



THE CHANCERY  
OFFICE OF THE VICAR GENERAL  
ARCHDIOCESE OF NEW YORK

*SOME THINGS TO KNOW*

SEPTEMBER 2020

<https://archny.org/monthly-combined-mailing-from-the-vicar-general/>

**PRAYING FOR OUR RECENTLY DECEASED PRIESTS** During the COVID-19 shut down, eleven priests went home to God: John Bida, Harry Byrne, Frank Damis, Leonard DiNola, Richard Guastella, James Healy, Lawrence Lucas, Peter Miqueli, John Monaghan, Joseph Murphy and John Ruvo. As we had been asked to offer Mass for them at the time of their death and burial, His Eminence will be offering two public Masses which you may wish to attend. The first will be celebrated at the chapel of the John Cardinal O'Connor pavilion on Monday, November 2 at noon. Because of two-meter distancing, only the priests in residence will be able to participate. A second Mass will be offered on Thursday, November 5 at St. Joseph's Seminary at noon. In addition, as word is received of any Masses that are to be scheduled in individual parishes, we will let you know.

**ANNUAL MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES** All parishes are required annually by New York State Religious Corporation Law and the Archdiocese of New York Uniform By-Laws to hold an annual meeting of the trustees by the second Wednesday of November (this year, it is November 11) at the parish corporation's principal office. At this meeting, the pastor, as corporate secretary and treasurer and the two lay trustees shall review and accept the annual financial report. Following the meeting, please send the year-end financial report to the finance office. The minutes of the annual meeting must be kept on file at the parish office.

**"INTER NOS"** It came as a surprise to so many of us when we discovered that an internal memo sent to all the priests appeared on a local Hudson Valley news site within a matter of hours. We have heard from you that you prefer to obtain news of this kind directly from the archdiocese and we have promised we would do that with honesty and transparency. We all understand that these memos are internal by their nature and are shared among ourselves within the presbyterate for our information. Updates to the media are generally released through our department of communications. How grateful we are when there is collaboration with this protocol of the archdiocese.

**LINE OF DUTY DEATH** In the unfortunate event of the death of a parishioner who is serving in the United States military or those in uniform on the police or fire departments who die in the line of duty, pastors are asked to notify the office of the vicar general with funeral arrangements.

**PRESBYTERAL COUNCIL SELECTIONS** Now that summer is over, it is time to think about choosing priests to fill vacancies on the presbyteral council. His Eminence has underscored the importance of this council in his administration. He expressed his hope that priests would make themselves available to serve on this senate and he urges the widest possible engagement in the selection process. He wants to be assured that the make-up of the council is truly representative. Your active participation is clearly desired. Deans and area conference chairs are encouraged to discuss these vacancies with their constituencies.

**RENEW + REBUILD REBATES** The development office is currently preparing for September rebates and want to share some information about how they are calculated. Rebates are dispersed on a quarterly basis and directly deposited into the parish account set up specifically for *Renew + Rebuild*. For option 1 parishes, the first monies paid fulfill the parish's cardinal's appeal goal for the year(s) it fundraised for *Renew + Rebuild*. When the appeal goal has been fulfilled, payments are then split 74% to the parish and 26% to the archdiocese. These payments are based off of only the previous three months. After the parish has cashed the full amount of its *R+R* goal, additional funds are split 85% to the parish and 15% to the archdiocese. If a parish exceeds 120% in payments, the parish will receive 100% of the money cashed. These thresholds are based off of payments, not pledges. Ensuring parishes receive their funds so that they can complete their capital projects is our highest priority. We work closely with our colleagues in finance and the donor data center to distribute these rebates to parishes in a timely and accurate fashion. Our goal is to disperse the rebates for this quarter to parishes by the end of September. If you have additional questions, contact Bettina Alonso at [bettina.alonso@archny.org](mailto:bettina.alonso@archny.org) and 646-794-3393.

**PRIESTHOOD SUNDAY USA** September 27 is the national observance of Priesthood Sunday USA which was inaugurated in 2002. This is the time each year to express appreciation and gratitude to all the priests who have served God's people. It is a way to allow Catholics to recognize good priests who, day in and day out, do an outstanding job in serving them in parishes across America. The focus is on the place of the priesthood as a central reality in the life of the Church. The shortage of vocations makes priests less visible and, consequently, less prominent. Ask your people to remember their priests and to thank them for what they do to bring the Lord to the faithful through the sacraments. Visit the Serra International web site at <https://serraus.org/priesthood-sunday/>. Also, visit the web site, [www.nypriest.com](http://www.nypriest.com).

**YEAR END FINANCIAL STATEMENTS** Now is the time to work with your accountant, bookkeeper and associate director of parish finance (AD) to complete and submit all financial statements by Saturday, October 31. Include a balance sheet and income statement for each parish entry (church, school, cemetery). In addition to the financial statements, be sure to complete the trustee sign-off sheet and return it to Marcus Ryan, director of parish finance. Finally, fill in the Board of Trustees Annual Meeting Minutes and keep these in your parish files. If we can assist in any way, call Marcus Ryan at (646) 357-0164.

**STATUS ANIMARUM** From the Latin meaning *state of souls*, this accounting is a register of people living in a parish and events related to them. Today, we refer to it as the annual sacramental report. Every year, we collect Mass attendance numbers, sacramental figures, religious education and regional or parish school enrollment, staffing and volunteer personnel data for each parish church and worship site. In view of the fact that we are still involved in the “culture of planning” throughout the archdiocese, be as accurate as you can with your report. The Mass attendance numbers will be reported for Sunday, October 18, 2020, the Twenty-Ninth Sunday of the Church Year, including the anticipated Masses on Saturday evening. For the sacramental and other data, report for the time period requested. The information that you provide is helpful for parish planning in the archdiocese and for responding to the reports that are required by the Holy See and the Episcopal conference. I will be grateful to receive your statistics by Monday, November 16, 2020. The information for the Kenedy *Official Catholic Directory* is always sent to you separately. This year, we are moving to a more automated process which should make things easier for everyone involved.

**PREACHING ABOUT RACISM** Bishop Shelton Fabre of Houma-Thibodaux will be presenting a Zoom videoconference titled *Preaching Against Racism* to the priests of the archdiocese on Tuesday, September 22 at 4:00 pm. A panelist from the archdiocese will respond to his remarks. This will be followed by an opportunity for questions. The extent of the program will go for 60 minutes to 90 minutes. To register and submit questions in advance of the conference, go to [preachingagainstracism.eventbrite.com](https://preachingagainstracism.eventbrite.com). You must register at this link in order to get to the conference. This will allow us to control who has access to the seminar and will give us an indication of participation.

**RECONCILIATION MONDAY DATES** Advent Reconciliation Monday will be held on December 21, 2020 from 4:00 to 8:00 PM in all the parishes of the archdiocese and the Diocese of Brooklyn. Lenten Reconciliation Monday will be observed on March 29, 2021 from 3:00 to 9:00 PM in the archdiocese and the Dioceses of Brooklyn and Rockville Centre. Promotional material will be available as we get closer to the date.

**CELEBRET AND TESTIMONY OF SUITABILITY: WHICH IS WHICH?** All across the country, in just about every diocese, letters of suitability have become more important than ever when planning to perform temporary ministry outside the archdiocese. Two documents are available. Which is which?

1. **TESTIMONY OF SUITABILITY** This is sometimes referred to as a letter of good standing. Its use began after the implementation of the Dallas Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People in 2002. It is required in every diocese within the United States and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico prior to an event. It is sent from the office of priest personnel to the diocese where the event is located. The way these are processed has changed and takes a longer period of time to respond to them. A form was included in the July/August combined mailing. You may email your request to [priestpersonnel@archny.org](mailto:priestpersonnel@archny.org) in a timely manner, usually two weeks to allow for preparation of the proper documentation. With your application, include the event, time, date, location, diocese, email and address of the Ordinary. Without it, a priest may be met with an embarrassing refusal.
2. **CELEBRET** This word comes from the Latin and means *let him celebrate*. Prior to the Dallas charter, it was used within the USA and abroad. But now, it is required when traveling outside the country. The universal law of the Church (canon 903) stipulates that a priest is to be permitted to celebrate the Eucharist, even if he is not known to the rector of the church, if he presents commendatory letters, not more than a year old, from his own Ordinary, stating that he is in good standing and requests that appropriate hospitality be extended to him. You may email your request to [catherine.cruz@archny.org](mailto:catherine.cruz@archny.org) in a timely manner, usually two weeks to allow for preparation of the proper documentation. With your application, include the event, time, date, location, diocese, and when you will depart and return. Without it, a priest may be met with an embarrassing refusal.

So, to summarize, if traveling within the country, be sure you have a testimony of suitability from the office of priest personnel (646-794-2930). Whenever you leave the country, secure a *celebret* from the office of canonical services (646-794-2929). Don't leave home without them.

**ORDINATION TO THE PRIESTHOOD** The date for priesthood ordination for next year will be Saturday, May 29, 2021. Mark your calendars now and plan to participate to welcome the class of 2021.