

“It is true that God has made his entire people a royal priesthood in Christ. But our Priest, Jesus Christ, also chose some of his followers to carry out publicly in the Church the priestly ministry in his name on behalf of mankind.”

Rite of Presbyteral Ordination

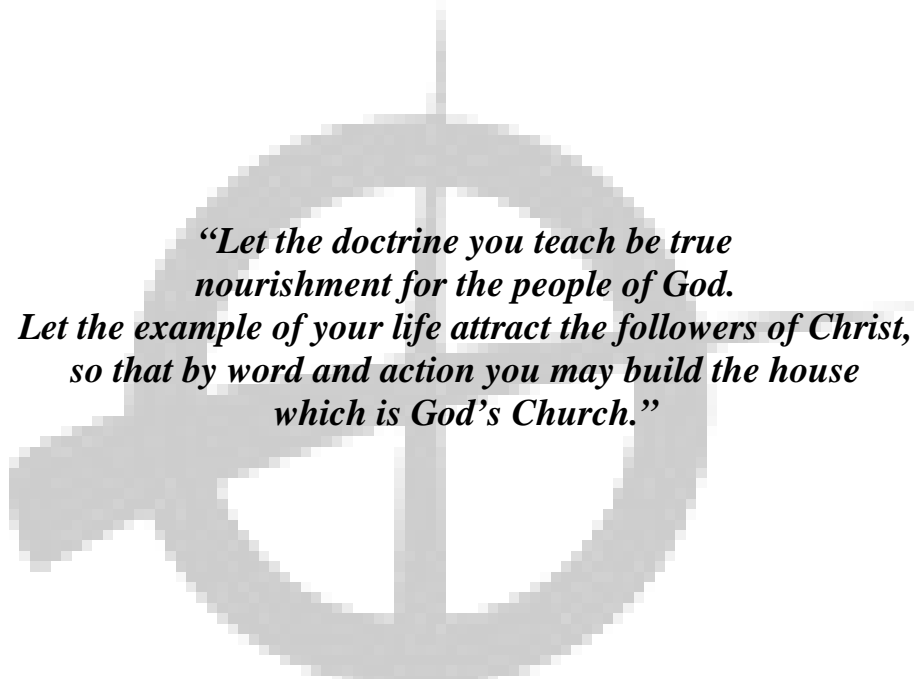
Introduction

The priest, by virtue of ordination, embarks on a spiritual journey of holiness defined by the promises made at ordination, and renewed yearly at the Chrism Mass. Building on the grace of baptism, these promises identify the uniqueness of the priest’s life and ministry, as distinct from those of the baptized.

More than an occupation, the priesthood is a way of life; a path chosen in response to God’s call to serve. The promises and commitments made by the priest reflect the various relationships the priest is to maintain, and form the framework through which the priest grows in holiness, ministers to the people of God, and witnesses to the community at large.

The call to ministry is a sharing in the ministry of Christ of whom Isaiah says (41:27 - 42:8), “a bruised reed he will not break, and a dimly burning wick he will not quench; he will faithfully bring forth justice.” The priest’s disposition is to be characterized by a humility that acknowledges God as the author of our life and ministry, and one that values the knowledge, experience, and needs of those he serves, deferring/seeking when necessary, to the expertise of the community he serves.

In today’s world priests have so many obligations and roles to fulfill. There is, too, such a great diversity of challenges they face, and often enough, they have to attend to them hastily. As a result they are sometimes in danger of scattering their energies in many directions.



***“Let the doctrine you teach be true
nourishment for the people of God.***

***Let the example of your life attract the followers of Christ,
so that by word and action you may build the house
which is God’s Church.”***

***“May they be faithful to the ministry that they received from you,
Lord God, and be to others a model of right conduct.”***

Rite of Presbyteral Ordination

For their part, priests, who are already involved in and distracted by the numerous duties of their office, additionally seek ways to unify their interior lives with their program of external activities. Determining appropriate behaviour can be challenging as members of today’s church expect so much more from their pastors than in previous generations.

Priests are often expected by the faithful to be competent in areas of management, administration, counselling, teaching and leading worship. Added to this are the higher expectations that are placed on priests as community leaders and public figures, including accountability for their actions in professional and personal life.

This guideline, the Code of Priestly Conduct, has been developed to assist priests to live and minister in contemporary society in a manner consistent with modern awareness, sensitivities and concerns. It has been developed to assist in building the fraternity of the priesthood as a living sign of God’s reign; to encourage respectful collaborative ministry with the laity; and to foster a stewardship of his life and ministry in a manner that others may benefit from the fruits of his holiness.



*Jesus called the twelve and said to them,
“Whoever wants to be first must be last of all and servant of all.”*

Mark 9:35

Priests should therefore occupy their position of leadership as men who do not seek the things that are their own but the things that are Jesus Christ's. They should unite their efforts with those of the lay faithful and conduct themselves among them after the example of the Master, who came among us “not to be served, but to give his life as a ransom for many” (Mt 20:28).

Presbyterorum Ordinis #9

The Priest as Servant Leader

Desiring to minister as Jesus did and to exercise a leadership of service, not of power, which calls others to serve, we resolve to:

- ✘ Develop leadership skills for effective communication and management in the parish community and the Archdiocese;
- ✘ Recognize the limits of our qualifications, our abilities and our knowledge in certain areas, and consult other professionals, particularly with respect to marriage and other counselling, legal, contracts, financial, and medical matters;
- ✘ Make decisions in a consultative manner with Deanery Councils, Parish Pastoral Councils and Finance Councils, and to search for consensus to ensure that different views are heard and respected in the process;
- ✘ Welcome and accept suggestions, opinions, and constructive criticism from brother priests and those whom we serve.

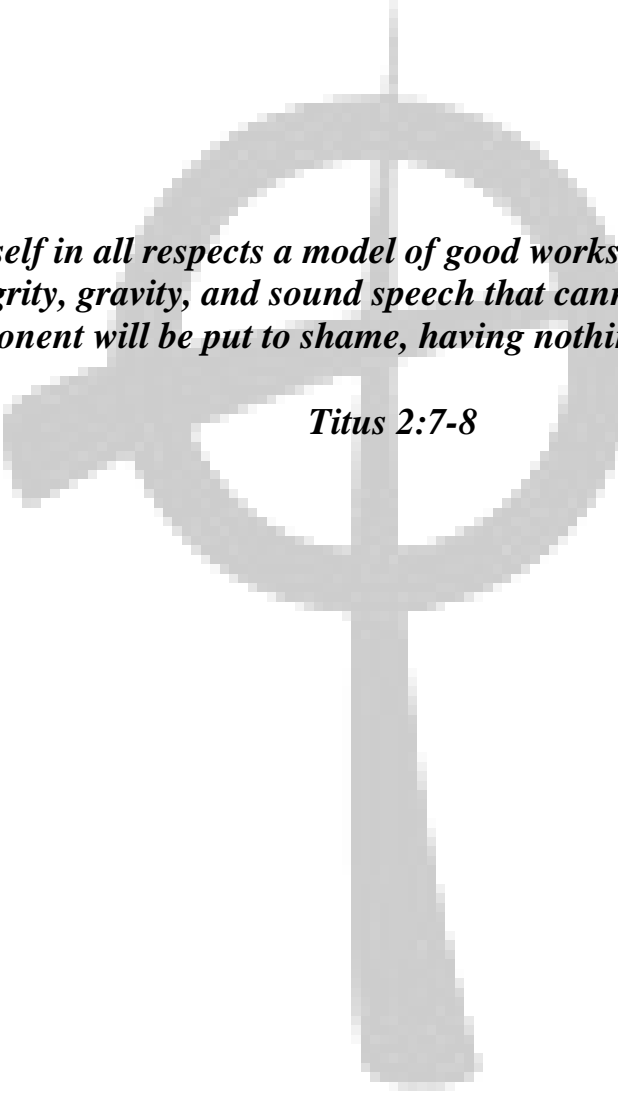
The Priest as Teacher & Spiritual Guide

Motivated by the desire to nourish the spirit of our parish communities and Archdiocese, we resolve to:

- ✘ Continually enhance our knowledge of Scriptures, of current Church teaching, and of liturgical principles;
- ✘ Ensure that liturgical celebrations and homilies are well-prepared and are in accordance with the liturgical norms of the Archdiocese and the General Instruction of the Roman Missal;
- ✘ Demonstrate sensitivity to the diverse forms of spirituality within the Church;
- ✘ Encourage and support the personal and spiritual formation of children, youth, and adult parishioners.

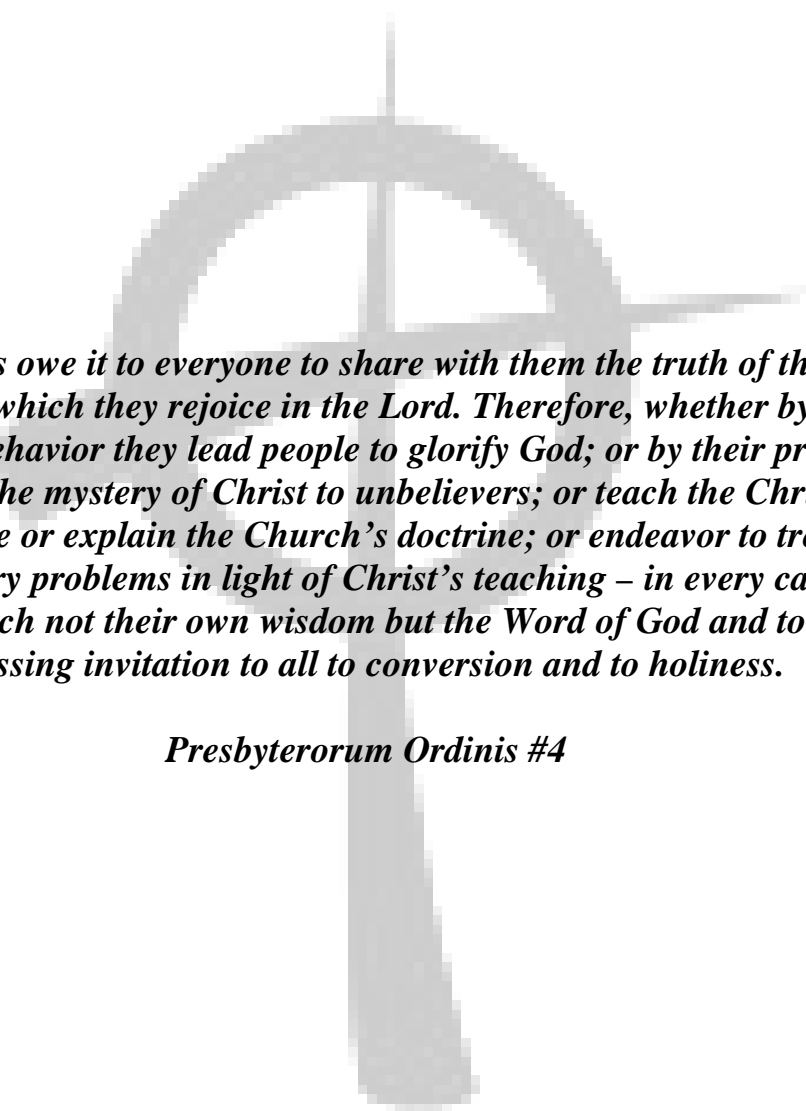
As instructors in the faith and in helping members of the faithful to be led in the Holy Spirit to the full development of their own vocation in accordance with the Gospel teaching through pastoral and spiritual counselling, we resolve to:

- ✘ Assume the full burden of responsibility for establishing and maintaining clear and appropriate boundaries in all counselling and counselling-related relationships;
- ✘ Be aware of our own levels of competency to counsel in specific areas in order to refer individuals to other professionals when appropriate;
- ✘ Carefully consider the consequences of entering into a relationship with someone with whom we have a pre-existing relationship, such as an employee, friend, or any other similar relationship as this may hinder our effectiveness to offer objective counselling;



Show yourself in all respects a model of good works, and in your teaching show integrity, gravity, and sound speech that cannot be censured; then any opponent will be put to shame, having nothing evil to say of us.

Titus 2:7-8



Priests owe it to everyone to share with them the truth of the Gospel in which they rejoice in the Lord. Therefore, whether by their exemplary behavior they lead people to glorify God; or by their preaching proclaim the mystery of Christ to unbelievers; or teach the Christian message or explain the Church's doctrine; or endeavor to treat contemporary problems in light of Christ's teaching – in every case their role is to teach not their own wisdom but the Word of God and to issue a pressing invitation to all to conversion and to holiness.

Presbyterorum Ordinis #4

- ✘ Be aware of the person's vulnerability when entering counselling sessions and avoid fostering dependency in any counselling relationships;
- ✘ Respect personal boundaries by not initiating nor engaging in physical contact of any kind (i.e. holding, touching, hugging) with persons whom we counsel;
- ✘ Avoid counselling sessions being misunderstood or misconstrued;
 - Location and time of sessions should be carefully considered to avoid confusion about the nature of the relationship
 - No sessions should be conducted in private living quarters
 - Determine the goal or need of the person seeking counselling before sessions begin.

Mindful of the joys of priestly life as well as the difficulties that we can encounter in the circumstances of contemporary life, we resolve to care for our physical and emotional well-being by:

- ✘ Managing our time effectively, according to the priorities of our vocation and ministry;
- ✘ Developing mature friendships that are supportive of, and compatible with, our vocation and ministry;
- ✘ Acknowledging the need for adequate and private living space;
- ✘ Ensuring proper nutrition, adequate sleep, regular exercise and leisure;
- ✘ Avoiding all illegal substances and refrain from the excessive use of alcohol and tobacco.



Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my thoughts. See if there is any hurtful way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting life

Psalm 139:23-24

As teachers and spiritual leaders called to live and share our faith as fully as possible, we resolve to grow through:

- ✘ Daily prayer and reflection on Scriptures;
- ✘ Regular celebration of, or participation in, the Eucharist and the other sacraments;
- ✘ Spiritual direction or accompaniment and periodic retreats;
- ✘ Ongoing theological, scriptural, spiritual, liturgical, and personal formation.

Notes

Self-care is important for priests to maintain a sense of overall well-being. The first step in self-care is to self-assess and to evaluate one's current state of physical, emotional, and spiritual health.

Each individual needs to determine which areas of self-care and development require the most attention and to take time to ensure that this care properly occurs.

Some key sources of stress are: multiple demands on time and energy; unrealistic expectations of oneself or from others; confusion or conflict; unclearly defined boundaries; loneliness; poor eating habits; and lack of physical exercise.

Helpful responses to stress include: discovering meaningful spiritual disciplines; regular time off and annual vacations; proper nutrition, exercise, and sleep; friends and family and other support systems; as well as realistic time management.

Associated with their bishop in a spirit of trust and generosity, they make him present in a certain sense in the individual local congregations, and take upon themselves, as far as they are able, his duties and the burden of his care, and discharge them with a daily interest. And as they sanctify and govern under the bishop's authority, that part of the Lord's flock entrusted to them they make the universal Church visible in their own locality and bring an efficacious assistance to the building up of the whole body of Christ. Intent always upon the welfare of God's children, they must strive to lend their effort to the pastoral work of the whole diocese, and even of the entire Church. On account of this sharing in their priesthood and mission, let priests sincerely look upon the bishop as their father and reverently obey him.

Lumen Gentium, 28

Priests, never losing sight of the fullness of the priesthood which the bishops enjoy, must respect in them the authority of Christ, the Supreme Shepherd. They must therefore stand by their bishops in sincere charity and obedience. This priestly obedience, imbued with a spirit of cooperation is based on the very sharing in the Episcopal ministry which is conferred on priests both through the Sacrament of Orders and the canonical mission.

Presbyterorum Ordinis, 7

The Priest as Builder of Communion

Building Communion with the Archbishop

Understanding that ministry is directed to the service of God and to one another, and recognizing that it is through our communion with the Archbishop that we affirm our unity with the Pope and the teachings of the Universal Church, we resolve to:

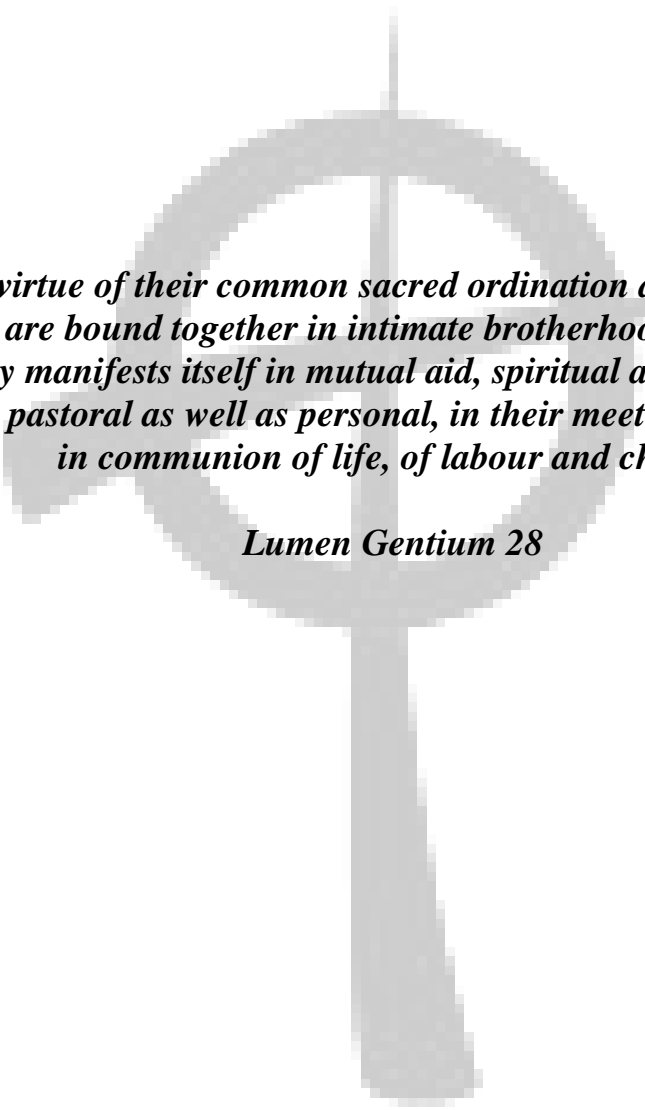
- ✘ Communicate with the Archbishop with professional and personal courtesy;
- ✘ Speak respectfully about the Archbishop;
- ✘ Make our views known and offer constructive feedback using appropriate avenues of communication (a letter or a meeting with the Archbishop, meetings with the Council of Priests, deanery meetings, or with the Dean);
- ✘ Support the Archbishop's efforts to implement the teachings of the Church and to administer the Archdiocese;
- ✘ Follow all Archdiocesan policies, protocols, liturgical norms, pastoral practices and administrative requirements;
- ✘ Publicly support all projects, programs, and initiatives of the Archdiocese.

The Priest as Builder of Communion

Building Communion amongst Brother Priests

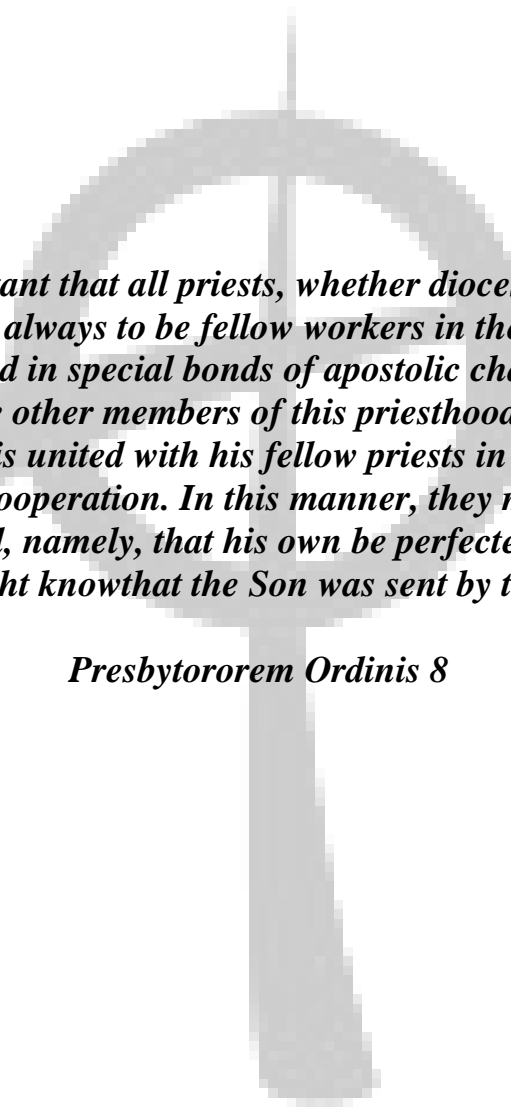
Attentive to the need to respect the history of a situation, to recognize the vitality of new ideas, and to acknowledge that we all have different strengths and weaknesses, we resolve to:

- ✘ Communicate with brother priests with professional and personal courtesy;
- ✘ Adhere to and respect all canonical and diocesan norms regarding territory and jurisdiction in regards to sacramental preparation, the celebration of the sacraments, and pastoral matters;
- ✘ Participate and support all clergy associations, committees, study days, retreats, and deanery meetings;
- ✘ Reach out with compassion and concern to brother priests who appear to be struggling or are in difficulty with their ministry or personal life;



In virtue of their common sacred ordination and mission, all priests are bound together in intimate brotherhood, which naturally and freely manifests itself in mutual aid, spiritual as well as material, pastoral as well as personal, in their meetings and in communion of life, of labour and charity

Lumen Gentium 28



It is very important that all priests, whether diocesan or religious, help one another always to be fellow workers in the truth. Each one, therefore, is united in special bonds of apostolic charity, ministry and brotherhood with the other members of this priesthood. [...] Each and every priest, therefore, is united with his fellow priests in a bond of charity, prayer and total cooperation. In this manner, they manifest that unity which Christ willed, namely, that his own be perfected in one so that the world might know that the Son was sent by the Father.

Presbyterorum Ordinis 8

- ✘ Demonstrate respect for the ministry of our predecessors, including:
 - Express gratitude and thanks for the service and ministry of our predecessor;
 - Refrain from criticism and derogatory comments of our predecessor's ministry or character;
 - Respect the parish as a community with a unique history and characteristics and refrain from introducing policies, norms, or procedures in any area of parish life without the necessary knowledge or time required to fully understand the situation.

- ✘ Demonstrate respect for the ministry of our successors, including:
 - Be welcoming and supportive to the new successor;
 - Be supportive and encouraging to the parish in times of transition;
 - Refrain from criticism of our successor's ministry or character;
 - Provide proper pastoral, financial, and operational orientation to the parish for our successor;
 - Ensure that office and rectory are clean and personal belongings are removed when leaving parish.
 - Refrain from interfering in any pastoral matter of our previous pastoral assignments.

The Priest as Builder of Communion

Building Communion in the Parish Community

Acknowledging the many gifts that are present in the community, that effective ministry calls for a collaborative style, and that communication is maintained within the community, we resolve to:

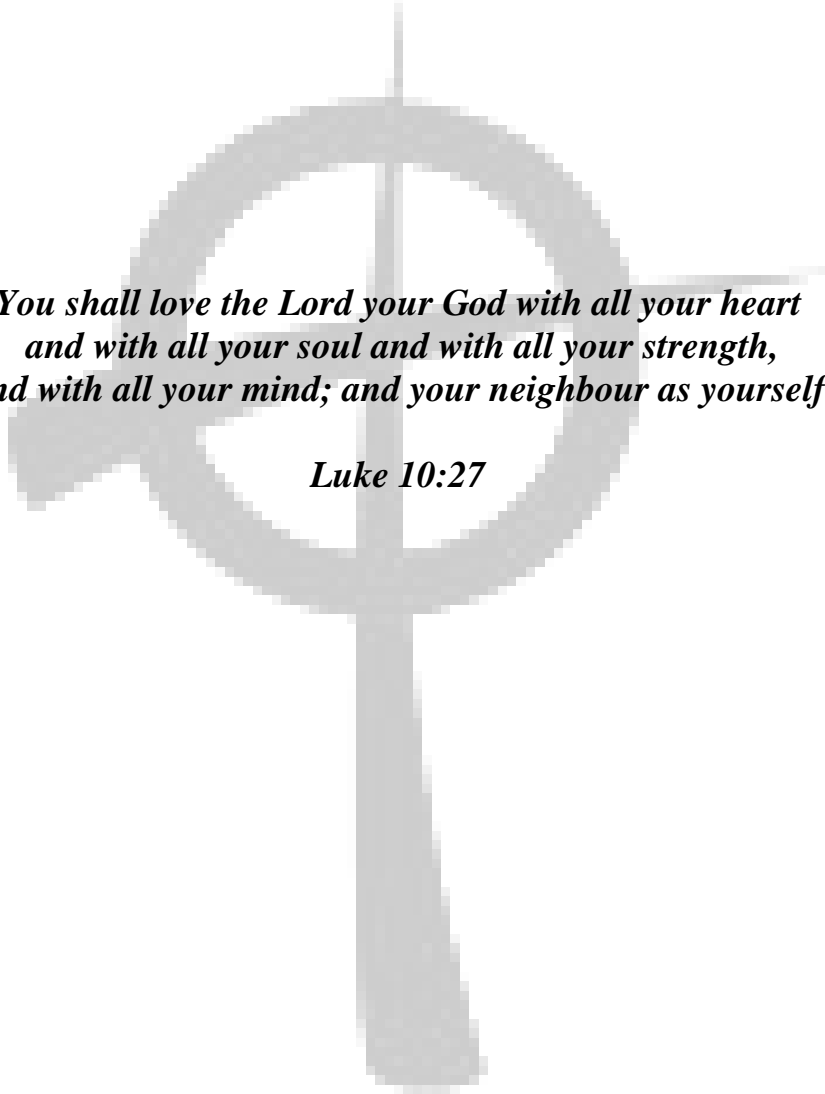
- ✘ Establish and maintain cooperative relationships with individual parishioners, employees, and with the various groups and ministries within the parish;
- ✘ Encourage stewardship among parishioners and express gratitude and appreciation for parishioner involvement;
- ✘ Encourage and support all parishioners to be involved in parish, deanery, and diocesan committees, projects, and initiatives;
- ✘ Model respect, inclusivity and collaboration;
- ✘ Take appropriate measures to diffuse potential conflicts;
- ✘ Avoid all gossip and counsel those in conflict;
- ✘ Avoid favoritism and partisanship;
- ✘ Foster a spirituality of communion among parishioners with the diocesan and the universal Church.

Exercising within the limits of their authority the function of Christ as Shepherd and Head, they gather together God's family as a brotherhood all of one mind, and lead them in the Spirit, through Christ, to God the Father.

Lumen Gentium, 28

.... priests have been placed in the midst of the laity to lead them to the unity of charity, "loving one another with fraternal love, eager to give one another precedence" (Rom 12:10). It is their task, therefore, to reconcile differences of mentality in such a way that no one need feel himself a stranger in the community of the faithful.

Prebyterorum Ordinis 9



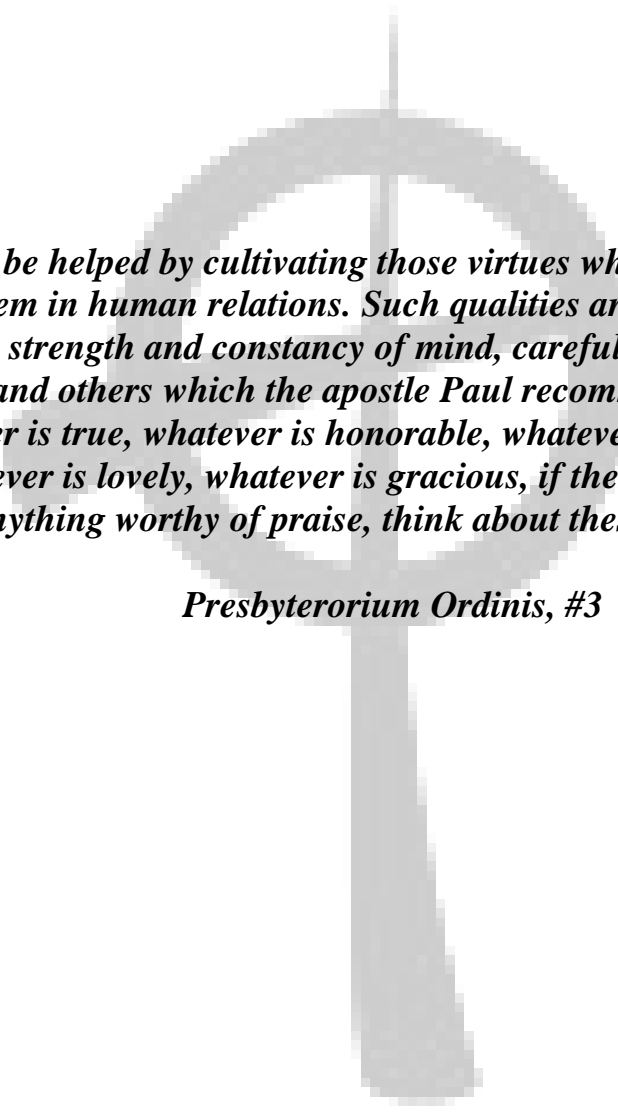
*You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart
and with all your soul and with all your strength,
and with all your mind; and your neighbour as yourself*

Luke 10:27

The Priest as Celibate

Committed to a celibate lifestyle and called to serve as examples of celibate chastity in all relationships at all times, we resolve to:

- ✘ Never exploit the trust placed in us by the faith community;
- ✘ Avoid developing inappropriate relationships with youth and children, employees, or parishioners;
- ✘ Never exploit anyone for any purpose;
- ✘ Take seriously any allegations of sexual misconduct and report any allegations to the Professional Conduct Committee of the Archdiocese of Winnipeg and, if the situation involves a minor as required by the laws of Manitoba, report the situation to the civil authorities (Archdiocese of Winnipeg's procedures will be followed to protect the rights of all involved);
- ✘ Review the contents of the Sexual Abuse Policy of the Archdiocese and reporting requirements of the province of Manitoba and follow these procedures and regulations.



Priests will be helped by cultivating those virtues which are rightly held in high esteem in human relations. Such qualities are goodness of heart, sincerity, strength and constancy of mind, careful attention to justice, courtesy, and others which the apostle Paul recommends when he says: “Whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is gracious, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things” (Phil. 4:8)

Presbyterorum Ordinis, #3

Maintaining an open and trustworthy relationship with youth and children we resolve to:

- ✘ Use a team approach to managing youth activities with the parish;
- ✘ Physical contact should not be initiated and if received, it should occur in a respectful manner.

To set an example of moral and ethical behavior for youth and children we resolve to:

- ✘ Refrain from the inappropriate use of alcohol
- ✘ In any and all circumstance, avoid the appearance of impropriety.

***In everything do to others as you would have them do to you;
for this is the law and the prophets***

Matthew 7:12

Although by Christ's will some are established as teachers, dispensers of the mysteries and pastors for others, there remains, nevertheless, a true equality between all with regard to the dignity and to the activity which is common to all the faithful in the building up of the Body of Christ

Lumen Gentium 32

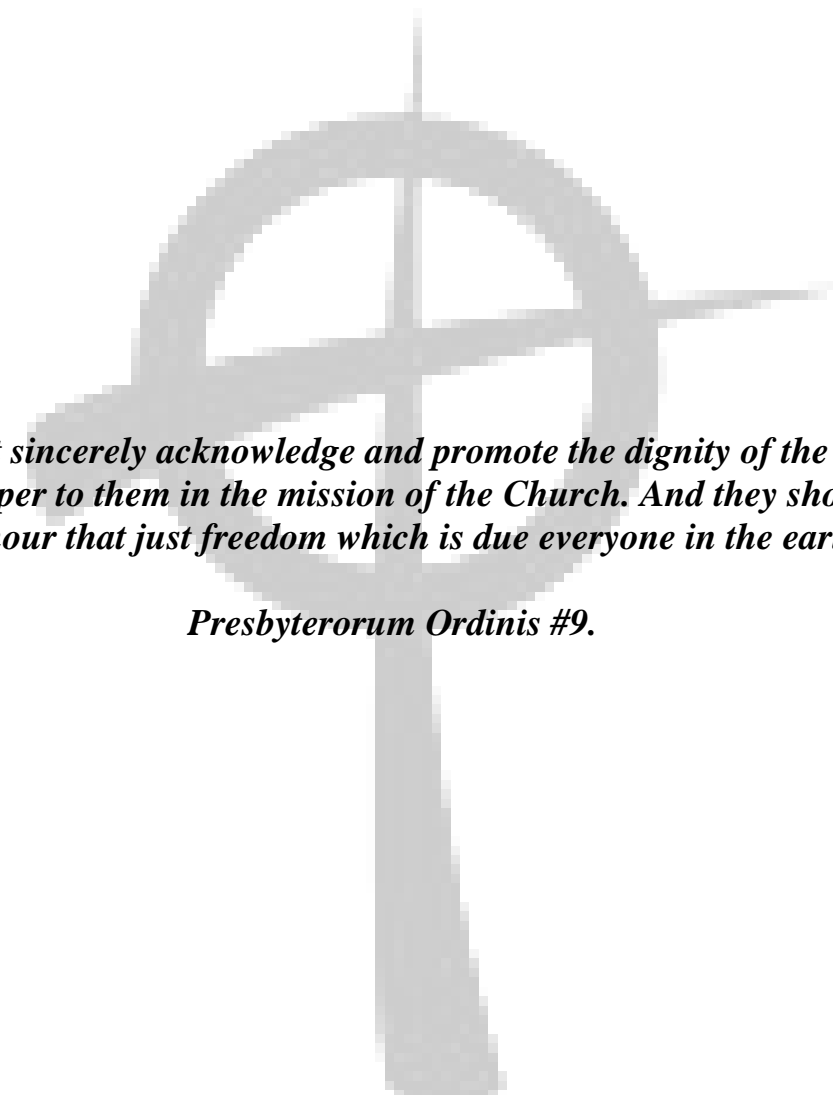
Priests must sincerely acknowledge and promote the dignity of the laity and the part proper to them in the mission of the Church. And they should hold in high honour that just freedom which is due everyone in the earthly city.

Presbyterorum Ordinis #9.

The Priest as Promoter of the Dignity of Persons

Recognizing the dignity of each individual person and acknowledging the need to uphold that dignity, we resolve to:

- ✘ Promote respect, through words and through actions, for all individuals;
- ✘ Respect the sanctity of life, respect the vows of celibacy and respect the vows of marriage;
- ✘ Acknowledge the importance and the role of laity in the mission of the Church;
- ✘ Refrain taking any advantage of individual vulnerabilities or weaknesses;
- ✘ Refrain from any physical, verbal or written patterns of behaviour that might harass, intimidate or abuse. Harassment encompasses a broad range of physical, written, or verbal behaviour, including without limitation the following:
 - Physical or psychological abuse
 - Racial slurs
 - Derogatory ethnic slurs
 - Sexual advances or touching
 - Sexual comments or sexual jokes
 - Displaying offensive materials
- ✘ Ensure that allegations of harassment, intimidation or abusive behaviour are taken seriously and reported to an appropriate authority, such as the Human Resources Office of the Archdiocese. .



Priests must sincerely acknowledge and promote the dignity of the laity and the part proper to them in the mission of the Church. And they should hold in high honour that just freedom which is due everyone in the earthly city.

Presbyterorum Ordinis #9.

Notes

- Racial, gender, sexual orientation, ethnic or other slurs denigrate the dignity of the person and may constitute harassment. Gossip, however benign, reinforces the erosion of human dignity.
- Physical proximity and situations of physical exclusivity may create unwanted discomfort. Prudent consideration of the nature of the situation may alleviate any potential confusion.
- Physical contact should not be initiated and, if received, should occur in a respectful manner.
- Hugging, tickling or horseplay may constitute abuse.

*Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after justice.
They shall have their fill*

Matthew 5:6

*Blessed are they that suffer persecution for justice's sake:
for there is the kingdom of God*

Matthew 5:10

*For I tell you, that unless your justice abound more than that of the scribes
and the Pharisees, you shall not enter the kingdom of heaven*

Matthew 5:20

*What does the Lord require of you but to do justice,
and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God.*

Micah 6:8

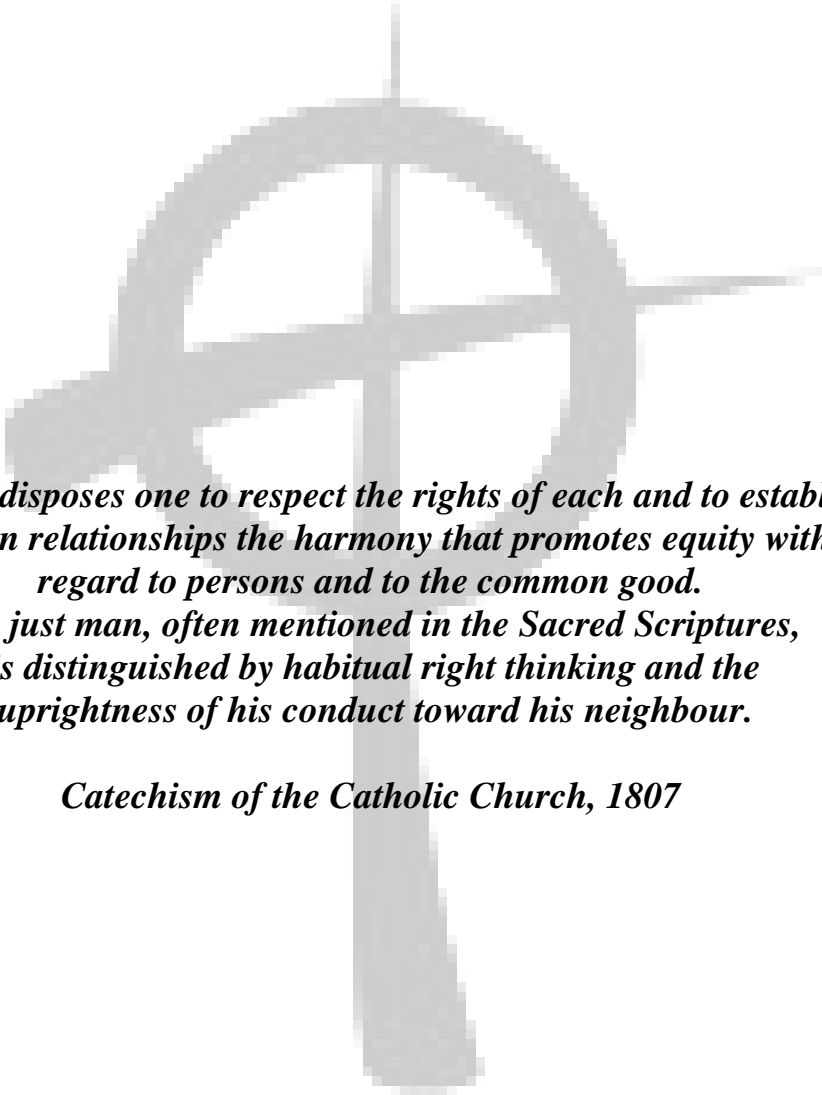
*And in building up the Church, priests ought to treat everyone with the
greatest kindness after the model of our Lord.*

Presbyterorum Ordinis, #6

The Priest as Promoter of Justice

In promoting justice within parish communities, we resolve to:

- ✘ Preach and pray for social justice in the liturgical celebrations of the parish;
- ✘ Promote justice and fairness in the administration and distribution of parish responsibilities ensuring that all parishioners have equal opportunity to be involved;
- ✘ Foster an environment free of discrimination and of discriminatory practices;
- ✘ Encourage a harmonious work environment that reflects fair and just working conditions;
- ✘ Ensure that salaries and benefits to employees are fair and equitable;
- ✘ Respect the uniqueness of the individual, be attentive to ethnic and cultural difference, acknowledge and value the distinct contributions made to pastoral life;
- ✘ Accommodate and create an atmosphere conducive to respect for, and the enrichment of, families and family commitments;
- ✘ Maintain the confidentiality and privacy of communications unless harm would result;



***Justice . . . disposes one to respect the rights of each and to establish in human relationships the harmony that promotes equity with regard to persons and to the common good.
The just man, often mentioned in the Sacred Scriptures, is distinguished by habitual right thinking and the uprightness of his conduct toward his neighbour.***

Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1807

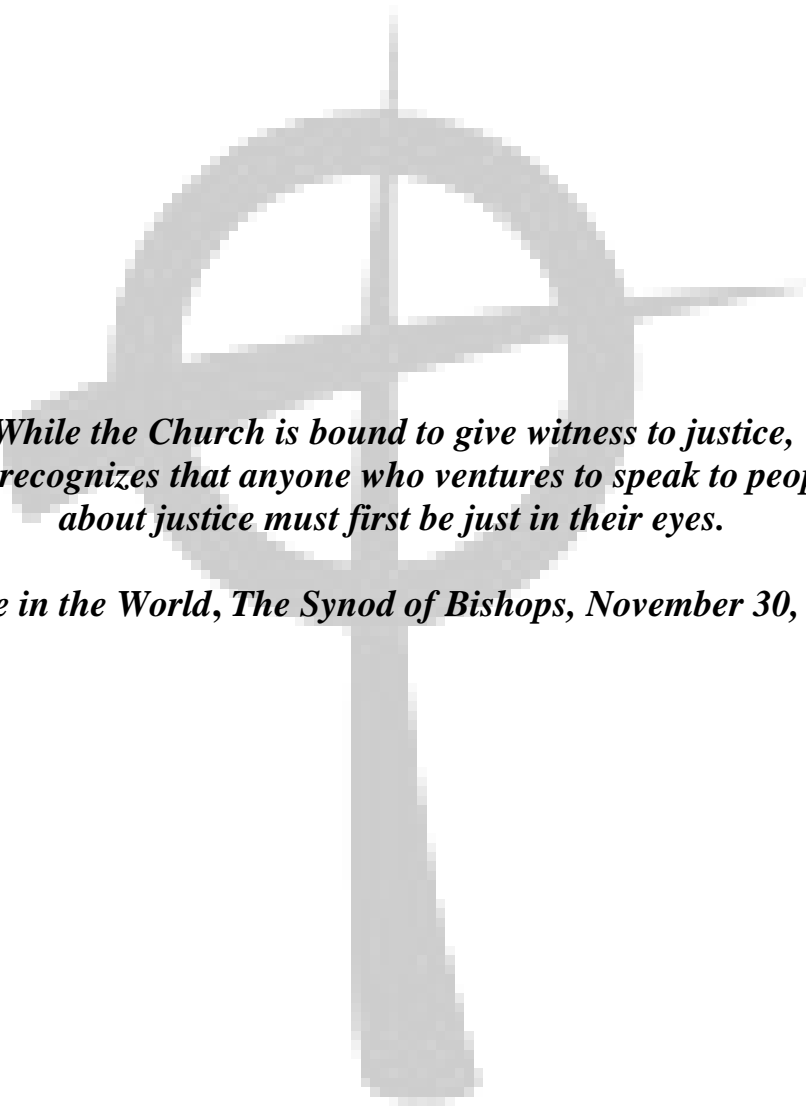
- ✘ Uphold and respect, in every circumstance, the seal of confession and encourage individuals to seek help outside of the confessional when necessary;
- ✘ Provide appropriate venues for venting disagreements and concerns and, when appropriate, solicit the assistance of an impartial professional third party.

In promoting justice within the community of priests and the Archdiocese, we resolve to:

- ✘ Respect diversity and difference and work to resolve disagreements in a collaborative manner;
- ✘ Assist each other in the just administration of pastoral work and contribute to the peaceful and respectful solution of pastoral and interpersonal difficulties;
- ✘ Promote fair and equitable sharing of the Archdiocesan resources for the well being and financial stability of individual parishes.

In recognizing that social justice is an integral dimension of the gospel and extends into the broader community, we resolve to:

- ✘ Implement the social justice teachings of the Church, in particular, the preferential option for the poor and disadvantaged;
- ✘ Encourage faithful stewardship of God's creation;



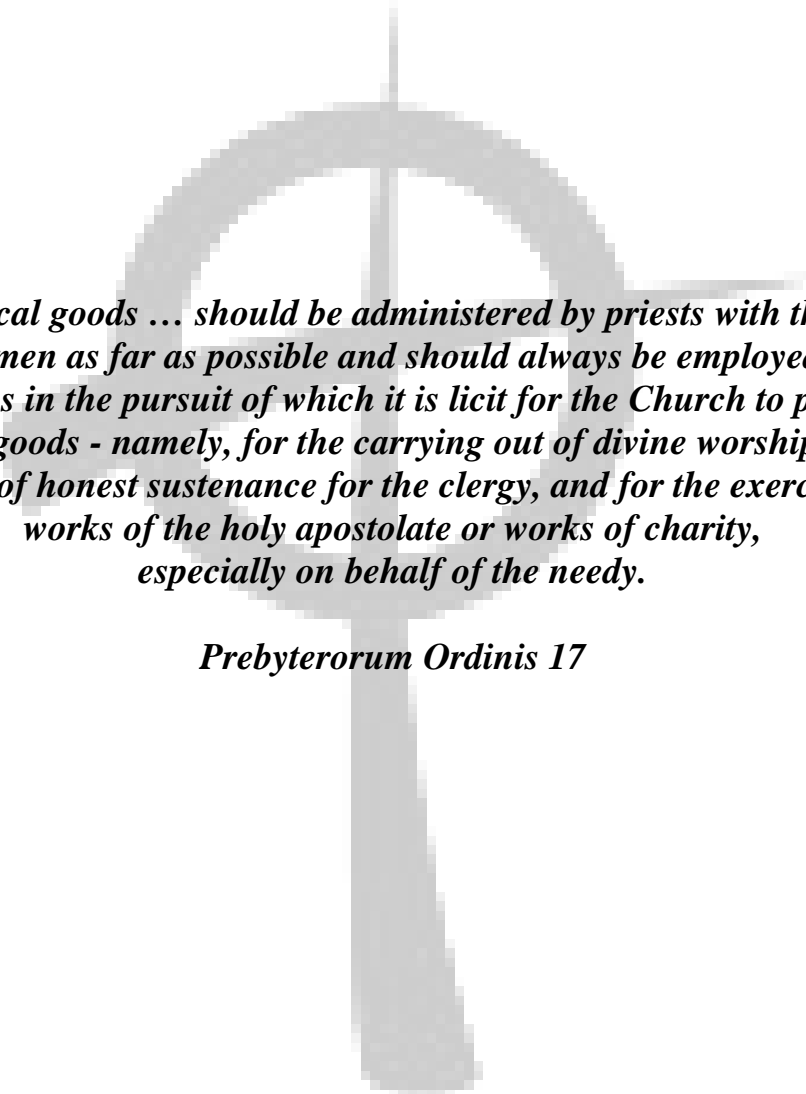
*While the Church is bound to give witness to justice,
she recognizes that anyone who ventures to speak to people
about justice must first be just in their eyes.*

Justice in the World, The Synod of Bishops, November 30, 1971

- ✘ Encourage parishioners to engage in public debate and public policy development with regards to morality, human dignity, and justice;
- ✘ Never engage in partisan politics so as to publicly support one political party or political candidate.

Notes

- Accountability and transparency in decision-making and the sharing of information promotes a fair and just work environment. Policies, procedures and responsibilities should be identified and clearly communicated to all concerned.
- The perfunctory termination of an employee or a volunteer without prior notice of any difficulties or attempts to address those difficulties jeopardizes principles of justice.
- An indigenous person or a recent immigrant, whether parishioner or priest, may bring their own distinct perceptions of family, gender or communal values to a parish. Learning about those perceptions and sharing information about local or national customs promotes justice and helps prevent potential misunderstandings.



Ecclesiastical goods ... should be administered by priests with the help of capable laymen as far as possible and should always be employed for those purposes in the pursuit of which it is licit for the Church to possess temporal goods - namely, for the carrying out of divine worship, for the procuring of honest sustenance for the clergy, and for the exercise of the works of the holy apostolate or works of charity, especially on behalf of the needy.

Prebyterorum Ordinis 17

The Priest as Steward of Temporal Goods

Desiring to be faithful stewards of all that is entrusted to us, we resolve to:

- ✘ Act in the best interests of the parish and the Archdiocese at all times;
- ✘ Administer parish assets in a transparent manner and provide timely, accurate budgets and accounts to parishioners;
- ✘ Ensure that decisions meet civil and canon law obligations;
- ✘ Ensure that all diocesan policies are followed as provided in the Archdiocesan Policy Manual on parish administration;
- ✘ Acknowledge the limits of our qualifications, abilities and availability and use the services of professionals in legal, financial and facility management matters;
- ✘ Ensure that all church and rectory property is accurately inventoried and maintained in good condition;
- ✘ Refrain from the appropriation of parish property for personal use or benefit;
- ✘ Avoid conflicts of interest, real or perceived, when employing the services of professional or trade professions.
- ✘ Avoid using our position or title for personal financial and/or material gain.



Notes:

- While parishioners may offer gifts or discounts and other savings on goods or services they provide, it would, in most circumstances, be imprudent for such offers to be accepted by priests when he is acting in his personal capacity.
- Although a parishioner may act out of sincere generosity, this can lead to an imbalance in the pastoral relationship between parishioner and priest. Prudence and pastoral judgment are needed to assess the situation before proceedings with any such transactions. Examples of potentially delicate circumstances might include the offering of dental care, discounts on the purchase of, or service to, a vehicle, or offers of vacation property at low or no cost.