure in the Diocese of Cleveland. For many years, we have been served by a district structure that allowed for a healthy participative framework for developing new initiatives and sharing resources among our parishes. For many decades, this structure helped foster communication between the Bishop and the faithful. It also helped frame how we care for one another in the diocese. However, over time, it has become apparent that an update has become necessary.

The cultural landscape we are privileged to minister in has changed dramatically over the past several decades. We face many challenges. These challenges require us to be more creative, more agile, and more fruitful in our work. It is my sincere hope that these structural changes I am promulgating will equip us to be ultimately more effective at caring for one another and crafting innovative pastoral plans that bring many more people into encounter with our Lord.

In this new structure, I reinstate the Office of Dean and designate our parishes to be members of one of twelve Deaneries across the diocese. These twelve Deans will be a source of accountability in matters of parish governance, but also a focal point of care for their brother priests and deacons. They are asked to do this in the same spirit St. Paul exhorted the young church at Thessaloniki, “therefore encourage one another and build each other up.” (1 Thessalonians 5:11).

Additionally, the Deans will call together a Deanery Committee in each Deanery that consists of lay staff, clergy, (active and retired), and religious engaged in ministry in our parishes and other ministries within the Deanery. With each Dean’s guidance, I will appoint a Deanery Chair in each Deanery who will lead a process to develop and implement a Pastoral Plan for their Deaneries. These plans will consist of measurable actions that create new initiatives, share resources, and coordinate ministry among the parishes of the Deanery. As the writer of Proverbs expressed, “where there is no vision, the people perish” (28:19).

The Dean will facilitate the conversation to ensure that these visions are bold, manageable and that they are achieved. He will be a champion for the vision, developed at the grassroots level. My sincere hope is that these plans make it obvious that we are one church here in the eight counties that comprise the Diocese of Cleveland, laboring together to bring ourselves and others into intimate contact with God’s overabundant love for humanity.

In order to assist in the implementation and long-term success of the Deaneries, I have created a new position within my office, the Director of Deanery Operations and Planning. This full-time role will be a valuable resource to our Deans and Deanery Chairs by clarifying issues, providing training, identifying helpful resources, assisting with visits, and facilitating meetings as


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needed. This position will create and sustain the momentum necessary to ensure that this new model works effectively throughout our diocese.

The Great Commission cannot become a faint echo from the past. It is a living call placed deep within each of us at our Baptism. All our structures – our parishes, schools, charitable works, and deaneries - exist for this one purpose. I hope today's promulgation is a decisive step we will take together to hold us all more accountable to the Lord's call. May we too joyfully proclaim at every moment in our daily lives that Jesus Christ is Lord!

May God's abundant blessings come upon you and those you love,

Your brother in Christ,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "+ Edward C. Malesic". The signature is written in a cursive style with a cross at the beginning.

Most Reverend Edward C. Malesic, JCL  
Bishop of Cleveland



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Decree Establishing Deaneries and the Office of Dean  
Diocese of Cleveland

1. I hereby establish within the Diocese of Cleveland deaneries according to the list provided in the Appendix to these norms, and reinstitute the office of Dean.
2. Districts and the offices of Presbyteral Convener and District Chairperson are hereby abrogated.

**The Dean**

3. The term of office of the Deans shall begin on June 1, 2024, and end on May 31, 2030, and likewise for each six-year period thereafter (cf. can 554, §2, *CIC*). The term of office of a Dean appointed during the six-year period shall be until the end of the period, such that all Deans end their term of office at the same time. The appointment is renewable.
4. The Dean is to conduct a visitation of each parish in the Deanery every three years (cf. can. 555, §4, *CIC*), according to the issues as may from time to time be established by diocesan offices.
5. The Dean is to gather the entire presbyterate of the Deanery at least three times per year for fellowship, prayer, and mutual encouragement.
6. The Dean will assist with conflict resolution within the deanery, both ex officio and at the request of the diocesan bishop.
7. Each Dean is a member of the Presbyteral Council during his term of office, replacing the District Conveners.

**The Deanery Committee**

8. A Deanery Committee is established in each Deanery to produce and implement a Deanery Pastoral Plan and to provide opportunities for networking and collaboration among the parishes of the deanery.
9. The members of the Deanery Committee are:
  - a. All pastors, parish life coordinators, parochial vicars and deacons appointed to parishes of the deanery;

- b. Parish pastoral staff of parishes of the deanery nominated by the pastor or parish life coordinator;
  - c. Retired priests and deacons within parishes of the deanery who accept the invitation to membership;
  - d. Staff persons of Catholic institutions within parishes of the deanery who accept the invitation to membership
10. The Deanery Chair presides over the Deanery Committee.
11. The Deanery Pastoral Plan consists of no more than three measurable goals that advance common pastoral action (recommended initiatives, resource sharing, and formation) among the parishes of the Deanery. These plans will align with the Bishop's vision for the diocese, respect subsidiarity of parish & diocesan responsibilities, and adhere to canon law & magisterial teaching. In support of the Deanery Pastoral Plan, the Deanery Chair may establish project-specific, time-limited working groups of the Deanery Committee to address specific issues.

### **The Deanery Chair**

12. I establish the office of Deanery Chair to lead the Deanery Committee's work in creating and implementing the Deanery Pastoral Plan and promoting collaboration among the parishes of the deanery.
13. The Deanery Chair is appointed by the diocesan bishop.
14. The one to be appointed Deanery Chair must be a deacon or lay person in full communion with the Catholic Church, a member of the pastoral staff of a parish of the deanery or at a Catholic institution within a parish of the deanery (ordinarily for at least one year) and possess the qualities to necessary to fulfil the responsibilities of the office.
15. When the office of Deanery Chair is vacant, or in anticipation of its vacancy, the Dean shall convene a Deanery Chair Selection Committee comprised of members of the Deanery Committee ensuring broad representation of the pastoral life of the deanery. The Deanery Chair Selection Committee shall include no fewer than five and no more than eleven members, a majority of whom should not be priests. The Dean presents a list of qualified candidates for the office of Deanery Chair to the Deanery Chair Selection Committee. From this list, the Deanery Chair Selection Committee selects one candidate by consensus and recommends this person to the Dean. If the Dean agrees with the recommendation, he nominates the candidate to the diocesan Bishop.
16. The Deanery Chair shall maintain an accurate listing and contact information of members of the Deanery Committee, set Deanery Committee meeting dates, send invitations in a timely manner, and establish agenda for a minimum of three Deanery Committee meetings per year; and arrange for the distribution of meeting summaries to Deanery Committee members.

17. The term of office of the Deanery Chair is three years, beginning July 1, 2025, and each three years thereafter, such that the term begins one year and four years after the beginning of the term of office of the Dean. For each holder of the office, the office may be held for no more than nine years.
18. The Deanery Chair loses office when no longer engaged in pastoral ministry within the Deanery, or at the discretion of the Diocesan Bishop.

**Promulgation and effect**

19. These norms are to be promulgated via notice given in the *Diocesan Memorandum* and notified as soon as possible via email to the clergy of the diocese.
20. These norms take effect on May 31, 2024, except as provided for in *Transitional Norms*, below.

**Transitional norms**

21. Current District Chairpersons may continue in office until December 31, 2024.
22. District Committees may continue to meet until December 31, 2024, or until the replacement Deanery Committee is functioning, whichever is sooner.

Given at Cleveland, Ohio, this 10th day of April, 2024



Most Reverend Edward C. Malesic, JCL  
Bishop of Cleveland



Chancellor

## **Appendix: List of deaneries and parishes**

### Deanery #1 (Lorain)

- Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Lorain
- Sacred Heart Chapel, Lorain
- Saint Anthony of Padua, Lorain
- Saint Francis Xavier Cabrini, Lorain
- Saint Mary, Lorain
- Saint Peter, Lorain
- Saint Teresa of Avila, Sheffield Village
- Saint Thomas the Apostle, Sheffield Lake
- Our Lady Queen of Peace, Grafton
- Sacred Heart, Oberlin
- Saint Agnes, Elyria
- Saint Jude, Elyria
- Saint Mary, Elyria
- Saint Vincent de Paul, Elyria Township
- Saint Joseph, Amherst
- Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, South Amherst
- Saint Patrick, Wellington

### Deanery #2 (Suburban West)

- Saint Adalbert, Berea
- Saint Mary, Berea
- Saint Raphael, Bay Village
- Saint Angela Merici, Fairview Park
- Saint Bernadette, Westlake
- Saint Ladislav, Westlake
- Saint Christopher, Rocky River
- Saint Brendan, North Olmsted
- Saint Clarence, North Olmsted
- Saint Richard, North Olmsted
- Saint Mary of the Falls, Olmsted Falls
- Holy Spirit, Avon Lake
- Saint Joseph, Avon Lake
- Holy Trinity, Avon
- Saint Mary of the Immaculate Conception, Avon
- Saint Peter, North Ridgeville
- Saint Julie Billiart, North Ridgeville
- Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton, Columbia Station

### Deanery #3 (Suburban Southwest)

- Assumption, Broadview Heights
- Holy Family, Parma
- Saint Anthony of Padua, Parma
- Saint Bridget of Kildare, Parma
- Saint Charles Borromeo, Parma
- Saint Columbkille, Parma

- Saint Francis de Sales, Parma
- Saint Matthias, Parma
- Saint John Bosco, Parma Heights
- Mary Queen of the Apostles, Brook Park
- Saint Bartholomew, Middleburg Heights
- Saint Michael, Independence
- Saint John Neumann, Strongsville
- Saint Joseph, Strongsville
- Saint Ambrose, Brunswick
- Saint Colette, Brunswick
- Saint Albert the Great, North Royalton
- Saint Basil the Great, Brecksville

#### Deanery #4 (Cleveland West)

- Saint Clement, Lakewood
- Saint James, Lakewood
- Saint Lake, Lakewood,
- Transfiguration, Lakewood
- Saint Mel, Cleveland
- Saint Mark, Cleveland
- Our Lady of Angels, Cleveland
- Saint Ignatius of Antioch, Cleveland
- Saint Vincent de Paul, Cleveland
- Saint Patrick, Westpark (Cleveland)
- Blessed Trinity, Cleveland
- Mary Queen of Peace, Cleveland
- Saint Leo the Great, Cleveland
- Saint Thomas More, Brooklyn

#### Deanery #5 (Cleveland Central)

- Saint Augustine, Cleveland
- Saint Barbara, Cleveland
- Saint Emeric, Cleveland
- Saint John Cantius, Cleveland
- Saint Malachi, Cleveland
- Saint Michael the Archangel, Cleveland
- Saint Patrick, Bridge Avenue, Cleveland
- Saint Rocco, Cleveland
- Saint Wendelin, Cleveland
- Sagrada Familia, Cleveland
- Saint Colman, Cleveland
- Saint Stephen, Cleveland
- Our Lady of Mount Carmel, Cleveland
- Saint Boniface, Cleveland
- Saint Andrew Kim (Korean Pastoral Center), Cleveland

#### Deanery #6 (Cleveland East)

- Cathedral of Saint John the Evangelist, Cleveland
- Immaculate Conception, Cleveland
- Saint Adalbert, Cleveland
- Saint Agnes/Our Lady of Fatima, Cleveland
- Saint Aloysius – Saint Agatha, Cleveland
- Shrine of Saint Elizabeth of Hungary, Cleveland
- Saint Casimir, Sowinski Avenue, Cleveland
- Saint Vitus, Cleveland
- Holy Name, Cleveland
- Immaculate Heart of Mary, Cleveland
- Our Lady of Lourdes, Cleveland
- Our Lady of Peace, Cleveland
- Saint John Nepomucene, Cleveland
- Saint Stanislaus, Cleveland
- Holy Spirit, Garfield Heights
- Saint Paul, Cleveland
- Holy Redeemer, Cleveland
- Saint Jerome, Cleveland
- Saint Mary, Cleveland
- Saint Peter, Cleveland

#### Deanery #7 (Cleveland Suburban Southeast)

- Saint Monica, Garfield Heights
- Saints Peter and Paul, Garfield Heights
- Saint Therese, Garfield Heights
- Saint Martin of Tours, Maple Heights
- Saint Mary, Bedford
- Our Lady of Hope, Bedford
- Holy Angels, Chagrin Falls
- Resurrection of our Lord, Solon
- Saint Rita, Solon
- Our Lady of Guadalupe, Macedonia
- Saint Joan of Arc, Chagrin Falls
- Saints Cosmas and Damian, Twinsburg
- Saint Barnabas, Northfield

#### Deanery #8 (Cleveland Suburban East)

- Saints Robert and William, Euclid
- Saint John of the Cross, Euclid
- Our Lady of the Lake, Euclid
- Saint Casimir, Neff Road, Cleveland
- Communion of Saints, Cleveland Heights
- Holy Rosary, Cleveland
- Saint Clare, Lyndhurst
- Saint Dominic, Shaker Heights
- Gesu, University Heights
- Saint Paschal Baylon, Highland Heights



- Sacred Heart of Jesus, South Euclid
- Saint Francis of Assisi, Gates Mills

#### Deanery #9 (Lake-Geauga)

- Divine Word, Kirtland
- Immaculate Conception, Madison
- Immaculate Conception, Willoughby
- Saint Noel, Willoughby Hills
- Our Lady of Mount Carmel, Wickliffe
- Saint Anthony of Padua, Fairport Harbor
- Saint Bede the Venerable, Mentor
- Saint John Vianney, Mentor
- Saint Mary of the Assumption, Mentor
- Saint Cyprian, Perry
- Saint Gabriel, Concord Township
- Saint Justin Martyr, Eastlake
- Saint Mary, Painesville
- Saint Mary Magdalene, Willowick
- Saint Anselm, Chesterland
- Saint Edward, Parkman
- Saint Lucy, Middlefield
- Saint Helen, Newbury
- Saint Mary, Chardon
- Saint Patrick, Thompson

#### Deanery #10 (Summit South)

- Immaculate Conception, Akron
- Nativity of the Lord Jesus, Akron
- Saint Bernard, Akron
- Saint Francis de Sales, Akron
- Saint Mary, Akron
- Saint Matthew, Akron
- Saint Paul, Akron
- Saint Sebastian, Akron
- Saint Vincent de Paul, Akron
- Saint Augustine, Barberton
- Guardian Angels, Copley
- Saint Hilary, Fairlawn
- Queen of Heaven, Uniontown
- Prince of Peace, Norton
- Saint Andrew the Apostle, Norton

#### Deanery #11 (Summit North)

- Blessed Trinity, Akron
- Saint Anthony of Padua, Akron
- Saint John the Baptist, Akron
- Visitation of Mary Akron
- Immaculate Heart of Mary, Cuyahoga Falls

- Saint Eugene, Cuyahoga Falls
- Saint Joseph, Cuyahoga Falls
- Saint Mary, Hudson
- Mother of Sorrows, Peninsula
- Saint Victor, Richfield
- Holy Family, Stow
- Our Lady of Victory, Tallmadge

Deanery #12 (Wayne-Ashland-Medina)

- Saints Peter and Paul, Doylestown
- Saint Edward, Ashland
- Saint Peter, Loudonville
- Our Lady Help of Christians, Litchfield
- Holy Martyrs, Medina
- Saint Francis Xavier, Medina
- Saint Martin of Tours, Valley City
- Sacred Heart of Jesus, Wadsworth
- Saint Agnes, Orrville
- Saint Anne, Rittman
- Saint Stephen, West Salem
- Saint Mary of the Immaculate Conception, Wooster
- Our Lady of Grace, Hinckley



**Instructions for the implementation of the Deanery structure in the Diocese of Cleveland**

**Introduction**

These instructions are provided as an aid in establishing and managing the Deanery structure of the Diocese of Cleveland as promulgated on April 10, 2024. While thorough, they are not exhaustive of every possible issue that may arise. To assist with this, the Bishop has hired a Director of Deanery Operations and Planning whose role is to be available to clarify issues, provide training, identify helpful resources, to assist with visits, and facilitate meetings as needed.

The main distinction between these norms and the district structure that is now abrogated is the strengthening of the role of Dean and the addition of Deanery Pastoral Plans. The Dean's qualifications and responsibilities are described below in addition to the role of the Deanery Chair and the Deanery Committee in forming and implementing the Deanery Pastoral Plan.

**The Dean**

*Qualifications*

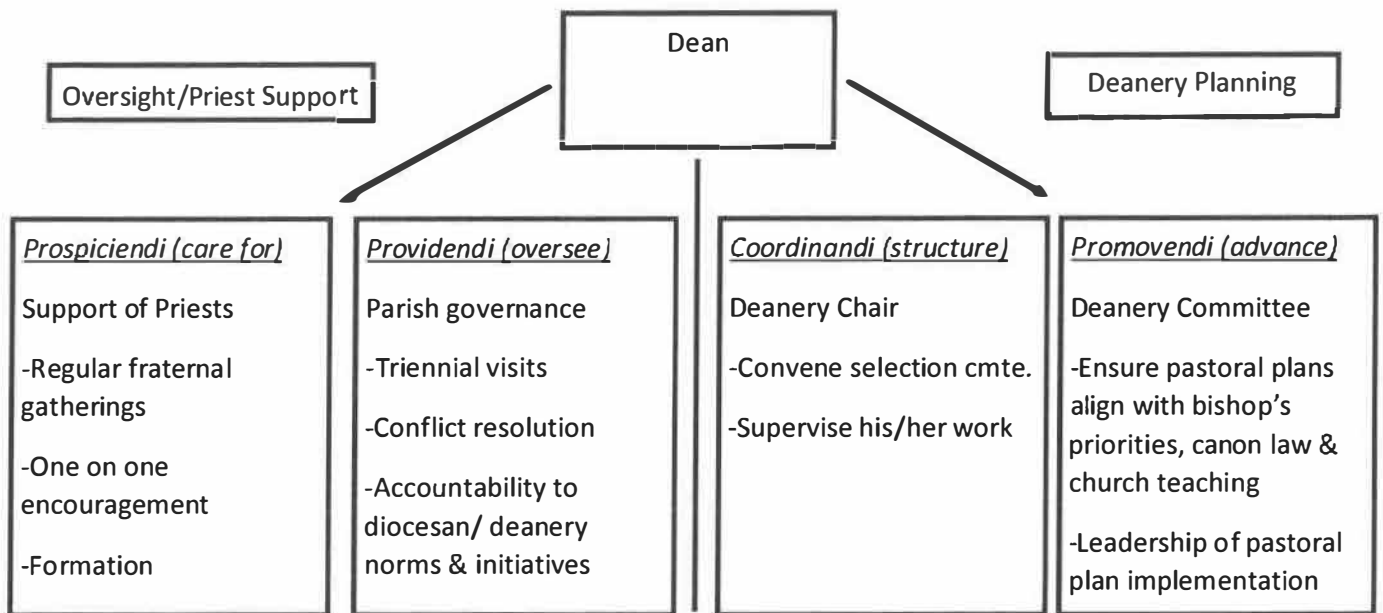
- The candidate is to be a priest assigned to an office or ministry in the deanery, ordained at least 8 years, having completed at least 1 pastoral assignment, and ordinarily having served 1 year in the Deanery.
- If the candidate is a religious order priest, he must receive the permission of his religious superior to accept this appointment.
- Ordinarily a pastor.
- If not a pastor, he should be a priest who is in a position that he could effectively carry out the duties assigned to the Dean.
- The duties of the Dean involve pastoral care of the clergy of the deanery. Therefore, the priest chosen should be:
  - Highly esteemed by the clergy and people for his learning, prudence, piety, and apostolic work.
  - Organized, able to convoke and lead gatherings, and possess leadership and administrative skills.
  - Able to promote and coordinate the pastoral activity of the Deanery in a collaborative manner with the Deanery Chair.

*Selection*

The Dean is appointed by the Bishop who may consult with other priests exercising ministry in that Deanery if he deems it appropriate or prudent to do so (cf. can. 553 §2)

*Responsibilities*

Here in the Diocese of Cleveland the Dean's responsibilities cover four areas: parish oversight, care of priests, providing structure to the Deanery Committee, and the advancement of the Deanery Pastoral Plan. The chart below summarizes these responsibilities visually:



Each of these roles is expanded further below.

### Parish Oversight

**Role of the Dean:** The Dean ensures that each parish is:

- Maintaining its temporal goods appropriately,
- Keeping accurate sacramental and other required records,
- Conducting liturgy in accordance with applicable norms,
- Maintaining liturgical objects and spaces in a dignified manner, and
- Sustaining the pastoral vitality of the community with respect to cc. 528-529

These responsibilities are largely covered by a triennial visit to each parish in the Deanery. In this work, he will have substantial support from diocesan offices in providing reports and assisting with site visits as requested.

**Triennial Parish Visits:** Every three years, the dean will conduct a site visit of each parish in his deanery. The purpose of this visit is to proactively identify issues/problems, encourage parish staff, clergy, and volunteer leadership, and help connect the parish with outside resources to assist its growth and development. While the visit is administrative in nature, time for prayer with both clergy and staff should be incorporated into it. This could include Mass, the Liturgy of the Hours, Adoration, or something equally appropriate.

#### *Pre-visit*

The diocesan offices will provide a portfolio of reports detailing the temporal and pastoral condition of the parish. The Dean should spend time studying the report to familiarize himself with the parish's current condition to help focus his visit. The visitation instrument will also

include guidelines for questions to ask during conversations with parish staff. Some of the questions will be standard, but the Dean is free to formulate questions based on issues identified from the reports provided by the Diocese.

#### *Visit – conversations*

It is strongly recommended that the on-site portion of the visit begin with a common prayer experience that includes the entire parish staff. The importance of this cannot be overstated. Prayer will help focus the visit on Our Lord and assist everyone to continue discerning His will in the administration of the parish.

The Dean is then to interview as many staff from the parish as possible, ideally one on one, or in the case of parishes with larger staff, smaller groups of two to three may be appropriate. For those parishes with schools, the school leadership ought to be interviewed individually and the faculty/staff in groups. He should also arrange a meeting with members of both the financial and parish councils. That meeting can be scheduled outside of the visit and could be done virtually if it is more convenient. The Dean is to use the opportunity of these conversations to uncover areas of concern, but also to encourage the staff and parish leadership in their work. They should feel that their concerns are being heard and that their efforts are valued by the larger Diocesan family.

#### *Visit – records and liturgical life*

During the visit, the Dean will review the parish's records and registers. At his discretion, however, he may ask the Director of Deanery Operations and Planning to visit the parish in advance and review all the relevant records which are as follows:

- Sacramental registers of baptism, marriage and death (c. 535 §1).
- Register of catechumens (c. 788 §1).
- Register of those already baptized who are received into full communion<sup>1</sup>.
- Register of Mass intentions (c. 958 §1).
- Inventory of immovable goods and movable goods of value (c. 1283, 2°).
- Record of income and expenditures (c. 1284 §2, 7°).
- Annual year-end report of administration (c. 1284 §2, 8°).
- File establishing the rights of the church to its goods (c. 1284 §2, 9°).
- Record of obligations incumbent upon pious foundations (c. 1307§2).
- File of episcopal letters and important documents (c. 535 §4).

If the records are reviewed in advance, the Director of Deanery Operations and Planning will include those results in the pre-visit portfolio of reports.

Additionally, the visit will include visual inspection of the church including the sanctuary, the tabernacle, devotional niches or spaces, and any side chapels, especially those used to reserve

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<sup>1</sup> SACRED CONGREGATION FOR DIVINE WORSHIP, *Ordo initiationis christianae adultorum*, ed. typica, Vatican City State, Typis polyglottis Vaticanis, 1972, n. 486, English translation in *The Rites*, vol. 1, The Liturgical Press, Collegeville, 1990.

the Eucharist if different from the main sanctuary. Additionally, the sacristy's condition and contents will be inspected to ensure that liturgical implements are held securely in a dignified manner. Also, chalices, pyxes, ciboria, communion cups, vestments and other objects used for the celebration of the liturgy will be reviewed for condition and appropriateness. The Dean is not to make these assessments based on his personal preferences, but on norms found in the General Instruction of the Roman Missal and other relevant particular norms. To aid this, the visitation instrument will include a checklist of the items and spaces to be inspected, plus a rubric for assessing their condition.

In terms of the parish's pastoral vitality, the Dean will use cc 528-529 as a guide, but will also keep in mind the relative size and resource base of the parish. The Dean's visit is an opportunity to connect the parish with support and should not be conducted as a punitive inspection. A flourishing parish, with a missionary posture, is crucial to connecting people to Jesus. Each parish expresses that vision uniquely and the Dean's role is to encourage creativity at the scale appropriate to the community's size, finances, and capabilities.

#### *Post visit*

The Dean will be provided with a post-visit summary form which he is to fill out and submit to the Vicar General within 45 days of the visit. If any substantial issues effecting the life and ministry of the Church are uncovered, those are to be brought to the attention of the Vicar General and/or the Vicar for Clergy and Religious, as appropriate, as soon as possible.

If the visit uncovered other pressing needs that parish leadership or staff identified, those are to be shared with the Director of Deanery Operations and Planning as soon as possible so that Diocesan staff can be responsive to addressing those needs and provide any requested resources in a timely fashion.

\*Note on timing: In the rollout of the new structure, these visits will commence once the Deanery Committees have concluded developing their initial Deanery Pastoral Plan.

**Conflict resolution and accountability:** As needed, the Dean will respond to intraparish and interparish disputes and disagreements by pastorally helping the affected parties resolve their differences constructively. The Dean may certainly avail himself of Diocesan staff and resources if needed and the Director of Deanery Operations and Planning can be a main point of contact in that process. The Dean is also responsible for holding pastors and parish leadership accountable to diocesan norms and initiatives and the Deanery Pastoral Plan.

**Clergy Personnel Records:** If, while working with the clergy of his Deanery, the Dean discovers or is made aware of an issue or incident involving a deacon or priest that effects the life or ministry of the Church, he is to inform the Secretary for Clergy and Religious via email of the issue or incident. The Dean is not to keep his own records of these incidents and issues.

#### Support of Priests

**Role of the Dean:** The Dean is tasked with ensuring a fraternal connection among the priests of the Deanery. In this role, he complements the work of the Secretariat for Clergy and Religious but does not

supplant its oversight functions. His goal is to support each priest in leading a prayerful life, centered on the Eucharist being mindful of his physical, emotional, and mental well-being.

**Priest Gatherings:** The Dean is to gather the entire presbyterate of the Deanery at least three times per year for fellowship, prayer, and mutual encouragement. Since the Deanery Committee meetings will also include the priests of the Deanery, these meetings are not to duplicate that planning process nor create an alternate one but are an opportunity for a deepening of their relationships with each other and their ministry as priests.

The Dean is responsible for ensuring that the priests of his Deanery participate in these gatherings and are fraternally connected to one another. If not already taking place, these gatherings should begin by the time the triennial parish visits start but can start earlier in the rollout of the new Deanery Structure as appropriate.

**Formation:** The Dean is not responsible for creating any new programs or activities of ongoing formation specific to the priests of the Deanery. Instead, the Dean's role in formation is to ensure that each priest in the Deanery is taking advantage of available continuing education and formation offerings.

**One on one:** The Dean is to make himself available for one-on-one meetings with priests of the Deanery as needed, both proactively to resolve issues, but also in response to priests' requests for assistance. If the issue or concern directly effects the life and ministry of the church, the Dean is to share that with the Vicar for Clergy and Religious as soon as possible. Also, he is not to keep his own records of these concerns or issues.

**Retired Priests:** The Dean is to take special care to reach out to the retired priests living within the parishes of the Deanery to ensure that they are included and feel welcomed in both Deanery Committee and Clergy Support gatherings.

### Deanery Planning Roles and Process

**Dean's role:** The Dean will oversee the selection of a Deanery Chair and then guide the Deanery Chair's leadership of the Deanery Committee ensuring that all pastoral plans align with the Bishop's vision for the diocese, respect subsidiarity of parish and diocesan responsibilities, and adhere to canon law and magisterial teaching.

**Baseline Visits:** After the Dean is initially named, utilizing a visitation instrument designed by the Bishop's staff, he will conduct site visits of each parish in his Deanery to assess what is working well and not working well both in the life of the priests and in the operation of the parish. This data will be collated into baseline reports that outline the needs of each parish and of the deanery's priests. This visit will not be as exhaustive as the planned triennial visits and is intended for use in shaping the direction of the Deanery Pastoral Plan.

#### **Deanery Chair:**

##### **Qualifications:**

- A deacon or lay person, not excluding a religious sister or brother.
- In full communion with the Catholic Church.

- Active member of a parish pastoral staff or Catholic institution of the Deanery, on the membership roster of the respective Deanery, and ordinarily has ministered in the Deanery for one year.
- Possesses suitable qualities to fulfill the responsibilities of the office.

**Selection process:** The Dean will convene a Deanery Chair Selection Committee comprised of members of the Deanery Committee. The Deanery Chair Selection Committee shall include no fewer than five and no more than eleven members, a majority of whom should not be priests. The Dean presents a list of qualified candidates for the office of Deanery Chair to the Deanery Chair Selection Committee. This list will be pulled together from the Dean’s own knowledge of staff in the Deanery, plus any information gleaned from the baseline visits. From this list, the Deanery Chair Selection Committee selects one candidate by consensus and recommends this person to the Dean. If the Dean agrees with the recommendation, he nominates the candidate to the diocesan Bishop. The Bishop’s office will do a simple background check, review the Dean’s recommendation letter and then the Bishop may appoint the Deanery Chair.

**Role:** Once appointed by the Bishop, the Deanery Chair gathers the Deanery Committee which consists of the clergy, staff, religious, and key volunteers of the Deanery to assess what is working (and warrants further support) and what is not working (and would benefit from new programs, initiatives, and shared activity). Then based on that assessment, the Deanery Chair leads an effort to prioritize needs and develop proposals to address those needs.

**Deanery Committee Purpose:** The Deanery Committee’s work is twofold:

- 1) To form and implement a Deanery Pastoral Plan of no more than three goals of recommended initiatives, resource sharing, and/or formation activities.
- 2) To provide opportunities for ongoing networking and connection for those working for parishes and ministries within the Deanery.

**Deanery Pastoral Plan:** After the Deanery Chairs are selected, they will convene the Deanery Committee to draft a recommended Deanery Pastoral Plan. Since the Deanery Committee is typically large, the Deanery Chair should form an *ad hoc* smaller working group to draft the Deanery Pastoral Plan after hearing the larger group’s feedback. The working group should consist of a maximum of ten people, with no more than half of the members being priests. The final recommendation, once approved by the Dean, will be implemented under his leadership with the support of the Deanery Chair.

The Deanery Pastoral Plan could be developed as follows:

1. Formation/Reflection
  - a. The Deanery Committee ought to take time to be deeply formed in prayer and theological reflection of relevant scripture, magisterial teachings, and diocesan pastoral letters.
  - b. Additionally, the Deanery Committee will prayerfully review and reflect on results from both the Diocesan phase of the Synod on Synodality and the Dean’s baseline visits.
2. Prioritization



- a. After having carefully reflected on the Deanery's needs, the committee will, by way of consensus, list the three highest pastoral needs in the Deanery that would benefit from inter-parish initiatives.
3. Planning
  - a. The Deanery Chair will form a working group to brainstorm solutions and prepare concrete recommendations to address the prioritized needs.
4. Review
  - a. The entire Deanery Committee will gather to pray, reflect, and comment on the working group's recommendations.
  - b. If needed, the working group will modify their recommendations before submitting them to the Deanery Chair.
5. Approval
  - a. With the Dean's approval and full support, the recommendations will become the Deanery Pastoral Plan and work will begin on implementation.
  - b. The Dean will be responsible that the final plans align with the Bishop's vision for the diocese, respect subsidiarity of parish and diocesan responsibilities, and adhere to canon law and magisterial teaching.
6. Accountability and Learning
  - a. The working group will ensure that the recommended plans are specific, measurable, and time limited and have reporting and accountability processes to ensure success or lessons learned from setbacks.
  - b. Many of these plans could take up to three years to implement and future Deanery Committee meetings could include opportunities for celebration of progress, reflection on lessons learned, or even modification of the Deanery Pastoral Plan's goals and objectives.

Once the plans are in implementation, the Deanery Chair can form additional *ad hoc* working groups to form meeting agendas, deliver reports on the Deanery Pastoral Plan, provide recommendations, and share ideas for consideration. These *ad hoc* committees are not to become standing commissions but will be project specific and time limited. Further meetings can also include opportunities for networking and connections among the staff and leadership of the Deanery's parishes and ministries.

As the Deanery Pastoral Plan's timeframe ends (typically three years), the Deanery Chair should reconvene the working group to assist in producing a final report that is to be shared with the Deanery Committee and the Bishop. Then, the Deanery Chair is to begin the process of forming a new Deanery Pastoral Plan with goals set for the following three years.

### **Episcopal Council**

In order to provide a forum for the Bishop to communicate directly with the Deans should a need arise, an Episcopal Council has been created. The council will consist of the Deans plus the Bishop's vicars and the auxiliary Bishop(s) of the diocese. This council is not intended to become a regular standing body but can be brought together *ad hoc* to address specific issues or allow the bishop an opportunity to solicit feedback or share his vision for the pastoral care of the diocese directly.

### **Conclusion**

At the center of all our work is the person of Jesus Christ. He calls each of us to a life of discipleship and the Church exists to enthusiastically bring others into the adventure of responding to this call of love and grace. The structures of the Church are tools that help us do this work and do it justly, efficiently, and effectively. The structures do not exist as an end of themselves but are always in service to the salvation of souls. As we implement this new Deanery structure, we must always keep prayer at the center of our efforts and may that prayer abundantly guide our creativity in bringing the Gospel to life in our communities.