



## DIOCESE OF THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS POLICY FOR EMERGENCY EPISCOPAL SUCCESSION

While the Canons of Diocese of the Rocky Mountains provides an episcopal succession plan, this policy is meant to give specificity of who should perform essential tasks in the eventuality of the untimely death of the bishop or his removal through Ecclesiastical Discipline.

### **Canon 4, Section 8. In Case of Death, Retirement, or Removal of the Bishop**

Upon the death, retirement, or removal of the Bishop, if there be no Bishop Coadjutor or Bishop Suffragan, the Diocesan Council shall be the acting Ecclesiastical Authority of the Diocese. Upon the written request of the Diocesan Council, the College of Bishops may appoint an Acting Bishop to have charge of the Diocese until a Bishop can be elected. A Bishop Suffragan may not become the Bishop of the Diocese unless he be so elected at a meeting of the Synod and his election be consented to by the College of Bishops, as provided for in Title III, Canon 8, Section 4 of the Provincial Canons.

### **Canon 4, Section 9. Disability or Impermissible Absence of the Bishop**

If the Council should determine upon careful deliberation that the Bishop is under a disability, or has absented himself without permission from or consultation with the Diocese for more than two months, it may with the consent of the Archbishop declare the Office of the Bishop vacant. In such case, the Bishop Suffragan shall take charge until the Council with the consent of the Archbishop declares the Bishop restored. If there be no Bishop Suffragan, the Council shall serve as the Ecclesiastical Authority of the Diocese until the Council with the consent of the Archbishop declares the Bishop restored.

### **In the case of the incapacity of the current Bishop to perform his duties:**

The Bishop (hereafter “the Bishop” refers to the diocesan Bishop) may become incapacitated for service through illness, accident, mental, psychological, or emotional incapacity, other extended physical disabilities, or a family crisis. In this case:



1. Notification: The Canon to the Ordinary should notify the Diocesan Council of the Bishop's incapacity. Such notification may also reliably come from his wife, or another family member.
2. Verification: The bishop's incapacity should be verified by the Diocesan Council and other trusted advisers. Its duration must be determined through discussions with the Bishop, his family, other leaders within the Diocese, and/or medical professionals.
3. Wife: If the Bishop's wife is not aware of the incapacity, she should be notified by the Canon to the Ordinary.
4. The Archbishop should be notified
5. Diocesan Council: A confidential closed meeting of the Diocesan Council should be convened to discuss the matter. At this meeting, the details and the duration of the work needed to carry through the process of caring for the Bishop and his family and providing leadership for the Diocese, along with assignment for duties needed along the way, should be made.
  - a. NOTE: It may well be appropriate to include the Bishop's wife in a number of the ensuing steps.
  - b. NOTE: A liaison should be established to maintain active communication with the Archbishop throughout this process, including freedom for the Archbishop to advise and direct at any step along the way.

The work of caring for the Bishop, his family, and the Diocese should include at least the following components:

Transition Team: A designated team of people assuming responsibility and oversight of the process must be established by the Diocesan Council, in accordance with the canons of the Diocese. This team must assume coordinated leadership of the following areas of responsibilities.

1. Transition Team Leader: One of the members of the Diocesan Council will be designated as the leader of the Transition Team.
2. Temporary Bishop: If there is no Bishop Suffragan or Assisting Bishop, seek the help of the Archbishop to discern the availability of another bishop to perform episcopal duties for up to one year. This temporary bishop will be part of the Transition Team.
3. Duration: Provision should be made for the assessment of the continuing duration of incapacity and its implications.
4. Cessation: A plan for the cessation of temporary leadership upon the return of the Bishop to active service may be needed.

Communication Plan:

1. A determination should be made about how broadly the incapacity and its reasons should be shared within the Diocese.



2. A determination should be made with the Archbishop concerning how broadly the incapacity, and its reasons, is to be shared with the ACNA College of Bishops. (Eventually this may include a communication plan beyond the College and beyond the Diocese).
3. Staff: If it has not yet happened, a meeting of the Diocesan Staff should be convened to discuss the matter.
4. Intercessors: Notify the Diocesan intercessors of the Bishop's incapacity.
5. Other Diocesan leaders: Any other key leaders of committees, etc., within the Diocese should be appropriately informed personally.
6. Prepare and distribute a written electronic statement for the Diocese concerning the Bishop's incapacity.

Support:

1. Insurance: Review the Bishop's insurance and disability plans for applicable provisions.
2. Finances: Instruct the Finance Committee to review the finances of the Diocese to consider implications and adjustments that will be likely be needed during the incapacity of the Bishop.
3. Family: Active ongoing spiritual, emotional, and physical support for the Bishop's wife and family must be considered.

Work:

1. Calendar: Review the Bishop's upcoming calendar, send notifications, and make appropriate changes and reassignments for all Diocesan-related duties.
2. Administrative details, such as cancellations of flights and hotels, etc., must be assigned to the appropriate individuals.
3. Leadership and Strategic Responsibilities: The Diocesan Staff and other key strategic leaders must be convened to review the responsibilities of the Bishop for assessment and reassignment during his incapacity. Specific decisions must be made for reassignment or a hiatus of activity in any given area. Clear communication to all impacted by the changes must be insured.
4. Duration: If the incapacity is long-term but not permanent, provision must be made for the ongoing and detailed leadership of the Diocese in terms of all operational and ministry systems.

Areas of Pastoral Responsibility during the absence of the bishop

Canon to the Ordinary

1. Chief Pastor for all diocese clergy
2. Resolving conflict with Rectors and Parish Councils
3. Grant permission for divorced to be married in the church



#### Diocesan Council

1. Welcoming clergy from other jurisdictions
2. Appoints investigator for charges of clergy misconduct (in conjunction with the chancellor)
3. Executes sentence of the court (in conjunction with the chancellor)

#### Administrative Addendum

#### Canon to the Ordinary

1. Preside at Synods
2. Approve candidates for ordination

#### Diocesan Council

1. Call special Synods
2. Appoints various assistants as needed
3. Appoints Chancellor
4. Manages budget

#### Parish Oversight

#### Canon to the Ordinary

1. Recommends rector candidates
2. Oversees process of new rector selection

#### Diocesan Council

1. Receive requests for new congregations to form
2. Assumes responsibility for parishes without rectors
3. Approves selection of new rector
4. Consent to the removal of a rector
5. Authorize a deacon to lead a congregation