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ARCHDIOCESE OF PALO
CHANCERY
Palo, Leyte

GUIDELINES ON THE CO-PASTORSHIP MINISTRY

ONE: GENERAL STATEMENTS

1. The Archbishop of Palo, by virtue of his primary responsibility and concern for the spiritual welfare of the Catholic faithful (Can. 383) has now re-introduced the Co-Pastorship setup in the Archdiocese of Palo.
2. Needless to say, the local ordinary has by law the prerogative to introduce said concept in the diocese and can freely confer (Cann. 147 & 523) the said task on priests whom he considers fit to discharge pastoral responsibilities (Can. 521) to the faithful under the said set up.
3. He makes the appointment or designation (like in some other similar cases) after some careful thought, prayer and reflection as well as after due consultation with the council of priests or with some individual members of the clergy whose opinions could be of help in the exercise of said ministry (Can.524).
4. The co-pastorship setup is now re-introduced considering the more diversified and more complicated pastoral needs and conditions of various parishes within the archdiocese that necessitate a more intensified and more effective form of pastoral ministry.
5. The appointment of two priests in a co-pastorship is limited to bigger parishes with presumably much larger responsibilities and needs to be jointly taken cared of by the co-pastors assigned to them.

TWO: THE NATURE AND FUNCTIONS OF THE CO-PASTORSHIP MINISTRY

1. The Co-pastorship Ministry refers to two priests being assigned to a specific parish with equal rights and responsibilities like any officially designated pastor with his rights and responsibilities towards the parish of assignment (cf. Can. 519; 528 ff.);
2. The Co-pastorship follows the Team Ministry concept where-in all decisions and policies to be implemented in the parish are results of regular deliberations as well as mutual agreements officially made by said priests (Can. 543). Thus, the joint exercise of pastoral duties and responsibilities provided for by Can 517, pars. 1 & 2 becomes the basic canonical provision for the co-pastorship in the administration of the parish;
3. By **joint exercise** the co-pastors formally discuss and officially come to an agreement as regards any and all parish policies, programs and pastoral directions;
4. Agreements are results of formal or informal meetings that are presumably done by the co-pastors regularly. Agreements and policies to be implemented become official

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- because they are put in writing and have to be submitted to the Chancery for information and updating purposes;
5. In some extreme circumstances, the Chancery, however, may have to decide on certain issues or concerns that the co-pastors may find hard to resolve among themselves. Said concerns may be sent to the Chancery for its official decision. However, goodwill and solicitude for the good of the parishioners should motivate the co-pastors to agree on any and all concerns that may come, their way;
 6. Official agreements may mainly fall under the following areas of pastoral responsibilities namely (a) Liturgical-Sacramental administration, (b) Pastoral programs, (c) Parish Office management, and, (d) Parish Finances and other pastoral concerns that may come up later on;
 7. Similar to the One-parish-One-pastor setup, the overall pastoral consideration of the co-pastorship is to jointly serve the spiritual well-being of the faithful in the parish of assignment;
 8. Equal or equitable discharge of duties is highly possible depending on what the co-pastors ultimately agree among themselves. The co-pastorship may mutually agree that considering some personal conditions (e.g. health) or some pastoral circumstances (e.g. some other diocesan assignment) one of them should take fewer responsibilities in the parish of assignment due to the foregoing considerations;
 9. However, mutual consent and official agreement as regards any and all policies and pastoral directions are necessary for said policies to be legally introduced as such in the administration of the parish;
 10. In parishes where there are assistants, the canonical provisions on parochial vicars apply (Can. 545ff). Thus, the co-pastorship jointly decides what pastoral responsibilities will they, as pastors, would give to the parochial vicars who assist them;
 11. What have become official policies and agreements in the administration of the parish (distribution of responsibilities, plans of action for pastoral programs, policies imposed on parishioners, etc.) have to be observed and sustained for at least One (1) year.
 12. After the prescribed period expires, the co-pastors through mutual consent and official agreement, will again decide whether the delineated roles and pastoral responsibilities will be revised, changed or modified.

THREE: AREAS OF PASTORAL CONCERN AND RESPONSIBILITIES

A) ADMINISTRATION OF THE SACRAMENTS:

1. The co-pastors are to mutually and officially agree upon themselves as to who will personally take care of this particular responsibility;
2. The tasks of the co-pastor assigned to this area of concern, among others, include the ff.
 - a. to come up with the scheduling or specific assignment of every priest for the daily or weekly for the celebration of the Mass;
 - b. to designate priests who would be assigned to do the other sacraments like weddings, baptisms, confessions, anointing of the sick, and other spiritual activities

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- like blessings and other para-liturgical celebrations with due consideration for equitable distribution of pastoral responsibilities in dispensing the sacraments;
3. Designation of priests to specific schedules is done with due consideration for letter "C" nos. 1 & 2.

B) PASTORAL PROGRAMS

1. The Co-pastorship should agree among themselves as to who will personally take charge of the pastoral programs being implemented in the parish;
2. The priest who is designated to oversee pastoral programs in the parish has, among others, the following responsibilities:
 - a. To come up with a list of pastoral programs existing in the parish as well as those that are yet to be implemented;
 - b. Through mutual agreement, to come up with an official list of each priest's designation to specific pastoral programs with due consideration for one's skills and aptitude as regards implementing said programs;
 - c. To come up with the names of lay leaders who can ably help each priest in his designated pastoral program of assignment;
 - d. To see to it that the pastoral programs of the archdiocese are properly sustained and implemented in the parish;
 - e. To come up with an annual report on the development of all pastoral programs to be submitted to the Archdiocesan PAS before the end of each year.

C) PARISH OFFICE ADMINISTRATION AND DAILY CHORES

1. The Co-Pastorship should implement the priest-of-the-day policy so that a priest is always duly designated to take charge of pastoral responsibilities that go through the parish office daily;
2. The priest-on-duty setup could be implemented on a daily or weekly basis depending on what is officially agreed upon by the Co-pastorship;
3. The priest who is on duty has the full responsibility over the following (a) any and all operations or transactions at the parish office within the period of his designation, (b) taking care of walk-in or on-the-spot requests for any of the sacraments or sacramentals; (c) to act and decide for the co-pastorship as regards minor matters and issues that do not require the consent and agreement of the co-pastor, e.g., to buy snacks for a priest who happens to come over to the Rectory, etc., and (d) to immediately contact the co-pastor in relation to matters that require the consent and agreement of the entire Co-pastorship in accordance with law;
4. The priest-on-duty may automatically be responsible for the daily household chores plus the regular upkeep of the church;
5. The co-pastors may discharge said responsibility either personally or entrust the same to a trusted lay worker;

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6. Assuming responsibility towards household chores and church upkeep, however, maybe done on a permanent basis considering that maintaining cleanliness and orderliness both in church and at the parish rectory is of utmost importance to the parish.

D) PARISH FINANCES

1. With the establishment of the Parish Finance Council, the co-pastorship is hereby mandated to establish and keep said council operational as soon as possible so that pursuant to the provisions of local laws and statutes there will be a clear designation of funds to be handled by the co-pastorship (e.g., stole fees) and those that have to be kept under the strict guidance of the finance council and the parish treasurer;
2. The Co-pastorship can do either of the following in the administration of parish finances:
 - a. Designate either one of the co-pastors to handle daily incomes, donations, bills and other related expenses;
 - b. By mutual agreement, they can also designate the parish secretary or any lay person (preferably with some expertise in accounting) acceptable to both of them who will handle the above-stated concerns in their behalf;
 - c. The designated priest \secretary \lay person has the obligation to come up with an official ledger containing the daily statement of accounts that details the daily income and expenses of the parish;
 - d. d) Three (3) copies of the daily statement of account are to be produced so that each co-pastor will have his own copy of the daily financial statement for his personal guidance. The third copy is retained as file copy of the parish which is to be kept by the Moderator. Said third copy is readily available if and when the Chancery asks for it;
 - e. If a lay person is designated to take charge of the daily accounting, one of the priests, however, is to be designated to take charge of the monthly financial report as this involves remittance of the parish arancel, quota, and other financial contributions that may be required by the Chancery;
 - f. The Petty-Cash system maybe introduced by the co-pastorship for facilitating the day-to-day disbursements of funds;
 - g. Said petty cash fund maybe handled by the priest in-charge of finances or by an office personnel who is trusted by both pastors;
 - h. The co-pastorship is required to put up a Common Fund which is presumably to be deposited at any bank in accordance with our archdiocesan procedures so that major expenses or financial needs in church, at the rectory, and other pastoral programs can immediately be attended to considering that the Common Fund is readily at hand.
3. Like the parochial vicars, the co-pastors will now receive the corresponding stipends or stole fees whenever either of them celebrates the Sacraments particularly the Mass, Weddings, Funerals, and other activities where-in stipends are usual given;

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4. All other considerations like the possibility of giving stipends for the Anointing, Confessions, etc., will now depend on the mutual agreement of the co-pastors. This certainly also depends on the availability of funds;
5. The remaining amount (less the stipends) received by the parish office for the celebration of the Sacraments and others are now considered as income and will go directly to the Common Fund for proper accounting later on.

E) CHANCERY CONSIDERATIONS

1. Pursuant to Can. 517, par.1, The Chancery holds the Moderator responsible in directing the joint action or activity of the co-pastorship and be responsible for it to the Archbishop;
2. In juridical affairs, only the Moderator acts in the name of parish without prejudice to the need for mutual consent and agreement before any decision or policy is implemented (Can. 543 n.3);
3. The Moderator also initiates meetings and dialogues with his co-pastor so that mutual agreements or policies as well as other parish concerns would be properly addressed. This he does without prejudice to the right of the other co-pastor to ask for a dialogue or formal meeting anytime;
4. Considering that they are both pastors with equal rights and responsibilities, the Moderator may not be entitled to a higher salary or bigger share of whatever is due to each member unless by a mutual agreement they both agree that the said Moderator receives a higher share or compensation;
5. Priests in the co-pastorship are both pastors of the parish where they are assigned. As such, they can individually sign documents like certificates as official representative of the parish without prejudice to the need for joint consultation and agreement when circumstances require it;
6. However, the Chancery leaves it to the prudent judgment of the co-pastors whether to designate the Moderator as representative of the parish in dealing with some sectors in the community, e.g., representing the church before the LGU, civic organizations, etc.;
7. In parishes where the co-pastorship has no assistants, the Chancery leaves it to the prudent judgment of the co-pastors if the priest-of-the-day (week) would be designated to act as representative of the co-pastorship.
8. In parishes where there are assistants who could be designated as priest-of-the-day, the Chancery also leaves it to the wise discretion of the co-pastors as to who would act as representative of the parish as regards daily operations of the parish, or in its dealings with the community, etc.;
9. Considering that the co-pastorship is still a work in progress, the Chancery asks all co-pastorship ministries to submit quarterly reports on their meetings together with the policies and directions they have taken as co-pastors;
10. All parishes with co-pastorship setup are to meet at least twice a year together with the Chancery representative in order to come up with a formal report and some recommendations as regards the co-pastorship set-up that could be of help to the Chancery in its future direction on the matter;

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11. The Chancery leaves it to the prudent judgement of the co-pastors as regards their day(s) off and vacations as prescribed by Law (cf. Cann. 283;
12. The co-pastorship may not hesitate to approach the Chancery as regards anything that is related to the development of the co-pastorship setup in the Archdiocese.