



MEMORANDUM

To: Pastors & Parish Administrators

From: Rev. Msgr. Joseph G. Celano *JGC*
Episcopal Vicar for Administration

Date: February 10, 2021

Subject: Financial Accountability

As you know, this past year, the Diocesan Office of Finance outsourced our auditing process to independent vendors in an effort to have a current assessment of the positions of all of our parishes. This was a major project that has born a great deal of fruit. I am grateful for your cooperation with the process, especially since several of the audits needed to be rescheduled because of the pandemic. The results have been analyzed and many of the reports have been returned to pastors and their finance councils for their information and to implement any recommendations made to strengthen local fiscal management practices. In addition, it has provided an opportunity for the Office of Finance to recognize certain weaknesses that can now be addressed in a more comprehensive way.

One significant response has been the establishment of a new position within the Vicariate for Administration - the Office of Parish Financial Services. Catherine Solfaro is now available to oversee the auditing process and follow-up with questions and concerns. She is also available to help analyze results and help support pastors and business managers on the parish and school level, utilizing best practices for reporting, transparency and possibly more efficient use of funds.

In an effort to provide a more transparent method of reporting of weekend collections, Catherine's office has developed and piloted a parish program so that all weekly collections may be easily entered and uploaded in order to have greater accountability and to monitor trends developing across the diocese. A detailed description of how to implement this is also attached.

In addition, Bishop Checchio, along with the Diocesan Finance Council, has directed the exploration and implementation of NAVEX Global EthicsPoint as an additional measure of accountability and transparency for the financial practices in our diocesan administration, parishes and institutions. EthicsPoint is an anonymous hotline that provides the opportunity for people with concerns or even employees, to report suspected fiscal malfeasance without repercussion for their job. The hotline report would then initiate a confidential, internal inquiry to assure that all measures of propriety are being followed. The process will be overseen by the Office of the Chancellor, working with appropriate offices from the Vicariate for Administration. As these procedures are finalized, you will receive more



information. Many dioceses and archdioceses have been working with EthicsPoint for some years and report that it has greatly improved the overall trust and transparency needed in our times. Certainly, we must all do all that is possible to ensure the integrity of our financial operations on every level and show ourselves to be good stewards of the resources entrusted to us.

Finally, the Bishop had directed a subcommittee of the Diocesan Finance Council to review our current policies on parish finance councils. Those results were discussed at the Presbyteral Council meeting for further input. You will find the attached revised guidelines that you are asked to implement with your business managers and finance councils immediately. These new guidelines replace the former guidelines and should be retained in Volume 1 of the Policy & Resource Manual on Parish Administration.

Please know of the Bishop's gratitude for all you do in shepherding the many complex aspects of running our parishes, institutions and schools, especially in regard to the good stewardship we are asked to exercise over the resources our people entrust to us for the mission of the Church.