



# **Canonical Issues for Lay Parish Corporators 2022-2023**



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# A Light Brightly Visible...



- **Archbishop William Lori's Pastoral letter guides us in our work as Missionary Disciples seeking to share and live out the Gospel of Jesus Christ.**
- **All of us share in that responsibility and as parish leaders, we model that commitment to others both inside the parish and beyond its walls.**

# Corporator Training



- **Basic Training for Corporators**
  - **Canonical Aspects**
  - **Civil Law Aspects**
- **Advanced Training for Corporators**
  - **Human Resources**
  - **Finance**
  - **Facilities Management**

# Parish Corporators

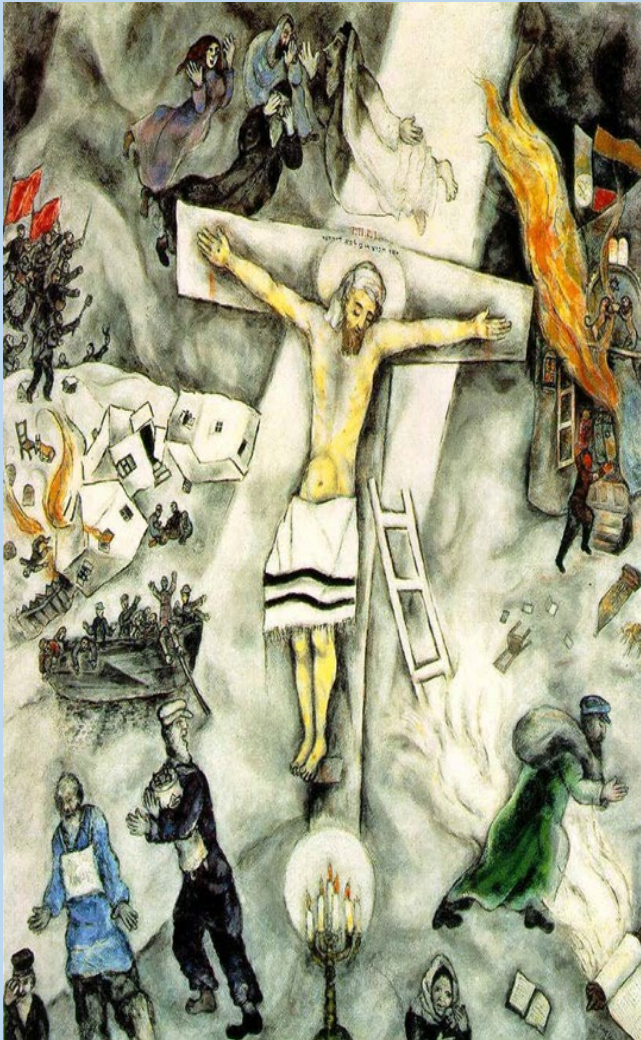
## Role of the Corporators as Administrator under Canon Law

- While civil law requirements are attached to parish corporations and those who work for them, there are also canonical requirements under Church law for those who oversee the patrimony of juridic persons (in this case parishes).





# Parish Corporators



## Canon Law

The canon law governing parishes can generally be of two types:

- Common or universal law, binding on all Catholics; and
- Particular law, relating to territory, such as the archdiocese or the territory of the Conference of Bishops.

# Parish Corporators

Because of the different types of law, it is not surprising that we find distinctions from place to place, just as the civil laws vary from State to State.

In addition to varying geographically, the law also changes with time. What was considered to be essential in the early 1980s might now be of lesser importance, and be replaced with other concerns.



# Parish Corporators

## Code of Canon Law-Book V

This book is called the “Temporal Goods of the Church” and covers many aspects of the management and alienation of Church goods and property.

Some of you may have reviewed this book in a canon law class so you know that canon law is not read exactly like civil laws of the United States.



# Parish Corporators



**Code of Canon Law - Title II:  
Administration of Goods  
(canons 1273-1289)** has a  
number of canons that apply at  
the parish level.

The canons refer throughout to  
an “administrator” of  
ecclesiastical (church) goods.  
In a parish, the pastor is the chief  
administrator answerable to the  
Archbishop for his oversight of  
church goods.



# Parish Corporators



## Other Administrators

Others “who lawfully take part in the administration of ecclesiastical goods, are bound to fulfill their duties in the name of the Church and in accordance with the law” (canon 1282).

This means employees, corporators and others have similar duties under canon law.

# Parish Corporators

## Canon 1284 states:

§1 All administrators are to perform their duties with the diligence of a good householder;

§2 Therefore they must:

1º exercise vigilance so that the goods entrusted to their care are in no way lost or damaged, taking out insurance policies for this purpose insofar as necessary;



# Parish Corporators

2º take care that the ownership of ecclesiastical goods is protected by civilly valid methods;

3º observe the prescripts of both canon and civil law or those imposed by a founder, a donor, or legitimate authority, and especially be on guard so that no damage comes to the Church from the non-observance of civil laws;



# Parish Corporators



4º collect the return of goods and the income accurately and on time, protect what is collected, and use them according to the intention of the founder or legitimate norms;

5º pay at the stated time the interest due on a loan or mortgage and take care that the capital debt itself is repaid in a timely manner;



# Parish Corporators

6º with the consent of the ordinary, invest the money which is left over after expenses and can be usefully set aside for the purposes of the juridic person;

7º keep well organized books of receipts and expenditures;



# Parish Corporators

8º draw up a report of the administration at the end of each year;

9º organize correctly and protect in a suitable and proper archive the documents and records on which the property rights of the Church or the institute are based, and deposit authentic copies of them in the archive of the curia when it can be done conveniently.



# Parish Corporators - Accounts



§3 It is strongly recommended that administrators prepare budgets of incomes and expenditures each year; it is left to particular law, however, to require them and to determine more precisely the ways in which they are to be presented.



# Parish Corporators - Employees



## **Can. 1286 Administrators of goods:**

- 1º in the employment of workers are to observe meticulously also the civil laws concerning labor and social policy, according to the principles handed on by the Church;
- 2º are to pay a just and decent wage to employees so that they are able to provide fittingly for their own needs and those of their dependents.



# Parish Corporators - Accountability

- **Can. 1287 §1.** Both clerical and lay administrators of any ecclesiastical goods whatever which have not been legitimately exempted from the power of governance of the diocesan bishop are bound by their office to present an annual report to the local ordinary who is to present it for examination by the finance council; any contrary custom is reprobated.
- **§2.** According to norms to be determined by particular law, administrators are to render an account to the faithful concerning the goods offered by the faithful to the Church.



# Parish Corporators - Litigation

- **Can. 1288**

Administrators are neither to initiate nor to contest litigation in a civil forum in the name of a public juridic person unless they have obtained the written permission of their own ordinary.



# Parish Corporators

- Both canon law and civil law oblige business managers and other administrative professionals to act prudently on behalf of the parishioners they serve.
- They are to go about their duties with the understanding that they act, not for themselves, but with the special trust of others who rely on their honesty and expertise.



# Collaboration with Other Parish Entities



- Role of oversight and collaboration with **Parish Pastoral Council** and **Finance Council (Committee)**;
- Both required to be formed according to Universal and Diocesan canon law;
- Corporators have right to attend their meetings as observers and/or to receive their minutes;
- Corporators may also ask Pastoral Council President and/or Finance Chair to attend Corporator meetings to give updates, etc.;
- Cannot sit on either body while corporator



# Policy Website



The Archdiocese has established a policy website where Financial, Property, HR and Risk policies are now located. Sacramental policies are also located here.

The address for the site is:

- <http://policy.archbalt.org/>
- There is also a “quick link” at the top of the Archdiocese of Baltimore webpage.

**Remember the Mission**



# Problem 1

**You were recently over to the rectory for dinner with the pastor and you noticed that the entire first floor is being renovated with a new kitchen, bathroom and fireplace. Father indicates that he is “having a little work done” to make the place more comfortable.**

**This is the first you’ve heard of the matter. What should you do?**





# Problem 2



- You have just volunteered to chaperone the parish youth group on a pilgrimage to Washington, DC to participate in the Right to Life Rally and March. You ask the parish associate what kind of training you might need to be able to go. He tells you that you don't have to worry about this since you are a corporator and there is no special training for that.
- How do you handle this situation?



# Problem 3

The parish bookkeeper has just mentioned to you in passing that she is hiring her son to drop off the bank deposit every day so she can stay at the parish and answer the phones. She also asks you if you would like her to do your taxes this year, just like she did last.

Are there any issues in this situation?

