



# FROM ALTAR TO OFFICE

PASTORAL & ADMINISTRATIVE  
PARISH HANDBOOK

**THE DIOCESE *of* RALEIGH**  
**OFFICE OF THE BISHOP**

DATE: **13 JAN. 2026**



**DECREE OF APPROVAL AND PROMULGATION**  
**Pastoral and Administrative Parish Handbook**  
**Diocese of Raleigh**

In the exercise of my pastoral responsibility as Bishop of Raleigh, and in accordance with the Code of Canon Law, especially canons 381 §1, 391 §§1-2, and 394 §1, I hereby approve and promulgate the **Pastoral and Administrative Parish Handbook** for the Diocese of Raleigh.


This Handbook is offered as a pastoral and practical resource for those who serve in leadership and ministry throughout the Diocese, particularly pastors, clergy, parish staff, and lay ecclesial ministers. It brings together diocesan policies, canonical norms, and established practices to support faithful ministry, sound administration, and responsible stewardship in service of the Church's mission.


The norms contained in this Handbook are to be applied in harmony with universal and particular law, as well as with directives issued by competent ecclesiastical authority. Future norms shall be observed in accordance with the law.

By this decree, the **Pastoral and Administrative Parish Handbook** is approved and promulgated and shall enter into force on **January 13, 2026**, a weekday in Ordinary Time. From that date forward, it is to be recognized as an official guide for pastoral and administrative life within the Diocese of Raleigh.

I encourage all who use this Handbook to do so in a spirit of collaboration, ecclesial communion, and pastoral charity, mindful that good governance serves the good of the People of God.

Given at the Chancery of the Diocese of Raleigh, on this thirteenth day of January in the Year of Our Lord two thousand twenty-six.

  
† Luis Rafael Zarama  
Bishop of Raleigh

  
Luis O. Capacetti, JCL  
Chancellor

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION .....	02
2. THE PARISH PRIEST: PASTOR AND ADMINISTRATOR .....	05
3. PASTORAL CARE AND EVANGELIZATION .....	08
4. LITURGICAL AND SACRAMENTAL MINISTRY IN PARISH LIFE .....	12
5. FAITH FORMATION, RELIGIOUS AND CATHOLIC EDUCATION .....	16
6. PARISH ADMINISTRATION AND GOVERNANCE .....	21
7. STEWARDSHIP AND TEMPORAL GOODS .....	25
8. CLERGY LIFE, VOCATIONS, FORMATION, AND SUPPORT .....	29
9. OFFICE OF COMMUNICATION .....	32
10. CONCLUSION .....	33
11. INDEX OF DIOCESAN OFFICES .....	34

# 1. INTRODUCTION



2

## PASTORAL RATIONALE

**The parish priest stands at the crossroads of two inseparable dimensions of ecclesial life: the altar, where he sanctifies God's people, and the office, where he governs, shepherds, and administers the community entrusted to him.**

Both responsibilities flow from the pastoral charity that defines priestly ministry (*cf. Pastores Dabo Vobis*, 23). The faithful look to their pastor not only for sound preaching and reverent liturgy, but also for wise stewardship, transparent governance, and the capacity to build a parish culture rooted in communion.

In every age, the Church has called priests to unite spiritual leadership with responsible administration. This handbook seeks to support that call by articulating a coherent and practical framework for the daily governance of parish life—always in harmony with the mission of evangelization, ecclesiastical duties, and diocesan policies.

## 1.1 PURPOSE OF THE HANDBOOK

This handbook provides **clear, unified, and accessible guidance** to assist parish priests in fulfilling their pastoral and administrative responsibilities.

It gathers in one place the resources, norms, and best practices of diocesan offices, offering:

- A pastoral vision anchored in the Church's teaching
- Practical direction for parish administration
- A consistent framework for collaboration with diocesan structures
- Tools that strengthen accountability, transparency, and mission effectiveness

Its purpose is not to add burdens, but to **lighten the weight of administrative responsibilities** so that priests may devote themselves more fully to preaching, sanctifying, and shepherding the People of God.

## 1.2 PASTORAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE VISION

This handbook begins with a simple conviction: **good administration is itself a work of pastoral charity.**

When administrative practices are sound, transparent, and mission-driven:

- The parish becomes a trustworthy steward of God's gifts;
- Ministries flourish because structures support them;
- Families encounter a coherent and welcoming community;
- The priest is freer to devote his energy to evangelization and sacramental life.

Administrative leadership is not separate from pastoral leadership; it is its natural extension. This handbook encourages priests to see both dimensions as complementary expressions of their identity as pastors who teach, sanctify, and govern in the name of Christ (cf. c. 519).

## 1.3 COLLABORATION WITH DIOCESAN OFFICES

The Diocese does not ask the priest to navigate parish leadership alone.

Each office of the Curia exists to **support, equip, and accompany** him.

Throughout this handbook, the role of each diocesan office is explained in terms of:

- Its mission and responsibilities
- How it partners with the parish priest
- When and how to seek assistance
- Practical processes, forms, and communication channels

This collaborative structure reflects the ecclesiology of communion: the priest, the bishop, and diocesan offices working together for the spiritual and temporal good of the faithful. The handbook presents these relationships not as bureaucratic requirements, but **as expressions of shared pastoral care.**

## 1.4 CANONICAL AND PASTORAL FOUNDATIONS

The guidance in this handbook rests on:

- The Code of Canon Law (1983), especially cc. 515–540 regarding parish life and the office of pastor
- Diocesan policies and statutes
- The pastoral directives of the Bishop
- Principles drawn from the Church's teaching on evangelization, stewardship, catechesis, and pastoral governance

These foundations ensure that the parish operates faithfully, transparently, and in communion with the Bishop, who is the visible source of unity within the local Church.

## 1.5 HOW TO USE THIS HANDBOOK

Priests are encouraged to approach this handbook as:

- A **reference manual** for practical procedures
- A **pastoral guide** shaped by theological and canonical principles
- A **companion document** when collaborating with diocesan offices

- A **formation tool** for new pastors, administrators, and parish leaders

Each section follows a consistent structure: pastoral rationale, mission and role, partnership with the priest, communication, encouragement, and key takeaways, to ensure clarity and ease of use.

### SUMMARY

This handbook seeks to strengthen the unity between the altar and the office, offering priests a practical and mission-centered resource for parish leadership. Rooted in pastoral charity and ecclesial communion, it affirms that every administrative act serves the Church's fundamental purpose: to proclaim the Gospel, celebrate the sacraments, and accompany the faithful into deeper union with Christ.

This foundational vision prepares the way for the next chapter, which reflects more fully on the identity of the pastor and the integration of spiritual leadership with sound administrative stewardship.



## 2. THE PARISH PRIEST: PASTOR AND ADMINISTRATOR



5

### PASTORAL RATIONALE

**The priest’s mission to teach, sanctify, and govern the faithful entrusted to him (cf. c. 519) forms a single act of pastoral charity that embraces both spiritual leadership and responsible administration.**

Pope Francis has emphasized that today’s priest must exercise “a pastoral heart capable of uniting closeness to God with responsible closeness to the people” (*Address to Parish Priests of the Diocese of Rome*, 2023), and recent magisterial texts, including *Praedicate Evangelium* (2022) highlight that parish governance is an essential expression of this pastoral identity.

By leading with humility, order, and attention to real situations, the pastor ensures that the daily life of the parish supports evangelization, safeguards the worthy celebration of the sacraments, and fosters a stable, transparent, and mission-oriented community. Administrative stewardship is therefore not ancillary to priestly ministry but contributes directly to the growth of ecclesial communion and the flourishing of the People of God.

## 2.1 THEOLOGICAL AND CANONICAL IDENTITY OF THE PASTOR

(cc. 515 to 540)

Canon law describes the pastor as the proper shepherd of the parish who participates in the bishop's pastoral care. His governance includes spiritual leadership, the administration of parish goods, and the oversight of ministries and personnel. This identity presumes collaboration with clergy, religious, and laity, while maintaining the pastor's responsibility for the unity and direction of the parish.

## 2.2 RESPONSIBILITIES TOWARD THE PARISH COMMUNITY

Core responsibilities include:

- Preaching and catechesis rooted in the Church's doctrine.
- The faithful celebration of the sacraments.
- Pastoral accompaniment of individuals and families.
- Supervision of ministries and programs.
- Stewardship of parish resources and compliance with canonical and diocesan norms.
- Fostering communion within the parish and with the diocese.

These duties shape the daily rhythm of parish life and guide decision making.

## 2.3 PRINCIPLES OF PASTORAL LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

Effective governance reflects several key principles:

- Pastoral charity as the motive for all administrative work.
- Transparency in communication and financial matters.
- Responsible delegation paired with appropriate oversight.
- Collaboration that respects roles and competencies.

- Accountability to canonical and diocesan norms.
- Unity with the bishop and the diocesan mission.

These principles sustain healthy parish life and promote trust among the faithful.

## 2.4 DELEGATION AND COLLABORATION WITH PARISH STAFF AND COUNCILS

The pastor relies on staff and consultative bodies such as the Parish Pastoral Council and Parish Finance Council. Delegation is most effective when responsibilities are clearly defined, expectations are known, and communication is consistent. Councils offer valuable perspective and support, while the pastor retains the responsibility of governance and final decision making.

## 2.5 COMMUNICATION WITH THE BISHOP AND DIOCESAN CURIA

Regular communication with diocesan leadership strengthens pastoral effectiveness and ensures alignment with diocesan policies and canonical requirements. The Curia exists to assist pastors by providing expertise, resolving challenges, and supporting parish initiatives. Collaboration with diocesan offices is an extension of ecclesial communion and contributes to unified pastoral practice across the diocese.

## 2.6 OFFICE OF THE VICAR GENERAL – PUBLIC RESOURCES FOR PARISH PRIESTS

### Office of the Vicar General

The Office of the Vicar General assists the Bishop in the governance of the diocese and serves as a primary point of contact for parish priests seeking administrative guidance, canonical clarity, or support in matters involving parish operations, clergy services, and diocesan procedures. The office oversees curial coordination, mediation of concerns, administrative processes, and the

approval of external clergy and speakers. Publicly accessible resources are available to help priests navigate common administrative needs.

### Public Resources and Online Documents

The following links provide direct access to forms, guidelines, and protocols that support the daily administrative responsibilities of parish priests:

- **Vicar General – Main Office**

Overview of the office's mission, responsibilities, contact information, and curial leadership.

[dioceseofraleigh.org/vicar-general/vicar-general](http://dioceseofraleigh.org/vicar-general/vicar-general)

- **Forms and Guides for Parishes and Priests**

A collection of publicly available resources used for parish administration, including general templates, parish inventory tools, and guidance for standard procedures.

[dioceseofraleigh.org/vicar-general/forms-and-guides-parishes-and-priests](http://dioceseofraleigh.org/vicar-general/forms-and-guides-parishes-and-priests)

- **Protocol and Forms for Review of Prospective Speakers**

Official diocesan policy and required documentation for approving external speakers, retreat leaders, presenters, and mission personnel invited to parish events.

[dioceseofraleigh.org/vicar-general/protocol-and-forms-review-prospective-speakers](http://dioceseofraleigh.org/vicar-general/protocol-and-forms-review-prospective-speakers)

### Use and Application

These public resources assist priests in:

- Completing administrative tasks related to parish governance.
- Ensuring compliance with diocesan procedures when hosting external speakers.
- Accessing standardized forms and templates for parish operations.
- Communicating effectively with the Vicar General's office for guidance or consultation.

These tools supplement the broader support offered by the Office of the Vicar General and should be used whenever administrative or pastoral circumstances require coordination with the diocesan curia.

7

## SUMMARY

The priest's identity as pastor encompasses both spiritual leadership and responsible governance. When exercised with prudence, clarity, and charity, these dimensions strengthen parish life and advance the Church's evangelizing mission. Diocesan offices stand ready to support pastors in this shared ministry.

With this understanding in place, the following chapter turns to the daily work of evangelization and pastoral care that flows directly from the priest's leadership of the community.

### 3. PASTORAL CARE AND EVANGELIZATION



#### PASTORAL RATIONALE

**Evangelization shapes the daily life of the parish and guides every ministry and pastoral decision.**

The priest leads this mission by preaching the Gospel, forming disciples, and sustaining a community capable of welcoming, teaching, protecting, and accompanying people in their real circumstances. This work is strengthened through coordinated collaboration with diocesan offices that provide formation, communication support, charitable outreach, and safeguarding.

### 3.1 EVANGELIZATION IN A SECULAR CONTEXT

Evangelizing today involves welcoming people who often approach the parish from a distance or with limited formation. The priest sustains this mission through preaching, sacramental presence, and pastoral accompaniment. Support for parish evangelization planning, leadership formation, and pastoral consultation is available through the Office of Evangelization and Discipleship.

#### Diocesan Evangelization Resources

To assist parish priests and ministry leaders in their evangelizing mission, the Diocese of Raleigh provides publicly accessible resources through the Office of Evangelization and Discipleship. These materials support parish planning, leadership formation, small-group development, multicultural outreach, and the ongoing formation of missionary disciples.

Primary diocesan resources include:

- **Evangelization & Discipleship – Main Office**  
dioceseofraleigh.org/evangelization-and-discipleship
- **Evangelization (Faith Formation Resources)**  
dioceseofraleigh.org/faith-formation/evangelization
- **Processes for Evangelization-Pastoral Planning**  
dioceseofraleigh.org/faith-formation/processes-evangelization-pastoral-planning
- **Forming Missionary Disciples – Resource Library**  
dioceseofraleigh.org/faith-formation/forming-missionary-disciples-resources
- **Always Be Ready – Foundational Evangelization Course**  
dioceseofraleigh.org/faith-formation/always-be-ready

- **Hispanic and Multicultural Ministries (within OED)**

dioceseofraleigh.org/ministerio-hispano

These resources may be used to strengthen parish evangelization teams, train leaders, accompany lay movements, and support culturally diverse communities in the mission of forming intentional disciples.

### 3.2 PASTORAL ACCOMPANIMENT OF FAMILIES, YOUTH, AND ELDERLY

Families, youth, and elderly parishioners all shape parish life in essential ways. The priest's presence strengthens unity, supports formation, and encourages participation across generations. Assistance for family ministry, youth ministry, and intergenerational programs is offered through the **Office of Evangelization and Discipleship** (see *OED entry in the Diocesan Office Directory*).

9

### 3.3 OUTREACH TO THE MARGINALIZED AND IMMIGRANTS

Many households face poverty, instability, or complex legal and social needs. The priest offers pastoral care while discerning when specialized support is necessary.

For food assistance, case management, disaster response, and immigration legal services, the priest collaborates with **Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Raleigh**. A complete presentation of its mission, services, and operational guidance is provided in **Section 5.6: Partnership with Catholic Charities** (see *Section 5.6 and Catholic Charities entry in the Diocesan Office Directory*).

### 3.4 SMALL FAITH COMMUNITIES AND LAY MOVEMENTS

Prayer groups, small communities, and lay movements enrich parish life when well accompanied. The priest ensures they are integrated into parish life and remain sound in doctrine and mission.

When questions arise regarding formation content, group structures, or canonical matters, the priest may consult the Office of Evangelization and Discipleship through the Diocesan Coordinator for Hispanic Lay Movements and, when needed, the **Chancellor's Office** (see the *OED and Chancellor entries in the Diocesan Office Directory*).

The Diocese has guidelines for Hispanic lay movements that serve as catalysts for evangelization within their communities. These movements often play a significant role in welcoming newcomers, fostering prayer, and promoting service. The new policy provides clearer expectations, formation standards, and channels of communication so that their work can unfold in close harmony with the parish and the diocesan mission. Priests are encouraged to consult these guidelines when accompanying Hispanic lay movements that are active in the parish (see *Diocesan Office Directory, OED entry*).

See: [dioceseofraleigh.org/ministerio-hispano/movimientos](http://dioceseofraleigh.org/ministerio-hispano/movimientos)

Emmaus retreat groups operate in accordance with diocesan norms established to ensure sound pastoral practice and periodic evaluation. At this time, the Office of Discipleship and Evangelization does not provide specific programmatic accompaniment or guidance.

[dioceseofraleigh.org/sites/default/files/inline-files/Normas-retiro-emaus-10-24-2024.pdf](http://dioceseofraleigh.org/sites/default/files/inline-files/Normas-retiro-emaus-10-24-2024.pdf)

[dioceseofraleigh.org/sites/default/files/inline-files/Emaus-auto-eval-10-24-2024.pdf](http://dioceseofraleigh.org/sites/default/files/inline-files/Emaus-auto-eval-10-24-2024.pdf)

As described above, a diocesan Coordinator for Hispanic Lay Movements has been created. This new position does not exercise governance functions, but serves in a coordinating and facilitative role, supporting communication and alignment with the diocesan pastoral pathway.

### 3.5 LIFE, FAITH, AND CULTURAL BACKGROUND OF THE FAITHFUL

Parishes often reflect significant cultural and linguistic diversity. Understanding these realities strengthens communion and deepens evangelization. The priest fosters unity while honoring the traditions and needs of various communities.

Support for multicultural ministry, especially within Hispanic communities, is available through Hispanic and Multicultural Ministries, a division of the Office of Evangelization and Discipleship (see *OED entry in the Diocesan Office Directory*).

### 3.6 PARISH COMMUNICATIONS AND DIGITAL EVANGELIZATION

Communication is a pastoral responsibility that shapes trust and supports evangelization. Bulletins, websites, social media, and public messaging all contribute to the parish's pastoral voice.

All media requests must be directed to the Office of Communications, who will assist parishes in responding to media inquiries.

Guidance for communication standards, digital platforms, media interaction, and crisis communication is provided by the Office of Communications (see *Communications entry in the Diocesan Office Directory*).

In an effort to provide parishes with an easy-to-use tool to effectively communicate and engage with parishioners online and strengthen digital outreach efforts DOR Content is made available through the Office of Communications to support parishes in enhancing their digital presence. At [dorcontent.com](http://dorcontent.com), parish communications leaders can easily access a content calendar, download social media posts tailored for their communities, and explore other diocesan media, including videos and other valuable resources.

### 3.7 SAFE ENVIRONMENT AND CHILD PROTECTION

The protection of minors is central to the Church's mission. Compliance with safe-environment procedures ensures that parish programs are trustworthy and that children and youth are safeguarded.

Training requirements, background checks, annual reporting, and incident protocols are overseen by the Office of Child and Youth Protection (see Safe Environment entry in the Diocesan Office Directory).

Clergy, Employees, and Volunteers are required to undergo screening and background checks appropriate to their level of involvement. According to the guidance provided by the Office of Child and Youth Protection Screenings and Criminal Background Checks for Volunteers

More resources can be found at Safe Environment Team Tools | Diocese of Raleigh

### 3.8 EVANGELIZATION, CATECHESIS, AND FORMATION SUPPORT

Catechesis and formation sustain the parish's missionary identity and deepen faith at every stage of life. The priest ensures doctrinal integrity, clear structure, and strong leadership across all formation ministries.

The Office of Evangelization and Discipleship provides catechetical resources, training for parish leaders, curriculum guidance, and sacramental preparation support (see OED entry in the Diocesan Office Directory).

### SUMMARY

Evangelization and pastoral accompaniment shape the ordinary rhythm of parish life. Through preaching, teaching, presence, and collaboration with diocesan partners, the priest forms a community that welcomes, nurtures, protects, and sends disciples into the world.

This missionary focus naturally leads to the heart of ecclesial life—the celebration of the liturgy and the sacraments—which the next chapter explores as the source and summit of the Church's mission.

## 4. LITURGICAL AND SACRAMENTAL MINISTRY IN PARISH LIFE



12

### PASTORAL RATIONALE

**The liturgical and sacramental life of the parish is where the Church is most visibly herself.**

Through reverent celebration, careful preparation, and pastoral accompaniment, the priest draws the community into the mystery of Christ and sustains its unity. This chapter provides guidance for the sacramental ministries that define parish life, in collaboration with the diocesan offices that support priests in liturgical, canonical, and pastoral matters.

## 4.1 THE LITURGICAL LIFE OF THE PARISH

The priest safeguards the liturgical life of the parish through fidelity to the Church's rites and pastoral leadership in worship. The **Office of Divine Worship** provides norms, directives, and training resources (see *Diocesan Office Directory*, Divine Worship entry).

### Masses Celebrated in Private Homes

The celebration of Mass in private homes is not an ordinary pastoral practice. Except in genuine pastoral necessity—such as care for the sick or homebound—Mass is ordinarily celebrated in churches and chapels to maintain its visible connection to the parish community.

A priest **may not** celebrate Mass in a private residence without prior consultation with the **pastor of the parish in whose territory the home is located** (see *Section 6.1*).

When pastorally justified, the celebration should be simple, transparent in purpose, and fully compliant with liturgical norms, avoiding any impression of privilege or parallel communities.

### Visiting Clergy

Any priest or deacon who wishes to minister within the parish—even for a single Mass, retreat, sacramental celebration, or temporary assistance—must first obtain diocesan authorization, which includes a current Letter of Good Standing issued by his proper ordinary or religious superior (cf. c. 903), the granting of appropriate faculties through the Office of the Vicar General (cf. cc. 966–969), and full compliance with diocesan Safe Environment protocols; pastors should not permit visiting clergy to exercise ministry without this verification and must coordinate with the local pastor whenever ministry occurs within another parish's territory (see *Sections 4.1 and 6.7*). All procedures, forms, and contact information for visiting clergy are available through the diocesan webpage for clergy permissions at *Forms and Guides for Parishes and Priests* | Diocese of Raleigh

## 4.2 BAPTISM: PREPARATION, CELEBRATION, AND REGISTRATION

Baptism initiates the faithful into the life of the Church. The priest ensures adequate preparation of families and godparents, dignified celebration of the sacrament, and accurate recording of the baptism in parish registers (see *Section 4.10*). General Norms for the Celebration of the Rite of Baptism for Children along with forms and instructions for Godparents are provided by the **Office of Divine Worship** Norms and Guidelines | Diocese of Raleigh Canonical guidelines for sponsors and sacramental documentation are supported by the **Office of the Chancellor** (see *Diocesan Office Directory*).

## 4.3 EUCHARIST: FIRST COMMUNION, ADORATION, AND MINISTERS

The Eucharist is the center of parish life. The priest oversees catechesis for First Communion with support from the **Office of Evangelization and Discipleship** (see *Diocesan Office Directory*, *OED entry*) and ensures liturgical guidance and norms through the **Office of Divine Worship**. He forms Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion according to the norms of the diocese and fosters a culture of reverence in the parish's liturgical practice.

See: [dioceseofraleigh.org/media/2892](http://dioceseofraleigh.org/media/2892)

## 4.4 CONFIRMATION

Confirmation strengthens the faithful for mission. Coordination of catechesis, preparation of candidates and sponsors, and collaboration with the bishop's office are part of the priest's responsibilities. Norms for the Formation of Candidates for Confirmation and for the Administration of the Sacrament of Confirmation are supplied by the **Office of Divine Worship** Norms and Guidelines | Diocese of Raleigh Curricular resources and guidance are available through the **Office of Evangelization and Discipleship** (see *OED entry in the Diocesan Office Directory*).

In light of the inherent connection of the Sacraments of Initiation with the Easter Season and in observance of canon 884 §1, Bishop Luis grants to priests properly appointed as Pastors and Parochial Vicars for service in the Diocese of Raleigh, the special faculty to administer the Sacrament of Confirmation to adult Catholics [persons who are 18 years or older who are previously baptized in the Catholic Church but not yet confirmed] during the sacred season of Easter, beginning with the Easter Vigil and extending through the celebration of Pentecost (CIC canons 97 §1, 882, 884 §1, 885 §§1-2). This faculty also extends to those who have equal rights with the pastor, including administrators and priest campus ministers.

During this season, there is no need to request faculties for each celebration as is the case the rest of the year.

- 14 Requests for Confirmation outside the Easter Vigil or beyond the provisions of diocesan norms must be submitted directly to the **Office of the Bishop**.

This office reviews and processes all such requests to ensure proper coordination, consistent practice across the diocese, and appropriate communication with the confirming minister. Priests should contact the bishop's office well in advance when unique pastoral situations arise. (*see Bishop's Office entry in the Diocesan Office Directory*).

#### 4.5 MATRIMONY

Marriage preparation involves pastoral accompaniment and adherence to canonical norms. Questions regarding impediments, permissions, dispensations, and documentation are directed to the **Office of the Chancellor** (see Diocesan Office Directory, Chancellor entry). The priest ensures couples are well-prepared for their vocation and that all canonical requirements are met prior to the celebration.

Marriage forms and instructions are found on the website at Marriage Forms | Diocese of Raleigh

#### 4.6 TRIBUNAL MARRIAGE CASES

When parishioners seek clarity and healing through a marriage nullity process, the priest provides pastoral guidance and helps with initial inquiries. Formal procedures are undertaken through the **Office of the Tribunal**, which offers training, support, and procedural clarity (see Diocesan Office Directory, Tribunal entry).

Those seeking a declaration of nullity should be instructed to directly contact the **Office of the Tribunal** who will provide guidance in English or Spanish.

See: [dioceseofraleigh.org/tribunal/tribunal](http://dioceseofraleigh.org/tribunal/tribunal)

#### 4.7 MERCY AND HEALING: MINISTRY OF RECONCILIATION

The priest fosters a parish culture of conversion by maintaining regular times for confession, providing catechesis on the sacrament, and offering penitential services. Though not linked to a specific diocesan office, this ministry is enriched by collaboration with parish leadership and seasonal initiatives supported by the diocesan liturgical calendar (*see Section 4.1 for guidance on communal celebrations*).

#### 4.8 HOLY ORDERS: COORDINATION WITH THE DIOCESE

The priest promotes vocations by encouraging discernment and accompanying those who express interest in ordained ministry. Individuals are referred to the **Office of Vocations** and the **Office of the Permanent Diaconate**, which guide them through discernment and formation processes (*see Diocesan Office Directory, Vocations and Permanent Diaconate entries*).

#### 4.9 ANOINTING OF THE SICK AND PASTORAL CARE OF THE DYING

The priest provides sacramental care to the sick, elderly, and dying, ensuring that the Church's consolation is accessible at critical moments. Coordination with families, hospitals, healthcare chaplains, and homebound ministries often requires clarity and organization. Resources for pastoral care are available through the Pastoral Care Ministry within the **Office of Evangelization and Discipleship**.

A diocesan resource currently being compiled by the Deans—detailing hospital coverage, assigned parishes, and chaplains—will be included in this section once finalized to support consistent pastoral coordination across the deaneries.

Liturgical guidance for the celebration of funerals is available through the **Office of Divine Worship** Norms and Guidelines | Diocese of Raleigh

The diocese also maintains a comprehensive list of Catholic Cemeteries and Columbaria in the Diocese of Raleigh.

#### 4.10 PARISH SACRAMENTAL REGISTERS

Accurate sacramental records uphold the rights of the faithful and fulfill canonical obligations. The priest ensures prompt and precise documentation of Baptism, Confirmation, Marriage, and Reception into Full Communion. The **Office of Archives and Records**, along with the **Office of the Chancellor**, provides detailed guidelines for proper entries, corrections, annotations, and access requests. (see *Diocesan Office Directory, Archives entry*). [dioceseofraleigh.org/chancery/archives](http://dioceseofraleigh.org/chancery/archives)

#### SUMMARY

The liturgical and sacramental life of the parish is its foundation and its highest expression. The priest safeguards this sacred life with reverence, pastoral attentiveness, and fidelity to the Church's norms, supported by diocesan offices that accompany him in liturgical, canonical, and operational matters.

Flowing from this wellspring of grace, the next chapter considers the lifelong formation of the faithful and the parish's responsibility to nurture disciples who grow in wisdom, charity, and missionary zeal.

## 5. FAITH FORMATION



16

### PASTORAL RATIONALE

**Faith formation transforms knowledge into discipleship. It leads people from understanding the faith to living it.**

Through catechesis, Catholic education, and works of charity, the parish fosters an integral and lifelong journey of conversion. The priest guides this process by ensuring that formation, education, and service are unified, doctrinally sound, and rooted in the sacramental life of the Church. This chapter outlines how the parish collaborates with diocesan offices to sustain a culture where faith is taught, lived, and expressed in service.

## 5.1 RELIGIOUS EDUCATION FOR CHILDREN

Children encounter Christ through formation that is age-appropriate, rooted in the Gospel, and integrated into parish life. The priest oversees all children's religious education programs, ensuring fidelity to Church teaching and alignment with diocesan norms. The **Office of Evangelization and Discipleship** provides curriculum guidance, readiness standards for sacraments, catechist support, and consultation for parish leaders (see *Diocesan Office Directory*, *OED entry*). Sacramental preparation for children is coordinated closely with Sections **4.2 Baptism**, **4.3 Eucharist**, and **4.4 Confirmation**.

## 5.2 ADULT FAITH FORMATION (OCIA/RICA)

Adults deepen their understanding of the faith through structured formation, Scripture study, theological reflection, and opportunities for spiritual growth. The priest ensures that adult formation is substantive, accessible, and connected to parish life. For adults seeking initiation into the Catholic Church, the priest oversees the OCIA/RICA process. The **Office of Evangelization and Discipleship** provides doctrinal resources, formation materials, and team training for OCIA leaders (see *OED entry* in the *Diocesan Office Directory*). All formation should be integrated into the parish's sacramental, liturgical, and evangelizing mission.

## 5.3 CATECHIST TRAINING AND SUPPORT

Catechists participate directly in the Church's mission by handing on the faith with clarity and fidelity. The priest ensures that catechists receive ongoing doctrinal, spiritual, and methodological formation. The **Office of Evangelization and Discipleship** coordinates diocesan training, certification processes, doctrinal review, and leadership development (see *Diocesan Office Directory*, *OED entry*). Regular parish formation gatherings foster unity, prayer, and mission-focused catechesis.

## 5.4 PARISH RESPONSIBILITIES TOWARD CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

Catholic schools are integral to the Church's mission of education and evangelization. When a parish is associated with a school, the priest supports its Catholic identity, collaborates with the head of school, and promotes unity between parish and school communities. The **Office of Catholic Schools** provides curriculum oversight, teacher formation, accreditation guidance, and administrative support (see *Diocesan Office Directory*, *Catholic Schools Office entry*). The priest ensures that sacramental preparation for schoolchildren aligns with parish norms and is coordinated with Sections **4.2**, **4.3**, and **4.4**.

## 5.5 COLLABORATION BETWEEN SCHOOL AND PARISH CATECHESIS

Parish catechetical programs and Catholic schools share a united mission of forming disciples. The priest fosters collaboration between parish catechetical leaders and school religion teachers to ensure consistency in doctrine, sacramental preparation, and pastoral practice. The **Office of Evangelization and Discipleship** and the **Catholic Schools Office** support joint initiatives, resource sharing, and coordinated communication (see *Diocesan Office Directory*). Sacramental preparation remains a parish responsibility, carried out in close alignment with the school community.

17

## 5.6 OFFICE OF CATHOLIC SCHOOLS – PUBLIC RESOURCES FOR PARISH PRIESTS

The **Office of Catholic Schools** oversees the educational mission of the Diocese of Raleigh by supporting pastors, principals, teachers, and families in forming students in faith, academic excellence, and Christian character. The office provides leadership in curriculum development, accreditation, policy implementation, professional formation, and the safe operation of diocesan schools. While internal documents and administrative tools may require protected access, several public resources are available to

assist parish priests in their collaboration with local Catholic schools.

### Public Resources and Online Information

The following links provide direct access to diocesan-level information regarding Catholic schools, including leadership contacts, school directories, academic programming, admissions, and safe-environment practices.

- **Catholic Schools – Main Page**

Overview of mission, programs, initiatives, and diocesan educational structure

[dioceseofraleigh.org/catholic-schools](http://dioceseofraleigh.org/catholic-schools)

- **Office of Catholic Schools – Administrative Leadership**

Contact information, diocesan superintendent, academic leadership, and office responsibilities.

[dioceseofraleigh.org/catholic-schools/office-catholic-schools](http://dioceseofraleigh.org/catholic-schools/office-catholic-schools)

- **School Directory**

List of all Catholic schools within the Diocese of Raleigh, including location, grade levels, and contact information.

[dioceseofraleigh.org/catholic-schools/school-directory](http://dioceseofraleigh.org/catholic-schools/school-directory)

- **Admissions Information**

Policies, procedures, and guidance for families seeking enrollment in Catholic schools.

[dioceseofraleigh.org/catholic-schools/admissions](http://dioceseofraleigh.org/catholic-schools/admissions)

- **Academic Standards and Curriculum**

Diocesan curriculum guidelines, academic philosophy, program descriptions, and accreditation information.

[dioceseofraleigh.org/catholic-schools/academics](http://dioceseofraleigh.org/catholic-schools/academics)

- **Tuition Assistance and Scholarships**

Information on diocesan tuition support, financial aid programs, and scholarship opportunities for families.

[dioceseofraleigh.org/catholic-schools/tuition-assistance](http://dioceseofraleigh.org/catholic-schools/tuition-assistance)

- **Safe Environment in Catholic Schools**

Policies and training requirements that ensure the protection of minors in all Catholic school settings, in collaboration with the Office of Child and Youth Protection.

[dioceseofraleigh.org/catholic-schools/safe-environment](http://dioceseofraleigh.org/catholic-schools/safe-environment)

- **Employment Opportunities**

Current position openings, hiring requirements, and application processes for educators and school personnel.

[dioceseofraleigh.org/catholic-schools/employment](http://dioceseofraleigh.org/catholic-schools/employment)

### Use and Application

These public resources support parish priests in:

- Understanding the mission and structure of diocesan schools.
- Collaborating effectively with principals and school leadership.
- Guiding families who seek information about admissions or financial assistance.
- Promoting strong parish-school relationships that advance evangelization and formation.
- Ensuring appropriate compliance with safeguarding norms in school environments.



The Office of Catholic Schools remains a partner in the parish's mission to educate, form, and accompany young disciples in the life of faith.

## 5.7 PARTNERSHIP WITH CATHOLIC CHARITIES

### Pastoral Rationale

Why This Section Belongs Here, "Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by my deeds." (cf. James 2:18)

Faith formation and Catholic Charities are two inseparable dimensions of the Church's mission. Catechesis forms disciples in the truths of the Gospel, while Catholic Charities provides opportunities to live those truths through concrete service. One educates in faith; the other demonstrates faith in action. For parish priests, uniting these realities ensures that religious instruction is not merely theoretical and that charitable works are firmly rooted in the Gospel. Together, they offer a complete witness to the love of Christ.

### Mission and Role

Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Raleigh is the charitable outreach arm of the Diocese. Its mission is to provide help to our brothers and sisters in need by alleviating the effects of poverty and creating hope through solutions that transform lives. Catholic Charities serves the most vulnerable individuals and families across central and eastern North Carolina, offering programs such as:

- **Food Pantry Services** – direct distribution of food for families in need.
- **Disaster Services** – response and training for parishes and communities affected by natural or man-made disasters.
- **Immigration Legal Services** – professional guidance to immigrant families navigating complex legal processes.
- **Case Management & Referrals** – connecting parishioners with local resources and support systems.

### Partnership with Parish Priests

Pastors are encouraged to see Catholic Charities as a direct extension of their own pastoral care, especially in carrying out the corporal works of mercy. While priests provide sacramental and spiritual leadership, Catholic Charities provides the infrastructure and expertise to address material, legal, and social needs.

Key areas of collaboration include:

- **Referral and Support:** When a family presents urgent needs beyond the parish's capacity, pastors can connect them with Catholic Charities' programs.
- **Immigration Guidance:** Priests are often asked about immigration legal services; all information and appointment scheduling is available at [catholiccharitiesraleigh.org/programs/immigration-legal-services](http://catholiccharitiesraleigh.org/programs/immigration-legal-services).
- **Disaster Preparedness:** Catholic Charities offers training for parish leaders and volunteers on how to respond when disasters strike.
- **Volunteer Engagement:** Catholic Charities provides parishioners opportunities to live their faith by serving the poor, feeding the hungry, and supporting the vulnerable.

19

### Communication and Access

- All Catholic Charities staff emails follow the format: [firstname.lastname@ccharitiesdor.org](mailto:firstname.lastname@ccharitiesdor.org).
- Parish priests uncertain about the appropriate contact
- Can find information on their local Catholic Charities Office page. All locations are listed at [CatholicCharitiesRaleigh.org/locations](http://CatholicCharitiesRaleigh.org/locations).
- Immigration staff listings are intentionally limited online due to scam risks; priests should contact the general directory for guidance.

### Pastoral Encouragement

The needs across the Diocese are too great for any single parish to carry alone. Catholic Charities partners with priests to extend the Church's mission of mercy and justice. Priests are encouraged to:

- Make Catholic Charities their "first charity of choice" when guiding parish charitable giving and outreach. This ensures that the faithful's generosity supports an organization rooted in the Church's mission, accountable to diocesan leadership, and united with parish efforts. By prioritizing Catholic Charities, parishes witness to unity rather than fragmentation and show parishioners that their contributions serve not only local needs but also the broader diocesan family.

- Promote parishioner involvement in Catholic Charities volunteer opportunities.
- View Catholic Charities not as an outside agency but as a collaborator in shepherding souls through acts of justice, mercy, and advocacy.

### Words of Reassurance

Catholic Charities seeks to make collaboration simple and accessible. Though the Diocese has fewer Catholic Charities offices than parishes, the staff is committed to offering support, guidance, and training whenever possible. As a trusted presence in communities, Catholic Charities walks alongside parish priests, easing their burdens while ensuring the most vulnerable are not forgotten.

### SUMMARY

Faith formation is a lifelong journey that embraces catechesis, Catholic education, and works of charity. The priest leads this mission by cultivating a culture of discipleship and by partnering with diocesan leaders who support families, catechists, and parish ministries.

This formative work calls for structures that sustain the life of the community. Accordingly, the next chapter addresses parish administration as a ministry carried out with integrity, transparency, and a deep sense of pastoral responsibility.



## 6. PARISH ADMINISTRATION AND GOVERNANCE



21

### PASTORAL RATIONALE

**Parish administration is a ministry of stewardship, justice, and pastoral charity.**

Through responsible governance, transparent decision-making, and adherence to diocesan norms, the priest protects the mission of the parish and ensures that its resources, personnel, and ministries serve the Gospel faithfully. Good administration strengthens trust, safeguards the community, and creates stable conditions in which evangelization and sacramental life can flourish.

This chapter outlines the essential elements of parish governance and the collaborative relationship between the parish priest and the diocesan offices that support this ministry.

## 6.1 PARISH'S LEGAL AND CANONICAL STATUS

Every parish is a juridic person in the Church, entrusted to a pastor who exercises the office of governance in communion with the diocesan bishop. The priest ensures that all parish operations—pastoral, financial, sacramental, and administrative—comply with diocesan policy and universal law.

### **The pastor's authority is ordinarily limited to the territory of his parish.**

He exercises pastoral care and governance for the faithful who reside within its boundaries, and his faculties are meant to be exercised within that defined area.

**Any extension of his ministry beyond parish territory requires delegation or authorization from the diocesan bishop**, who may assign additional responsibilities or grant faculties for ministry outside the parish's territorial limits (cf. can. 515–518 CIC).

In the Diocese of Raleigh, each parish is also separately incorporated civilly and must follow the appropriate procedures for its civil, corporate status. The Pastor, Parish Finance Council and Pastoral Council chairpersons, and Principal of the school (if applicable) all serve as ex officio directors of the board.

The General Counsel provides necessary guidance on paperwork that must be submitted annually.

The **Vicar General** provides direction on clergy coordination, parish oversight, and interpretation of diocesan norms. The **General Counsel** offers guidance when facing matters involving:

- Contracts, leases, and vendor agreements
- Real property issues or transactions
- Civil liability or risk considerations
- Compliance with federal or state law
- Governance or bylaw interpretation
- Legal aspects of parish or school administration
- Sensitive situations requiring risk mitigation or legal review

Priests are encouraged to work through the appropriate diocesan channels—typically the Vicar General, Chancellor, or Chief Financial Officer—when requesting legal consultation. [dioceseofraleigh.org/general-counsel](http://dioceseofraleigh.org/general-counsel)

## 6.2 PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL

The Parish Pastoral Council assists the pastor in discerning the mission and long-term pastoral priorities of the parish. Its role is consultative, not managerial. The council reflects the diversity of the parish and helps identify pastoral needs, opportunities for evangelization, and areas for growth.

Each parish in the Diocese of Raleigh is required to have a Pastoral Council that meets regularly. The priest ensures that council meetings focus on mission and remain aligned with diocesan vision (*see Section 3 on evangelization and formation*).

The **Office of the Chancellor** provides guidance for drafting, reviewing, and updating Parish Pastoral Council statutes. The Chancellor ensures clarity, coherence, and canonical soundness, and finalized statutes are submitted through the Chancellor's Office for the bishop's approval (*see Diocesan Office Directory, Chancellor entry*).

Well-crafted statutes strengthen transparency, unity, and shared understanding within the council.

## 6.3 PARISH FINANCE COUNCIL

The Parish Finance Council assists the pastor in stewardship of parish resources. Canon law requires every parish to have a Finance Council that meets regularly, reviews financial statements, prepares budgets, and ensures transparency and accountability.

The priest collaborates with the **Office of Financial Planning and Analysis, Internal Audit**, and the **Parish Financial System** to ensure proper financial procedures (*see Diocesan Office Directory*).

Parish Finance Councils are expected to operate in accordance with guidance from the diocese

- See: [dioceseofraleigh.org/sites/default/files/inline-files/Parish-Finance-Council-Guidelines-2024.pdf](https://dioceseofraleigh.org/sites/default/files/inline-files/Parish-Finance-Council-Guidelines-2024.pdf). This includes the requirement to approve expenditures over ten thousand dollars (\$10,000), prepare the annual budget, and required reports to diocesan offices.

Diocesan staff are available to give periodic orientations to Finance Council members at the pastor's invitation.

Clear communication, professional standards, and transparent decision-making strengthen trust and align financial stewardship with the mission of the Church.

## 6.4 PARISH STAFF AND VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT

Parish staff and volunteers are essential collaborators in ministry. The priest fosters a workplace marked by respect, clarity of expectations, and healthy communication.

The **Office of Human Resources** assists with hiring, onboarding, performance management, benefits, workplace standards, and conflict resolution. The **General Counsel** provides guidance on employment law, contracts, and civil compliance (see *Diocesan Office Directory*).

Clear job descriptions, written procedures, and regular supervision strengthen unity, morale, and mission effectiveness.

## 6.5 SAFE ENVIRONMENT AND COMPLIANCE

The protection of minors and vulnerable adults is central to the Church's mission. Parishes must comply with all Safe Environment requirements, including background checks, training, supervision norms, documentation, and reporting procedures.

These responsibilities are overseen by the **Office of Child and Youth Protection** (see *Section 3.7 and Diocesan Office Directory, Safe Environment entry*). The priest ensures that all personnel involved in ministry with minors remain trained and compliant.

Safe-environment compliance is not merely administrative—it is pastoral care.

## 6.6 SAFETY AND SECURITY

Parishes are encouraged to have a Safety and Security Ministry that functions in accord with guidance from the **Office of Safety and Security**.

Parish clergy and staff should contact the diocesan staff immediately in cases of:

- Violence, or threats of violence, on diocesan property.
- Incidents that have resulted in or could result in serious physical injury or loss of life.
- Contact with law enforcement, whether a call for service or request by law enforcement.
- Incidents that pose serious threats to property, security or the operation of diocesan entities.
- Incidents that present credible threats to diocesan credibility, integrity, or public reputation.
- Incidents that may require multidisciplinary coordination among diocesan offices.
- Natural disasters or catastrophic events affecting diocesan facilities or personnel.
- Serious allegations or incidents (e.g., abuse, misconduct, criminal activity, security-related).
- Major media or legal developments affecting diocesan reputation.
- Cybersecurity breaches or data theft impacting sensitive information.

23

## 6.7 RECORDS MANAGEMENT AND ARCHIVES

Proper records management protects the rights of the faithful and supports pastoral continuity. Parishes maintain sacramental registers, administrative files, parish archives, and cemetery records where applicable.

The **Office of Archives** and Records offers clear guidance for maintaining, correcting, securing, and preserving these records (see *Section 4.10 and Diocesan Office Directory*).

Good recordkeeping supports canonical integrity, pastoral care, and the parish's long-term institutional memory.

## 6.8 RELATIONSHIP WITH DIOCESAN OFFICES, THE BISHOP, AND THE MODERATOR OF THE CURIA

The parish exists in communion with the diocesan bishop and is strengthened by the diocesan offices that assist the priest in governance, formation, worship, administration, and pastoral care. The priest maintains open communication with these offices, seeks guidance when needed, and implements diocesan norms in parish life.

**The Moderator of the Curia plays a vital coordinating role.** As the bishop's principal administrator, the Moderator ensures that diocesan offices function smoothly and consistently. He facilitates communication among departments, resolves inter-office issues, and offers priests clear, unified guidance when matters require coordinated responses. His role forms a crucial bridge between the bishop's pastoral priorities and the administrative structures that support parish life.

Cross-references include:

- **Chapters 3–5** for pastoral, liturgical, and educational collaboration
- **Section 5.6** for charitable partnerships
- **Sections 4.1 and 6.1** for clergy coordination and territorial clarity

This spirit of collaboration strengthens diocesan unity and ensures that parish governance advances the broader mission of the Church.

Within this spirit of ecclesial communion and shared responsibility, the Annual Visit of the Dean serves as a meaningful opportunity for pastoral accompaniment, fraternal dialogue, and attentive listening, while also supporting sound administrative coordination within the deanery. When such a visit is scheduled, parishes are asked to collaborate responsibly by ensuring timely access to the designated digital resources or documentation, available through <https://dioceseofraleigh.org/vicar-general/forms-and-guides-parishes-and-priests>. This practice promotes clarity, transparency, and appropriate follow-up, and assists the Dean in carrying out his service in communion with the Bishop, fostering unity, accountability, and the faithful stewardship of parish life.

### SUMMARY

Parish administration, when exercised with justice, accountability, and pastoral care, strengthens the Church's witness and safeguards its mission. Through responsible planning, transparent governance, and effective collaboration with diocesan offices, the priest fosters a community that is faithful, accountable, and mission-driven.

Building upon this administrative foundation, the next chapter examines the stewardship of temporal goods—an essential expression of the Church's commitment to serve the Gospel with wisdom and sustainability.



## 7. STEWARDSHIP AND TEMPORAL GOODS



25

### PASTORAL RATIONALE

**Stewardship is a work of the Gospel and a concrete expression of pastoral charity.**

Caring for temporal goods is not simply an administrative duty but a way the parish responds to God's generosity and supports the salvation of souls. The faithful sustain parish life through ordinary income—Sunday offertory, Holy Day collections, sacramental offerings, facility-use donations, and parish fundraising initiatives.

Alongside these regular contributions, the community also participates in larger efforts such as capital campaigns, endowment gifts, planned giving, and the Bishop's Annual Appeal—initiatives of greater scale that demonstrate a mature and forward-looking commitment to strengthening the Church's mission (see Section 7.3). Honoring and managing these gifts with integrity is an essential dimension of pastoral leadership.

For this reason, the chapter follows a logical and mission-driven sequence: it begins with the reception of gifts (ordinary and extraordinary), moves to long-term development and planning, and then addresses budgeting, financial systems, internal controls, facility management, risk mitigation, and reporting. This progression mirrors the operational rhythm of parish life: gifts are entrusted to the Church, planned with prudence, safeguarded through unified procedures, invested in facilities and ministry, and communicated back to the community with clarity. When stewardship is exercised coherently, it builds trust, inspires generosity, and ensures that every resource—whether modest or transformative—supports evangelization, worship, formation, and service (see Chapters 3–5).

## 7.1 PRINCIPLES OF STEWARDSHIP IN PARISH LIFE

Stewardship expresses gratitude for God's gifts and commits the parish to using resources wisely and generously. The priest ensures that decisions about finances, property, and planning reflect mission priorities and strengthen evangelization (see *Chapter 3 on pastoral mission*).

Cross-reference: See Section 6.3 Parish Finance Council for coordinated financial oversight.

## 7.2 FUNDRAISING, SPECIAL COLLECTIONS, AND CHARITABLE GIVING

Fundraising must be transparent, mission-aligned, and consistent with diocesan norms (see *Diocesan Office Directory, Development and Foundation entry*). The priest ensures clarity in communication, accurate recordkeeping, and the faithful use of designated gifts.

Parishes are encouraged to support Catholic Charities, as described in Section 5.6, to strengthen diocesan outreach to those in need.

Coordination with the Office of Development and The Foundation (see *Section 7.3*) ensures that parish appeals align with diocesan priorities and avoid duplication.

## 7.3 DEVELOPMENT AND THE FOUNDATION

The Office of Development and The Foundation strengthens long-term diocesan sustainability by partnering with parishes, schools, and donors to support mission. The office oversees the Bishop's Annual Appeal, provides guidance on fundraising and stewardship, and assists with capital campaigns, planned giving, and estate-planning initiatives (see *Diocesan Office Directory, Development and Foundation entry*).

The office collaborates with the Office of the Bishop, Vicar General, General Counsel, Finance Department, Human Resources, Communications, and the Office of Catholic Schools (see *Chapter*

5) to ensure alignment with diocesan mission. Email or mobile phone are the preferred communication methods.

Development and The Foundation oversee diocesan policies related to endowment agreements, investment and spending policies, and gift acceptance policies. Updated versions of these policies support unified stewardship (see *Diocesan Policy Index*).

Among its endowments, The Foundation is responsible for implementing the Bishop's required perpetual care fund for all cemeteries and columbaria. Insert language or link to the requirements.

Priests frequently request guidance on donor restrictions, parish endowments, major-gift procedures, and capital campaigns (see *Section 7.2*).

The office prepares the annual audited financial statements of The Foundation and issues quarterly endowment statements to all stakeholders. Additional resources and staff directories are available at:

[dioceseofraleigh.org/development](http://dioceseofraleigh.org/development)

[foundationdor.org/](http://foundationdor.org/)

## 7.4 FINANCIAL PLANNING AND BUDGETING

The parish budget is a pastoral tool that aligns financial resources with mission and long-term planning. The priest collaborates with parish staff and the Finance Council to prepare a balanced, transparent, and mission-oriented budget (see *Section 6.3*).

The Office of Financial Planning & Analysis provides templates, forecasting tools, and multi-year planning consultation (see *Diocesan Office Directory, FP&A entry*).

Cross-reference: See Section 7.3 Development and The Foundation for long-term revenue planning.

## 7.5 PARISH FINANCIAL SYSTEM AND INTERNAL CONTROLS

The parish relies on unified financial procedures to ensure accuracy, transparency, and accountability in the administration of temporal goods. Proper controls safeguard offertory income, prevent mismanagement, support long-term planning, and strengthen collaboration with diocesan offices. These systems also allow priests to focus more fully on pastoral leadership while ensuring that the parish's financial practices remain compliant with diocesan policies, civil law, and canonical expectations (*see Section 6.3 Parish Finance Council*).

### 7.5.1 DIOCESAN FINANCIAL RESOURCES FOR PARISH ADMINISTRATION (PUBLIC LINKS)

To support parish priests in fulfilling their administrative responsibilities, the Diocese of Raleigh provides publicly accessible financial reference materials, manuals, and procedural guidelines through the Office of Finance (Business & Fiscal Services). These resources offer foundational guidance for accounting, reporting, internal controls, auditing, and financial planning.

Key Resources:

- Business & Fiscal Services – Overview
- [dioceseofraleigh.org/business-and-fiscal-services/business-and-fiscal-services](https://dioceseofraleigh.org/business-and-fiscal-services/business-and-fiscal-services)
- Financial Reference Documents and Protocols for Parishes
- [dioceseofraleigh.org/business-and-fiscal-services/financial-reference-documents-and-protocols-parishes](https://dioceseofraleigh.org/business-and-fiscal-services/financial-reference-documents-and-protocols-parishes)
- Parish and School Accounting Manual (PDF)
- [dioceseofraleigh.org/sites/default/files/inline-files/Parish-and-School-Accounting-Manual-1995.pdf](https://dioceseofraleigh.org/sites/default/files/inline-files/Parish-and-School-Accounting-Manual-1995.pdf)
- Controller's Office (payroll, loans, transactions)
- [dioceseofraleigh.org/business-and-fiscal-services/controllers-office](https://dioceseofraleigh.org/business-and-fiscal-services/controllers-office)

- Office of Financial Planning and Analysis (loans, capital planning, financial comparisons)
- [dioceseofraleigh.org/business-and-fiscal-services/financial-planning-and-analysis](https://dioceseofraleigh.org/business-and-fiscal-services/financial-planning-and-analysis)
- Audited Diocesan Financial Statements
- [dioceseofraleigh.org/chief-financial-officer-chief-administrative-officer/audited-financial-statements](https://dioceseofraleigh.org/chief-financial-officer-chief-administrative-officer/audited-financial-statements)

These tools serve as the operational backbone for parish financial administration and should be consulted whenever implementing accounting procedures, preparing reports, or collaborating with diocesan finance personnel. Additional policies that govern parishes—such as insurance, capital projects, and risk management—are detailed in Sections 7.6–7.8.

## 7.6 PROPERTY, FACILITIES, AND MAINTENANCE

27

Parish buildings support worship, formation, and community life. Their upkeep is a pastoral responsibility that requires planning, safety, and good stewardship, including the responsible management, use, and conservation of the Rectory as a vital component of parish life and clerical residence.

Rectory Policy (*see Section 7.6 – English:*

[dioceseofraleigh.org/system/files/2025-12/Diocese-of-Raleigh-Rectory-Policy-9-24-24.pdf](https://dioceseofraleigh.org/system/files/2025-12/Diocese-of-Raleigh-Rectory-Policy-9-24-24.pdf)

**Spanish:** [Diocese-of-Raleigh-Rectory-Policy-Spanish-9-24-24.pdf](https://dioceseofraleigh.org/system/files/2025-12/Diocese-of-Raleigh-Rectory-Policy-Spanish-9-24-24.pdf)

The Office of Property and Construction assists with facility assessments, major repairs, renovation standards, contractor vetting, and capital planning (*see Diocesan Office Directory, Property and Construction entry*).

Pastors must consult this office before undertaking structural repairs, large maintenance projects, or construction (*see Section 7.7*).

Cross-reference: See Section 6.1 for legal and canonical considerations.

## 7.7 CAPITAL PROJECTS AND DIOCESAN APPROVALS

Large projects (\$20k and above) - including new construction, major renovations, property transactions, or expenditures above diocesan thresholds—require formal diocesan consultation or approval.

These processes involve the Vicar General, General Counsel, Finance Department, and Property and Construction (*see Diocesan Office Directory*).

Cross-reference: See Section 7.6 for building standards; see Section 6.1 for juridic-person considerations.

## 7.8 INSURANCE, RISK MANAGEMENT, AND EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

The parish must maintain appropriate insurance and follow diocesan risk-management protocols. The priest works with diocesan insurance administrators to ensure coverage for facilities, liability, and workers' compensation (*see Diocesan Insurance Guidelines*).

Emergency preparedness should align with diocesan recommendations; disaster response often involves Catholic Charities Disaster Services (*see Section 5.6*).

Cross-reference: Section 6.5 Safe Environment for safeguarding responsibilities.

## 7.9 PARISH REPORTS AND FINANCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY

Annual reporting and audits strengthen accountability and stewardship. The priest collaborates with diocesan offices to complete:

Annual parish financial report (*see FP&A and Finance Department*)

Internal audit documentation (*see Section 7.5*)

Capital project updates (*see Section 7.7*)

Offertory and campaign reporting (via Development and The Foundation, (*see Section 7.3*))

Safe Environment compliance reports (*see Section 6.5*)

These processes build trust and reinforce parish transparency.

### SUMMARY

Responsible stewardship fortifies the life of the parish. Through transparent financial practices, prudent budgeting, consistent internal controls, care for parish facilities, and close collaboration with diocesan offices, the priest ensures that temporal resources are directed toward the Church's spiritual mission.

Attentive stewardship ultimately serves the ministers themselves. Thus, the final chapter turns to the formation, well-being, and long-term support of clergy, whose lives and ministry remain vital to the Church's mission.



## 8. CLERGY LIFE, VOCATIONS, FORMATION, AND SUPPORT



29

### PASTORAL RATIONALE

**Clergy life unfolds along a dynamic path: discernment, formation, ordination, ministry, and ongoing growth.**

The Diocese accompanies this journey by providing structures that help priests and deacons serve with joy, stability, and pastoral maturity. Ordinary and extraordinary demands of ministry require spiritual depth, emotional resilience, fraternal support, and practical resources. For this reason, the Diocese provides distinct pathways for priestly vocations, priestly formation, diaconal formation, and clergy well-being, recognizing that each has its own character and pastoral needs.

The order of this chapter reflects this ecclesial reality. We begin with the discernment of **vocations to the presbyterate**, followed by **priestly life and ongoing formation**, then a dedicated section on the **Permanent Diaconate**, and finally the supports necessary for **health, well-being, and sustainable ministry**. This structure honors the different identities and responsibilities of priests and deacons while emphasizing the shared mission that unites ordained ministry.

Cross-reference: **See Sections 4.1–4.11** for sacramental responsibilities and **Sections 6.1–6.7** for collaborative structures of parish governance.

## 8.1 PROMOTION AND DISCERNMENT OF PRIESTLY VOCATIONS

The **Office of Vocations** accompanies men discerning a call to the priesthood and supports pastors in fostering a parish culture open to God's call (*see Diocesan Office Directory, Vocations entry*). Priests play a critical role by encouraging discernment, identifying potential candidates, and cultivating prayer for vocations within parish life (*see Section 3.1 on evangelization and formation environments*).

The Vocations Office oversees application processes, psychological and academic evaluations, pastoral references, and seminary placement. Seminarians are formed according to the Program for Priestly Formation and diocesan norms, with close collaboration between pastors, formation directors, and diocesan leadership.

## 8.2 PRIESTLY LIFE, ONGOING FORMATION, AND FRATERNITY

Priestly identity deepens over a lifetime. The **Office of Continuing Education and Formation of Priests** provides retreats, study days, canonical updates, pastoral-skills training, and opportunities for human, spiritual, and intellectual growth (*see Diocesan Office Directory, Continuing Education entry*).

Fraternal support—through deaneries, clergy groups, mentoring, and intentional priestly gatherings—offers encouragement and accountability. Ongoing formation strengthens pastoral leadership, assists priests in addressing emerging ministerial needs, and grounds them in the unity of the presbyterate.

Cross-reference: **See Section 7.4** for financial planning resources that assist priests in sustainable ministry.

## 8.3 THE PERMANENT DIACONATE: DISCERNMENT, FORMATION, AND MINISTRY

The **Office of the Permanent Diaconate** oversees the discernment, academic formation, pastoral training, and assignments of deacon

candidates. The identity of the deacon is distinct from that of the priest, and this section recognizes the diaconate as a permanent order with its own mission and pastoral profile (*see Diocesan Office Directory, Permanent Diaconate entry*).

Priests collaborate with deacons by providing supervision, clear communication of responsibilities, and support for the ministries entrusted to them. Proper coordination ensures that deacons exercise their ministry in harmony with parish priorities and with the pastor's pastoral authority (*see Section 6.2 on governance and clergy roles*).

Cross-reference: **See Section 4.1** for sacramental duties in which deacons may collaborate under the pastor's direction.

Each deacon in parish ministry is required to complete the Diaconal Ministry Memorandum available through the **Office of the Permanent Diaconate**. This memorandum provides a framework of understanding between the pastor and the deacon and clarifies the expectations with regard to the deacon's ministerial service in the Diocese of Raleigh and the parish, under the supervision of the pastor.

This memorandum also serves as the working basis for the deacon's annual ministry review.

The parties to this memorandum are the deacon, the pastor (or other supervisor designated by the bishop or director), and the director of deacons on behalf of the bishop. The memorandum may be revised during the course of an assignment given by the bishop, with the approval of the director of the permanent diaconate. In the case of married deacons, the deacon's wife is also to be made aware of the initial Memorandum and any subsequent changes.

## 8.4 HEALTH, WELL-BEING, AND SUSTAINABLE MINISTRY

*(Human Resources | Financial Planning & Analysis | Continuing Education & Formation)*

Sustainable ministry requires attention to physical health, emotional balance, financial stability, and personal well-being. The **Office of Human Resources** provides support related to healthcare benefits, retirement pathways, employment policies, and workplace matters (see *Diocesan Office Directory, Human Resources entry*). Prompt communication with HR ensures that needs are addressed efficiently and confidentially.

The **Office of Financial Planning & Analysis** assists clergy with retirement preparation, budgeting, and long-term financial planning (see Section 7.4). This support allows priests and deacons to minister with confidence and peace of mind.

The **Office of Continuing Education and Formation of Priests** also integrates health and wellness resources into its programs, emphasizing responsibility for self-care as part of priestly stewardship.

**Remuneration.** Priests who serve full-time as pastors, parochial vicars, chaplains, in diocesan offices, assigned to further studies, or the equivalent receive remuneration as outlined in the Remuneration for Priests Memorandum issued annually by the Chief Financial Officer.

Priests who serve part-time or are shared between two offices receive partial remuneration as agreed upon at the time of their assignment.

Priests in other special assignments or circumstances, including but not limited to those involved in canonical proceedings or assignments not equivalent to the offices listed above, receive remuneration proportionate to their ministry as determined by the diocesan bishop.

<https://dioceseofraleigh.org/system/files/2025-12/Decree-Remuneration-Policy-for-Priests-3-6-25.pdf>

**Priest Healthcare Case Management** is available through the **Office of the Vicar General**. Contact information is available on the “Resources for Priests” page in the password protected section of the Office of the Vicar General webpage or by contacting the Vicar General.

Contact information in case of medical emergency for priests is to be kept on file in the **Office of the Vicar General** along with the priest’s funeral plans. Funeral plans may be updated via the website at Forms and Guides for Parishes and Priests | Diocese of Raleigh

Cross-reference: **See Section 6.5 Safe Environment** for conduct and well-being responsibilities that support a healthy ministry.

31

## SUMMARY

The Diocese accompanies its clergy from vocational discernment through formation, ordination, ministry, and ongoing support. By integrating spiritual, human, intellectual, and pastoral formation—as well as policies that ensure personal and ministerial sustainability—the Church affirms that the well-being of her ministers is essential to the vitality of parish life.

Sustained by prayer, fraternity, and a shared commitment to the Gospel, priests and deacons are strengthened to serve God’s people with joy, fidelity, and perseverance.

LASTLY, IT IS IMPORTANT TO NOTE...

Office of Communications

The Office of Communications stands as a vital partner in the Church’s mission, equipping parish priests and diocesan ministries with clear and consistent messaging, high-quality digital and print resources, and trusted guidance for media and public engagement. In a world that hungers for truth and clarity, these public resources empower our parishes to communicate with confidence, to share the Gospel with conviction, and to stay closely connected to the life of the diocese. By using these tools faithfully,

priests ensure that their communities receive timely, accurate information and experience the unity, transparency, and pastoral care that strengthen the Church’s witness today. In the Diocese of Raleigh, where our communities are geographically diverse, multicultural, and rapidly growing, the Office of Communications plays an especially crucial role in fostering coherence, accessibility, and communion across regions, ensuring that every parish, regardless of size or setting, remains fully connected to the mission and heartbeat of the local Church.

- **News Media Relations**  
Diocesan employees may not grant interviews to the media without prior approval of the diocesan Director of Communications or the Bishop of Raleigh. If the request comes to a parish, school or agency, the pastor/employee should contact the diocesan Director of Communications for instructions on how to proceed.

See diocesan employee handbook for more information: [dioceseofraleigh.org/sites/default/files/2024-07/Dioces](https://dioceseofraleigh.org/sites/default/files/2024-07/Dioces)

- **Communications – Main Office Page**  
Overview of the office’s mission, services, staff contacts, and communication support

[dioceseofraleigh.org/communications-office/communications](https://dioceseofraleigh.org/communications-office/communications)

- **Parish Bulletin Announcements and Event Calendar**  
Weekly diocesan announcements and approved content for parish bulletins

[dioceseofraleigh.org/communications-office/bulletin-announcements](https://dioceseofraleigh.org/communications-office/bulletin-announcements)

- **NC Catholics Magazine**  
Official diocesan publication with news, spiritual reflections, and updates from across the diocese.  
[dioceseofraleigh.org/nc-catholic](https://dioceseofraleigh.org/nc-catholic)

- **Official Diocesan Social Media Platforms**  
Used for digital evangelization, public messaging, and diocesan updates:

**Facebook:** [www.facebook.com/DioceseofRaleigh](https://www.facebook.com/DioceseofRaleigh)  
**YouTube:** [www.youtube.com/user/DioceseofRaleigh](https://www.youtube.com/user/DioceseofRaleigh)

**Instagram:** [www.instagram.com/catholicdor/](https://www.instagram.com/catholicdor/)

- **DOR Content Portal**  
A centralized digital resource offering graphics, video content, templates, and social media materials for parish use.  
[www.dorcontent.com](https://www.dorcontent.com)

- **Design Guidelines, Social Media Policies, and Photography/Videography Protocols**  
Accessible through the Communications main page; these materials provide standards for branding, digital conduct, media etiquette at liturgical events, and the appropriate use of diocesan visual identity.

[dioceseofraleigh.org/communications-office/communications](https://dioceseofraleigh.org/communications-office/communications)

## CONCLUSION

As we bring this handbook to its close, we renew our shared commitment to serve Christ and His people with integrity, clarity, and joy.

The pages above are not simply procedures or policies, they are tools meant to sustain the daily mission of our priests, strengthen our parishes, and deepen communion across our Diocese. In this same spirit, Pope Leo XIV, in his message for the World Day of Prayer for the Sanctification of Priests, June 27, 2025, invites priests to renew their “yes” before the Sacred Heart of Jesus, the source of their vocation and the place where God’s mercy heals, strengthens, and unites; he urges them to be builders of unity and peace amid a world marked by division, exercising wise discernment, pastoral charity, and fraternal communion.

Remembering the gift of their ordination, priests are called to serve humbly, accompany the faithful with the Gospel, and root their ministry in prayer, forgiveness, and closeness to the poor, families, and young people. May every guideline become an opportunity for better stewardship, every collaboration a witness to unity, and every pastoral challenge a doorway to grace.

With confidence in the Holy Spirit and trust in one another, we move forward, together, building communities where the Gospel is lived with conviction and where every person can encounter the tender and transforming love of Jesus Christ; and, as the Holy Father entrusts all priests to Mary, we echo his blessing with renewed hope for the mission entrusted to us.

## INDEX OF DIOCESAN OFFICES

Diocesan Offices – Structured Listing by its collaborative expression of the bishop's pastoral governance.

### Introductory Explanation

A diocesan curia is more than an administrative framework; it is a collaborative expression of the bishop's pastoral governance. Grounded in ecclesiastical discipline and illumined by the theology of communion, its purpose is to assist the bishop in fulfilling the ministries of teaching,

sanctifying, and governing, thereby ensuring that the mission of the Church is carried out with clarity, unity, and accountability.

For this reason, diocesan offices are best understood as pastoral offices, which serve as distinct expressions of ministry, each contributing in complementary ways to the life of the Church. This structure provides priests and parish leaders with a clear sense of where to seek guidance, whom to contact, and how diocesan resources support parish ministry.

## 1. EPISCOPAL GOVERNANCE

### The Bishop

Provides pastoral leadership, governance, and the teaching authority of the Diocese. Oversees diocesan vision, major initiatives, and ecclesial unity.

### Vicar General and Moderator of the Curia

Assists the Bishop in governance, provides authoritative guidance to clergy, and ensures coordination, communication, and effective administration among diocesan offices.

### Chancellor

Maintains canonical records, oversees diocesan archives, authenticates official acts, manages the promulgation of policies, and provides canonical guidance.

### General Counsel

Advises the Diocese on civil legal matters including contracts, compliance, property, and risk management.

### Tribunal

Conducts marriage nullity cases, canonical procedures, and offers pastoral and juridical assistance in matters of matrimonial law.

## 2. EVANGELIZATION, WORSHIP, AND FAITH LIFE

### Worship

Guides the celebration of the sacred liturgy, reviews special liturgical requests, provides training, and ensures fidelity to liturgical norms.

### Evangelization and Discipleship

Supports parishes in forming missionary disciples through planning, leadership development, and lifelong formation pathways.

### Catholic Schools

Assists Catholic schools in governance, curriculum, accreditation, and Catholic identity; collaborates with pastors and principals.

### Catholic Charities

Extends the Church's charitable mission by providing social services, emergency assistance, immigration legal support, and outreach to the vulnerable.

### Continuing Education and Formation of Priests

Provides retreats, workshops, pastoral formation, canonical updates, and ongoing education programs for clergy.

### Permanent Diaconate

Oversees the discernment, formation, and ongoing support of permanent deacons and assists parishes in integrating diaconal ministry.

**Vocations**

Accompanies candidates discerning the priesthood, oversees seminary formation, and promotes a culture of vocations throughout the Diocese.

**3. PROTECTION, RECORDS, AND COMMUNICATIONS****Child and Youth Protection (Safe Environment)**

Implements Safe Environment policies, background checks, and training to ensure the protection of minors and vulnerable adults.

**Archives and Records**

Maintains diocesan historical and canonical archives and guides parishes in sacramental records management.

**Communications**

Manages diocesan media, digital platforms, branding, public relations, and crisis communication; supports parishes in communicating effectively and faithfully.

**4. TEMPORAL GOODS AND ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES****Finance**

Oversees diocesan financial operations, accounting standards, fiscal stewardship, and parish financial support.

**Financial Planning and Analysis (FP&A)**

Assists parishes and diocesan entities with budgeting, forecasting, financial modeling, and long-term planning.

**Parish Financial System**

Provides accounting systems, training, and support to ensure accurate and consistent parish financial reporting.

**Internal Audit**

Evaluates parish and diocesan internal controls, financial procedures, risk management, and compliance.

**Property and Construction**

Advises parishes on capital projects, facility assessments, safety standards, maintenance, and contractor approvals.

**Human Resources**

Oversees employment policies, benefits, healthcare, retirement plans, and workplace support for clergy and lay staff.

**Development and The Catholic Diocese of Raleigh Foundation**

Leads fundraising efforts including the Bishop's Annual Appeal, capital campaigns, planned giving, endowments, and gift acceptance policies; supports parishes and schools in long-term sustainability.





