Role Description for Deans (Vicars Forane)

A Dean (Vicar Forane) is a priest who, in the name of the Bishop, is placed over a deanery (canon 553 §1).

QUALIFICATION AND ELECTION

1. Deans are priests elected by the priests of each local Deanery. Deans must be confirmed by the Bishop prior to taking office (canon 553, §2).
2. Elections shall take place by mail ballot sent by the Chancellor of the Diocese.
3. Elections are to be completed in time for the November Council of Priests meeting.
4. Priests with Chancery, diocesanwide assignments or assignments representing more than one Deanery shall be considered members of the Central Deanery. In no case shall priests have more than one vote.
5. In anticipation of expiry of term, nominations for Dean shall be sought by mail consultation of the priests assigned to a Deanery.
6. Only priests with public faculties are eligible for the office of Dean. A list of eligible candidates shall be included with the ballot.

TERMS AND VACANCIES

The term of office for Deans is three (3) years, effective on November 1st. The diocesan bishop can freely remove a Dean from office for a just cause in accord with his own prudent judgment. If a Dean resigns prior to the completion of his term, the Bishop shall appoint a Dean to complete the term. The office of Dean is not tied to the office of pastor of a certain parish.

OATH

Deans shall make a profession of Faith and Oath of Office in the presence of the Vicar General or the Vicar for Priests.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Every Dean shall report to the Bishop any matter in any parish within the Deanery which it may be necessary or useful for the Bishop to know, particularly any case of serious illness or other form of distress amongst the clergy, the vacancy of parishes, the care of souls and the measures taken in the case of vacancies.
The Dean has the duty and right of:
1. Promoting and coordinating common pastoral activity in the Deanery (canons 374, §2, 555 §1, 1°).
2. Convoking Deanery meetings of priests, every other month, opposite the Council of Priests;
3. Leading by example and seeing to it that the clerics of his Deanery lead a life in keeping with their state and perform their duties diligently; making appropriate referral to the Vicar for Priests and Vicar General as may be necessary (canon 555 §1, 2°).
4. Serving as an *ex officio* member of the Council of Priests and the Priests Personnel Board. (canons 524, 547)
5. Functioning as an agent of communication from the Bishop and the Council of Priests.
6. Raising issues of importance to the Deanery and to the Diocese at Council of Priests meetings.
7. Seeing to it that religious functions are celebrated according to the prescripts of the sacred liturgy, that the beauty and elegance of churches and sacred furnishings are maintained carefully, especially in the Eucharistic celebration and custody of the Most Blessed Sacrament. (canon 555 §1, 3°).
8. That the parochial registers are inscribed correctly and protected appropriately (*ibid*)
9. That ecclesiastical goods are administered carefully; (*ibid*)
10. That the rectories are cared for with proper diligence. (*ibid*)
11. That Canon Law and Diocesan Policy (Particular Law) is correctly applied.
12. That spiritual and fraternal support is available to the presbyters of his Deanery and especially concerned especially for those who find themselves in more difficult circumstances or are beset by problems. (canon 555 §2, 2°).
13. That retired priests are visited and included in Deanery activities insofar as possible. (*ibid*)
14. That the priests of his Deanery district whom he knows to be gravely ill do not lack spiritual and material aids and in conjunction with the Vicar for Clergy, that the funeral rites of those who have died are celebrated worthily. (canon 555 §3.)
15. He is also to make provision so that, on the occasion of illness or death, the registers, documents, sacred furnishings, and other things which belong to the Church are not lost or removed. Further, that the belongings of priests are protected until legitimate persons become responsible. (*ibid*)
16. Visiting the parishes of his Deanery regularly and especially as requested by the Bishop, Vicar General or Vicar for Clergy.

Approved  

Date 6-28-2016