

Diocese of St Mark the Evangelist

“Guidelines for Leaders” - Chapter 2

Parishes, Chapelries and Congregations



Diocesan Finance Board has prepared these “User-Friendly Guidelines” to help Chapelry and Parish leaders to lead the Church more effectively. They are designed to explain and interpret the Diocesan Rules in a way that can be understood and applied easily.

For details, it will still be necessary to consult the Rules of the Diocese. In many cases these are referred to in these guidelines, and the relevant numbers are given in brackets.

†Martin: St Mark the Evangelist

1. Introducing Parishes, Chapelries and Congregations

In this Diocese, our **Parishes** are geographical areas under the leadership of the Rector or Priest in Charge (the “Incumbent”). Parishes are made up of a number of church communities, where people belong and identify, called “Chapelries” and “Congregations”. The Bishop determines the status of a church as a Chapelry or Congregation after appropriate consultation.

- ✦ **Chapelries** are generally larger and more established, and have more rights and responsibilities.
- ✦ **Congregations** are smaller and more dependent on others for ministry. They may be growing towards becoming Chapelries.

2. Their Responsibilities

The basic principle in our Rules is that God expects his people to take responsibility for mission and ministry in their community - and then to support one another in our shared life.

Our Diocesan Vision expresses it like this:

To make disciples in vibrant, self-sufficient Congregations established and linked to each other by sharing in:

- ✦ Resources
- ✦ Ministry and service
- ✦ Outreach and evangelism.

This means that certain important decisions need to take place at Chapelry level, and others at Parish level. There should always be good communication between the two.

2.1 Chapelry Responsibilities

The Rules require each Chapelry to hold Vestry Meetings and to have a Chapelry Council. Congregations have meetings, and should take responsibility for as much as they can, but they are not required to follow all the rules for Vestries and Chapelry Councils.

Chapelries are responsible for:

- ✦ **Ministry** at Chapelry level - e.g. Prayer Groups, Chapelry Choir and Organisations, Lay Ministers' Duties, Sacristans.
- ✦ **Chapelry Finances** - e.g. Chapelry Budget, Giving, Bookkeeping, Financial Statements, Banking, Making a contribution to the Parish.
- ✦ **Chapelry Property** - the care of any property and buildings that "belong" to the Chapelry, including plans for new buildings (*Remember, all property really belongs to the Diocesan Trustees*).

But... none of this can be done in isolation - because everything affects the whole Parish! So, there should always be communication and consultation in a spirit of love and co-operation. The Rules also expect you to do that. If you make decisions at Chapelry level, they need to be communicated (and sometimes approved) at Parish level.

2.2 Parish Responsibilities

The Rules also require the Parish to hold Vestry meetings and have a Parish Council. Every Chapelry in the Parish is represented at Parish Vestry and on the Parish Council. At Parish level the various Chapelries and Congregations negotiate and agree with one another about the issues that affect the whole parish.

The Parish is responsible for:

- ✦ **Shared Finances** - including Diocesan Assessment, Housing and Care of the Rector, Ongoing Clergy Training.
- ✦ **Co-ordination and Communication** between the various Chapelries and groups - e.g. The Clergy Roster, Training for Ministries, HIV/AIDS, Development, Youth, MU, and AWF.
- ✦ Setting priorities and approving important programmes for **Mission and Ministry**, such as building projects, planting new churches

In all of these things, the Rector or Priest in Charge has the authority to lead, with the guidance and support of the Parish Council. Other chapters will explain things such as: Vestry Meetings, Chapelry and Parish Councils, Relationships and Roles of Leaders (Rectors, Chapelry and Parish Wardens, Community Clergy), and Financial Controls.