

# I. INTRODUCTION

## 1. Overview

This ***Parish Administration & Finance Manual*** is issued by the Diocese of Bridgeport's Parish Finance Services (PFS) group, whose mission is to provide parishes with direction and support on accounting and financial matters to assist them in the stewardship of their economic resources.

This Manual serves to update the previous one issued in 2002 and is one of the "Six Key Elements" (see *Chapter II, Section 5*) to improve and enhance support to parishes in administrative and financial matters.

Specifically, this Manual is designed to assist parishes by documenting key financial policies, and guidelines and providing necessary forms. While we celebrate the diversity across our 87 Parishes, all must adhere to the same basic financial guidelines.

There are many practical reasons for maintaining a standardized, complete, yet simplified Manual. For instance, Pastors have informed us that when they transfer to another Parish, it has been time-consuming and inefficient to learn a local set of financial policies and procedures.

This Manual is meant to standardize diocesan policies, yet allow for local Parish efficiency in their implementation. For example, the Chart of Accounts and definitions have been revised so that all parishes are classifying income and expenses consistently. Accordingly, this will enable PFS to answer Parish questions efficiently and will save parish staff time on journal entries and transactions.

The Diocese of Bridgeport is committed to providing parishes and their staffs with the tools to enhance financial stewardship to enable the ministry of the Church. As we enhance and clarify this important work, we improve our ability and scope in doing the Lord's work in our parishes and communities.



## 2. Format

This updated Manual contains 12 sections, with detail within each:

- I. Introduction
- II. The Parish: Membership, Structure, & Leadership
- III. Parish Finance Council
- IV. Budgeting and Reporting
- V. Human Resources/Payroll
- VI. Chart of Accounts
- VII. Cash Receipts
- VIII. Fundraising
- IX. Parish Investment Policy
- X. Cash Disbursements
- XI. Record Retention
- XII. Parish Development



### 3. Distribution and Updates

A copy of this Manual will be given to all Parish Clergy, the Parish Business Manager/Accountant/Bookkeeper, and all members of the Parish Finance Council.

A copy will also be kept in the Parish Office for any parishioner to peruse.

At the end of some chapters are Appendices with hard copies of forms and supporting documents. Many of these are included in PDF format on the enclosed CD for ease of printing at your Parish.

This Manual and supporting documents are also posted, in their entirety, online on the Diocesan website:

[www.bridgeportdiocese.com/PAFM.shtml](http://www.bridgeportdiocese.com/PAFM.shtml)

**Updates to this Manual will be supplied when issued by Diocesan Parish Finance Services. These will be supplied in hard copies and posted on the Diocesan website.**

### 4. Promulgation

The norms and provisions of this *Parish Administration & Finance Manual* are in effect in all Parishes of the Diocese of Bridgeport on **February 15, 2008**, in accord with canons 537 and 1276.

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