



DIOCESE OF OAKLAND

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Dear friends:

Our Diocesan Mission Statement, “To know Christ better and make Him better known,” speaks volumes to me about the focus of the Chancery and parishes of our Diocese. I want to thank you, first, for the incredible work of service you do for God’s people. I am very grateful we are working together.

Bishops Cummins, Vigneron, and Cordileone, my predecessors, had the vision to recognize the importance of developing and updating policies and procedures to create a sound basis for our working together. These policies are the policies of our Diocese, which both employees and employer are expected to follow. The first Chancery/Parish Personnel Policies were approved and promulgated in January 2000. The Policies were completely reviewed in 2003, 2007, 2010, 2014, and 2024. The current College of Consultors has reviewed the changes you will find this year and I have approved them.



These policies clearly state the rights and responsibilities of each employee and also the rights and responsibilities of the Diocese/Parish as the employer. Please take time each year to carefully review this document. Do not hesitate to contact our Diocesan Human Resources Office with any questions.

May our God bless you and your families and bless especially the time and talent you so graciously share in His service.

Sincerely yours,

The Most Reverend Michael C. Barber,
SJ Bishop of Oakland

Offices of the Diocese of Oakland

Vision Statement

Receiving (A) their mission as a participation (B) in the pastoral mission of the Bishop of Oakland (C), the personnel (E) of the Diocesan Offices work to serve parishes, institutions, and organizations in order to support them (F) as their members strive to witness faithfully to Christ and to serve God and neighbor, thereby growing in holiness and service according to their Baptismal consecration. (G)

Mission Statement

The personnel of the Diocesan Offices assist the Bishop in his role of teaching, sanctifying, and shepherding the Catholic Church in Oakland by serving parishes, institutions and organizations in the areas of

- Guiding pastoral activity
- Caring for the administration of the Diocese and exercising good stewardship over its resources
- Exercising judicial power.¹

Priorities

The priorities of those individuals who direct and serve in the Diocesan Offices are:

- To support and represent the Bishop in fulfilling his responsibilities as pastor of the Church in Oakland, especially “in expressing his pastoral charity”.²
- To serve as resources to parishes and pastoral centers, so they may be more effective in strengthening their ministries and apostolates, especially catechesis.³
- To develop and support strong leadership, both clerical and lay, for the service of parish communities.
- To ensure the financial health of the Diocese both in the present and the future.
- To facilitate responsible planning and development, given the demands of growth and the constraints imposed by limited resources.
- To support the Bishop in sustaining the Cathedral of Christ the Light and the whole Cathedral Center.⁴

In all of its work, the Diocesan Offices will demonstrate commitment to advancing the values of spirituality, collaboration, diversity, hospitality, justice and accountability.

¹ See Vat. II’s Decree on the Bishops’ Pastoral Office in the Church, *Christus dominus*, n. 27; *CIC*, 469.

² The phrase quoted comes from Pope John Paul II’s Post-synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Pastores gregis*, “On the Bishop, Servant of the Gospel of Jesus Christ for the Hope of the World,” (n. 45). Giving particular attention to the pastoral charity here reflects the mind of the Synod, as reported by the Holy Father: “Many of the interventions of the Synod Fathers referred to various aspects and moments of Diocesan life. Due attention was thus given to the Diocesan Curia as the structure employed by the Bishop to express his pastoral charity in its different aspects” (*ibid.*). For a further consideration of witnessing to hope as central to mission of the Bishop and his curia, see endnote H.

³ The singling out of catechesis for special emphasis is the result of the planning process directed by the Diocesan Pastoral Council.

Because the mission of the Bishop is first and foremost to bear witness to the mystery of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ and his coming again,⁵ (H) so too such witnessing to the Christian hope must animate all the activities of the Diocesan Offices.

End Notes

This series of end notes is meant to offer commentary on the “Mission Statement” and “Priorities” in order to clarify their meaning or draw out their implications.

^A To speak of the mission of the Diocesan Offices as “received” is a necessary consequence of affirming it is a share in the Bishop’s mission. Neither he nor the community establishes his mission. He embraces it from Christ, who determines it and assigns it to him. Likewise, the mission of the Diocesan Offices comes from Christ, through His Church, and those individuals who serve in these Offices accept and embrace it in faith.

^B This bond between the Diocesan Bishop and his co-workers in his curia is so strong the **Directory on the Pastoral Ministry of Bishops**, *Ecclesiae imago*, issued after the close of the Second Vatican Council, speaks of them forming “almost one being” with him (n. 200).

^C Since the mission of the Diocesan Offices is so inextricably linked to that of the Bishop, it is useful here to recall how the Fathers of the Second Vatican Council summarized the Church’s belief about the Bishop’s identity and mission: “The bishops themselves, however, having been appointed by the Holy Spirit, are successors of the Apostles as pastors of souls (Vat. I, *Pastor aeternus*, c. 3 / DS 3061). Together with the supreme pontiff and under his authority they are sent to continue throughout the ages the work of Christ, the eternal pastor (*ibid.*, “Proem.” // DS 3050). Christ gave the Apostles and their successors the command and the power to teach all nations, to hallow men in the truth, and to feed them. Bishops, therefore, have been made true and authentic teachers of the faith, pontiffs, and pastors through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to them (Vat. II, *Lumen gentium*, nn 21, 24-25)” (*Christus dominus*, n. 2).

^D At this point it is helpful to recall the teaching of the Second Vatican Council on the identity of a particular church or “diocese”: “A diocese is a portion of the people of God which is entrusted to a bishop to be shepherded by him with the cooperation of the presbyterate. Thus, by adhering to its pastor and gathered together by him through the Gospel and the Eucharist in the Holy Spirit, it constitutes a particular church in which the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church of Christ is truly present and operative. Individual bishops who have been entrusted with the care of a particular church -- under the authority of the supreme pontiff -- feed their sheep in the name of the Lord as their proper, ordinary, and immediate pastors, performing for them the office of teaching, sanctifying, and governing” [*Christus dominus*, n. 11].

^E About the personnel of the Diocesan Offices, **The Directory** offers this wise counsel: “[They are] distinguished not only for their competence, but also for their piety and pastoral zeal” (*Ecclesiae imago*, n. 200).

^F The formulation here is expressly constructed to emphasize a pre-eminent criterion for the mission-effectiveness of the Diocesan Offices is their level of service to parishes.

In connection with this point, it is helpful to recall the wise counsel offer which **The Directory** offers to priests working in the Diocesan Curia applies also to religious and laity: Along with their duties in

⁵ Pope John Paul II’s Post-synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Pastores gregis*, n. 2.

these offices, they should exercise some form of ministry, so this direct contact with the faithful, as they struggle to answer their call to Christian holiness, will help prevent the Diocesan Offices from becoming a mere bureaucracy (see *Ecclesiae imago*, n. 200).

^G Building upon the vision of the Fathers of the Second Vatican Council, this “Mission Statement” could not fail to make reference to the Universal Call to Holiness. About this the Council says:

The Lord Jesus, the divine Teacher and Model of all perfection, preached holiness of life to each and every one of His disciples of every condition. He Himself stands as the author and consummator of this holiness of life: "Be you therefore perfect, even as your heavenly Father is perfect" (Mt. 5:48) They are justified in the Lord Jesus, because in the baptism of faith they truly become sons of God and sharers in the divine nature. In this way they are really made holy. Then too, by God's gift, they must hold on to and complete in their lives this holiness they have received.... Thus, it is evident to everyone, that all the faithful of Christ of whatever rank or status, are called to the fullness of the Christian life and to the perfection of charity (*Lumen gentium*, n. 40).

Reference to the universal call to holiness serves to underline that assisting the People of God in the Diocese of Oakland in their turning from sin and growing in Christ's grace is the ultimate measure for determining whether the Diocesan Offices have achieved the mission they share with the Bishop.

^H On the mission of witnessing to hope, Pope John Paul II writes:

It is in fact the task of every Bishop to proclaim hope to the world, hope based on the proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ: a hope "which not only concerns penultimate matters but also and above all that eschatological hope which awaits the riches of the glory of God (cf. *Eph* 1:18), which surpasses anything that the human heart has ever conceived (cf. *1 Cor* 2:9), and to which the sufferings of the present cannot be compared (cf. *Rom* 8:18)...A stance of theological hope, together with faith and love, must completely shape the Bishop's pastoral ministry.

The Bishop is called in a particular way to be a prophet, witness and servant of hope. He has the duty of instilling confidence and proclaiming before all people the basis of Christian hope (cf. *1 Pet* 3:15). The Bishop is the prophet, witness and servant of this hope, especially where a culture of "the here and now" leaves no room for openness to transcendence. Where hope is absent, faith itself is called into question. Love too is weakened by the loss of this virtue. Especially in times of growing unbelief and indifference, hope is a stalwart support for faith and an effective incentive for love. It draws its strength from the certainty of God's desire for the salvation of all people (cf. *1 Tim* 2:4) and from the constant presence of the Lord Jesus, the *Emmanuel* who remains with us always, until the end of the world (cf. *Mt* 28:20) [*Pastores gregis*, n. 3].