

## THE OFFICE OF A RELIGIOUS PASTOR

### INTRODUCTION

The pastor or parish priest is an office in Catholic Church, one among those offices that are surrounded by laws, rights and responsibilities. The surrounding laws must be observed by the parish pastor, he should exercise his right but responsibility is taken into consideration, he has to carry it out. Meanwhile, there are many offices in the Church, most of them have hierarchical undertone, but some are merely positions being filled up by priests or even lay people, for example, heads of institutions, heads of ordinary offices and so on. One thing is known to be general in the offices of the Church: they are meant for *salus animarum*, that is, for salvation of souls, that is, to serve for the salvation of souls.

A priest is by nature of his office, is another Christ who carries out the three priestly functions of Christ: the *teaching* of Christ, His *governance* and *sanctifying* functions. His office is therefore the acting office of Christ that leads the flock of Christ with the commandments given by him. He therefore teaches the people of God in about the way to heaven, interprets the commandments of God to them, the way to observe the ethics of Christ, the way to practice the perfect love, he teaches the rights and responsibilities due to and expected of the congregation of Church. The pastor governs the people of God. his governance is more of leading, leading them in the ways the Master, Jesus taught, leading them out of sin to holy life, he leads them to strive towards doing good. He practices the distinguished leadership of Christ who came not to be served but to serve and gives his life as ransom for many. He acknowledges the rights and freedom of the followers of Christ: he provides them with the freedom to choose the fellowship of Christ for themselves. He physically represents Christ as a captain in the ship that leads the sheep of God to heaven. In sanctifying the people of God, a pastor conveys the blessings, graces and providence of God who delivered His people through the sacrifice offered by His Son Jesus Christ. The sanctity of Christ the Master which he administers is never measured by the holiness of the administering priest but instead by the holiness of Christ who is God, but the pastor strives to be holy as the heavenly Father is, in order to worthily carry out the functions entrusted to him. The pastor sanctifies the people of God especially with the sacraments he administers to them, the daily worship, prayers and blessings. By properly carrying out these three main functions, the pastor then working in the Bishop's stead, represents Christ among the flock and strains for *salus animarum* of the parish entrusted to him.

## PARISH AS OFFICE OF A RELIGIOUS PASTOR

The office of a religious pastor is also a parish which is „*a certain community of the Christian faithful stably constituted in a particular church, whose pastoral care is entrusted to a pastor (parochus) under the authority of the diocesan bishop.*”<sup>1</sup> This means that the office of a religious pastor is not different from the office of a circular or diocesan pastor. We may then put up the question: where then lies the difference between the office of a diocesan pastor and that of a religious pastor. The answer comes from the nature, procedures and processes as well as rights of instituting the two parishes in quote. That is, the diocesan parish is erected, suppressed and altered by only the diocesan bishop after consulting the presbyteral council, while a religious parish is erected, suppressed and altered by the same bishop but firstly with the consent of the of the Holy See, and also the positive support and acceptance of the highest authority, the generalate of the religious in quote. This distinction would carry the entity and statutes of a religious pastor and his office to an extra mile more than that of the diocesan one. As a matter of fact, 451, §1 of the 1917 Code defined the pastor in this way: „*Parochus est sacerdos vel perona moralis cui paroecia collecta est in titulum cum cura animarum sub ordinarii loci auctoritate exercenda.*” That is, a pastor is a priest or a moral person to whom a parish is entrusted in order to take care of the souls under the authority of the bishop. The current legislation denotes: *Parochus est pastor proprius paroeciae sibi commissae, cura pastorali communitatis sibi partem ministerii Christi vocatus est, ut pro aedem communitate munera exsequatur docendi, sanctificandi, et regendi, cooperantibus etiam aliis presbyteris vel diaconis atque operam conferentibus christifidelibus laicis, ad normam iuris.* the pastor (parochus). Literally translating, a pastor is the proper pastor (pastor) of the parish entrusted to him, exercising the pastoral care of the community committed to him under the authority of the diocesan bishop in whose ministry of Christ he has been called to share, so that for that same community he carries out the function of teaching, sanctifying, and governing, also with the co-operation of the presbyters or deacons and with the assistance of lay members of Christian faithful, according to the norm of law.

Before going on, I would like to point out some of the constituting elements that make up the person and office of a pastor. I would like to start with the ones that are common in the two definitions. The first element is that the pastor is a priest. This is to make it clear, that however the lay person or a religious may possess the qualities and virtues needed to carter for the faithful, the person must start by been chosen and ordained and taken up to the order of priesthood. The CIC (1917) goes further to attach moral entity to the person of the pastor. This is directly to explain the nature of his personality and task. The second important element that is also common in the two definitions is the entrustment of the parish to him.

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<sup>1</sup> Can 515-§1

One becomes a pastor or in other words a parish priest if that parish entrusted to him is a certain community of the Christian faithful which is stably constituted in a particular church under the authority of the diocesan bishop. So here, the parish precedes the pastor just as the pastor presupposes the parish. Every other person sharing the same right with him, like the chaplain, administrator etc., may be in charge of a certain group of the faithful but not stably constituted. The third element is that the pastor must perform under the authority of the diocesan bishop. This affirmation is well understood in the way it is expressed by current Code, where the diocesan bishop is described as the owner of Christ's ministry in which the pastor shares. The authority of the diocesan bishop highlighted is highly necessary in whom the all the rights of the administering if the sacraments are complete. Again, authority to ordain and send priests to evangelize, the authority to govern the greater flock of God in Christ's stead, and so on, are all in him.

There is an element of the pastor mentioned outstandingly by only the CIC (1917), „*care of the souls*.” The function of the pastor whether in form of rights or obligations are just to take care of the same people of God entrusted to his care. That is why he should do all to see that this aim is achieved. The CIC of 1983 went on to explain the three main functions of a priest, as teaching, sanctifying and governing the flock entrusted to his care. These form the center of the duties of a pastor which I will still elaborate in the subsequent topics. Another important element mentioned by the current legislation is the working together of the pastor with the presbyters or deacons as well as with the assistance of the lay faithful. This is to maintain that the pastoral work is never a personal endeavor and can only be achieved if the parish works as a community aiming towards the same goal.

## **THE CHARACTERISTICS OF A RELIGIOUS PARISH?**

As religious priests and secular priests are all priests but still differ from each other, so also there are some qualities and characters proper to only the religious parishes. The following are the most common ones:

### **The holder is not an individual**

The holder of a religious parish is the religious institute itself and not an individual or physical person.

In other words, the holder is a juridical person. This juridical person is perpetual in its manner and function. In this case the juridical person takes care of the rights and the responsibility of the parish just as in the case of every other benefice that belong to the religious, having the parish to be in charge of the pastoral activities

in the parish. Hence the CIC (1917) denotes: *Persona moralis, dui paroecia sit pleno iure unita, habitualement tantum curam animarum retinere potest, servato, duod ad actualement spectat, praescripto can.*<sup>2</sup> In explanation, the moral person, and in this case the juridical person, to whom the parish is completely legally joined to, has the right by nature of its statutes to pastoral works.

The case of the diocesan parish is different. The juridical person is, though not the pastor but been the collaborator of the bishop installed in a stable manner, he is the holder of the parish. The Can. 519 says: „*The pastor (parochus) is the proper pastor of the parish entrusted to him, exercising the pastoral care of the community committed to him under the authority of the diocesan bishop.*”

Here the rights of governance, teaching and sanctifying are all exercised by the same pastor appointed to the flock. The pastor is not simply a delegate of the diocesan bishop. Within his parish, he functions with ordinary power given him in law by reason of the office he holds.<sup>3</sup> In the case of a religious parishes, the pastor cannot be a juridical person. That is why the bishop entrusts the parish directly to the clerical religious institute or to clerical society of apostolic life.<sup>4</sup>

### **The pastor is not vicarius perpetus**

That is, the pastors of religious parishes are removable.

We can only talk about the *vicarius perpetus* if the diocesan parish is to taken into consideration. This is because, as already mentioned, the juridical person is the religious institute itself and no other one. Therefore every other member of it is deprived of that stability that would hinder his removal at any time, if needed.<sup>5</sup> The Can. 471 of the 1917 Code says: „*Vicarius si sit religious est amovibilis*

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<sup>2</sup> Cf. Can. 471, §2 of the Code of 1917.

<sup>3</sup> *New comentary on the code of canon law*. Edited by Beal, J. P., – Coriden, J. A., – Green, T. J., Theological Publications in India, Bangalore, 2010. (Henceforth: *New comentary...*) Commentaries on the Can: 519.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Can. 520.

<sup>5</sup> The stability of the pastor has vary many advantages. The pastor comes to know the flock very well if he is left to stay in a parish for a longer time and the wealth of the parish and such things like that cannot suffer disadvantages of a frequent change in the holder of the parish. This is also true in the case of the faithful; they would know him better and this leads to mutual understanding, trust and spiritual dependency. Knowing fully well that anything with advantage also can have disadvantage also, we should not forget the easiness of the removal of the pastor without a stable manner if there need arises. This is true especially when the pastor is morally handicapped and still does not want to renounce being a pastor of the parish.

*sicut parochus religiosus de quo in can. 454, and also Can. 454 which says: Parochi autem, ad religiosam familiam pertinentes, sunt semper, ratione personae. amovibiles ad nutum...*” Which means that, if the assistant of the pastor is a religious, he also can be removed just like the pastor (*parochus*) mentioned in the §5 of the Can. 454; and those pastors who belong to any religious family can be removed at any time, even with an immediate effect. Can. 522 of the current legislation compels that a pastor must possess stability and must be appointed for an indefinite period of time. If the pastoral aim is achieved through the good acts and behavior of the pastor, only the benefits of staying at a parish for a longer time can be highlighted. Otherwise there arises the need for the removal of the pastor which may be carried out with a more difficult procedure if the pastor does not comply to the act of removal.

### **The religious pastor is not the owner of the fruits of the parish’s wealth**

A religious has no right of ownership when it comes to earnings and salaries or fruits of the wealth of the working area. He lost this right when he took the vow of poverty and community life. From thence, even if he had properties or heritages before the vow, he has to renounce the right of ownership over them, just like the first Christians who brought together all that they had, renounces from the right of ownership over them in order to benefit from them within the same group of Christians. In contrary, the diocesan parish priest, the pastor (*parochus*) is the just holder of the fruits of the wealth of the parish. He handles it as his owner, or more precisely, as a father handles the wealth of his family.

### **There is no changes in the person of the holder of the parish**

This means that, the holder of the parish, the religious institute or the monastery has a perpetual state, a stability in its manner and remains the same without any change even if the religious pastor is changed. This stability also determines the financial and wealth conditions of the religious institute; which in this case, is less recognized, because the change only affects the pastor in quote, who handles the pastoral dimension of the church.

In effect, the expression „*change of holder*” is not used if a religious parish is concerned. One of the most important advantage of this condition is that every pastor tries to work with the best of his knowledge and ability; knowing fully well that he may be changed at any time, he is more careful with the finance and wealth of the parish.

### **The change on the pastor does not affect the worship and practice of faith**

This character of the religious parish is also in line with the one mentioned above, because both of them are as a result of the stability of the juridical person, the religious institute.

If a diocesan parish is considered, it can be seen that a pastor, being a proper pastor of the parish entrusted to him (Can. 519) can have great influence on the lives of the parishioners to the extent of bringing a shake and unbalanced situation in their faith if he is transferred or removed. The systems and methods he applied in his pastoral works may be different from that of his successors. In the case of the religious parish, this is not drastically experienced. The worship in the parish is more or less not affected if the pastor is changed, more especially when the pastor has his co-members from the same order working with him in the same parish. The system and methods of evangelization and pastoral works are observed, supervised and maintained by the competent superior.

### **The religious pastor is subjected to supervisions the diocesan bishop as well**

The religious pastor is appointed by the bishop to be the pastor of the flock belonging to his diocese. Owing to this fact, the religious pastors are not only under the influence and thorough supervision of only their competent superior, but also that of the local bishop as well. Although his supervision may not be as frequent as the superior's own. Constant supervision to and on the parishes has many advantages. It reminds every pastor to sit up and do more for the salvation of the souls, entices every pastor towards perfection in his pastoral works and makes him use the wealth and finance of the religious with fear. These are achieved because, in most cases, the parish is at the place with the monastery or any house of the religious institute where the competent superior also resides. This makes it easier for the pastoral works of the pastor to be supervised more often. With this, the challenges and problems that originating from the person of the pastor are easily and quickly discovered and are solved on time to avoid scandals.

The conditions surrounding the diocesan pastor are different. He probably resides at the parish far from the watch of the dean of his zone as we as the cathedral where the bishop lives. Most of these handicaps in him are not seen until they cause serious problems which may be very harmful on the lives of the faithful.

### **The two pillars of a religious parish should be taken into consideration**

A religious or more precisely, parishes belonging to monasteries are said to have two pillars: firstly, that it should possess freedom from the side of the religious institute. This freedom should be for the *salus animarum*; that is, in taking care of the souls of the parishioners. The religious institute is obliged to assure the pastor, who in this case, a vicar (parochial vicar) and the faithful the full freedom to practice their faith according to the norms of the local diocese as well as their culture, whatever the nature and apostolate of the institute may be. This should be experienced more in the preaching of the word of God to the faithful.<sup>6</sup> The same freedom should especially be provided to the pastor who is in charge of the pastoral activities so as to have the time and opportunity to take appropriate care of the parish. The second pillar is that the parish has some characteristics and peculiarities for been a religious parish. This means that some of the pastoral activities of the parish would be affected and influenced by the activities and apostolate of the monastery. As a result of this, the religious pastor should consider the programs of the monastery before fixing the engagements and activities of the parish. After all, there are some activities in the parish that may be the reserved to the superior of the monastery. This does not restrict the power and functions of the pastor of the parish but instead enriches it. It allows the monastery to be involved and take part in the life of the parish and also enables the competent superior to have frequent contact with the parishioners as well. Again some specialties of the institute like the feast of their founder and other pastoral ceremonies of the institute can be organized in the community of the faithful of the parish.

Szuromi made it clear that the two pillars are not equal in ranking, because one of them is subjected to the other: the peculiarities of the religious parish as a pillar is subjected to the pillar of freedom and independence of the parish from the institute. In other words, the proclaiming of the word of God to the faithful is prioritized and given the right of way, because everything pertaining the parish pastoral works should be first of all for the salvation of souls (*salus animarum*). That is why the state and conditions of the faithful are considered more than that of the religious institute.

### **A RELIGIOUS PASTOR (PAROCHUS)**

There are two situations in which a religious can be a pastor: *firstly*, when the parish is legally joined to an institute or society. *Secondly*, when a member of an institute or society is appointed to be the pastor of such parish that is not related to the given religious, such as a diocesan parish. Due to the things proper to each of them,

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<sup>6</sup> Szuromi, A. Sz.: „*La parrocchia e gli Istituti di vita consacrata e le Società di vita apostolica, nonché la presenza di alcuni movimenti spirituali*”. 522.

I find it better to elaborate it more in the subsequent topic which treats their appointments by the bishop. As I have already analyzed in the previous chapters, a religious pastor is never a physical person, it is never an individual. In other words, the juridical person is not the pastor himself who cares for the pastoral duties. The pastor is always the juridical person, and in this case, the religious convent or the monastery. They are the holders of the parishes themselves and the responsibilities of the pastoral work lie on them. The bishop gives the parish to them as personal belonging under his personal competence.

The CIC (1917) said: „*Sine Apostolicae Sedis indulto paroeciae nequit personae morali pleno iure uniri, ita ut ipsamet persona moralis sit parochus, ad normam*” (Can. 1423, §2.) In explanation, it is forbidden to join a parish with a moral person in such a way that the moral person is the pastor himself according to the norms of Can 1432, §2.

Németh used a very wonderful expression „*in titulum*” when explaining the bishop’s giving and handing over of the parish to the religious. He shared the opinion which says that this expression is only used when the possessor or the holder is not the owner of something in quote. So in this case, the monastery or the convent holds or possesses the parish that does not belong to it. Meanwhile the parish, just like every other temporal good of the Church belongs to the local diocese.

The Vatican Council II, in its decree on the bishop’s pastoral office in the Church claims that religious priests are also ordained in the office of the presbyterate with the same motif as in the case of the diocesan priests: to be cooperators and collaborators of the bishops in the dioceses. The decree went on to say that, they should be seen to belong to the clergy of the diocese because they also work for *salus animarum* in the diocese.<sup>7</sup>

They get the parish from the bishop, who with the consent of the competent superior entrusts the parish to the given convent or monastery, *with the requirement however that one presbyter is to be the pastor of the parish.*<sup>8</sup>

## **Appointment of a religious pastor**

Before the Council of Trent the law allows the pastor to be appointed by the superior of the religious without the consent of the local bishop. The governance of the parish was totally in the hands of the competent superior. He decides on everything, therefore the appointment of the pastor over the parishes belonging to the monasteries also fall within his competence. He could even appoint a priest who is not a member of the given religious institute but just a secular priest; neither an acceptance nor

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<sup>7</sup> Cf: CD 34.

<sup>8</sup> Can. 520, §1.

a confirmation was required from the bishop in this case. So, such a priest is chosen to see to the pastoral functions, and he can be removed at any time (*vicarius ad nutum amovibilis*). In each case the benefice belonged to the monastery, because the pastor is appointed to take care of only the pastoral works.<sup>9</sup>

The Council of Trent enacted that the bishop is the one to appoint the pastors to the monasteries of the religious. It extended this right to be practiced by the bishops even in such situations when the parish is completely joined and also when it is not completely joined to the religious monastery.

The Second Vatican Council's decree on the bishop's pastoral office in the Church compels the religious to be of assistance to the diocesan bishop for *salus animarum*. Hence, it says: „... indeed religious should comply promptly and faithfully to the requests and desires of the bishops in order that they may thereby assume an even more extensive role in the ministry of human salvation.”<sup>10</sup>

The appointment of a religious pastor can be treated under two basis: *firstly*, on the basis of entrusting a parish to a religious or a society and the *second* is when an individual member is assigned to be a pastor of a parish that does not belong to an institute or society. Now let us treat them separately.

### **Appointment of institute or society as pastor**

This nature of appointment is more common when we consider the parishes entrusted to religious and societies. Owing to the fact that in this case the pastor is the juridical person itself, CIC (1917) suggests the appointment of what it called the *parochial vicar*. This explains that he assists the institute or the society in fulfilling the duties of the pastoral activities. His function is to take the actual care of the souls of the faithful. In other words, he carries out the pastoral duties not only in the bishop's stead, but also in the institute's or societies stead as well. The CIC states that: *...with the consent of the competent superior, however, a diocesan bishop, but not a diocesan administrator, can entrust a parish to a clerical religious institute or clerical society of apostolic life, ..., with the requirement, however, that one presbyter is the pastor of the parish* (Can. 520, §1).<sup>11</sup> This pastor is nominated and presented by the competent superior who then appoints him to this office. Although the bishop has the right even to nominate and also appoint the religious member but legislature prefers

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<sup>9</sup> Németh, L. (1948): *A szerzetesplébánia jogi helyzete*. Kapisztrán-Nyomda, Vác. (Henceforth: Németh, 1948.) 18.

<sup>10</sup> CD. 35, 1.

<sup>11</sup> The Canon points out that the diocesan administrator has no right to entrust a parish to clerical religious institute or to clerical society of apostolic life. This aims at preserving and protecting the diocese from alterations and modifications which may be done by only the diocesan bishop who is the pastor of the whole flock within the confines of the diocese.

the superior's nomination, because it considers the superior knowing better the members qualities and personalities. This order is affirmed also in the CIC (1917) which says that, the right of presentation is reserved to the superior who can as well install the same pastor with the right given to him by the bishop.<sup>12</sup> The religious members should be ready to assist the diocesan works up to the highest extent. That is why the Vatican Council II urges them in this way: „*Religious should always attend upon bishops, as upon successors of apostles with devote deference and reverence. Whenever they are legitimately called upon to undertake works of apostolate, they are obliged to discharge their duties in such a way that they may be available and docile helpers to bishops...*”<sup>13</sup>

Knowing fully well that, with this pastoral work the convent or the monastery comes into close working relationship with the diocesan bishop, the legislature requires that the competent religious superior and the diocesan bishop should have a common written agreement in which the following three main things are to be concretely outlined: the work to be accomplished, the person to be appointed, as well as the financial arrangements.<sup>14</sup>

### **Appointment of an individual member as a pastor**

A member of a clerical religious institute or clerical society of apostolic life can be appointed to be the pastor of a non-religious parish, like the diocesan parish. As the religious also belongs to the clergy of the diocese, the bishop can decide to appoint a religious member to be pastor of one or some of his parishes.<sup>15</sup> In this appointment he requires a full consent of the competent superior. Otherwise, the religious is not permitted to carry out the pastoral function as entrusted by the bishop; that is, outside his religious institute. The Can. 671 states that: „*A religious is not to accept functions and offices outside the institute without the permission of a legitimate superior.*” This limitation or regulation aims at preserving the life and apostolate of their own institute as well as seeing to the congruence between the activities, charisms of the members and the institute.<sup>16</sup> The Second Vatican Council's decree on the bishop's pastoral office in the Church sees it from the point of mutual consultation. It denotes: „*...with respect to those works of the apostolate which religious are to undertake, bishops or episcopal conferences,*

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<sup>12</sup> Cf: Can 456 of the CIC (1917).

<sup>13</sup> CD. 35, 1

<sup>14</sup> Cf: Can. 520, §2.

<sup>15</sup> Can. 526 says that „*a pastor is to have the parochial care of only one parish; nevertheless, because of lack of priests or other circumstances, the care of several neighboring parishes can be entrusted to the same pastor.*”

<sup>16</sup> *New comentary...* 196. The commentaries made on the Canon 671, about the external duties and offices of the religious members.

*religious superiors or conferences of major religious superiors should take action only after mutual consultation...*<sup>17</sup>

The appointment also happens as in the case of religious parishes where the individual member is appointed as the parochial vicar. He is always nominated by his superior, who presents him to the bishop for assignment, although, if circumstance requires it, the bishop himself can choose the pastor but still with the confirmation from the competent superior. Also in this case, there should be an agreement between the competent superior and the diocesan bishop pertaining the work to be done, the person to be appointed and system of pastor's wages. Hence, the legislature extends this working agreement to every other works that the diocesan bishop would entrust to the members of the religious life.

In both cases ways where the pastor is a member of a clerical religious or clerical society of apostolic life, the Vatican Council II urges the superiors and the diocesan bishops to meet from time to time in order to discuss and deliberate on those affairs which concern the apostolate in their territory to achieve harmonious and fruitful relationship.<sup>18</sup>

## **JURISDICTION OF A RELIGIOUS PASTOR**

The jurisdiction of a religious pastor matches with that of a secular pastor, owing to the fact that he is also a pastor whose vocation is mainly the salvation of the souls entrusted to him in the same parish. Moreover, owing to the fact that the pastor in this case is a religious in the monastery, the superior represents the whole institute in exercising the powers and jurisdictions needed to care for the souls entrusted to the parish, but these are practically and concretely carried out by the appointed person. In essence, these powers and jurisdictions which the secular priests exercise are also attributed to him like:

### **He is a pastor**

This means that he is the pastor of the flock of Christ in his control. The name pastor is used to denote his person and function which is like the function of a shepherd of the sheep. A shepherd takes watch over his shepherd day in, day out without ceasing.

In the same way, the pastor takes care of the souls in his care, to seeks for his flock if they are scattered; to bring them back to their local parish if for any just cause

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<sup>17</sup> CD. 35, 5.

<sup>18</sup> Cf: CD. 35, 6.

they make their way to another places; to feed them on a very good spiritual pasture; to bring them to their good water of Jordan (like Israel) to quench their thirst; to arrange them in a good fold; to feed them and make them have rest of mind; to look for those who are lost; to bring back those which are driven away; to bind up the ones are wounded; to strengthen the sick among them; to feed them with judgment (Cf. Ez 34: 11–16). Just as a shepherd offers his life for the sheep, so also the pastor should offer his life for the faithful entrusted to his care. He should be steadfast, and not relent in any case concerning the flock. He should lavish all that he has to practice the corporal works of mercy on them name: to feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, to clothe the naked, harbor the harborless, visit the sick, ransom the captive and to bury the dead. He also should know that the spiritual works of mercy deeply belongs to his duties. That is to instruct the ignorant, to counsel the doubtful, to admonish the sinners, to bear wrongs patiently, to forgive offences willingly, to comfort the afflicted and also to pray for the living and the dead.

### **He is the judge of his flock**

A pastor is judges in God's stead above the flock entrusted to his care. His judgment is direct and ordinary because he is the proper pastor (*parochus*) of the parish under him.<sup>19</sup> A judge must strive to be just and fair in his judgments. He never should be one sided or play partiality among between the flock. His judgment is administered in two ways. *Firstly*, in the everyday life among the members of the faithful where he should see all the member as those who have equal rights. He should not have better regards for the rich. He should not put differences between the healthy and the sick, the indigenes and non-indigenes, the young and the old, men and women. He should exclude discrimination of any kind. The *second phase* of his judgement is during the absolution of their sins on confession. In this judgement he is representing God who is the Judge of all judges. During absolution, he should know that, in one sin or offence committed against another, four persons are offended together, namely: God, who is creator of everyone, the person that is offended, the offender himself or herself, the community of the faithful. So he should bring reconciliation among these parties. However, he should not forget that, God whose power he uses in judging is a merciful One. He should therefore endeavor to prioritize the healing of the wounded soul of the offender.

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<sup>19</sup> Cf: Can 519.

## He is the teacher of the flock

A pastor, whether secular or religious, exercises the power of teaching towards the parish in his care. As a parent educates and trains his or her child in physical and social matters, so also the pastor teaches the flock in spiritual areas. His teaching is not merely *ad forum internum*, that is, inside matters, but also in public forums and in general matters as well. In his teaching, he has the power to rebuke and warn the faithful especially when they are following the wrong ways in the practice of their faith. He can as well punish and chastise the member who brings disorder in the normal routine of the pastoral system of the parish. I intend to elaborate more on the teaching of the pastor later in the topic that treats the three main functions of the pastor in handling parishes. It can be seen that his power is more of pastoral, which at the same time requires that the faithful owe him with reverence as their pastor.

## THE OBLIGATIONS OF A RELIGIOUS PASTOR

Before we talk about the obligations proper to the religious pastor, it is necessary to point out a couple of responsibilities that arise merely from his vocation, as being a religious. Naturally, a religious has all his or her life committed to God for the salvation of souls. He does this by totally sacrificing his or her life from the day of perpetual vows. In the case of a religious priest, he should be willing and ready, as a tool of evangelization, to be used by the bishop, if needed, to save souls even in the parishes. The Vatican Council II related to this when it says: „... especially in view of urgent need of souls and the scarcity of diocesan clergy, religious communities which are not dedicated exclusively to the contemplative life can be called upon by the bishops to assist in various pastoral ministries...”<sup>20</sup> Here it tries to explain that situations may arise in which the bishop needs the help of the religious due to the shortage in the number of the diocesan priests. In other words, the clerical religious institutions and clerical societies should see it as one of their responsibilities to assist if need occurs.

Then, in the case of a religious pastor we consider those obligations mainly pertaining care of souls of the faithful.

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<sup>20</sup> CD 35, 1.

## Pastoral care of all the faithful

This involves what we have discussed in the previous chapter: that a pastor is like a shepherd; all that concerns the life, welfare and sustenance of the flock falls to his interest. He should be a good shepherd in order to protect the sheep from the attack of the wolves. He should draw a plan of his pastoral work and work it in the manner which Jesus taught. To achieve this, he has to involve the members of the parish so that his teachings, governance and work of sanctification would directly get to the targeted people. In the case of a religious pastor, the institute is to make sure that all needed to take care of the faithful is provided; it should weigh the weight and intensity of the pastoral work and if needed, provide pastoral helpers to the pastoral vicar. In some strategic areas like catechetical teaching and other areas of religious and moral education, it should ensure adequate number of tutors. This is easier to be handled within those religious parishes for which the institute's apostolate is more of teaching.

## Residing at the parish

A pastor is compelled, by nature of his office to reside at the parish or place very close to the parishioners. His work is shepherd-like, so his staying with the sheep he rears is compulsory to him. The current legislation says: „*A pastor is obliged to reside in a rectory near the church. Nevertheless, in particular cases and if there is a just cause, the local ordinary can permit him to reside elsewhere, especially in a house shared by several presbyters, provided that the performance of parochial function is properly and suitably provided for.*”<sup>21</sup> Here it is pointed out that he must live at the rectory and not at any house around the territory of the parish. Even if he has many stations and parishes to cover, he is obliged to live at the one chosen to be the rectory, as in the case of parochial vicar (Cf. Can.550, §1). This is because of the other areas of his function which are not merely spiritual; those that may pertain governance or administration. His residing elsewhere must be only by the permission of the bishop. This shows how serious it is, that the pastor lives among his flock. The legislator compels the permission from the bishop and prefers to live at another place when it involves sharing with other presbyters in a common place. This community life is strongly recommended by the *Christus Dominus* 30, 1. According to the decree, this way of living promotes and gives rise to an efficacious apostolic work as well as giving example of the charity and unity life of the faithful. The CIC (1917) also said that the pastor can reside elsewhere with the permission from the bishop but with condition that the pastoral work should not suffer disadvantages.<sup>22</sup> The residing

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<sup>21</sup> Can. 533, §1.

<sup>22</sup> CF: Can 465, §1 of 1917 Code.

in the rectory near the church does not invalidate the §2 of the Can. 533 of the current legislation which allows the pastors to be absent from their parishes for at most one continuous or interrupted month a year. It added to it, that the time the pastor spends in the spiritual retreats are not computed in this time of vacation. It is interesting that the CIC (1917) provides two months for this same vacation of the pastors and also said that this can even be spent continuously. This Code also does not count the time of retreat in the time of vacation of the priest (CIC 1917, Can. 533 §3). Both the Can. 465, §4 of 1917 Code and the current legislation (Can. 533, §2) compels the pastor to inform the bishop before leaving the parish with a reason.

The condition of a religious seems more serious in this aspect. Because of the fact that he is under the authority of, not only the bishop, but also the superior, he should also submit his permission application to his competent superior. Generally, this permission is also needed when a pastor intends to be absent from the parish for a just reason especially when he is to stay outside the parish for more than one week. The written form of informing the bishop and the superior as in the case of the religious pastor is a requirement of only the Code of 1917. The current legislation does not specify this form of information. It only forced that the pastor should inform the local ordinary. That is, if the reason for leaving the parish in this manner is so sudden, and for a just cause, the secular pastor is obliged – but it is enough – to verbally inform the bishop, whereas in the case of a religious pastor, he verbally informs the superior, as noted in the CIC of 1917.<sup>23</sup> It is the obligation of the pastor to provide for the pastoral work of the flock entrusted to him during the time he is absent from the parish. The CIC (1917) clearly said that the pastor is to provide for the substitute during the time of his absent. The current legislation, though indirectly, only mentioned that, „*it is for the bishop to establish norms which see to it that during the absence of the pastor, a priest endowed with the necessary faculties provides for the care of the parish.*”<sup>24</sup> This norm is expected to cover such situations when the a parish is entrusted to a group of priests *in solidum*, to mark who is to be the moderator and also how the parish is to be taken care of if the absence is unexpected. If the situation involves a religious pastor, it the religious institute that should take care of the *vicarius substitutus* when the parochial vicar is absent from the parish. In other words, it not the pastor that would appoint the substitute but the monastery; in any case, the appointed should be given the faculty of carrying out the pastoral duties by the bishop.

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<sup>23</sup> Can. 465, §5 of CIC (1917). The sudden nature of the reason for being absent from the parish is not noted by CIC, it only emphasized on being absent from parish for more than one week.

<sup>24</sup> CIC 533, §3.

## Celebration of the Holy Mass

This obligation aims at pointing to the intentions of the Masses being said by the priests. Generally, a priest is to say Mass for the intention already buked by the faithful. Otherwise, if there is no special request for a given Mass, the priest who celebrates the Mass is free to choose his Mass intention. This applies to Sundays, feasts and other weekdays as well. The legislator say something different about pastors. The current legislation say: „*After a pastor has taken possession of his parish, he is obliged to apply a Mass for the flock entrusted to him on each Sunday and holy day of obligation in his diocese (Can. 534, §1).*” A pastor who has a parish to govern must prioritize his flock as the first intention for which he celebrate Masses on Sundays and holy days of obligations in his diocese. With this, he offers the flock together with their problems, joys and sorrows to God when he applies the Mass in *alter Christus* who is the Priest, the Altar and the Sacrifice on the Mass. This obligation cannot be delegated, unless if by a just cause the pastor is impeded or suspended from completing it. Otherwise, he should apply the Masses for the people on other days as noted by the same canon. This situation attracts more attention when a parish has both a pastor and a parochial administrator. Note well, the Can. 539 outlined those conditions which may require the appointment of a parochial administrator who would exercise the same functions as the pastor though with limitations, especially if the pastor is in captive, or exiled, or banned, ill or other causes like that. According to law, the diocesan bishop designates a pastor as soon as possible, so that the sheep would not be left without shepherd. If such situation arises, the bishop is to decide whether the pastor or the parochial administrator is to apply the Mass for the people; otherwise both of them have to decide which one of them is to carry out the obligation. The venue of this Mass must be the parish church and should never be entrusted to another person to be applied in another place. This means that the Mass offered by the pastor for the people is territorially limited to the parish of the flock. As a result of this, even if this Mass is applied by another person, it can be done only on Sundays and on other days of obligations in the diocese. Consequently, from its nature of being an obligation, no stipend could be taken for this Mass by the person who applies it, even though he has another two or three Masses to be said on that same day, with regard to the instructions of the local ordinary.

The case of the religious always has something to add. In monasteries, it is the duty of the superior to assign every clerical member to the time and place of applying Masses as the case may be. If a pastor should fall under this authoritative disposition of the superior, then the faithful would suffer disadvantages. The pastor is therefore to be exempted from this precept so that he can be able to apply Masses for the faithful belonging to the parish.<sup>25</sup> This exemption does not alter the statutes of the religious pastor for been subjected to the authority of the superior who assigns him to apply

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<sup>25</sup> Németh, 1948. 66.

Masses on other times as well. However, the superior should consider other engagements of the pastor before assigning him to say Masses on a given day of the week.

The form of this Mass is not highlighted at all. There is no specification in 1917 Code on whether the Mass offered for the people should be a singing or silent one, or whether the pastor should say homily or not, neither which altar (whether main or side altar) should be used for the mass. The codex did not go down in this respect to explaining cases. Again, it is obvious that the Mass for the people cannot be replaced with those in which a pastor is allowed or in some monasteries, compelled – by virtue of his statutes as a religious – to apply Masses for their own personal intentions.<sup>26</sup>

### **Catechism and homily**

We have already seen from the chapters above that both the catechism of the faithful, that of the children and the homily on the Masses solely belong to the obligations of the pastor of a parish. He is to teach them from the pulpit of the parish church, during the catechism classes and outside the church provided that the place falls within the territories of the parish. To achieve success, he should visit the parishioners frequently to know their problems, correct their failings, and encourage them in their weaknesses, and so on. The experience and information he gathers from the visitations would help him organize his homily which he addresses to the same faithful. This is the reason why it is advisable that the pastor himself says the homily whenever Masses are applied for the faithful in his parish, because he is the shepherd who knows his sheep. There are some occasions when an unknown preacher is been invited to say the homily; in the case of a religious, the invitation of such persons is solely the function of the superior. It is also the duty of the superior to appoint helpers to the pastor in the catechetical education of the children. Hence, the pastor is to organize a scheme for the helpers so that they would run their activities in line with the system of work of the pastor.

### **Administering of the sacraments to the faithful**

As we have seen above, it is the right of the pastor, and if strictly looked at, not only right but also obligation to administer the sacraments to the faithful in his care, provided that they themselves require it. The same thing is applicable also in the case of a religious pastor. The duty of administering the sacraments fall under his competence. Although, if need arises, there are some sacraments which the assistants may administer in his stead. The pastor is however not allowed to administer the sacraments that belong to the duties of the bishop, like the sacrament of confirmation; but he can

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid, 66–67.

do this if the receiver is in danger of death. In such functions like this, his assistance is not allowed to assist him. Meanwhile, every other sacrament as well other acts of faith, like the litany, parish congresses, devotions – except some extraordinary ones like processions in odd time, retreat, *tridium*, and so on, which the superior has to arrange – are to be organized and administered by the pastor. If the pastor is a religious, he should take cognizance of the activities of the monastery in fixing the dates for these events and should also make sure that the spiritual and pastoral care of the faithful does not suffer set-backs.

### **Care of the poor**

This emphasizes mostly on the disposition of the pastor towards the faithful; to be more on the side of the poor and the disadvantaged ones. This requires that the pastor should try to make the administration of the sacraments reachable to the faithful; if it requires paying for the sacraments, to render it on a low cost or even free to those who cannot afford it. Beyond this, the pastor should embrace the poor faithful of his parish as a father to whom they can go with confidence to lay their burden with the hope of relief. A religious pastor would do more in this because it is assumed the monastery itself and other member of institute would help him with every skill and method needed to achieve a better result in evangelization among the poor.

### **Care of the sick**

It is the duty of the pastor to share with the sick in their sufferings. He does this by visiting them more frequently especially those in the danger of death, to console them and administer sacraments to them. It is true that other priests can as well do this work, like the assistants and other priests when they *are in solidum*, they can do it if the for any just cause the pastor himself cannot be able to do it himself. Jesus Christ spent many times caring for the poor, the sick and the needy. Therefore, a priest who performs in Christ's stead ought to prioritize the condition of the less privileged.

### **The fight against false teachings and believes around the parish**

The pastor is the teacher of his flock not only in the community of the faithful, but in public as well. He should keep watch ever what is taught to the faithful especially in schools. He is to know and monitor the sects in the parish area and make sure that their contact with the members of the flock are not misleading and deceiving. He should be concerned about the content of the faith and moral

teachings both in the religious and government schools in the parish area provided the faithful belong to the audience of such teachings. If any abuse is experienced, pastor should do everything to battle with the source of the false teachings and beliefs. To subdue this, the pastor himself can as well organize some meetings, conferences, seminars and things of that nature in order to create forums to enlighten the faithful and to warn them to end-up their contacts with those with such propaganda.

The superior of the institute is to see that these obligations are properly carried out by the pastor (parochial vicar). He should therefore visit the parish, if he is not residing in the monastery attached to the parish, in order to correct mistakes if there is any and to encourage the pastor if the work is going on an expected way.

### **Other obligations**

In this, we mean those obligations that do not directly refer to the pastoral care of the faithful but still compel the pastor in view of his religious statutes. For example, the wearing of habits which is treated by Can. 669, which says in §1 that: „*Religious are to wear the habit of the institute, made according to the norm of proper law, as a sign of their consecration and as a witness to poverty. §2 Clerical religious of an institute which does not have a proper habit are to wear clerical dress according to the norm of can. 284.*” If the institute has its proper habits, like the Franciscan, Cistercians and so on, the religious pastor from this institute must wear his habit both in the parish engagements and the public when representing the faithful. The legislator also solves the problem of those religious institutes without their proper habits. Hence the same Can. 669, §2 denotes: „*Clerical religious of an institute which does not have a proper habit are to wear clerical dress according to the norm of can. 284.*” Meanwhile these clerics should put on the dresses of the clerics approved by the episcopal conference of the region where they serve. Actually, the law did not specify the kind or type of the dress, nor when the habit is to be worn by the member of the religious. This is left to be treated under a proper law. Habit identifies traditions and signifies dimensions of the monastic life as well as Christ’s poverty if those institutes who sprung from monastic life are considered. So the religious pastor should be on the habit proper to his religious institute, and if his is belonging to such order without their proper habits, he is to wear on the clerical dresses that is customary to the area of the parish he manages. Another obligation of a religious pastor is to strive after his personal perfection, his personal conversion, the strict follow service of God and follow imitation of Christ, examining of conscience daily as well as frequent approach to sacrament of penance as denoted by the Can. 664. The legislator believes that a religious strives more profoundly after the goal of our life for which God called us all. That is why after the ordinary examination of conscience which happens at the beginning of everyday Mass, it requires that a religious makes out time especially at the end of the day to look into their minds and find out their failings and natural weaknesses in order to maintain a frequent

reconciliation that leads to perfection. It also urges that, they attend the sacrament of penance frequently. This does not limit the freedom which everybody had including the religious in going for confession when the individual mind calls for it. It only tries to uplift the values of the connection between the frequent examination of the conscience and the frequent confession, within which the two sacraments necessitate one another.

### **The religious pastor's reverence, obedience and dependence**

A religious person, – whatever function or duty entrusted to him within or outside his institute, – still remains a religious. Whenever they are to be assigned to any duty, especially outside their institute, the nature of the duty is expected to firstly, be reconciled with the religious life of the member who is to be assigned. That is why the law even bans them from taking up such engagements that are outside their institute unless the competent superior permits it. On the other hand, it is stated by the Second Vatican Council's decree on the bishop's pastoral office in the Church, *that all religious, exempt and non-exempt, are subject to the authority of the local ordinaries in those things which pertain to the public exercise of divine worship (except where differences in rites are concerned) the care of the souls, sacred preaching intended for the people, the religious and moral education of the Christian faithful, ...*<sup>27</sup>

This submission is from the fact that everything concerning pastoral work of the faithful belongs to the bishop. So, the religious who partakes in them is also bound not only to enjoy the liberties and benefits of the diocesan pastors who are naturally assigned to this work, but should also abide by the rudiments required to perform the pastoral duty, that is, he fully owes the bishop with complete reverence and obedience. Now we have seen that in this case, the religious has two masters to serve and obey. Nevertheless, the religious pastor's main function is the care of the souls of the faithful. In other words, he should be exempted from many things in the institute so that he can be able to fulfill the pastoral duties given to him. It is now clear that, the religious' reverence and dependence has two channels: towards the competent superior and the bishop as well. Owing to the fact that this will not be an easy task, because it is never easy to serve two masters,<sup>28</sup> it is necessary to treat them separately.

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<sup>27</sup> CD. 35, 4.

<sup>28</sup> In Mt 6: 24a, Jesus said that no one can be a slave of two masters, because he will either hate the first and love the second or be attached to the first and despise the second. This would make the reverence and dependence of the religious pastor to be a complicated one. However, if we look at it from the scope of *salus animarum*, which is the common goal every evangelical participant, and if all would abide to the laws guiding this field of apostolic work, we could hope for lesser problems.

## Reverence and dependence towards the bishop

As far as the apostolic functions of the diocese is concerned, all rights and powers are reserved to the bishop. The religious, therefore, who shares in this is bound to obey and respect him. The law moderating this side of cooperative apostolic work says: „*Religious are subject to the power of bishops whom they are bound to follow with devoted submission and reverence in those matters which regard the care of soul, the public exercise of divine worship, and other works of the apostolate.*”<sup>29</sup> The religious pastor exactly falls within this category. His apostolic duty is for the care of the souls of the faithful who belong to the parish entrusted to him. Moreover, pastoral work is by its nature, is a public divine worship in which the pastor exercises the power of Christ to administer the sacraments and also to teach, govern and sanctify the people of God. The bishops should accept, and consider the service of the religious with open mind, while the religious should work in full communion with the bishop.<sup>30</sup>

This is obvious and has not much to be explained if the parish is a diocesan one and the religious is merely the pastor. This is because, the Can. 681, §1 made it clear by saying that: *works which a diocesan bishop entrusts to religious are subject to the authority and direction of the same bishop, without prejudice to the right of religious superiors according to the norm of Can. 678, §§2 and 3.* More problems are experienced when the parish is the one attached to a monastery or convent. Here, the parish is more or less under the control of the superior, even though the pastor carries out the pastoral duties. The religious pastor is very close to the commands and daily directions of both the superior and the norms of the institute. Although, if the precepts of the Canon law which regard this situation is observed, there would not be much problems. After all, even CIC (1917) in its Can. 631, §1 said: *Idem parochus vel vicarius religiosus, licet ministerium exercent in domo seu loco ubi maiores superiors religiosi ordinariam sedem habent, subset immediate omnimodae iurisdictioni, visitation et correctioni Ordinarii loci, non secus ac paroshi saeculares, regulari observantia unice excepta.* In explanation: whether the religious pastor or parochial vicar is exercising his office at a place where the higher superior continuously resides, the pastor is under the direct, ordinary inspection and punishment of the bishop, though with the exemption of only the matters pertaining religious discipline. It is therefore necessary to point out those areas where the bishop enjoys priority in inspecting the pastoral functions of the religious pastor. According to Németh, the inspection has both the locational and personal phases. The locational

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<sup>29</sup> Can. 678, §1.

<sup>30</sup> *New comentary...* Commentaries on the Can: 678, §1.

inspection of the bishop covers firstly the parish church where the faithful practice their faith.<sup>31</sup> Secondly, the cemetery, but this is only if the faithful use it for burials. So many parishes, from ages, have their cemetery of burial ground which in this regard falls among the goods or at least belongings of the Church. Then the parish office: the bishop supervises the parish office even if this office is situated in the monastery. His inspection on the parish office is not merely administrative: that is checking the condition of the register and documents, but he also checks whether the office building is conducive and meets the needs of the faithful. If the parish is *ecclesia conventualis*, that is, belonging to the convent or monastery, the right of inspection and visitation of the bishop is limited. But still the following aspects in the church are under the bishop's competence of inspection: the altar, the tabernacle, the Holy Eucharist itself, the baptistery, the pulpit, the confessional, the sacristy, the equipment to administer the sacraments both in and outside the church, the oil of the sick, the vestments, especial those that belong to the parish church, the tower of the church and the bell, the bowl of the holy water at the entrance of the church, crosses and sculptures that are mounted by the parish. All the institutions where the spiritual undertakings of the faithful are carried out also belong to the locational inspection of the bishop like, schools, homes, oratories etc.

In the personal inspection, the bishop checks the person of the pastor, his personal dispositions and appearance before the faithful. He also checks his homily, as well as how he behaves both among the faithful and in the community area.

### **Obedience and dependence to the competent superior**

The religious pastor owes the competent superior a high reverence and obedience in all that concerns his religious life, just as a secular priest fully depends on the diocesan bishop for his priestly work. Well, it is obvious that here those areas are considered which do not limit the right of a person wherever he may be. That is, pertaining his religious life and pastoral work. The superior is not a juridical person but represents the institute in carrying out the rights and responsibilities of governance. The legislature demands that they remain subjects to the proper superior and disciplined to the institute even if an external work is entrusted to them.<sup>32</sup> He checks those areas about the religious life that the bishop has no right to check; the individual, personal and spiritual life of the religious pastor as well as his community life. These are the most important areas of the life of the religious and it is also very important that the superior always sees that there is balance in these aspects

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<sup>31</sup> Németh, 1948. 45–47.

<sup>32</sup> Cf: Can. 678, §2.

in the lives of the religious members. With reference to this, the current legislation says: „*The apostolate of all religious consists first of all in the witness of their consecrated life, which they are bound to foster by prayer and penance.*”<sup>33</sup> It is also the function of the superior to check whether the pastoral function given to the religious pastor can be reconciled with his religious life. Anyway, for the religious institutes with pastoral works in their apostolate, it does not create any new situation, because there, the vocation is actualized. At the same time, problems may arise if the religious order is wholly contemplative in their manner. This is because, the pastoral duties of the parish needs a full person who should devote all, only for the sake of *salus animarum*, and may this situation may not offer the religious pastor from the contemplative order to live his religious life as required. The legislature therefore bans the members from this kind of order from taking up the pastoral engagements. It says: *Institutes which are entirely ordered to contemplation always hold to a distinguished place in the mystical Body of Christ: ... For this reason, members of these institutes cannot be summoned to furnish assistance in the various pastoral ministries however much the need of the active apostolate urges it.*<sup>34</sup> This is because the pastoral work may, in some aspects, be difficult to be reconciled with the spirit of the institute. This is the reason why the religious pastors always enjoys exemption on so many obligations concerning religious life, as the pastoral work is prioritized over his religious life. That is, he is not compelled to join in observing those programs or activities of the religious life that would in any way restrict his pastoral work for the faithful. This exemption does not concern his obedience and reverence to his superior because he even has the power to call him back from the external work given to him by the bishop, though bearing in mind that he should inform the bishop.

Now, we can understand the reason why the legislature provides uniform level of rights and power over the religious pastors working in such areas external to their institutes because as we have said earlier on, the religious pastor still remains a religious whatever function given to him may be. If that is the case, the superior then has the right of visitation and inspection both on the religious and diocesan parishes provided a member of his institute is assigned to work there. This helps him to gather information about how his subject member performs in the pastoral work in the parish which may be useful for immediate corrections especially if the religious pastor has some defects in his pastoral works or religious life as well. If the parish is attached to the monastery or convent, the superior also has the right to inspect and even to give permission to the pastor to some other things, like permission to go out of the vicinity of the monastery. This is because the care of the faithful is a very big task and needs more freedom. However, the superior’s

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<sup>33</sup> Can. 673.

<sup>34</sup> Can. 674.

permission is needed by the pastor especially for those engagements that do not solely pertain the pastoral activity. These include private mailing, travelling that has no connection with his pastoral activity, visitation of families that are not in search of the faithful, the use of the parish wealth beyond ordinarily in pastoral endeavors and so on.

We have seen that to be a religious pastor is not an easy task. As we have said earlier, he serves two masters at a time. With these, Németh supports such motions which say that the religious pastor is more under the investigations and authority of the competent superior than that of the bishop. The inspection and power of the bishop towards the religious is more of seeing to the effective performance towards the pastoral activities in quote; whereas the superior looks into the personal and religious life of the religious pastor from a closer range.<sup>35</sup>

## CONCLUSION

Having gone through this topic, we can be bold enough to call it a unique one. Unique, in the sense that it talks about such a situation and sometimes problem that the Church looks at with less concern and which has been drawing the interest of all to itself. We cannot say that this area of the pastoral function of the Church is extraordinary, it only has been overemphasized, that is, overlooked by the competent authorities handling it and the authors as well.

The gift of religious and societies is a heavenly one, and their participation in the apostolic work, especially in the parish pastorals is really a grace.

The office of the religious pastor whether from the clerical religious institute or clerical society of apostolic life been treated in this project deserves serious attention, because it places the pastor in between the authority of the local ordinary, the bishop and that of the competent superior of the institute or society as well. Again, the pastor himself is religious and should lead the lay faithful who are living in the worldly society, of which, they are by their nature and statutes, territorially belonging to the local ordinary.

Consequently, besides all the advantages and fruits of the involvement of the religious into the pastoral apostolic activities of the Mother Church, the difficulties, controversies and problems arising from it are also to be put into consideration. The splitting up of dioceses into parishes which the Council of Trent mandated, the territorial qualities of the parishes, the appointing of a pastor to be the proper pastor of the parish especially from the religious, his dependence and independence to and from the bishop as well as the competent superior, his governance over the lay faithful, his combining the religious and parish life, the observance of the rules

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<sup>35</sup> Cf: Németh, 1948. 45–52.

and regulations both the diocese and the his institute or religious and so on are all such strategic areas that require good care of the legislating and executing bodies that work in harmony for *salus animarum*. In these case, the authority of the local ordinary, that is, the bishop is prioritized; he claims the authority of the Apostles which is supreme in all that pertains the care of the souls of the faithful. Having then a religious pastor to be appointed or handed over a parish, it needs the mutual cooperation of both the bishop himself and the competent authority of the religious.

Some areas of this pastoral office of the religious pastor, like the one concerning the temporal goods of the religious parish church requires good knowledge and understanding of the religious to enhance adequate handling of the properties of the religious and the parish respectively. However, if the religious institute is exempt, all its affairs are under the stipulations of the Apostolic Holy See, otherwise, it falls under the authority of the bishop who is its founder.

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