

# VICARS FORANE

## **Appointment, Duties, and Responsibilities as identified in the *Code of Canon Law* and promulgated as particular law of the Diocese of Scranton**

### **Overview:**

1. Appointment of Vicars Forane, i.e., Deans
2. Responsibilities and Duties of the Dean in general
3. Specific Administrative and Pastoral Responsibilities of Deans
4. Priestly and Fraternal Responsibilities of Deans to priests in the Deanery
5. Interaction with Regional Episcopal Vicar and Implementation of Vision 2030

### **1. Appointment of Deans (Vicars Forane):**

- Deans (Vicars Forane) are freely appointed by the diocesan bishop after he has consulted with the priests of the Deanery
- The Dean can be any priest within a deanery and is not limited to those priests who are pastors nor are the appointment of Deans limited to diocesan priests
- From the day of appointment, the Dean is appointed to a term of three years

### **2. Responsibilities and Duties of the Dean in general:**

- To regularly convoke and preside at Deanery meetings at least twice annually and as determined by the diocesan bishop or Episcopal Vicar
- To solicit the concerns and observations of the priests of the deanery and, where necessary, to submit those concerns and observations to the diocesan presbyteral council and/or the Diocesan Bishop.
- To strive to initiate fraternal gatherings of the priests and other clergy in the Deanery for prayer and mutual support
- To serve, where needed, as a representative of the diocesan bishop at community, parish, or other Deanery events as requested

- To attend workshops and other meetings established for Deans by any diocesan official

### **3. Specific Administrative and Pastoral Responsibilities of Deans:**

- To conduct a canonical visitation of each parish in his Deanery on an annual basis and/or as determined by the diocesan bishop, where he:
  - Reviews parochial sacramental registers and administers his signature with the date
  - Reviews the financial accounts annually to ensure that they are properly kept and that ecclesiastical and temporal goods are well administered
  - Ensures that the rectory and other parochial buildings are well maintained
- Works with the priests of the Deanery to foster pastoral action and a coordination of pastoral activity within the Deanery, where he:
  - Facilitates the scheduling of Sunday masses to provide adequate access to the celebration of Sunday and daily mass, while working toward an adequate distribution of the clergy of the Deanery
  - Facilitates the scheduling of penance services, particularly during Advent and Lent
  - Work to facilitate coverage within the Deanery when a priest is away or sick
  - Facilitate any other pastoral and catechetical activities within the Deanery in collaboration with all other clergy and lay persons
- To ensure that the liturgical celebrations are carried out in accord with the prescribed liturgical and ritual books and that the churches, sacred vessels, and vestments are suitable and well-maintained, and that the Blessed Sacrament is reserved carefully and appropriately in accord with liturgical law.

### **4. Priestly and Fraternal Responsibilities of Deans to priests in the Deanery:**

- To see that the clergy within the Deanery perform their duties diligently and lead a life in keeping with the responsibilities and duties of the clerical state

- To provide assistance, both spiritual and material, to priests who are seriously ill and to assist in the planning of funerals for any clergy of the Deanery that take place within the Deanery
- To secure the temporal goods that belong to the parish in the event of a pastor's death
- To ensure that the clergy of his deanery attend days of reflection, the annual clergy convocation, and other theological lectures or conferences
  - Where necessary, to ensure that daily mass is available to the Christian Faithful when priests are at the clergy convocation
- To provide spiritual support or secure it to priests of the Deanery and to be particularly solicitous to priests of the Deanery who find themselves in difficulty, all while refraining from any gossip or detraction
- When a priest of the Deanery is ill or hospitalized:
  - To inform the Episcopal Vicar for Clergy
  - To ensure that the priest has access to the Sacraments of Penance, Anointing of the Sick, and Holy Communion
  - To visit the sick priest while in the hospital and during the period of convalescence
- Upon the death of a cleric (including deacons) in the Deanery:
  - Immediately inform the Episcopal Vicar for Clergy
  - To participate in the planning of the funeral
  - To be the celebrant at the Mass of Transferral or at the Vespers Service prior to the funeral and that all of the directives of the deceased for the funeral are carefully followed

## **5. Interaction with Regional Episcopal Vicar and Implementation of Vision 2030:**

- Based on the yearly required canonical visitations, to communicate any and all relevant priority drivers with the Regional Episcopal Vicar
- To work with the Regional Episcopal Vicar and pastors to identify remedies to address the relevant priority drivers and, where necessary, to propose solutions for parish

modifications via an annual review and updating of Deanery Vision 2030 Blueprints in order to best address:

- An adequate distribution of clergy
- The needs of the people of God
- An equitable distribution of ecclesiastical and temporal goods
- Where necessary, to be involved and engaged in all parish modifications, (i.e., mergers and suppressions of parishes and closure of churches) and to provide guidance and support to affected pastors
- In collaboration with the Regional Episcopal Vicar, to engage various groups at different times to address the pastoral and administrative needs of priests and parish life coordinators
- To convoke periodic meetings to address ongoing pastoral challenges and opportunities with representatives of the entire People of God in the vicariate, including, all clergy, religious, and lay Christian Faithful
- To maintain an ongoing openness to collaboration among the entirety of the People of God of a Deanery about the challenges and opportunities that require ongoing pastoral planning and to communicate those observations with the Regional Episcopal Vicar

#### **6. Other *ex officio* Responsibilities:**

- To participate in a diocesan synod as an *ex officio* member
- At the discretion of the diocesan bishop, the Dean may serve as the priest moderator of parishes in the Deanery whose pastoral care is entrusted to a deacon or lay person (cf. *CIC* c. 517 §2)

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