

DIOCESE OF WINONA

ADMINISTRATION AND PHYSICAL CARE OF ORATORIES

1. The parish ceases to exist as a “parish” and its territory is subsumed by the designated parish. Thus,
 - A. The pastor is responsible for the spiritual needs of all the baptized who reside in his territory (c. 519).
 - B. Parishioners of the merged parish shall be registered in the successor parish, respective to territory. However, a pastoral procedure is to be implemented that informs parishioners of the change in registration, simultaneously providing them opportunity to register membership to a parish of their choosing.

2. The Church building (hereafter informally identified as oratory) remains standing as a place of occasional worship. This means,
 - A. Sunday Mass (which includes the Vigil Mass on Saturday) and the sacraments of initiation are to be celebrated in the principal parish church, and are not permitted in the oratory.
 - B. The oratory may be used for weddings and funerals, always at the discretion of the pastor.
 - C. Use of the oratory for devotions, private prayer and Masses on feast days proper to the oratory is permitted.
 - D. The Blessed Sacrament is not to be reserved in the oratory without permission of the local ordinary (c. 934, §1, 2°).

3. The contents of the oratory are to be upheld with the utmost esteem and respect. In respect to such items,
 - A. The ownership of sacred vessels, vestments, relics, and objects of artistic or historic value become the property of the successor parish. However, such articles may remain in the oratory and may not be sold or given to individuals for personal use. (c. 1269).
 - B. Other articles of value that are not consecrated or directly used in divine worship may be sold, with the proceeds to be allocated according to this policy (see no. 4c).
 - C. The sacramental and financial records of the parish are to be transferred to the successor parish.
 - D. Minute books, record books, the parish seal, copies of bulletins, digital documents and any other items of historical value are to be transferred to the successor parish.

4. The pastor of the parish to which the community of the oratory is merged administrates the oratory and any associated cemeteries. With regard to administration and finance of the oratory and cemeteries,
 - A. The parish civil corporation will be merged into the corporation of the successor parish unless particular circumstances warrant otherwise.
 - B. The restructuring of any and all civil corporations requires consent of the local ordinary.
 - C. It is recommended, when possible, that cemetery associations be combined for ease of administration and that the board include trustees from each of the cemeteries under the parochial authority of the pastor. There should be an annual meeting to review the finances and maintenance of the cemeteries.
 - D. Having met all diocesan fiscal obligations up to the moment of the merger, all future diocesan obligations shall cease.
 - E. With regard to the allocation of parish assets, primary consideration is to be given to cemetery perpetual care, then final disposition of parish buildings, then ordinary and maintenance expenses. There is to be a budget for ordinary and regular maintenance. This annual budget must provide assurance that all fiscal needs for the oratory are met (i.e., insurance, maintenance, utilities, etc.). Designated members of the faithful who once comprised the merging parish, in collaboration with the Pastor, assume responsibility for sustaining the oratory building, in addition to the support of their new parish community. With regard to the annual budget and physical condition of the oratory,
 - The budget will be reviewed annually.
 - If the oratory does not have resources to continue maintenance, liability insurance, and other ordinary expenses, the building is to be razed or requests can be brought to the Diocese of Winona Planning Office to consider other options for the church.
 - There will be an annual review of the physical condition and fiscal vitality of each oratory. When the physical or fiscal operational needs of the oratory building are deemed disproportionate, the building is to be razed, or permission to examine other options can be presented to the Diocese of Winona Planning Office.
 - F. Insurance to cover demolition of the building in case of unintended damage will be maintained through the Diocesan Self-Insurance Program.
 - G. For oratories, individual maintenance expenses of over \$1,000 are considered extraordinary acts of administration, thus requiring a proxy for validity.
 - H. A separate fund is to be established at the successor parish for the maintenance of each oratory, including the costs related to the possible sale and/or demolition of the oratory's building(s).
 - I. All gifts or bequests designated for an oratory are to be accepted or refused by the pastor according to the norm of law.
 - If the gift or bequest is without condition, the sum may be divided between the cemetery association and the successor parish.

- If there are any conditions attached to the gift or the bequest that will alter the condition of the oratory building, the local ordinary's permission is required before the gift is to be accepted.
- J. The assets of the oratory are not to be distributed in a manner or for the purpose of benefiting private individuals, but always in a manner that respects the intentions of donors to the Church that is to benefit the Church and her proclamation of the Gospel.
- K. The proper canonical procedures must be adhered to prior to the razing of the oratory building.

May 21, 2015