



The Office of Vicar Forane (Dean) in the Diocese of Erie

MEMBERSHIP:

Eligible to serve in the office of Dean are all priests, diocesan and religious, residing in the Diocese of Erie and engaged in the apostolic ministry, whether parochial or administrative, are eligible for the office. Retired priests are not eligible to serve as Dean.

TENURE:

Priests elected will serve for a term of five years. Should resignation for legitimate reason be required, the Diocesan Bishop will appoint a successor. The newly appointed Dean will complete whatever remains of the predecessor's five-year term.

The diocesan bishop can freely remove a Vicar Forane from office for a just cause in accord with his own prudent judgment (c. 554, §2). In the Diocese of Erie, deans lose their office and responsibility if transferred or appointed to serve in another deanery.

SELECTION OF DEANS:

The following will serve as the procedure for nominations:

- a) Nominations for dean will be received in each deanery by mail ballot and conducted by the three regional episcopal vicars. In the first round of nominations, each priest may nominate two names. The two priests receiving the most nominations from the priests of their deanery and who accept that nomination will become finalists for the second ballot, also conducted at the deanery level. Only one name may be selected from the nominees on the second ballot. Following the second ballot, the number of votes each finalist nominee received is to be sent to the Bishop, who will appoint one of the two finalist nominees as the Dean (cf. c. 553, §2).
- b) The entire Board of Deans will be reconstituted every five years. The process for nominating deans will be held at a time determined by the Bishop prior to the first meeting of the new Presbyteral Council session.

VOTING:

The following enjoy the right to nominate and to vote for nominees:

- a) All active and retired secular priests incardinated in the Diocese of Erie and residing within its territory.
- b) Secular priests not incardinated and priest members of any Institute of Consecrated Life or Society of Apostolic Life who live in the Diocese and who exercise some office for the good of the Diocese.

DUTIES/RESPONSIBILITIES:

In accord with canon 555 of the *Code of Canon Law*, the Vicar Forane has the duty and right –

- a) To promote and coordinate the common pastoral activity within the deanery;
- b) To see that the clerics of the deanery lead a life in harmony with their state of life and diligently perform their duties;
- c) To see that the sacraments and liturgical worship are celebrated in accord with the prescriptions of liturgical norms, that the good appearance and condition of the churches and of sacred furnishings are carefully maintained especially in the celebration of the Eucharist and custody of the Blessed Sacrament, that parish registers are correctly inscribed and duly cared for, that the ecclesiastical goods are carefully administered and finally, that the rectory is maintained with proper care;
- d) To see that clerics, in accord with the prescriptions of particular law and at times stated in the law, attend theological lectures, study days, days of prayer and reflection, meetings or conferences in accord with the norm of canon 279, §2;
- e) To take care that clerics of the deanery have ready access to spiritual help; to care for those who find themselves in difficult circumstances;
- f) To take care that clerics seriously ill do not lack spiritual and material assistance; to see that funerals of clerics are celebrated with dignity; to make provisions that when a pastor is sick or dying, books, documents, sacred furnishings or other things belonging to the Church are safeguarded;
- g) To visit annually the parishes of the deanery.

DUTIES/RESPONSIBILITIES – PARTICULAR TO THE DIOCESE OF ERIE:

- a) To serve as an elected member of the Presbyteral Council of the Diocese of Erie.
- b) To ascertain the needs of particular groups in the deanery (e.g. migrant, elderly, and prisoner);
- c) To promote priestly fraternity and spirituality, to foster collaboration and cooperation through deanery meetings, to be held at the minimum, three times each year;
- d) To be solicitous for and to visit clerics who are retired or infirm;
- e) To assist the regional Vicar and Director of Clergy Personnel in arranging coverage for parishes when necessary;
- f) To work to resolve matters of conflict on the parish level and among priests of the deanery whenever possible, and whenever necessary to refer the matter to the proper regional Vicar.
- g) To represent the Bishop at special ceremonies when requested;
- h) To encourage and coordinate programs of ecumenical cooperation within the deanery.

Promulgated – November 1, 1983
Revised – November 5, 1990
Revised (a) under ELECTIONS – August 10, 1992
Revised (b) under ELECTIONS --May 26, 1994
Revised (e) under DUTIES/RESPONSIBILITIES,
JURISDICTIONAL – January 13, 2003
Revised (e) under DUTIES/RESPONSIBILITIES,
LITURGICAL – January 13, 2003
Revised under DUTIES/RESPONSIBILITIES – CODE OF
CANON LAW – September 20, 2010
Revised under TENURE, ELECTIONS, AND
DUTIES/RESPONSIBILITIES –
February 10, 2014
Substantial Revision – June, 2014
Revised under SELECTION OF DEANS and
DUTIES/RESPONSIBILITIES IN THE DIOCESE
-October 2019