

# **DIOCESE OF LANCASTER**



## ***Guidance Notes***

# **The Role of the Dean**

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The Dean's role is primarily pastoral, being an extension of the Bishop's pastoral role as shepherd. It is an office of apostolic care for the Church in a local area, promoting and sustaining a supra-parochial mission and ministry as envisaged by the Second Vatican Council, embracing clergy, religious and lay people alike.

Furthermore, the Dean is the Bishop's personal representative in the Deanery and acts in this capacity when presiding at liturgical functions, local civic functions, ecumenical activities and similar events. The necessary authority is delegated to him by the Bishop for carrying out the duties set forth in this document.

The Dean is also a vital channel of communication between the Bishop and the priests, deacons and people of his Deanery. This implies a two-way flow of information:

- The Bishop relies on the Dean to implement, at Deanery level, all major diocesan decisions, policies and recommendations.
- Working in concert with the Bishop, the Dean has the obligation to share with him any concerns that he may have about the common good of all the People of God in the Diocese.
- He must also represent to the Bishop the views of priests, deacons, religious and people under his pastoral care as the Dean.

The establishment of good communication, and the care for appropriate confidentiality, must be priorities for the good working of the Deaneries and the Diocese as a whole.

## **The Appointment of the Dean**

The Bishop will invite nominations from all the priests of the Deanery before appointing a Dean. Any priest in the Deanery is eligible for this office, which is for a period of five years - from September 2009. A Dean may also be reappointed for further terms.

***The priests of the Deanery should nominate a man who has their confidence and support:***

- ***to initiate, promote and co-ordinate, together with priests, laity and religious, the projects and activities which will develop and realise the potential of the Deanery.***
- ***Who has leadership ability and good communication skills.***
- ***Who will have a special care for the priests and deacons within the Deanery.***

- ***Who can work collaboratively and effectively with the Bishop, brother priests, the deacons and religious – all for the good of the Church.***

### **The Bishop and the Dean**

- The office of Dean is to be exercised in accordance with the prescriptions of Canon Law [Canon 553-555].
- The Bishop will, from time to time, assemble the Deans for discussion, consultation and sharing of good practice.
- When possible, a Dean is to be consulted about appointments to be made in the Deanery and he will be informed when priests are to come to, or leave, the Deanery.
- The Dean may induct new parish priests, either ceremonially or informally, where this practice is observed.
- The Dean may be asked to represent the Bishop at public functions or services, eg ecumenical meetings or funerals.

### **The Dean and Priests**

1. The Dean's role is to lead, counsel and assist all the priests in the Deanery in their pastoral ministry.
2. He should promote priestly fraternity and spirituality, developing a real sense of mutual concern, support and co-operation among all the clergy of his Deanery, encouraging social contacts between them.
3. As colleague and friend of all the clergy, secular and religious, they should have recourse to him in case of need or dispute, without prejudice to the right of direct access to the Bishop.
4. He should welcome and befriend new parish priests, assistant priests, deacons and religious as they arrive in the Deanery.
5. When Deacons are ordained in the Deanery, they are to be integrated into the life of the Deanery as much as possible and be invited to Deanery Conferences. The local Dean is to be consulted before a candidate for the Permanent Diaconate is selected.
6. He should be aware of retired priests living in the Deanery and should arrange for their involvement in the life of the Deanery, communicating any concerns to the priest in overall charge of the sick and retired clergy.
7. His care extends to priests who are sick, ensuring that proper treatment is being received, that application is made for sick benefits, and that the Bishop's Office is informed. If possible, the immediate supply needs should be met by priests within the Deanery – Mass times in the Deanery should be so arranged.
8. On the death of a priest, the Dean is to have overall responsibility for the funeral arrangements in conjunction with the family and the Bishop's Office, and, where

appropriate, other priests. He is to organize supplies and ensure that personal and parish property is safeguarded.

### **The Dean and the Deanery Conference**

- The Dean is Chair of the Priests' Deanery Conference.
- Deanery Conferences should meet at least six times a year. On occasions there will be a set paper for consideration and discussion. The agendas should reflect Diocesan and Deanery business, policy and projects. Outside speakers may be invited to participate and the meetings should include an opportunity for those present to socialise and relax together.
- All priests of the Deanery are to be actively encouraged to attend the Deanery Conference so that the dangers of isolation or even alienation may be avoided.
- Deacons of the Deanery are to be invited to the Deanery Conference.

### **The Dean, the Deanery Pastoral Council and the People of the Deanery**

- The role and responsibilities of laity and religious in the pastoral life of the Deanery is to be encouraged. Where representatives, co-ordinators and other personnel are required for various pastoral activities, the Dean is to ensure that suitable appointments are made.
- The Dean is the President of the Deanery Conference Pastoral Council which he convenes.
- The Dean is to ensure that the Deanery Pastoral Council meets regularly and follows the norms of the Diocese in its composition, scope and activities.
- The Dean may initiate other means for communication, consultation or discussion between the parishes of the Deanery without prejudice to any future Diocesan guidelines.
- The Dean should also forge good relations with religious communities and institutions which may be established within the Deanery and contributing to the life of the Church.

### **Other Responsibilities of the Dean**

- Developing and encouraging the implementation of the Diocesan and Deanery plans.
- Making a Pre-Visitation visit to the parishes in his Deanery to review the registers and books, making any concerns known to the Bishop.
- Making informal visits to parishes to note general state of repair and decoration of the property.
- Establishing good relations and co-operating with other church and civic leaders.
- Fostering the linking or merging of parishes, where this may become necessary.

- Encouraging and monitoring initiatives by lay and religious communities and individuals which may present new opportunities and means of evangelisation and growth in the local church and the Diocese.
- Keeping the Bishop informed of initiatives, progress and concerns of a Deanery.

Given at Lancaster

24 June 2009

*Michael G. Campbell OSA.*

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Bishop of Lancaster**