GUIDELINES AND PROCEDURES FOR MANAGEMENT OF SUNDAY COLLECTIONS

Parishes, Parish Elementary Schools, and Related Organizations/Activities
Revised: January, 2013

The following guidelines and procedures have been recommended by the Diocesan Task Force for Financial Policies for parish, parish elementary school, and parish related organizations.

GENERAL GUIDELINES AND PROCEDURES

A. Guarantee that all donations collected by the ushers are delivered intact (as collected) to the count team or to a locked or secured area in a sealed or locked bag(s).

- Before mass, inform the ushers of the number of collections. Assign tamper resistant or lockable bags for these collections (regular collection and special collection).
- A sign in sheet is recommended for the ushers. The ushers take up the collection by passing the offertory baskets. The ushers are to be in plain view at all times.
- The ushers consolidate the individual collection baskets to a pre-numbered sealed tamper resistant bag assigned to each mass that lines the main collection basket, or lockable bag. This is always done in the presence of a witnessing usher.
- The collection is maintained in its original sealed or locked form. No change is ever given from the collected funds or checks cashed from the collected funds.
- Other collection receipts such as second collections are to be appropriately segregated within the plastic bags or in separate bags.
- On the front of the bag, fill-in the mass, collection (first or second), and the date. Use ballpoint ink.
- The bag(s) for the regular collection and, if applicable, the second collection are transported to a secure area for safekeeping prior to delivery to the count team. For prenumbered bags, record the number of the bag on a log which is kept separate from the collection bag.
- Document the procedures for the ushers to follow, especially how to properly seal the bags. Post and communicate these procedures with the ushers. Let ushers know how much you appreciate their cooperation in successfully implementing these procedures.

B. Ensure the proper use of safekeeping devices, such as safes, to safeguard funds.

- A limited number of people should maintain lock combinations and/or custody of keys to parish safe(s). Person transporting collections to the counter should not have access to the keys for bank bags. Combinations and keys should never be stored in an unlocked desk drawer, hung on a wall, the back of a door, or in an unsupervised area where anyone can get access to them.
- Limit the amount of funds secured in a safe, to a minimum, with the excess deposited with a bank or night depository.

C. Make available a secure area for counting and provide supplies to aid the count process.

- The count area should be free of distractions and through traffic. Limit the number of people, other than the counters, in the room. Only the counters and someone from parish staff should be in the room. The parish staff should not be counting the collections.
Set up the count room with the counting supplies, collection worksheets, and bank deposit tickets. Also, supply a new tamper resistant or lockable bag to secure the funds to be deposited after the count is complete.

D. The tamper resistant bags or lockable bank bags are delivered unopened to the count team, preserving the chain of custody from the ushers. No one should handle money to sort or organize it prior to the arrival of the count team.

- Once the counters (the 3 person team must be composed of at least 2 unrelated persons) are assembled, the pastor or his designate will deliver the tamper resistant bags containing the mass collections. Other sources of revenue received by mail, or in person at the parish office are also delivered to the counters.

- The counters will examine the bags to note if the condition is secure. The condition of the bag and the bag number should be recorded on the Collection Form provided by the Diocese. If the integrity of the bag is compromised the pastor must be informed immediately.

E. Collections are counted, classified, and recorded by alternating count teams or duties are rotated among several count team members. The complete collection is deposited. None of the collection is kept at the parish as convenience cash.

- The envelopes are opened and the money inside is taken out and compared to the amount listed on the envelope. Envelopes with no amounts or envelopes with incorrect amounts are to be marked with the correct amounts. An envelope or list is to be prepared for loose checks since the check indicates the contributor.

- Checks are restrictively endorsed by stamping for deposit only to the parish account.

- The envelope amounts are totaled and the money from the envelopes (currency, coin and checks) is counted and both totals are compared and reconciled. The confirmed envelope total is recorded on the Collection Summary Form provided by the Diocese in the envelope section along with the number of envelopes.

- Two adding machine tapes are run to verify the total of the checks. Two adding machine tapes are run to total the currency and coin. There are now three separate tapes duplicated for checks, currency, and coin.

- The summary section of the Collection Summary Form is completed by adding the envelope and loose cash sections. The currency, coin and checks are to be bundled and/or wrapped and a second count taken to confirm the amount to be deposited. Any discrepancies are to be reconciled. The counters are to indicate the date of the count, what was done with the collection and sign the report. The report is retained by the parish.

- The counters will record the currency and checks on a duplicate bank deposit ticket. All information is completed on the deposit ticket. The original, along with the adding machine tapes are to be sent to the bank and a copy retained at the parish.

- The Collection Summary Form is retained, along with the deposit ticket. Match the deposit ticket to the Collection Summary Form to verify and attach both.

- The collection is placed in a tamper resistant bag ready for transport, along with the deposit ticket and second copy of the adding machine tape listing check amounts. The collection is then transported for deposit processing in the bank.

F. Confirm the amount of deposit credited to the parish account and add the transaction to the general ledger.

- The deposit receipt received from the bank is compared to the balance of the Collection Summary Form and retained at the parish.
All cash receipts are to be deposited in a local bank depository account. Weekly, mail the original of the completed cash transmittal form together with the check and/or duplicate deposit slip(s) to the HCAS. Additional deposits may be made during the week as required following the procedures outlined above. The copy of the transmittal form should be retained for informational purposes. **The importance of making deposits on a regular basis and of submitting the cash transmittal form every week cannot be overemphasized.** Faithfulness in recording and depositing cash receipts will aid the Office of Financial Administration immeasurably in generating timely financial reports.

### G. Management oversight by the Pastor/parish staff of the performance of the collection and processing of funds.

- Overages and shortages between the Collection Summary Form and bank deposit receipts should be reviewed to determine if additional count team members should be recruited or if count duties should be changed. Immediately notify the Pastor.
- A comparison is made of the actual collection to the budgeted collection for the week, the previous week results and periodically the previous year results.
- The actual collection is published in the church bulletin each week, by regular and special collections.
- The Finance Council should periodically review the collection process steps for lapses in procedures and to refresh the process.

### H. Parish staff: To the extent staffing levels permit, the duties of collecting, recording, depositing, and reconciling cash receipts should be separated among different individuals. If a parish does not have sufficient staff to separate responsibilities for cash handling, record keeping and reconciliation in the most desired manner, closer day-to-day supervision by the pastor or someone authorized by the pastor is necessary.

- All cash receipt accounting entries are supported with validated bank deposits tickets and other documentation to ensure an independent verification of cash deposits.
- The person who posts the contribution envelopes to the individual contribution records is not to be a money counter or the parish bookkeeper.

### I. Parishioner contributions from donor envelopes and checks are tracked, reviewed, and reported back to parishioners.

- Someone who is independent of the counting, depositing, and recording of the collections prepares the year-end parishioner statements.
- On an annual basis send donors a statement identifying the donation amounts received from the person.
- Gift acknowledgment forms are issued when donations of $250 or more are received.
- If there is a discrepancy, resolve it immediately by reviewing contribution records.
- The importance of adhering to these procedures cannot be overemphasized. If adequate internal controls are not in place, the personnel handling cash are not being afforded the protection to which they are entitled should allegations of impropriety ever be made.