

**Archdiocese of San Fernando**  
City of San Fernando, Pampanga

**POLICY INSTRUMENT**  
**on the Transfer of Clergy Pastoral Assignments**

<p><b>Note:</b> <i>This instrument presumes that the following have been established in or submitted or complied with by each parish or non-parish ecclesial institution: Pastoral Council, Finance Council, Monthly Financial Statements, Payment of Monthly RQS, Parish Church Fund</i></p>
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**Introduction**

The Policy Instrument on the Transfer of Clergy Pastoral Assignments in the Archdiocese of San Fernando specifies, under Rationale, some essential considerations and experiences in the past pastoral movements of the clergy that pave the way for the need to formulate a clear policy. The Policy Statement lays down the fundamental characteristics of the clergy transfer of pastoral assignments. While the Policy Guidelines concretely formulates and manifest through actions that need to be done to realize the Policy Statement. Lastly a note each on the authority, amendments, and effectivity of this instrument is stated.

**RATIONALE**

*“Let us go on to the nearby villages that I may preach there also. For this purpose have I come.” (Mark 1:38)*

The Second Vatican Council asserts, Christ, through His apostles, made the bishops successors of the apostles and partakers of His consecration and His mission. Bishops “have legitimately handed on to different individuals in the Church various degrees of participation in this ministry.... Priests, although they do not possess the highest degree of the priesthood, and although they are dependent on the bishops in the exercise of their power, nevertheless they are united with the bishops in sacerdotal dignity.” (*Lumen Gentium* 28; see Can. §157, 522)

Priests, by the power of the sacrament of Orders and as prudent cooperators with the Episcopal order, are consecrated to participate in Christ’s ministry of preaching the Gospel (teaching), shepherding the faithful (governing), and celebrating divine worship (sanctifying). This service should be marked by humility and dedication. “On account of this sharing in their priesthood and mission, let priests sincerely look upon the bishop as their father and reverently obey him. And let the bishop regard his priests as his co-workers and as sons and friends, just as Christ called His disciples now not servants but friends.” (LG 28; see Can. §519)

Furthermore, *Lumen gentium* says that a priest is a man of communion. “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 labor and charity.” (LG 28); see Can §521)

In the Archdiocese of San Fernando, the Archbishop, through the assistance of the Committee on Personnel, determines and issues the Pastoral Assignments of clergy. It is a concrete manifestation of sacramental communion, sharing in administrative and pastoral responsibilities, and continuity of the mission of teaching, sanctifying, and ruling, all in the service of the People of God.

As per experience, however, while change of pastoral assignments has given the clergy the opportunity to grow in their priestly commitment and ministry and to build friendships among themselves, it has nevertheless brought about in certain instances, albeit expressly unarticulated, unpleasant experiences, unnecessary competition, and strained relationships between and among some members of the clergy.

In addition, some important administrative and pastoral duties and policies have sometimes been overlooked or taken for granted or simply not complied with. Thus, there is a need for some corrective measures for the areas and responsibilities that may have been neglected or left out in the course of one's term as a pastor.

In view of the foregoing, the following policy statement and policy guidelines are herewith enacted for the Archdiocese of San Fernando:

**POLICY STATEMENT:**

**The Archdiocese of San Fernando affirms and ensures that the transfer of assignments of the clergy is a pastoral-missionary event that fosters continuity of mission, embodies sacramental communion, upholds trust, respect, and care among brother priests, and guarantees accountability and order in all actions.**

**POLICY GUIDELINES**

**A. SCOPE:**

The policy and policy guidelines contained in this instrument

1. apply to parish priests and priests assigned in non-parish ecclesial institutions;
2. do not apply to deacons, other archdiocesan offices, and committees and councils;
3. shall be implemented only after the Archbishop has issued the list of pastoral assignments of the clergy in a circular letter.

**B. THE ARCHBISHOP:**

The Archbishop shall advance (i.e., initiate, craft strategies, and ensure realization of) the following perspectives and/or inner dispositions among his clergy regarding the transfer of pastoral assignments as a way of cultivating a culture of communion, continuity, trust, respect and care, and accountability and order:

1. **On Sacramental Communion:** that priests are animated by the spirit of synodality and stewardship whether in performing individual duties and responsibilities in their respective assignments or gathered and work together as a presbyterium.
2. **On Continuity and sustainability of Mission:** that the pastoral assignment entrusted to each priest is the mission of the Lord and ministry of the Church, and must not be taken as one's own possession or property, nor a personal endeavor alone; and that one's participation (i.e., term of office) in such a mission and ministry is limited in both time and space. Therefore, the disposition of a steward-leader shall be adopted, a spirit of detachment observed, and an attitude of moving on embraced. On the other hand, the acceptance of a new pastoral assignment is great opportunity to recognize, appreciate, and build on the efforts and achievements of a brother-priest, and not to destroy, erase or simply replace them.
3. **Trust, Respect, and Care:** that each priest is capable and competent in performing the teaching, governing and sanctifying offices of the ordained ministry in the context of the local community entrusted to him. His successor must therefore be trusted to accomplish these responsibilities. Each priest is endowed with unique personal abilities, talents, education, and upbringing. Each one's personality, style, pace, and strategies must be respected. Each priest has his own limitations and weaknesses. Acceptance, understanding, and tolerance of each one's historicity and deficiencies are expressions of care for one another.
4. **Accountability and Order:** there are canonical, pastoral, administrative, and financial duties, obligations and responsibilities that must be adhered to and complied with for the good and growth of the archdiocese as an ecclesiastical institution.

## C. TASKS OF THE OUTGOING PASTOR

### 1. Administrative Tasks

- a. Update and sign all canonical/sacramental books of baptism, confirmation, marriage, and death (Can. 535), Record of First Communicants, and Record of Anointing of the Sick.
- b. Compile all deeds, abstracts of title, title policies and other legal documents relating to property including churches, rectories, convents, cemeteries and other property owned by the Archdiocese or property owned or used by any parish or subdivision. (Can. 535)
- c. Compile all the RCA's Pastoral and Circular Letters and Canonical Decrees, either digitally or printed.
- d. Secure a copy of the latest Catholic Directory of the Philippines (*please refer to Circular Letter 50, Series 2014, A Catholic Directory in all Parishes*).
- e. Compile the minutes of the meeting of the Pastoral and Finance Councils
- f. Secure the parish/ecclesial institution seal (Can. 535)
- g. Update a report of on-going or pending projects and liabilities, or loans, if any
- h. Ensure that the presbytery/rectory and parish office are fully ready for occupancy by the new pastor, i.e., clean, repairs or repainting done, ventilation is sufficient, toilets, showers, sinks, lights, electric sockets and water sources and faucets are all functioning well, doors and rooms are ready, and keys are properly labeled and systematically organized, etc.

## **2. Pastoral & Liturgical Responsibilities**

- a. Prepare, through announcements, the parishioners/constituents on the upcoming transfer of pastoral assignments, giving emphasis on the continuity of mission and the growth opportunity for community by “walking together” with the new pastor. Enjoin the community to take good care of the incoming brother-priest.
- b. Prepare the turnover liturgy
- c. Prepare a list with a short description of past and ongoing pastoral programs and activities of the parish/ecclesial community

## **3. Financial Resources**

- a. Update, complete and compile all duly signed copies of financial statements/reports submitted to the Archdiocesan Finance Office during his incumbency as pastor. The financial statements/reports should follow the Accounting Manual of the Archdiocese and should be signed by the Treasurer of the Finance Council.
- b. Accomplish the Asset Inventory itemized in “*Kasulatan ning Pamanibala at Pamanabilin karing Miyayaliwang Pongdu ning Parokya ning Kura Paroko king Maging Kayalili na*” (see example in Annex A)
- c. Establish the Parish Church Fund according to the provisions of Circular Letter No. 8, series 1980 (Policy-Norm)
- d. Pay RQS arrears and other utilities such as electricity, water, phone, cable, internet, etc. using the parish Funds. Unpaid bills during the transfer period shall be paid from the parish funds.
- e. Allocate from the parish funds a certain amount (not exceeding ₱50,000.00) for the settling allowance (material needs) of the new pastor. This shall not be given in cash to the new pastor. Rather, the Finance Council shall purchase or pay for the needs of the new pastor, if and when needed only.

## **4. Physical (buildings, gates, fence, etc.) & Material Resources (tables, utensils, chairs, computer, etc)**

- a. Complete and update inventory of parish/ecclesial institution property
- b. Complete and update inventory of parish/rectory and office property
- c. Draw up and sign a clear and accurate inventory (see Annex B – *Property Inventory Form*) of all immovable and movable goods specifically precious or of high cultural value, and all other goods, with a description and an estimate of their value. (Can. 1283, 2<sup>o</sup>) (ACCH shall provide template for the inventory of heritage churches).
- d. All parishes, shrines and institutions should submit a copy (digital or hard copy) of their inventory to the Chancery Archives.

## **5. Human Resources**

- a. Prepare a list of names with contact information and designation of all leaders and members of the pastoral council, finance council, parish/ecclesial organizations and barangay chapels
- b. Prepare a list of names of staff who will stay behind, their contact information, job description, and monthly compensation.

## **D. TASKS OF THE NEW PASTOR**

### **1. Administrative Tasks**

- a. Examine all the pertinent documents received from the previous pastor.
- b. Seek clarifications directly from the previous pastor when needed.

### **2. Pastoral & Liturgical Responsibilities**

- a. Learn, continue implementing, and build on the pastoral programs and activities of the parish/ecclesial institution. Seek clarifications and ask questions, if any, directly from the previous pastor.
- b. Engage in dialogue with the Pastoral and Finance councils regarding the history and life of the community, its the general profile and culture.
- c. Visit the poor in the community and listen to their needs, while asking them how the Church may respond to their needs.
- e. Reach out to, engage in dialogue with, and involve the religious present in his jurisdiction.
- f. Continue the liturgical schedules and practices as they were performed by the previous pastor. Avoid making immediate changes. Observe first and make necessary changes only when there are obvious wrong practices.
- d. Slowly and with explanation, introduce changes in the pastoral and liturgical life of the community

### **3. Financial Resources**

- a. Study the financial reports received and make the necessary adjustments together with the Finance Council.
- b. A month before the actual day of transfer, the outgoing pastor should present politely all existing actual funds (e.g. parish funds, organizational funds, construction funds, vocational funds, etc.) to the community.
- c. Follow the Accounting Manual of the Archdiocese and submit the month financial statement/report to the Finance Office of the archdiocese
- d. Ensure the payment of the RQS monthly from the Parish fund

### **4. Physical & Material Resources**

- a. Inspect the physical and material resources and validate the inventories received from the previous pastor.
- b. Update the various inventories received regularly

### **5. Human Resources Thankful of the predecessor**

- a. Retain the officers and members of the pastoral council, finance council, ecclesial organizations and barangay chapels in their present designation and do not make any changes in their composition until after three (3) months at least.

- b. Although the officers are expected to submit their courtesy resignations within thirty (30) days (*see Circular Letter no. 16, Series 1982, PPC Courtesy Resignation*), only after three (3) months may the pastor replace or retain the officers and members of the pastoral council, and finance council. (A courtesy resignation shall only be in effect upon the acceptance of the new pastor.)
- c. Appoint new pastoral council members and other leaders through the issuance of a Pastoral Appointment letter and an appropriate ceremony within the liturgy of the mass (*see template on Annex C*)

## **E. TRANSFER TO PASTORAL ASSIGNMENTS**

### **1. Pre-Transfer:**

- a. At least three (3) months before the release of the new pastoral assignments, the incumbent Vicars Forane shall remind and assist the pastors under his vicariate in accomplishing all the tasks for outgoing pastors stipulated under number C. above
- b. One week after the release of the new pastoral assignments, The Archbishop shall
  - i) appoint the new vicars forane and constitute them as *ad hoc* Transfer Committee to preside over the liturgical rite of turnover according to canons §833 and §527 and other archdiocesan practices, and to supervise the actual transfer to new pastoral assignments of the priests under their respective vicariate. They shall ensure, within three (3) months, that the new pastors have complied with their tasks laid down under number D. above
  - ii) give other instructions to the *ad hoc* Transfer Committee
  - iii) set the inclusive dates of the period of installation, taking of possession, and transfer to new assignments through a circular letter
  - iv) In case of non-compliance, the *ad hoc* committee shall deliberate on the appropriate action/s to be taken.
- c. The outgoing and incoming pastor shall meet and engage in a fruitful and light conversation regarding, among other topics, priestly ministry and the good of the archdiocese. In the said meeting, they shall set the date and time of the visit of the new pastor to his new assignment to:
  - meet with the pastoral and finance council regarding the turnover of pertinent documents, programs, and funds. This meeting shall take place before the actual liturgical turnover rite
  - arrange logistical needs for the official day of arrival of the new pastor (food, guests, expenses, etc.)
  - and address the material needs of the new pastor as stipulated under number C.,4.,e. above

(note: a short sample program may be provided for this purpose)

### **2. Actual Transfer**

- a. The outgoing pastor together with the parish/ecclesial community shall prepare, arrange, and conduct the welcome activities for the new pastor (Can. 833)
- b. The new Vicar Forane shall preside over the turnover rites (Can. 833)

## **F. PRUDENCE AND DISCRETION**

The former parish priest should exercise extreme prudence and discretion in dealing with his previous parishioners. The previous pastor should be mindful of his successor. The Holy Spirit abides by the new pastor and has the trust and confidence of the archbishop in his new post.

## **AUTHORITY, AMENDMENTS and EFFECTIVITY**

1. *Authority*: The Archbishop of San Fernando, Pampanga, (RCA) shall have the immediate and ultimate jurisdictional competence to officially resolve doubts, to formally decide conflicts, to duly enact provisions, and to abrogate, derogate or subrogate the provisions of the Policy Instrument on the Transfer of Clergy Pastoral Assignments.
2. *Amendments*: Any proposed amendment to, or revision, of this Sabbatical Instrument may be effected upon the recommendation of the Presbyterium gathered in an assembly, or the Archdiocesan Presbyteral Council, or through a *Motu Proprio* of the RCA, and subsequently approved by the RCA.
3. *Effectivity*: This Instrument shall be rendered definite and defined upon its issuance as an ASF POLICY-NORM in a Circular Letter. Previous ASF POLICY-NORM INSTRUMENTS, specifically Circular Letters No. 34, series 1995, No.18, series 2013, and No. 14, series 2019 are hereby abrogated effective on the date stated below.

This Instrument shall be rendered definite and defined confirmed for compliance effective on the 4th day of September 2024.

Previous ASF POLICY-NORM INSTRUMENTS that are explicitly or implicitly contrary to these NEW and/or REVISED ones, are *ipso facto* abrogated effective 04 September 2024.

**CONFIRMED AS EFFECTIVE**  
from date below until and unless otherwise provided  
by the competent Ecclesiastical Authority:

(Sgd.) ✕ **FLORENTINO G. LAVARIAS, D.D.**  
Archbishop of San Fernando  
Pampanga

**04 September 2024**

(Sgd.) **REV. FR. DANNY Q. NACPIL**  
Chancellor