



DIOCESE OF LAFAYETTE

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OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

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To Clergy, Laity and Religious in the Diocese of Lafayette

My dear people:

It has been my pleasure to serve as Bishop of the Diocese of Lafayette for almost four years. It has been a great blessing for me to serve the people of God with the assistance of so many competent and dedicated priests, deacons and lay people. The collaborative efforts of all who are involved in the mission of the Church have been a special blessing.

In our efforts to minister to the people of God, it is important that certain diocesan policies be put into effect and dutifully followed by all concerned. The former policy manual was promulgated by His Excellency, The Most Reverend Harry J. Flynn, former Bishop of Lafayette, on January 1, 1993. In the intervening years, some policies became obsolete and in the due course of events it became necessary to amend a number of the policies. Thus, this new policy manual can be seen as more of a revision than a complete reworking.

It will be noticed that the format of the policies has changed. In this new manual there is greater clarification of the difference between those things that are mandated and those that are recommended. I believe that this clarification will be of great assistance to all concerned.

I extend special thanks to Monsignor Russell J. Harrington, Chancellor, who devoted so much time and effort in the revision of the policies, especially in formatting the new manual. Thanks are due as well to the Conference of Vicars, the Council of Priests and the Diocesan Pastoral Council, who provided valuable input. Since this was not a major revision, no attempt was made for broad consultation among the clergy and religious of the Diocese. However, the usual process of amending policies, which is by recommendation of the Council of Priests and the Diocesan Pastoral Council, remains available.

In the previous policy manual there was a letter written by Archbishop Flynn, then Bishop of Lafayette, who wrote, "As we implement these policies we will be applying them to our individual situations. Policies are necessary for order and direction and are a means of achieving the goals set up through the whole process of the Synod...Indeed, policies are always to be carried out with a view toward proclaiming the Good News of God's wonderful love for us and sharing the joy of God's life with others." He went on to explain that policies must be applied with a pastoral heart, always keeping our eyes on the goal of proclaiming the Good News. His words stand as a good reminder, one which I wholly endorse, that policies are not written for their own sake, but for the sake of the Gospel. The manner in which they are applied is as important, or perhaps more important, than the substance of the policy itself.

With prayers that God may bless us in our efforts to be his faithful servants, I am

Sincerely yours in Our Lord,

Most Reverend Michael Jarrell
Bishop of Lafayette