

# **THE OFFICE OF THE VICAR GENERAL IN THE 1983 CODE OF CANON LAW**

## **INTRODUCTION**

“The king, who performs his own duties and protects his subjects, will be esteemed a god among men (Kural 388) and the world will constantly embrace the feet of the great king who rules over his subjects with love (Kural 544),” says the veteran Tamil poet Valluvar at about 300 years before Christ. Jesus made it as a command to his followers that whoever wanted to become great among them must be their servants, for the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve (Mk.10:45). Inspired by the life and ministry of Christ and his Apostles, Church also states, “In this Church of Christ, the Roman Pontiff has been granted by God supreme, full, immediate and universal power in the care of souls. As pastor of all the faithful, his mission is to promote the common good of the universal Church and the particular good of all the Churches” (CD 1). It continues to say that Bishops have also been designated the care of the souls of the particular portion of people of God, called diocese, and together with the Roman Pontiff and subject to his authority they must carry out this mission. There are different bodies and persons to render cooperation and counsel to the Bishop and the first among them is the Vicar General, the preeminent person in the curia, who serves the Bishop as his shadow and the alter ego. The office of Vicar General is so close to that of Bishop’s that it expires with the expiration of the office of Bishop. The prime objective of this study is to bring out the significance of the office of the Vicar General in the light of 1983 Code of Canon Law, so that the Vicar General may assist effectively in the pastoral ministry of the Bishop. Besides the General Introduction and General Conclusion, the dissertation is divided into three chapters.

## **I. THE EVOLUTION OF THE OFFICE OF VICAR GENERAL**

While tracing the historical evolution of the office of the Vicar General and his power different kinds of understanding could be found: one suggested that the office was developed to replace that of the archdeacon who began to cause considerable dissension; the other conclude that the vicar was used solely to supplement the work of archdeacons, many of whom were unable or neglected to fulfil their responsibilities; the third theory hold the view that Vicars General were appointed to help the Bishops in their absence to look after the diocese. Whatever may be, one could find that the derivation is found in the New Testament, in the early Church that when the faithful were increasing in numbers, the apostles, in order not to be deviated from their ministry, selected deacons to administer the distribution of food. In the 4<sup>th</sup> century Bishops appointed archdeacons, first among the seven deacons, who held office not by reason of priority of ordination but by free appointment of the Bishop. To him was generally committed the external administration of the diocese, including the control of the inferior clergy and the right of visiting and correcting all the clerics by judicial procedure. When the dioceses were divided into different districts, in the 6<sup>th</sup> century, there were also

appointments of urban and rural archdeacons and in the end of 11<sup>th</sup> century they became ordinary and stable with wider administrative powers.

During the middle ages various titles, such as *procurator*, *provisor*, *adiutor* and *episcopalis officii vices*, identified a figure similar to today's Vicar General. Such authorities governed the diocese only when the Bishop was absent from his See or when the See was vacant. Later, in the 14<sup>th</sup> century, the distinction was made between the Vicar General, who had voluntary jurisdiction and *Officialis*, who had contentious jurisdiction. It was the Council of Trent that greatly limited the power of archdeacons and archpriests to merely honorary dignitaries, by instituting the office of Vicar General that was recognised as possessing comprehensive jurisdiction within the diocese even when the Bishop was present. The Vicar General's jurisdiction extended *tam in spiritualibus quam in temporalibus*, to all aspects of life in the diocese, including at times authority over the *Officialis*. In certain cases, the same cleric served as both Vicar and *Officialis*.

The 1917 Code implemented the directives of the First Vatican Council by stabilizing the office of Vicar General as the alter ego of the Diocesan Bishop, prohibiting the use of the title for honorary purposes, limiting the number of Vicars General, and defining their jurisdiction. But, the appointment and removal was left to the discretion of the Diocesan Bishop, according to the circumstances and the need of the diocese. The 1983 Code retains substantially the same description and strengthens it by explicitating the Vicar General's governance as executive in nature. Inspired by the teachings of the Second Vatican Council and the Directory for the Pastoral Ministry of Bishops (*Ecclesiae Imago*) the 1983 Code added to the office of Vicar General certain other features.

## II. THE OFFICE OF VICAR GENERAL – ANALYSIS OF CANONS 475 – 481

**2.1 Institution and Appointment:** The new Code makes the appointment of VG obligatory. The phrase “in each diocese” authenticates that in all the dioceses, whether big or small without any exception, there should be a VG. The competent authority to appoint the VG is the Diocesan Bishop. The VG assists the Diocesan Bishop in the governance of the whole diocese. The definition underlies principally the ‘vicarious’ and ‘general’ character of the jurisdiction of VG and distinguishes him from other vicars in the diocese. As a general rule there should be one VG in the diocese, but the Diocesan Bishop can appoint more than one if circumstance warrants like: 1) the diversity of rites 2) the size of the diocese, 3) the large number of inhabitants and 4) other pastoral reasons. The Code wants the VG to be distinct from the Judicial Vicar. But, the smallness of the diocese and limited number of cases can suggest otherwise.

**2.2 Requirements and Mode of Appointment:** The general requirement stated by the General Norms of the 1983 Code for the ecclesiastical offices are: i) communion with the Church, ii) possessing suitable qualities which are required for that office by universal or

particular law or by the law of the foundation (can. 149 §1). Canon 478 §1 of the new Code enumerates the qualities required for the office of VG. The most fundamental requirement is that of priesthood. That means only a priest and not a deacon, though he is a cleric, be appointed as VG. This condition is necessary because of the vicar's responsibility to exercise complete power of executive governance, including those acts for which the priestly character is required (cann 129 §1; 150). However, the canon does not limit the candidate to diocesan priests. The *CCEO* (247 §2) suggests that the Vicar General must be a celibate priest and must be incardinated in the diocese unless particular law provides otherwise.

The required age is not less than 30 years and no one denies the need of reaching adequate human and priestly maturity before one assumes an office that involves great juridical and moral responsibility. Hence, in practice most of the VGs are more than forty in age. The educational qualification required is doctorate or licentiate in Canon Law or Theology. *CCEO* (247 §2) says that the candidate should have doctorate or licentiate or at least be expert in some sacred science. Hence, at least a true and well versed knowledge or experience in those disciplines is sufficient. Regarding the other human and Christian qualities, both the 1917 and 1983 Codes express the same requirements: sound doctrine, integrity, prudence and practical experience. *DPME(EI)* 201 underlines also the importance of pastoral experience and skill but the *DPME(AS)* 178 includes in addition, wisdom, honesty, moral uprightness, pastoral and administrative experience.

The diocesan Bishop is completely free in making the appointment and removal (can. 477 §1). The VG holds his office at the will of the Bishop (*ad nutum episcopi*). The canon does not expressly speak of the term of office of the VG; it can be either for a determinate time or an indeterminate time. The letter of appointment should make it clear. As a member of diocesan Curia, the VG while admitted must promise to fulfil his office faithfully and to observe secrecy (can. 471). He has to make the profession of Faith (can. 833, 5<sup>o</sup>) and also take the oath of fidelity in the presence of Diocesan Bishop or his delegate as prescribed by the Congregation of Doctrine of Faith. *CCEO* retains some privileges stating that the *Protosyncellus* and the *Syncelli* who are presbyters have, as long as they hold office, the privileges and insignia of the first dignity after the Episcopal dignity (can.250).

### **2.3. Incompatibility**

The 1983 Code (can. 478 §2) excludes only two categories of priests from assuming the office of VG. They are i) Canon Penitentiary and ii) the blood relatives of the Bishop up to the fourth degree. In order to avoid the insoluble conflicts that would inevitably occur between the internal and external fora the same person cannot be appointed as VG and as Canon Penitentiary. The new Code prohibits relatives up to the fourth degree, but whether inclusive or exclusive is not clear, whereas *CCEO* clearly states the blood relatives of the eparchial Bishop up to the fourth degree inclusive (can. 247 §3). If the VG is absent or impeded the Diocesan Bishop may appoint a substitute who must meet all the requirements set down in law for the office of VG and he exercises his full authority.

## **2.4 Special Rapport with the Diocesan Bishop**

The fundamental unity of the ministry of the Bishop must be reflected in the unity of the Curia. The VG is expected to maintain a good rapport with the Diocesan Bishop. There are two obligations imposed on him: 1) the duty of informing the Bishop before and after the undertaking of more important matters and 2) never to act contrary to the will and intention of the Diocesan Bishop. This is not only to help the better administration of the diocese but also to avoid unnecessary repetitions, delay, confusions and conflicts of power.

## **2.5 Cessation or Loss of Office**

Canon 481 of the 1983 Code establishes different causes that can determine the cessation or loss of office of the VG. He loses his office “at the expiration of the time of mandate” when he is appointed for a determinate period. The second means of cessation of the office is through resignation. The Code is silent about the acceptance of his resignation by the Bishop (can.481 §1). The corresponding canon in *CCEO* expressly says, “resignation accepted by the eparchial bishop.” While the Code asks for the resignation in the case of many other offices on completing seventy-fifth year, it is silent in the case of VG. The vacancy may also occur through his death of which both the 1917 and 1983 Codes do not speak explicitly. Another cause stated in this canon is the vacancy of the Episcopal See. The general principle (can. 184 §2) is that an ecclesiastical office is not lost on the expiry, in whatever way, of the authority of the one by whom it was conferred, unless the law provides otherwise. The office of VG is that the law had provided otherwise. When he receives certain information about the vacancy of the Bishop he also loses his office. When the Bishop is transferred, the VG loses his power even before the See becomes actually vacant (can. 418 §2, 1<sup>o</sup>).

The Diocesan Bishop can also freely remove VG, unless he is a bishop (can. 477 §1). If not grave causes, the canonical equity requires at least just cause for the transfer or removal of the Vicar General and his right to present reasons against the transfer or removal remains intact. No procedure is given for the removal of the VG. It is for the Diocesan Bishop to evaluate the causes and have sufficient reasons. When the Bishop is suspended in his office, the exercise of the power attributed to the Vicar General is also suspended, unless he is himself bishop (can. 481 §2). The VG can also be directly suspended from exercising his office like any other cleric.

## **2.6 Coadjutor and Auxiliary Bishops**

Canon 406 specifies that Coadjutor or Auxiliary Bishops with special faculties are to be appointed Vicars General and other Auxiliary Bishops, at least Episcopal Vicars. The Diocesan Bishop is to entrust them more important functions in preference of others especially those that require special mandate (can. 406 §1). Furthermore, the Diocesan Bishop is to consult them in matters of major importance especially that of pastoral nature and they are to function in harmony and union with him (cann 407 & 480).

### III. POWER AND FUNCTIONS OF THE VICAR GENERAL

**3.1. Ordinary Vicarious Power:** A Diocesan Bishop has ordinary proper power, but a VG has ordinary vicarious power and he has the canonical consideration of “ordinary” and “local ordinary. Hence, he does not need specific authorization from the Bishop, case by case, to exercise his power. At the same time the Diocesan Bishop can broaden the power of VG through delegation or special mandate and/or restrict his scope through a power of reservation (Cf. Can. 479 §1). The mission of VG is to collaborate in an auxiliary manner and be subordinated to the Diocesan Bishop. It expresses an organic participation in the power of the Diocesan Bishop.

**3.2 Executive Power of Governance:** The exercise of executive power is comprised of three types of activities: a) juridical execution that is, mandatory application of law and application of acts of the legislator and judge; b) acts of administration which means material administration or provisions for the common good; c) acts of government which comprises resolutions of the ecclesiastical authority concerning actual situations. VG’s power is the highest possible expression of participation in the power of the Diocesan Bishop and that assures unity of governance, for, he has the same executive power throughout the whole diocese as that which belongs by law to the Diocesan Bishop (can. 479 §1). He also can exercise executive power over his subjects, even when either he or his subjects are outside the territory (can. 136).

**3.3 Administrative Acts:** The VG can perform all administrative acts. Administrative activity (not act of administration) can be defined as that action of governance which carries out the day-to-day application of abstract norms to the concrete circumstances of ecclesial life, apart from those specific activities entrusted to the courts. He can issue within the limits of his competence general executory decrees (not general decrees) which define more precisely the manner of applying a law, or which urge the observance of laws (can. 31 §1). He can also issue general instructions which set out the provisions of a law and develop the manner in which it is to be put into effect (can.34 §1). They are given to the benefit of those whose duty it is to execute the law. He also has the power to issue singular administrative acts through which laws are applied to particular persons or group of persons. Accordingly, he (cann 35 to 93) can issue: i) singular decrees that communicate decisions or provisions; ii) singular precepts that impose injunctions; and iii) rescripts that grant dispensations, privileges and other types of favours.

**3.4 Reservation and Special Mandate:** The Diocesan Bishop can reserve certain matters because of importance, exclusively to himself. By virtue of this reservation, the administrative competence of the VG is diminished for certain acts or contexts. It must be communicated in writing and interpreted strictly. If the VG acts in these cases without the permission of the Diocesan Bishop, he acts illicitly. In contrast to the Episcopal reservation, the special mandate broadens the exercise of vicarial power in specific cases. It is an administrative act of the Diocesan Bishop that attributes competence to the VG to act in

administrative cases that the universal law expressly refers to the Diocesan Bishop. The VG acting without a special mandate where the law requires it acts not only illicitly but also invalidly. If the Apostolic See has granted, by some concession, habitual faculties to the Diocesan Bishop, it is understood that the VG too enjoys them in the entire diocese, unless it is given to the ordinary *industria personae*. In the same way if the Bishop is empowered to execute a rescript, the VG can also execute them even without a special mandate from the Bishop.

**3.5 Functions of Vicar General:** A diocese is a portion of People of God entrusted to the pastoral care of the Diocesan Bishop, who does it with the cooperation of the presbyterium. The VG becomes the primary co-operator by virtue of his office and the predominance in the curia, a complex entity made up of the plurality of offices to assist the Bishop in his pastoral functions in a stable manner. He is also an *ex officio* member in the diocesan Synod, the highest structure of participation in the governance of Bishop in the diocese and in the presbyteral & pastoral councils. The VG and Episcopal Vicars alone constitute the Episcopal Council. He is also an indispensable member of the particular councils, but with consultative vote. Apart from these, the Code also mentions at various places the necessity of getting permission from the Ordinary or Local Ordinary, which confirms the exercise of the power of VG at various fields of the diocese.

#### **Conclusion:**

From the above study it is clear that the VG enjoys the same executive power of governance throughout the whole diocese as that which belongs to the Diocesan Bishop. The extent of his power over all the spheres of the diocese could be understood from the provisions of the canons as Ordinary and local Ordinary. It is to be noted that the Code had also placed certain limitations over the office of VG and the exercise of his powers. They are: 1) if he is not a Bishop, he cannot attempt to execute acts that require Episcopal consecration and he may not enjoy the Episcopal dignity. 2) He cannot make laws or issue judgements which are acts of legislative and judicial powers respectively. His power is limited to the executive sphere. 3) Even in the executive sphere, there can be Episcopal control that the Bishop can reserve certain acts to himself. 4) Sometimes, by law itself certain acts might be reserved to the Bishop that the VG will need the special mandate of the Bishop to execute those acts. 5) If there is no Bishop in the diocese, there is no VG. In spite of these, as the Second Vatican Council rightly said, the VG is the pre-eminent person who assists the Bishop in the governance of the entire diocese and contributes to the building up of the Kingdom of God.

 *Thank You* 

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by **FR. A. ALEX GNANA RAJ**  
Madurai Archdiocese

## APPENDIX

**Following are the matters which by Universal law require a special mandate of the Diocesan Bishop for the Vicar General to act or exercise his power.<sup>1</sup>**

### 1. Rescripts

- To extend the time of rescripts granted by the Apostolic See, which have expired (can. 72).
- To dispense from the disciplinary laws, both universal laws and those particular laws made by the supreme ecclesiastical authority for the territory or for the subjects (can.87 §1). The case is a little different when recourse to the Holy See is difficult (can.87 §2).

### 2. Appointments and Removal

- To appoint a guardian for minors in special cases (can. 98 §2).
- To appoint person to ecclesiastical offices by free conferral in the diocese (can. 157). In particular, appointment of those who fulfill an office in the diocesan Curia (can. 470), the appointment of the finance Committee (can. 492 §1), the appointment to be a member of the council of Priests (can. 497, 3<sup>o</sup>), the appointment of the college of Consultors (can. 502 § 1), bestowal of canonry and assignment of roles to the chapter of Canons (cann 509 §1 & 503), the appointment of a priest to fulfil the office of canon Penitentiary where there is no chapter of Canons (can. 508 §2), appointment to the office of parish priest (can. 523), the appointment of a parochial Administrator (can. 539), the appointment of moderator of a group of priests of a parish (can. 544), the appointment of an assistant parish priest (can. 547), the appointment of a Vicar forane (can. 553 §1), the appointment of the rector of church (can. 557 §1), the appointment of a judicial Vicar (can. 1420 §1), the appointment of spiritual directors (can. 239 §2), the appointment of professors in the seminary (can. 253 §1), the appointment of diocesan judges (can. 1421 §1), appointment of a promoter of justice and defender of the bond (can. 1435). If an ecclesiastical office in a diocese is to be conferred on a member of a religious institute, the religious is appointed by the diocesan Bishop on presentation by, or at least with the consent of, the competent Superior (can. 682 §1).
- To remove the chancellor and other notaries (can. 485), to remove or transfer the parish priest or accept his resignation (cann 538 §§1, 3 & 1740), to remove an assistant parish priest (can. 552), to remove a Vicar forane (can. 554 §3), to remove professors of the seminary (can. 1488 §1), to remove the promoter of justice and defender of the bond (can. 1436 §2), to remove the financial administrator (can. 494 §2), to remove religious from an ecclesiastical office (can. 682 §2).
- To determine the manner of establishing the suitability to the office of a parish priest (can. 521 §3).

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<sup>1</sup> Thomas Pazhayampallil, Anton Padinjarathala, *Pastoral Guide*, vol.III, Bengaluru, Kristu Jyoti Publication, 2013, pp 647-657.

### **3. Formation of Clerics**

- To establish a minor seminary or similar institution (can. 234 §1).
- To reduce the period of staying in a major seminary to four years (can. 235 §1).
- To allow one to stay outside the seminary during the formation to priesthood (can. 235 §2).
- To allow one to reside outside the special house during his formation to permanent diaconate (can. 236, 1<sup>o</sup>)
- To admit one to the major seminary (can. 241 §1).
- To approve the rules of the diocesan seminary (can. 243).
- To see to the preparation of clerics who intend to move from one diocese to another (can. 257 §2).
- To send young persons and clerics, outstanding in character, intelligence and virtue, to ecclesiastical universities or faculties (can. 819).
- To determine those matters which concern the overall control and administration of the seminary (can. 259 §1).
- To oversee the formation of students to priesthood (can. 259 §2).
- To see to the building and maintenance of the seminary, the support of the students, the remuneration of the teachers and the other needs of the seminary (can. 263).
- To issue the decrees of incardination and excardination (cann 267 §1 & 270).
- To give permission to move from one diocese to another (can. 271), the written agreement with regard to this (can. 271 §1), calling such a one back or refusing the permission to reside further (can. 271 §3).
- To pass judgment on the observance of rules regarding a cleric's conduct with persons whose company can be a danger to the practice of celibacy or cause scandal (can. 277 §3).
- To issue dimissorial letters (cann 1016 & 1018 §1, 1<sup>o</sup>). To give permission to another bishop to confer holy orders (can. 1017).
- Not to forbid the deacon the exercise of the order though he refuses to be promoted to priesthood (can. 1038).
- To investigate the presence of the requisite qualities in one who is to be ordained (can. 1051).

### **4. Pastoral and Missionary Activity**

- To give permission to the prelatore to exercise pastoral or missionary activity in the diocese (can. 297).
- To promote, regulate and coordinate both new initiatives and established works concerning missionary activity and to ensure that there are proper agreements with the Moderators of those institutes which dedicate themselves to missionary activities (can. 790 §1).
- To ensure that everything concerning the administration of the whole diocese especially the pastoral action of the Vicars General and Episcopal Vicars, to appoint moderator of the Curia (can. 473 §§1, 2).
- To conduct visitation of the diocese (can. 396 §1).

**5. Associations**

- To establish public associations in the diocese (can. 312 §1, 3<sup>o</sup>), and also to suppress a diocesan public association (can. 320 §2).

**6. Diocesan Synod**

- To determine how some members have to take part in the diocesan Synod or be invited to it (can. 463). Also suspension, dissolution of the synod (can. 468 §1).
- To convoke the diocesan Synod (cann 461 §1 & 462 §1).

**7. Council of Priests, College of Consultors, Pastoral Council**

- To convoke the council of Priests, to preside over it and to determine the matters to be discussed and to accept items proposed by the member (can. 500 §1); to publish the decisions of the council of Priests (can. 500 §3); to dissolve the council of Priests (can. 501 §3).
- To preside over the college of consultors (can. 502 §2).
- To determine the manner in which the members of the pastoral council are designated (can. 512 §1).
- To convoke the pastoral council; to preside over it and to make public the matters dealt with in the council (can. 514 §1).

**8. Parishes**

- To separate parishes from the chapters of Canons if they were united to them (can. 510 §1). To settle conflicts which may arise between pastoral duties of the parish priest and the roles proper to the chapter of Canons (can. 510 §3).
- To establish, suppress or alter parishes (can. 515 §2).
- To provide for the spiritual care of communities that cannot be established as parishes or quasi-parishes (can. 516 §2).
- To entrust with a share in the exercise of the pastoral care of a parish to a deacon or some other person who is not a priest, or a community of persons, because of a shortage of priests (can. 517 §2).
- To entrust a parish to a clerical religious institute or to a clerical society of apostolic life (can. 520 §1). In this regard there is to be written agreement between the diocesan Bishop and the competent Superior of the institute or society (can. 520 §2).
- To establish the pastoral Council in the parish (can. 536 §1).

**9. Archives**

- To ensure that the acts and documents of the archives of cathedral, collegiate, parochial and other churches are carefully kept and that there is an historical archives in the diocese (can. 491). Also to enter the archive (cann 487 §1 & 490 §1), to remove documents from the archive (can. 488).
- To inspect the archive of the parish (can. 535 §4).

**10. ICL & SAL**

- To found an institute of consecrated life of diocesan right (can. 579).
- To approve the constitutions of an institute of diocesan right, to confirm any changes made in them, to dispense from them in particular cases (can. 595 §§1, 2).
- To guide the hermitical life (can. 603 §2).
- To consecrate virgins whose order approximates to the form of consecrated life (can. 604 §1).
- To discern new gifts of consecrated life and foster them (can. 605).
- To give permission to establish a house of religious institute (can. 609 §1) or a house of a society of apostolic life (can. 733 §1); introduce changes with regard to apostolic works of the institute (can. 612) or to establish schools (can. 801).
- To exercise special vigilance of an autonomous monastery which is not associated with any other institute (can. 615).
- To be consulted for suppressing a lawfully established religious house (can. 616 §1).
- To preside at the election of the Superior of the autonomous monastery and at the election of the supreme Moderator of an institute of diocesan right (can. 625 §2).
- To make the visitation of the houses of an instituit according to law (cann 628 §2 & 683 §1).
- To enter the enclosure of cloistered nuns whose monasteries are situated in his diocese (can. 667 §4).
- To govern the religious in matters concerning the care of souls, the public exercise of divine worship and other works of the apostolate (can. 678 §1).
- To forbid a member of a religious institute, for a very grave reason, to remain in his diocese (can. 679).
- To coordinate all apostolic works and actions of all religious in the diocese (can. 680). Also to direct works which the Diocesan Bishop entrusts to religious (can. 681 §1) and to enter into a written agreement between the Diocesan Bishop and the competent Superior of the institute (can. 681 §2). To deal with abuses in the religious institute after a warning to the religious Superior has been given in vain (can. 683 §2).
- To grant an induit of exclaustation for more than three years in the case of an institute of diocesan right (can. 686 §1); to impose an exclaustation on a member of an institute in the case of an institute of diocesan right or an autonomous monastery that is not associated with any institute (can. 688 §2); to grant an induit to leave the institute in the case of perpetually professed members of an institute of diocesan right (cann 691 §2 & 727 §1); dismissal of members in the case of an institute of diocesan right (can. 700); to judge the reason for dismissal with regard to an autonomous monastery that is not associated with any institute (can. 699 §2).
- To invite the members of institutes of consecrated life to help the Bishop in proclaiming the Gospel (can. 758).

**11. Schools**

- To provide for the establishment of educational, professional and technical schools (can. 820 §§1, 2); to watch over and inspect Catholic schools (can. 806 §1).

**12. Sacred Liturgy & Mass Obligations**

- To regulate liturgical matter (cann 844 §4; 860 §2; 863; 874 §1, 2°; 883, 2°).
- To reduce Mass obligations (can. 1308 §3).

**13. Confirmation**

- To give faculty to administer the sacrament of confirmation to one or several specified priests (can. 884 §1).

**14. Marriage**

- To delegate a lay person to assist at marriages under certain conditions (can. 1112 §1).
- To grant retroactive validation of an invalid marriage (can. 1165 §2).
- To issue a decree of separation of baptized spouses (can. 1692 §1).
- To accept the petition seeking the dispensation from a ratified and non-consummated marriage (can. 1699 §1). To issue a declaration of the presumed death of a spouse (can. 1707 §1).

**15. Sacred Places and Times**

- To dedicate a place (can. 1206); also to bless churches (can. 1207); to grant permission to build a church (can. 1215 §1).
- To allow a church for some secular purpose but not unbecoming ones (can. 1222 §1).
- To proclaim special holydays or days of penance (can. 1244 §2).

**16. Temporal Goods of the Church**

- To provide for the appropriate maintenance and residence of the parish priest who has resigned from his office (can. 538 §3).
- To remind the faithful of their obligation to provide for the needs of the Church (can. 1261 §2).
- To levy a tax on public juridical persons (can. 1263; cf. can. 264 §1).
- To carry out acts of administration of major importance (can. 1277).
- To entrust to the financial Administrator certain duties (can. 1278); also to determine what acts go beyond the limits and manner of ordinary administration, unless the statutes determine it (can. 1281 §2).
- To alienate goods which belong to the diocese (can. 1292 §1).

**Some Abbreviations:**

<i>can., cann</i>	-	<i>canon, canons</i>
<i>CD</i>	-	<i>Christus Dominus</i>
<i>DPME (AS)</i>	-	<i>Directorium de Pastoralis Ministerio episcoporum Ecclesiae (Apostolorum Successores 2004)</i>
<i>DPME (EI)</i>	-	<i>Directorium de Pastoralis Ministerio episcoporum Ecclesiae (Ecclesiae Imago 1973)</i>
<i>ESI</i>	-	<i>Ecclesiae Sanctae I</i>
<i>EV</i>	-	<i>Enchiridion Vaticanum</i>
<i>LG</i>	-	<i>Lumen Gentium</i>