



## DIOCESE OF ARMIDALE

### Role Description of Deans

According to Canon Law (1983) every diocese or other particular church is to be divided into distinct parishes (can. 374 §1). To foster pastoral care through common action, several neighbouring parishes can be joined into special groups, such as deaneries.

#### Nature of Deans

A Dean is a priest who is placed over a deanery or vicariate forane (can. 553 §1). Unless particular law establishes otherwise, the diocesan bishop appoints the deans, after he has heard the priests who exercise ministry in the deanery in question according to his own prudent judgment (can.553§2).

#### Mission of Deans

The Dean holds an office of considerable pastoral importance. He is a close collaborator with the Bishop in pastoral care of the faithful, and an attentive “elder brother” towards the priests of the deanery, especially those who are ill or in difficult situations. It falls to him to coordinate the common pastoral activity of the parishes, to see to it that priests are living in conformity with their state and that parochial discipline is duly observed, particularly with regard to the liturgy (cf. Second Vatican Council, Decree on the Pastoral Office of Bishops in the Church *Christus Dominus*, 29; Code of Canon Law, c. 555).

#### Office of Dean

For the office of Dean, which is not tied to the office of pastor of a certain parish, the bishop is to select a priest whom he has judged suitable, after he has considered the circumstances of place and time. A Dean in the Armidale Diocese is appointed 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 Dean from office for a just cause in accord with his own prudent judgment (can. 554 §1-3). The term of office of the Dean ends if he is transferred to another deanery.

## **Duties and Rights of Deans**

In addition to the faculties legitimately given to him by particular law, the Dean has the duty and right of:

1. promoting and coordinating common pastoral activity in the deanery;
2. encouraging the clerics of his district to lead a life in keeping with their state and perform their duties diligently;
3. encouraging the clergy to maintain the beauty and elegance of churches and sacred furnishings, especially in the Eucharistic celebration and custody of the Most Blessed Sacrament; and that the ecclesiastical goods are administered carefully, and finally that the presbytery is cared for with proper diligence (can. 555 §1-3);
4. seeing to it that, according to the prescripts of particular law and at the times stated, the clerics attend lectures, theological meetings, conferences, retreats and supervision;
5. whenever necessary, assist the Bishop in providing for clerics who are in more difficult circumstances or are beset by problems.
6. organising deanery meetings:
  - a. with the expectation that all priests and those responsible for specific pastoral areas attend;
  - b. promoting priestly fraternity and spirituality, fostering collaboration and cooperation and if required social gatherings such as luncheons;
  - c. four times a year, usually two weeks prior to the Council of Priests meetings;
  - d. providing minutes of the deanery meetings to the Office of the Chancellor within one week after the meeting;
7. taking care that the priests of his deanery whom he knows to be gravely ill do not lack spiritual and material aid;
8. making provision so that, on the occasion of illness or death, the registers, documents, sacred furnishings, and other things which belong to the Parish are not lost or removed;
9. working 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 Bishop or Vicar General;
10. mentoring newly appointed first-time administrators and parish priests.