

## CHURCH MANAGEMENT

### *A Guide to Church Management and Leadership*

Empowering Church Administrators for Effective Leadership

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Financial Management, Human Resource Management, Asset Management, Corporate Governance

#### DEDICATION

*To Jemitias and Ellen Jongwe,  
 my beloved siblings, Leocadia, Jemais, Josphat, Lilian and Sekai and to all faithful stewards who serve the  
 Church with integrity, humility and love*

#### Acknowledgements

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Special appreciation goes to the Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops' Conference for its ongoing commitment to the professionalisation of Church administration and to all those who generously shared their experiences both the successes and the challenges which have given this handbook its practical grounding.

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### **Objectives of the Book**

The primary objective of this handbook is to offer practical, theologically grounded guidance to Church administrators across all levels of the Catholic ecclesial community. It is equally a resource for seminarians, newly appointed administrators, school and hospital managers, parish coordinators and anyone involved in the governance of Catholic institutions.

This book seeks to deepen the understanding of everyone engaged in Church administration by addressing the specific needs of diverse ecclesial settings. It endeavours to serve as a valuable resource for students, educators, and practitioners seeking to advance their understanding of effective church management practices. Furthermore, this comprehensive guide is designed to benefit church administrators and lay individuals who may not have a formal background in management, offering practical insights and strategies that can be applied within the unique context of Church organisations.

By the end of this handbook, the reader should be equipped to:

- Apply sound financial management principles within a faith-based institutional context.
- Recruit, develop and retain a motivated and mission-aligned workforce.
- Manage Church properties and assets in accordance with Canon Law and good governance standards.
- Navigate ethical dilemmas with integrity, using the Church's social teaching as a moral compass.
- Develop and implement resource mobilisation strategies that ensure long-term institutional sustainability.
- Apply the principles of subsidiarity and solidarity to governance and decision-making.
- Mobilise, diversify and strategically manage financial and non-financial resources in support of institutional mission sustainability.
- Apply biblical leadership models that include servant leadership, transformational leadership and situational leadership within the specific governance context of the Catholic Church in Africa.
- Implement and evaluate corporate governance structures in Church institutions, using the High-Impact Governance Matrix to balance Mission Fidelity with Operational Excellence.
- Manage Church assets, namely, properties, buildings, infrastructure and investments in compliance with Canon Law (cc. 1254–1310) and applicable civil legislation.
- Participate constructively in synodal governance structures including Parish Pastoral Councils, Diocesan Finance Councils and Presbyteral Councils in accordance with both Canon Law and the vision of Pope Francis for a listening, walking-together Church.
- Apply economic resource allocation principles including the Production Possibility Frontier model to make optimal decisions about the balance between mission expenditure and administrative overhead in Church institutions.
- Build and sustain a leadership succession pipeline that honours the example of biblical leaders such as Moses, Nehemiah, Paul and Deborah, and equips the next generation of Church administrators for effective, faithful service.
- Establish, implement and maintain a comprehensive safeguarding framework covering children, vulnerable adults, institutional integrity, physical and intangible assets, and digital data in accordance with the requirements of *Vos Estis Lux Mundi* (2019), the relevant national Bishops' Conference safeguarding guidelines, and applicable civil legislation.
- Apply the theoretical frameworks of Human Capital Theory and the Resource-Based View to understand, develop and strategically deploy the Church's human, physical, financial and intangible resources in service of its mission.
- Understand and apply the principles of synodal governance by engaging constructively with consultative structures including Parish Pastoral Councils, Diocesan Finance Councils and Presbyteral Councils, in a manner consistent with both Canon Law and the vision of Pope Francis for a walking-together, listening Church.
- Reflect critically on lessons learned from Church administration practice in Zimbabwe and Africa, and apply a forward-looking vision that integrates digital transformation, impact measurement, talent development and financial sustainability to ensure institutional resilience in the coming decades.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

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The fundamental structure that facilitates efficient and well-organised governance within the Church, and guarantees the smooth running of its temporal and spiritual activities, is Church Administration. Rooted deeply in the principles of stewardship and servant leadership, church administration encompasses a broad range of responsibilities including pastoral care, financial oversight, human resource management, the mobilisation of resources, the safeguarding of all Church assets physical and intangible and, above all, the protection of the vulnerable persons entrusted to the Church's care. Guided by Canon Law, the social teachings of the Church and the magisterium, this field empowers administrators to lead with integrity and diligence in service to the Church's mission.

The Catholic Church is one of the world's largest organisations, operating schools, hospitals, universities, social welfare agencies, development programmes and parishes across every continent. The quality of her administration directly determines the quality of her witness. When Church institutions are well managed, they become beacons of the Gospel in action. When they are poorly managed when finances are mishandled, when people are exploited, when the vulnerable are harmed and those responsible are protected they risk becoming a counter-sign to the very values they are called to proclaim.

This handbook equips church administrators with both managerial and practical strategies to navigate the complexities of modern church governance while maintaining fidelity to the Church's timeless values and mission. It highlights the multifaceted dimensions of church administration, addressing both the spiritual and managerial roles of church leaders as stewards of God's gifts, and provides practical guidance on managing the temporal goods entrusted to the Church responsibly and transparently.

This handbook is grounded in two established management theories Human Capital Theory (Schultz, 1961; Mallon, 2024) and the Resource-Based View (Wernerfelt, 1984; Barney, 2021) which together provides the analytical framework for understanding the Church's most strategic resources: its people, its physical assets, its financial capital, and its irreplaceable intangible assets of moral authority, community trust and institutional reputation. A resource that cannot be exploited is not a resource and should not be counted; strategic administration requires not only the faithful custody of these resources but their active, purposeful deployment in service of the mission.

Safeguarding the protection of all persons and all resources entrusted to the Church is treated in this handbook as the integrating and ultimate administrative duty. Every chapter of this handbook, from financial management to human resource management, from asset management to corporate governance and leadership, culminates in this responsibility. The administrator who masters every other dimension of Church management but fails in safeguarding has failed at the most fundamental level of the Gospel calling.

Two cross-cutting principles of Catholic Social Teaching run through every chapter of this handbook and must be kept in constant view by every church administrator:

### **The Principle of Subsidiarity**

Subsidiarity holds that decisions should be made at the most appropriate and lowest possible level of authority. A higher body should not take over functions that a lower body can perform well. In church administration this means empowering school managers to manage their schools, hospital administrators to run their hospitals, and parish committees to govern their parishes while diocesan and episcopal structures provide oversight, direction and support rather than micromanagement. As the Catechism of the Catholic Church states: "A community of a higher order should not interfere in the internal life of a community of a lower order, depriving the latter of its functions" (CCC 1883).

### **The Principle of Solidarity**

Solidarity calls administrators to recognise that the resources of the Church belong not to any individual or institution but to the entire body of Christ. Financial surpluses in one institution should, where possible, support struggling institutions. Talented administrators should mentor and develop others. Success in one diocese enriches the whole Conference. As Pope John Paul II taught, solidarity is not a vague feeling of compassion but "a firm and persevering determination to commit oneself to the common good" (Sollicitudo Rei Socialis, 38).

In practice, subsidiarity operates across distinct strata of Church governance. The table below sets out each level, its proper sphere of authority, and its accountability relationship with other levels.

<b>Governance Level</b>	<b>Proper Sphere of Authority</b>	<b>Accountability Relationship</b>
<b>The Holy See</b>	Sets universal doctrine, Canon Law and magisterial teaching. Provides the supreme doctrinal and juridical framework for the whole Church. Does not administer individual parishes or institutions directly.	Accountable to the universal Church; all lower levels are ultimately accountable to each other and the universal Church and to God.
<b>Episcopal Conference</b>	Coordinates national pastoral priorities, issues joint pastoral letters and sets national-level policies. Promotes uniformity across dioceses without overriding local pastoral and administration discretion.	Reports to the Holy See; member bishops retain full diocesan authority in their own territories. Accountable to the universal Church; accountable the universal Church and to God.
<b>Diocese</b>	Under the Bishop’s authority, translates universal and national policies into local pastoral and administrative practice. Provides canonical approval for major decisions and oversight of all parishes and institutions within its territory.	The Diocese reports to the Holy See and Episcopal Conference; all parishes and institutions report to the diocese. Accountable to the universal Church; accountable the universal Church and to God.
<b>Parish</b>	The primary pastoral community in which the faithful encounter the sacraments, catechesis and charitable outreach. The parish priest, in collaboration with the Parish Council, administers the parish’s spiritual and temporal affairs.	The parish priest reports to the Bishop; the Parish Council assists and advises the parish priest (cf. Canon 536). Accountable to the universal Church; accountable the universal Church and to God.
<b>Parish Council</b>	An advisory and collaborative body of lay faithful assisting the parish priest in planning, governance and resource mobilisation. Does not replace clerical authority but ensures participatory governance in line with subsidiarity (cf. Canon 536).	Advises the parish priest; its resolutions are subject to his approval and diocesan guidelines. Accountable to the universal Church and to God
<b>Institutions (Schools, Hospitals, Social Centres)</b>	Each institution operates under diocesan canonical and administrative authority, managed by a qualified administrator accountable to an institutional governing board and the diocesan bishop. These are Church entities governed by their statutes and Canon Law, not personal enterprises.	The institution’s administrator reports to the governing board and diocese; the board reports to the diocese. Accountable to the universal Church and to God.

*Table 0.1: Strata of Church Governance under the Principle of Subsidiarity (cf. CCC 1883; Code of Canon Law, 1983)*

The principle of subsidiarity thus demands that the Holy See does not do what the diocese can do; the diocese does not do what the parish can do; and the parish does not do what the Parish Council or the faithful themselves can do effectively. Each stratum must operate within its proper sphere, exercising genuine authority while remaining in full communion with the levels above. Building on the rich tradition of ecclesial teachings and contemporary best practices, this handbook aims to strengthen the capacities of church administrators to foster communities that are spiritually vibrant, pastorally effective, administratively sound and socially responsible ultimately contributing to the Church’s mission of salvation and service to humanity.

## Chapter 1: Overview of Church Administration

Church administration stands as the backbone of effective and organised Church governance. Within the Catholic Church, this vital function ensures the smooth operation of ecclesiastical affairs, encompassing pastoral care, financial management, human resource management and asset management. Canon 1284 §1 is unequivocal: “All administrators are to perform their duties with the diligence of a good householder.” Empowering church administrators with knowledge and skills is therefore not an optional extra but a moral and canonical imperative.

Church leaders are custodians entrusted with the administration of the Church’s temporal goods. Lumen Gentium, Chapter 2, “The People of God,” emphasises the shared responsibility of all the faithful to participate in the Church’s mission. Administrators, through their dedicated service, contribute to the Church’s overall well-being and effectiveness. Throughout history, the Church’s popes have offered guidance on administration. Pope Leo XIII, in Rerum Novarum, emphasised the importance of just labour practices and the dignity of workers. Pope Francis, through Laudato Si and Fratelli Tutti, calls administrators to prioritise the needs of the vulnerable and marginalised.

### Defining Church Management

Management involves planning, organising, leading, motivating and controlling resources within an organisation to achieve goals efficiently and effectively. George R. Terry describes management as a process that integrates science and art to accomplish predetermined objectives. In the Church context, however, management carries an additional dimension: it is always a form of service rooted in faith.

There are several ways of conceptualising management within the Church setting:

### Stewardship and Servant Leadership

Management in the Church can be seen as the responsible and ethical stewardship of resources, talents and responsibilities entrusted to the Church community (Okonkwo, 2021). It involves servant leadership (Onaga, 2022), where church leaders serve the needs of the faithful and community with humility and compassion. These are not merely theoretical concepts; they represent a fundamental orientation of the heart that distinguishes Church administration from purely commercial management.

“...it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful.” (1 Corinthians 4:2)

## The Nexus of Stewardship and Servant Leadership

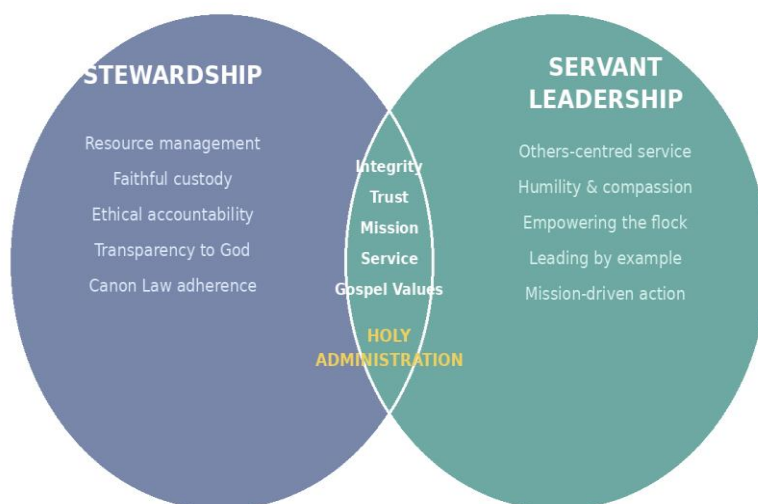


Figure 1.1: The Nexus of Stewardship and Servant Leadership — the foundation of high-impact administration (Author’s creation)

### **Stewardship Theory in Church Administration**

Stewardship theory holds that resources whether financial, human or environmental are considered gifts from God (Reumann, 2014). Church leaders and members are expected to manage these resources responsibly, ethically and transparently, ensuring that they are utilised in a manner that aligns with the mission and values of the Church. This framework is deeply congruent with the Church's own self-understanding, and stands in sharp contrast to agency theory, which assumes that individuals will always act primarily in their own self-interest.

This handbook deliberately prioritises stewardship theory for three reasons. First, it is consistent with the moral and accountable management style demanded by Canon Law. Second, it is aligned with the social teachings of the Church as articulated by a succession of popes from Leo XIII to Francis. Third, it integrates both stewardship and servant leadership, creating a transformative environment for mission-driven administration (Birch, 2002).

#### **Canon Law Anchor**

*Book V of the Code of Canon Law (cc. 1254–1310) governs the temporal goods of the Church. Administrators are bound by these canons in all matters relating to acquisition, management, investment and alienation of Church property. Ignorance of Canon Law is not an excuse for non-compliance.*

### **Defining Church Administration: A Theological Foundation**

The Catechism of the Catholic Church defines the Church in three complementary ways: as the whole People of God; as the liturgical assembly; and as the Mystical Body of Christ (CCC 751-752). These three dimensions shape how we understand the nature of Church administration. Because the Church is the People of God, administration must always serve and involve the whole community. Because the Church is the liturgical assembly, administration must protect the sacred and the spiritual. Because the Church is the Body of Christ, administration must reflect the values of its Head.

When Church administrators fail to embody the roles of stewardship and servanthood, they risk operating the Church as a private enterprise, compromising her entire mission. The temptation to treat a school, hospital or parish as one's personal domain is real and must be explicitly resisted through strong governance structures and personal spiritual accountability.

### **Key Functions of Administration**

The author adopts the classical management framework of Planning, Organising, Staffing, Directing and Controlling, adapted to the specific context of Church governance. Each function is understood not merely as a managerial tool but as an expression of faithful stewardship.

## Strategic Planning Hierarchy for Church Institutions



"Without proper planning, organisations risk chaos and uncertainty." — Mintzberg (1993)

Figure 1.2: Strategic Planning Hierarchy from Vision to Monitoring author's creation

### Planning

Benjamin Franklin observed: "If you fail to plan, you are planning to fail." In Church administration, strategic and operational planning are paramount. Administrators must align organisational goals with the teachings and mission of the Church, considering both external factors such as societal trends and internal capabilities such as faith-based resources. Kareska (2017) notes that planning offers focus and direction, enabling proactive problem anticipation. Mintzberg (1993) cautions that without proper planning, organisations risk chaos and uncertainty.

The author has observed that some dioceses possess well-crafted strategic plans, yet they are not rigorously adhered to. This often results in activities being conducted in an ad hoc manner, leaving some areas neglected while others receive disproportionate emphasis. The antidote is a culture of accountability that treats the plan as a living governance document, not a decorative exercise.

The types of planning required in Church administration include:

- Strategic Planning: Setting long-term goals and objectives (3–10 years) aligned with the Church's mission and vision.
- Operational Planning: Detailing short-term actions and tasks to achieve day-to-day functioning efficiently.
- Financial Planning: Budgeting, resource mobilisation and financial management strategies for sustainability.
- Pastoral Planning: Developing plans for spiritual growth, outreach programmes and pastoral care initiatives.
- Succession Planning: Identifying and developing future leaders to ensure institutional continuity.

### Organising

Organising involves the strategic management of defining and grouping roles, establishing authorities and creating frameworks aimed at achieving organisational goals (Robbins & Coulter, 2016). Effective organisation ensures the optimal utilisation of available resources. Church administrators structure the organisation by defining roles and responsibilities in alignment with the hierarchical nature of the Church, establishing clear reporting lines, departmental structures and workflows that facilitate collaboration among the People of God.

**Staffing**

The recruitment, training and development of individuals within the Church are crucial tasks for administrators. Staffing encompasses not only the employment of lay professional staff but also the placement of clergy and religious within institutional roles. Administrators must ensure that every position from hospital chief executive to parish caretaker is filled by a person with the right combination of competence, character and commitment to the Church’s values. The Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops’ Human Resource Policy provides detailed guidance on staffing procedures and must be consulted in all human resource matters.

**Directing**

Guiding employees within a religious context involves more than managerial tasks; it requires spiritual leadership. Church administrators promote a positive work culture infused with faith, motivate individuals through shared beliefs and foster a sense of community and teamwork rooted in the Church’s teachings. Directing encompasses strategic planning, policy development, financial management oversight, human resources, communication and coordination, risk management and community engagement.

**Controlling**

Controlling in church administration involves the strategic and responsible management of resources, processes and decisions to ensure alignment with the Church’s mission and values. Far from being domineering, effective controlling entails maintaining accountability, transparency and stewardship over all aspects of church operations. It involves establishing guidelines, monitoring progress and making adjustments as necessary. Controlling in Church circles serves to maintain order, foster accountability and safeguard the collective well-being and the Church’s mission. However, this function must be exercised with prudence: when control is applied excessively, it erodes the spirit of ownership among staff, stifles institutional innovation and creates a culture of compliance without commitment. The wise administrator controls outcomes and standards rather than every micro-decision. As Drucker and Kotter (2021) observe, leaders who over-control breed dependence rather than capability. The goal is accountability, not surveillance; alignment, not uniformity.

**Decision-Making**

In the realm of Church administration, decisions are not merely strategic but also theological. Administrators navigate challenges and opportunities by considering the teachings of the Church, the needs of the community and the divine guidance that shapes their choices. The principle of subsidiarity is critically relevant here: decisions should be taken at the most appropriate level. An administrator who makes all decisions unilaterally, bypassing those closer to the situation, violates both good governance and Catholic Social Teaching.

The following table summarises the five dimensions of decision-making in Church administration, illustrating the type, the appropriate decision-maker, the governing principle and a practical example from the Church context:

Decision Type	Who Decides	Governing Principle	Church Context Example
<b>Strategic</b>	Bishop / Board / Senior Leadership	Long-term mission alignment; consultation with the Holy See where required	Opening a new school or hospital in an underserved area
<b>Operational</b>	Institutional Administrators / Departmental Heads	Efficiency and policy compliance; day-to-day management	Approving staff leave; procuring supplies; managing facilities
<b>Inclusive</b>	Parish Council / Staff / Volunteers	Subsidiarity; participation of those closest to the matter	Setting parish budget priorities with the Parish Council
<b>Ethical</b>	All levels; guided by Catholic Social Teaching	Option for the poor; dignity of the person; common good	Choosing not to eliminate outreach programmes despite budget pressure
<b>Data-Informed</b>	Finance Committee / Management Team	Evidence-based; financial reports, metrics and stakeholder feedback	Reviewing quarterly variance reports before revising the annual budget

*Table 1.1: The Five Dimensions of Decision-Making in Church Administration (adapted and modified from Robbins & Coulter, 2016)*

Effective decision-making in Church administration encompasses:

- Strategic decision-making setting long-term direction in line with mission and vision.
- Operational decision-making day-to-day decisions to keep institutions running smoothly.
- Inclusive decision-making involving clergy, staff, volunteers and the community in major decisions.
- Ethical decision-making guided by the principles of Catholic Social Teaching.
- Data-informed decision-making using financial reports, performance metrics and community feedback.
- Adaptive decision-making remaining flexible and responsive to changing circumstances.

### **Conclusion: Overview of Church Administration the Administration Compass: Integrating the Five Functions**

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Church administration is not a secular intrusion into sacred space — it is itself a sacred act. When an administrator plans carefully, organises wisely, staffs fairly, directs with vision and controls with prudence, they are expressing in institutional form the same love that the Gospel expresses in personal form. The five classical management functions do not simply describe what administrators do; they describe what stewardship looks like when it is applied systematically to the governance of a community of faith.

- Research consistently demonstrates that institutions which integrate all five management functions rather than excelling in one and neglecting the others — achieve superior outcomes on both mission and operational dimensions (Robbins & Coulter, 2016; Drucker & Kotter, 2021). A church that plans strategically but organises chaotically, or that staffs carefully but fails to direct its people toward a shared vision, will underperform its potential. Integration is not a luxury; it is the architectural requirement of effective governance.
- The diagram below the Administration Compass visualises this integration. The five functions radiate outward from a single central point: Mission and Faith. This positioning is theologically deliberate. Every management function draws its purpose and its limits from the mission it serves. Planning without mission-alignment is strategy without soul. Controlling without mission-awareness is bureaucracy without mercy. The compass metaphor is also instructive: a compass does not tell you where to go; it tells you where you are, relative to where you need to be. The five functions perform exactly this role in Church administration.

## The Administration Compass



*Five Functions of Church Management (Terry, 1972; Canon 1284 §1)*

*Figure 1.3: The Administration Compass — Five Functions of Church Management Radiating from Mission and Faith at the Centre (Terry, 1972; Canon 1284 §1)*

### Scientific Insight — Systems Theory

Peter Senge's (1990) concept of the 'learning organisation' identifies five disciplines that parallel the five management functions almost exactly: personal mastery (staffing), mental models (organising), shared vision (directing), team learning (planning) and systems thinking (controlling). The Church administrator who understands their work through this systems lens will recognise that a weakness in any one function creates ripple effects throughout the entire institution not merely in the area where the weakness occurs.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

①	Church administration is a theological vocation, not merely a managerial function. Canon 1284 §1 demands the diligence of a good householder this is both a canonical obligation and an evangelical calling.
②	The five functions Planning, Organising, Staffing, Directing and Controlling must be integrated around the mission, not treated as independent silos. Weakness in any one undermines all the others.
③	The principles of Subsidiarity and Solidarity are the Catholic Social Teaching anchors of every management decision. Subsidiarity ensures decisions are made at the right level; Solidarity ensures the whole Body of Christ benefits.
④	Strategic plans that are written and ignored are governance failures. The antidote is a culture of accountability that treats the plan as a living document reviewed regularly by leadership and governance bodies.
⑤	The administrator who manages without stewardship and servant leadership may produce an efficient institution. They will not produce a missionary one. Efficiency and mission are both necessary; neither is sufficient alone.

*"All administrators are to perform their duties with the diligence of a good householder."*

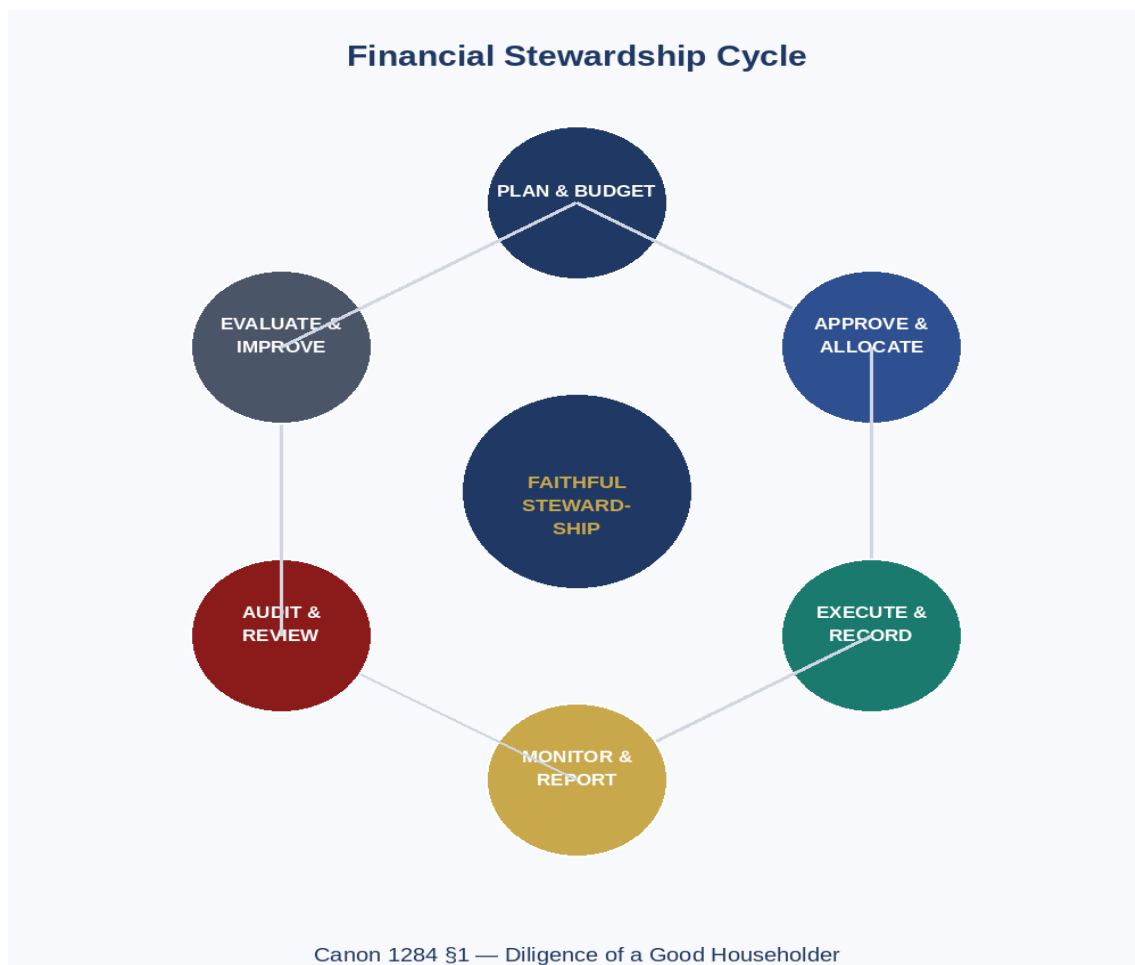
**Canon 1284 §1,**

Chapter 2: Financial Management in the Church

*"The love of money is a root of all kinds of evil." (1 Timothy 6:10)*

Financial Management takes centre stage among all administrative responsibilities. Canon 1284 §2 details the obligations of administrators with respect to financial records, budgets, accounts, insurance, taxes and reporting. Non-compliance with these canonical requirements is not merely poor administration; it is a canonical offence. Every administrator of temporal goods is personally responsible before the law of the Church for the faithful discharge of their financial duties.

At the same time, financial management must always be understood in the context of the Church’s mission. Money is a means, not an end. Resources exist to serve the poor, to educate children, to heal the sick, to proclaim the Gospel. When administrators lose sight of this, institutions become financially driven rather than mission driven and the Church loses her prophetic voice.



*Figure 2.1: The Financial Stewardship Cycle. A closed loop of faithful accountability  
Author's creation*

### Implementing Financial Controls and Best Practices

One of the critical responsibilities of Church administrators is safeguarding the assets of the Church, including financial resources. By implementing robust financial controls and adhering to best practices in accounting and budgeting, administrators ensure the responsible stewardship of the Church's funds. Key steps for effective financial controls include:

- Establish clear and comprehensive financial policies aligned with the Church's mission, Canon Law and applicable legislation.
- Implement segregation of duties no single person should authorise, record and reconcile the same transaction.
- Ensure regular and transparent financial reporting to church leadership, board members and where appropriate, the congregation.
- Monitor the institution's budget regularly, tracking income and expenses and identifying variances promptly.
- Establish internal controls including approval processes for expenditures and regular reconciliation of accounts.
- Establish a financial oversight committee or board finance committee to review financial statements and ensure compliance.
- Provide regular training to all staff involved in financial management.
- Identify financial risks and develop strategies to mitigate them, including maintaining adequate reserves.
- Ensure compliance with all applicable tax laws, regulatory requirements and reporting obligations.
- Commission periodic external audits by independent auditors in line with Canon 1287 §1.

**Canon Law Anchor**

*Canon 1287 §1: "Both clerical and lay administrators of any ecclesiastical goods whatsoever 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 of their administration to the local ordinary."*

**Budgeting and Financial Planning**

Budgeting and financial planning are integral components of effective financial management in the Church. Church administrators are tasked with developing budgets that align with the mission and objectives of the diocese or parish. This involves forecasting income and expenses, prioritising funding for ministry programmes and operational needs, and ensuring financial sustainability. By creating realistic budgets and engaging in strategic financial planning, administrators can make informed decisions that support the long-term financial health of the Church.

Financial reporting is not merely a good practice; it is a canonical obligation. Canon 1287 §1 requires administrators to present an annual report to the local ordinary. Beyond this minimum, best practice demands a tiered reporting cycle that informs all stakeholders throughout the year. The following framework, grounded in internationally recognised standards (KPMG, 2026; Yacob, 2024), is recommended for all Catholic institutions:

Report Type	Frequency	Key Contents	Primary Audience
<b>Monthly Cash-Flow Statement</b>	Monthly	Income received vs. expenses incurred; bank reconciliation; outstanding creditors and debtors	Finance Manager; Administrator
<b>Quarterly Management Accounts</b>	Quarterly (March, June, Sept, Dec)	Budget vs. actual variance analysis; narrative explanation of significant variances; updated full-year forecast	Board / Finance Committee; Diocesan Office
<b>Annual Financial Statements</b>	Annual (within 90 days of financial year-end)	Income and expenditure account; balance sheet; notes to accounts; auditor’s report; administrator’s narrative report on the year	Local Ordinary; Major Donors; Government regulators (where applicable)
<b>External Independent Audit</b>	Annual (mandatory; Canon 1287 §1)	Independent verification of financial statements; assessment of internal controls; management letter with recommendations for improvement	Bishop; ZCBC; Major Donors; Government

*Table 2.1: Financial Reporting and Audit Framework for Church Institutions (cf. Canon 1287; KPMG, 2026; Yacob, 2024)*

External audits must be conducted by qualified, independent auditors with no financial or personal interest in the institution. Every recommendation in the auditor’s management letter must be assigned to a responsible person with a clear deadline for implementation. An audit that generates recommendations which are never acted upon is a governance failure, not a compliance achievement (Yacob, 2024).

A sound church budget should include:

- A programme budget that aligns expenditure directly to ministry outcomes.
- A capital budget for major infrastructure investment and maintenance.
- A contingency reserve of at least three months of operating expenses.
- A mission-critical expenditure line that protects core ministry activities from cuts.
- Regular mid-year reviews with variance analysis and reforecasting.

**Transparency and Accountability in Financial Management**

Transparency and accountability are essential principles in financial management. Administrators must maintain clear and accurate financial records, provide regular financial reports to relevant stakeholders, and adhere to ethical standards in all financial transactions. Pope Francis has consistently underscored the critical importance of transparency, accountability and ethical conduct in all facets of Church governance. By upholding these standards, administrators build trust within the community and demonstrate faithful stewardship.

### Handling Donations, Tithes and Offerings

Managing donations, tithes and offerings is a significant aspect of Church administration. Administrators are responsible for collecting, recording and allocating these financial gifts in accordance with the donors' intentions and the needs of the Church. They must establish procedures for tracking donations, ensuring proper documentation and adhering to legal and tax requirements. By handling donations with integrity and diligence, administrators uphold the sacred trust placed in them by the faithful and contribute to the financial sustainability of the Church.

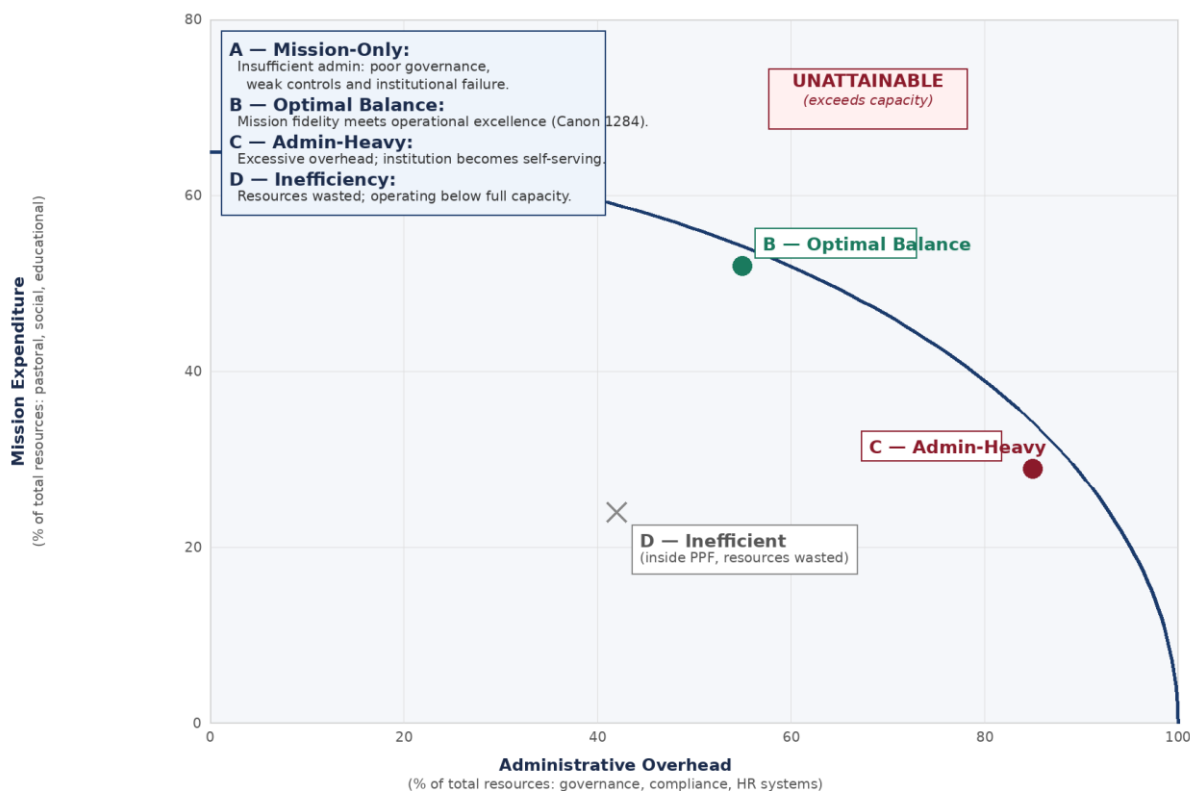
### An Economic Model for Church Resource Allocation: The Production Possibility Frontier

Economics provides Church administrators with a powerful analytical lens for understanding resource allocation decisions. The **Production Possibility Frontier (PPF)** a foundational model in economic theory (Samuelson & Nordhaus, 2010) illustrates the maximum combinations of two goods or services that an organisation can produce given its fixed resources. Applied to Church administration, the PPF maps the trade-off between *mission expenditure* (pastoral, educational and social programmes) and *administrative overhead* (governance, compliance, HR systems and financial controls) (Robbins & Coulter, 2016).

The curve of the PPF is concave to the origin, reflecting the economic law of increasing opportunity costs: as an institution devotes ever more resources to one dimension, it must sacrifice progressively larger amounts of the other. This has direct implications for Church administration. Point A on the curve represents a mission-only posture: maximum pastoral and social expenditure with minimal administration. While spiritually appealing, this position is institutionally dangerous weak governance, poor financial controls and absent compliance systems create conditions for fraud, donor loss and canonical non-compliance. Point C represents the opposite extreme: administration-heavy institutions that are technically excellent but mission-poor they run efficient systems in service of no transformative purpose.

Point B the **Optimal Balance point** corresponds precisely to the High-Impact Sweet Spot introduced in Chapter 6: the intersection of Mission Fidelity and Operational Excellence (Canon 1284 §1). Institutions operating at Point B deliver maximum mission impact while maintaining the administrative infrastructure required for transparency, accountability and sustainability. Point D, inside the frontier, represents waste and inefficiency institutions that are neither mission-focused nor administratively sound. The task of every Church administrator is to move their institution toward Point B and to maintain it there through continuous review, investment and reform.

### The Church Resource Allocation Model Production Possibility Frontier: Mission vs. Administration



(adapted from Samuelson & Nordhaus, 2010; cf. Canon 1284 §1; Robbins & Coulter, 2016)

Figure 2.2: The Church Resource Allocation Model — Production Possibility Frontier: Mission Expenditure vs. Administrative Overhead (Samuelson & Nordhaus, 2010; cf. Canon 1284 §1; Robbins & Coulter, 2016)

The PPF model also demonstrates why the principle of *efficiency* matters in Church governance. An institution operating inside the frontier (Point D) is failing its mission not because it lacks resources, but because it is using existing resources poorly. Before requesting additional funding from donors, bishops or government partners, administrators must first audit whether their current resource base is being deployed at maximum efficiency. This is both economically sound and canonically required by Canon 1284 §1, which obliges administrators to exercise the diligence of a good householder a standard that explicitly encompasses the elimination of waste and the pursuit of optimal stewardship.

#### Practical Implications of the PPF Model for Church Administrators

- Every budget decision involves a trade-off. Investing in a new financial management system (administrative overhead) reduces short-term mission expenditure but expands the overall frontier over time by improving efficiency, donor confidence and canonical compliance.
- Institutions that consistently operate inside the frontier are experiencing governance or management failure, not resource scarcity. The diagnostic question is: What is preventing full deployment of existing resources?
- Donor investment and government grants shift the PPF curve outward they expand what is possible. But they do not change the administrator's obligation to operate on the frontier, not inside it. More resources + poor governance = a larger Point D, not a better mission outcome.
- The optimal balance point (Point B) is not fixed. It shifts as the institution's context changes: a young institution in its early years requires proportionally more administrative investment to build systems; a mature, well-governed institution can afford to shift resources toward mission at the frontier. Annual budget reviews should explicitly consider where the institution currently sits on its PPF.

## Conclusion: Financial Management in the Church

### The Financial Integrity Pyramid: Building from Mission to Audit

Financial management in the Church must be understood from the bottom up and from the inside out. From the bottom up, because the entire edifice of sound financial governance rests on a foundational commitment: mission alignment. Every expenditure must be justifiable in terms of the Gospel the institution exists to proclaim. From the inside out, because financial integrity is not primarily a matter of external compliance but of internal character. The administrator who manages money with integrity not because they will be audited, but because they believe they are accountable to God, is the administrator the Church genuinely needs.

The Pyramid of Financial Integrity shown below models this architecture precisely. Mission Alignment forms the base wide, stable and load-bearing. Internal Controls and Segregation of Duties form the second tier, ensuring that no single person can authorise, record and reconcile the same transaction (Canon 1284 §2). Budgeting and Financial Planning form the third tier, translating mission priorities into resource allocations. Transparency and Accountability form the fourth tier, ensuring that all stakeholders receive timely, accurate and understandable financial information. At the apex, External Audit and Canonical Compliance provide the independent verification that gives the entire structure its credibility (Canon 1287 §1).

Empirical research by KPMG (2026) and Yacob (2024) confirm that institutions which invest in financial governance at all five levels of this pyramid consistently outperform those that focus only on the apex commissioning an external audit without the underlying systems of internal control; transparent reporting and mission-aligned budgeting that give an audit its value.

### THE FINANCIAL INTEGRITY PYRAMID



Built from Mission Alignment to External Audit (1 Corinthians 4:2; Canon 1284-1287)

Figure 2.3: The Financial Integrity Pyramid — Built from Mission Alignment to External Audit (1 Corinthians 4:2; Canon 1284–1287; KPMG, 2026)

#### Scientific Insight — Agency Theory Vs Stewardship Theory

Agency theory (Jensen & Meckling, 1976) assumes that individuals will act primarily in self-interest and must therefore be controlled through external incentives and penalties. Stewardship theory (Davis et al., 1997) assumes that individuals who identify deeply with their organisation's mission will manage its resources responsibly out of intrinsic motivation. Church financial governance works best when it combines both: stewardship theory as the personal disposition of the administrator, and agency theory mechanisms (audit, segregation, reporting) as the institutional safeguards that protect against the inevitable moments when stewardship dispositions fail.

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

①	Financial management is a canonical obligation (Canon 1284–1287), not an optional administrative virtue. Non-compliance is not merely poor management; it is a canonical offence.
②	The most dangerous financial failure in Church institutions is not fraud — it is the quiet drift toward opacity: unaudited accounts, undisclosed transactions, unreviewed budgets. These begin with busyness, not malice.
③	Segregation of duties is the single most important internal control: no one person should authorise, record and reconcile the same transaction. This is both canonical (Canon 1284 §2) and scientifically validated best practice.
④	Trust is built by systems, not instead of them. An administrator who says 'you can trust me, you don't need an audit' is — consciously or not — asking to be the only safeguard. That is an unfair burden on any individual.
⑤	Pope Francis calls for a Church that is poor and for the poor. That call begins with how the institution manages the money already in its possession — before it asks for more.

*"It is required of stewards that they be found trustworthy."*

**1 Corinthians 4:2**

### Chapter 3: Resource Mobilisation and Fundraising

Leadership is not only about having a vision. It requires courage, discipline and the capacity, the knowledge, skills and resources to achieve organisational goals. No matter how inspiring the mission of a Catholic institution, it will falter without the resources to sustain it. Resource mobilisation is therefore one of the most strategic responsibilities of any Church administrator.

Resource mobilisation is the strategic process of identifying, attracting, securing and managing the resources both financial and non-financial needed to sustain an institution's mission. It ensures mission sustainability, reduces financial uncertainty, builds donor confidence and strengthens accountability. Critically, it is not simply fundraising. It encompasses every source of institutional income and support: from Sunday offerings to international grants, from school fees to social enterprise revenue.

#### Reflective Question for Leaders

*What has been the most difficult challenge your institution faces in mobilising resources? What part of that challenge is within your control as a leader?*



### Diversified Funding Sources for Sustainable Mission

Figure 3.1: The Resource Mobilisation Wheel — Diversified Funding Sources for Sustainable Mission  
Author's creation

#### Why Resource Mobilisation Matters Now

The funding landscape for Catholic institutions across Africa and globally is shifting rapidly. Several converging trends are making traditional approaches to institutional finance increasingly inadequate:

- Declining traditional donations: As congregations age and attendance patterns shift, Sunday collections and membership contributions are falling in real terms across many dioceses.
- Increased accountability demands: Institutional donors, foundations and governments increasingly require evidence of impact, sound financial systems and demonstrable governance before releasing funds.
- The shift to digital giving: Mobile money, online platforms and digital giving technologies are becoming the primary giving channels for younger generations.
- Impact-based funding expectations: Donors want to see measurable outcomes, not just activities. Institutions that cannot demonstrate impact will increasingly be passed over.
- Growing partnerships and collaborations: Complex social challenges require multi-institutional responses. Institutions that cannot partner effectively will lose access to collaborative funding opportunities.

These trends demand a fundamental shift in how Church institutions think about and pursue resources. The era of passive fundraising simply putting out a collection plate and hoping for the best is over. What is required now is strategic, diversified and professionally managed resource mobilisation.

#### Principles of Resource Mobilisation

Sound resource mobilisation in a Church context must be grounded in principles that are consistent with the Church's values and mission:

- Mission Alignment and Stewardship: Every resource mobilisation activity must serve the mission. Funds raised for a specific purpose must be used for that purpose. Stewardship of donor resources is both a moral and a legal obligation.

- **Transparency and Accountability:** Donors, whether individuals, foundations or government partners, must be confident that their resources are used wisely, honestly and for stated purposes. Transparency is not optional; it is foundational to long-term donor relationships.
- **Diversification:** No institution should be dependent on a single source of funding. A diverse funding base reduces risk and ensures that the loss of one income stream does not threaten the whole institution.
- **Sustainability:** Resource mobilisation strategies must build long-term financial health, not just address immediate cash-flow crises. Short-term thinking leads to perpetual financial instability.
- **Ethical Fundraising:** The methods by which resources are raised must reflect the Church's values. Manipulation, misrepresentation and pressure tactics are inconsistent with Gospel-based fundraising.
- **Relationship Building:** Friends Raising before Fundraising: Sustainable funding comes from strong relationships built on trust, shared values and mutual respect. Before asking for money, invest in relationships.
- **Organisational Reputation:** An institution's reputation is its greatest resource mobilisation asset. Protect it fiercely through ethical conduct, transparent reporting and consistent delivery on commitments.

### **Internal Sources of Funds**

Every Catholic institution should begin its resource mobilisation strategy by maximising internal sources of income before seeking external funding. Internal sources include:

- **Tithes and offerings:** The foundational giving of the faithful, sustained by excellent pastoral stewardship and clear communication about how funds are used.
- **Special fundraising drives:** Periodic campaigns for specific capital projects, clearly communicated and transparently accounted for.
- **Membership contributions:** Structured giving programmes for regular supporters.
- **Income-Generating Activities (IGAs):** Schools and training centres, hospitals and clinics, agricultural projects, bookshops, conference facilities and guest houses are all examples of income-generating activities that sustain Church missions across Africa. These require professional management and clear financial separation from core ministry budgets.

### **External Sources of Funds**

Once internal sources are maximised, institutions should pursue a diversified portfolio of external funding:

- **Corporate partnerships:** Corporate social responsibility funds, cause-related marketing and strategic partnerships with businesses aligned with the Church's mission.
- **Individual major donors:** High-net-worth individuals and diaspora communities who can make significant gifts when cultivated through authentic relationships.
- **Foundations and grants:** Institutional grant-making bodies, including Catholic development organisations such as Misereor, Caritas, Catholic Relief Services (CRS), Trocaire and international development foundations.
- **Government funding:** Grants and service agreements with governments for the provision of education, health and social welfare services, where such funding does not compromise institutional independence or values.
- **International development partners:** Bilateral and multilateral development agencies whose funding priorities align with the Church's social mission.

### **Emerging Opportunities**

Forward-looking institutions should also be alert to emerging funding opportunities that were not available to previous generations of Church administrators:

- **Climate and environmental funding:** Catholic institutions with land, forests and agricultural programmes are well positioned to access climate finance linked to the principles of *Laudato Si*.
- **Youth empowerment grants:** Programmes focused on young people, skills development and employment creation attract significant donor interest.
- **Gender and social protection funding:** Institutions serving women, girls and vulnerable populations can access gender-responsive funding from a growing range of donors.
- **Social enterprise models:** Church institutions can develop revenue-generating business models that cross-subsidise mission activities, combining commercial viability with social impact.

### **Critical Success Factors in Resource Mobilisation**

Resource mobilisation does not happen by accident. Institutions that successfully sustain their missions over time share certain critical success factors:

- **Strong Leadership Commitment:** Board and senior management must own resource mobilisation as a strategic priority, embedding it in institutional strategy and allocating budget and time accordingly.
- **A Clear and Documented Strategy:** Institutions need a written resource mobilisation strategy covering a period of three to five years, with defined funding targets, priority programmes and a compelling value proposition.
- **Diversified Funding Sources:** A portfolio approach balancing internal revenue, grants, corporate partnerships,

- income-generating activities, endowments and digital fundraising reduces risk.
- **Strong Governance and Accountability Systems:** Donors give to institutions they trust. Strong financial controls, transparent reporting and regular audits are prerequisites for accessing significant external funding.
  - **A Dedicated Resource Mobilisation Function:** Whether a team or a single well-supported individual, someone must have explicit responsibility for donor relations, proposal development, compliance reporting and relationship management.
  - **A Compelling Value Proposition:** Institutions must be able to articulate clearly the problem they address, their unique approach, the measurable impact they achieve and the cost-effectiveness of their work.
  - **Stakeholder mapping and Strategic alliances:** Knowing who your potential donors and partners are and investing systematically in those relationships is the foundation of sustainable fundraising.
  - **Monitoring and Impact Reporting:** Clear key performance indicators, results tracking systems and compelling impact documentation are essential for attracting and retaining donor investment.
  - **Sustainability Planning:** Institutions should have explicit strategies for reducing donor dependency over time, including cost recovery mechanisms and long-term financing models.
  - **Digital Fundraising and Innovation:** Mobile money, online giving platforms, social media campaigns and blended finance models are transforming the funding landscape. Institutions that embrace these tools responsibly will have a significant advantage.
  - **A Culture of Stewardship:** Every member of the institution from the bishop to the groundskeeper should understand that resources are sacred gifts to be used faithfully for the mission.
  - **Effective Communication and Branding:** A clear message, professional proposals, a strong online presence and regular, honest communication with donors and supporters are foundational to long-term resource mobilisation success.

### **Challenges in Resource Mobilisation**

Honest reflection requires acknowledging the significant challenges that many Catholic institutions face in this area:

- Over-reliance on Sunday offerings and a failure to develop diversified income streams.
- Weak proposal writing capacity, limiting access to competitive grant funding.
- Limited donor mapping not knowing who the potential supporters are or how to reach them.
- Poor documentation of impact, making it difficult to demonstrate results to donors.
- Weak financial systems that undermine donor confidence and compliance capacity.

Addressing these challenges requires investment in institutional capacity in skills, systems and culture. The good news is that every one of these challenges is within the control of institutional leadership. As one KPMG resource mobilisation framework notes: “What part of the challenge is within your control as a leader?” The answer, in most cases, is: more than you think.

## **Church Entrepreneurship: From Passive Recipient to Active Creator of Value**

The Church in Africa and Zimbabwe in particular, has historically operated as a passive recipient of financial resources, dependent on Sunday collections, donor grants and mission remittances from international partners. This dependency model is no longer sustainable. A new paradigm is required: the entrepreneurial Church, which identifies unmet needs in its environment, deploys its unique resources creatively and builds self-sustaining ventures that cross-subsidise the mission (2023; Jongwe, 2024a).

Social entrepreneurship is defined as the application of entrepreneurial principles to the pursuit of social, educational and humanitarian goals (Austin, Stevenson & Wei-Skillern, 2006) and is particularly relevant to Church institutions. The Church entrepreneur does not pursue profit for its own sake; they pursue financial sustainability in order to deepen and sustain the mission. The distinction is critical because mission drift, understood as the gradual displacement of Gospel values by commercial imperatives, is the primary risk of Church entrepreneurship and must be governed with deliberate structural safeguards (JHertzke, 2023).

### **The Entrepreneurial Administrator versus the Caretaker Administrator**

Two archetypes characterise Church administration in Africa. The caretaker administrator maintains what exists by managing the parish budget, processing payroll and reporting to the bishop. The entrepreneurial administrator asks a different set of questions: What resources do we hold that are not being fully deployed? What needs in this community could we meet better than any other institution? What ventures could generate the revenue that would free us from donor dependency? (Barney, 2021; Islam & Amin, 2022; Jongwe, 2024a;).

Human Capital Theory (Schultz, 1961; Mallon, 2024) provides the theoretical foundation for Church entrepreneurship: entrepreneurial ventures require trained, creative and mission-aligned people, and the Church already possesses this human capital in abundance if it is strategically developed and deployed. The Resource-Based View (Wernerfelt, 1984; Barney, 2021) adds that the Church's VRIN resources, comprising its moral authority, community trust, canonical identity and network reach, constitute a portfolio of competitive advantages that secular entrepreneurs simply cannot replicate.

### **Defining the Entrepreneurial Opportunity Space for the Church**

Church entrepreneurship operates in the space between the Church's existing resources and the community's unmet needs. Wherever the Church holds assets such as land, buildings, skilled people, institutional trust and community networks, and the community faces deficits in education, healthcare, food security, skills development or economic opportunity, an entrepreneurial opportunity exists (Austin et al., 2006; Drucker & Kotter, 2021).

- Schools and training centres: Church schools can generate tuition revenue while extending access to quality education. Skills training centres can charge fees from employed participants to cross-subsidise programmes for the unemployed.
- Conference and retreat facilities: Church retreat houses, formation centres and guesthouses can generate commercial conference revenue from corporate clients outside mission hours, without compromising their primary spiritual purpose.
- Agricultural projects: Church land holdings in rural Zimbabwe represent significant untapped agricultural potential. Commercial farming, irrigation schemes and value-added agro-processing can generate substantial revenue (Jongwe, 2024a; MAED, 2023).
- Catholic media: Radio stations, publishing houses, websites and social media platforms are entrepreneurial assets that generate advertising revenue, subscription income and wider influence simultaneously.
- Healthcare enterprises: Mission hospitals and clinics can cross-subsidise free or subsidised services to the poor by charging market rates to private paying patients, applying the principle of solidarity in practice.

## **Conclusion: Resource Mobilisation and Fundraising**

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### **The Resource Mobilisation Wheel: Eight Streams, One Mission**

Resource mobilisation is the circulatory system of a Church institution. As the human body requires blood flowing through multiple vessels not a single artery to sustain all its organs simultaneously, so a Church institution requires resources flowing from multiple streams to sustain all dimensions of its mission simultaneously. An institution dependent on a single funding source is as vulnerable as a body dependent on a single blood vessel: any disruption to that one source threatens the survival of the whole.

The Resource Mobilisation Wheel below maps eight diversified funding streams, arranged around a central hub that represents the mission. The visual logic is deliberate: every stream feeds the mission, not the institution's operational comfort. This distinction matters enormously in practice. Institutions that mobilise resources to sustain the mission will make hard choices about which activities to fund, which programmes to grow and which to sunset, based on impact evidence. Institutions that mobilise resources to sustain the institution will make choices based on institutional inertia continuing what they have always done, regardless of impact, because the funding arrives regardless.

The shift from passive to active resource mobilisation is, at its core, a leadership decision. It requires the board and senior management to own resource mobilisation as a strategic priority not to delegate it entirely to a fundraising officer and assume it will happen. Research by Hertzke (2023) confirms that institutions in which the senior leader is the primary ambassador for the institution's mission consistently raise more resources than those in which the leader is primarily internally focused.

THE RESOURCE MOBILISATION WHEEL



Eight Diversified Funding Streams (KPMG, 2026; Canon 1254)

Figure 3.2: The Resource Mobilisation Wheel — Eight Diversified Funding Streams Around a Mission-First Hub (KPMG, 2026; Canon 1254; Hertzke, 2023)

**Scientific Insight, Portfolio Theory Applied to Funding**

Modern Portfolio Theory (Markowitz, 1952), originally developed for financial investments, applies directly to institutional funding strategy. Just as a diversified investment portfolio reduces overall risk even when individual assets underperform, a diversified funding portfolio reduces institutional financial risk even when individual income streams decline. The optimal funding portfolio for a Catholic institution combines low-volatility internal sources (tithes, school fees, service revenues) with higher-yield but more volatile external sources (grants, corporate partnerships) deliberately calibrating the portfolio to the institution's mission risk tolerance and operational reserve capacity.

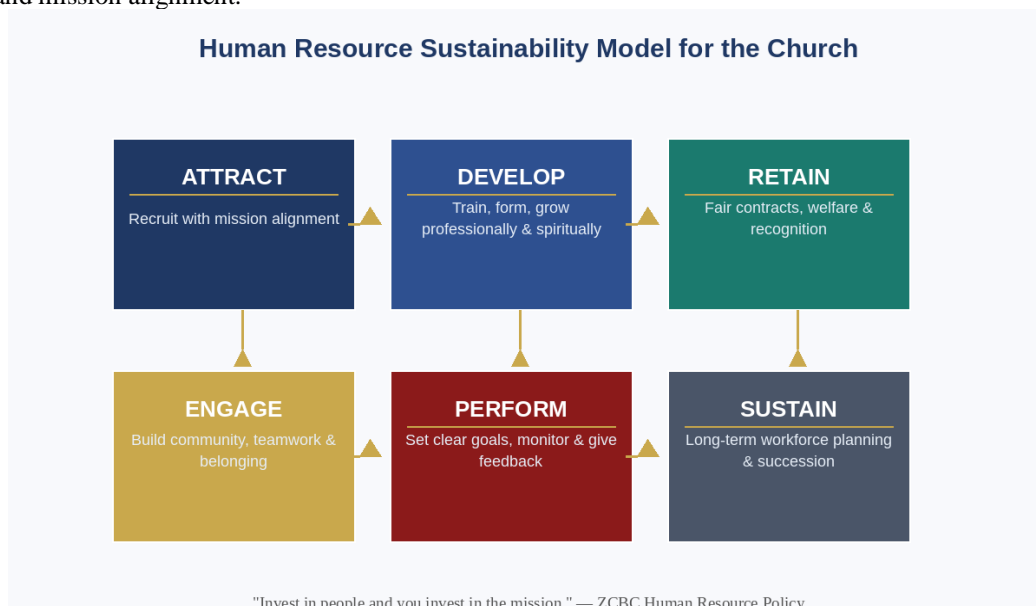
KEY TAKEAWAYS	
①	The era of passive collection-plate dependence is over. Strategic, diversified and professionally managed resource mobilisation is now a survival imperative for every Church institution.
②	The most powerful fundraising question is not 'How much can we raise?' but 'What would we do with the resources and can we prove we are already doing it with what we have?' Demonstrated impact is the most powerful fundraising tool.
③	Friends raising before fundraising: sustainable funding comes from authentic relationships built on shared values and genuine trust, not transactional asks made to strangers.
④	Digital giving mobile money, online platforms, social media campaigns — is no longer the future of Church fundraising. For the next generation of donors in Africa, it is already the present.
⑤	Every member of the institution from bishop to groundskeeper carries the institution's fundraising reputation in every interaction with every member of the community. Culture is fundraising strategy.

*"What part of the challenge is within your control as a leader? The answer, in most cases, is: more than you think."*  
 — KPMG Resource Mobilisation Framework (2026)

### Chapter 4: Human Resource Management for Church Sustainability

Human resources are the most important asset of any Church institution. Buildings can be rebuilt, budgets can be replenished, but the loss of committed, well-trained, mission-aligned people is the most difficult challenge for any administrator to overcome. The Catholic Church is one of the world's largest employers, and the sustainable operation of her institutions depends fundamentally on the quality of human resource management at every level.

Poorly managed human resources generate problems that extend far beyond internal operations. Low staff morale, high turnover, lack of professional development opportunities and poor communication affect not only institutional effectiveness but the Church's external reputation and her witness in the community. Church Administrators must therefore invest in human resources as a strategic priority, fostering a culture of respect, support, professional growth and mission alignment.



*"Invest in people and you invest in the mission."* — ZCBC Human Resource Policy

Figure 4.1: The Human Resource Sustainability Model — a cycle of attraction, development and retention author's creation

### **Recruitment, Training and Development**

The recruitment, training and development of all those who serve the Church lay professionals, religious sisters and brothers, deacons and priests must be conducted with careful consideration, in accordance with the Church's mission and values and in compliance with the Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops' Human Resource Policy and applicable labour legislation.

The Church can develop a committed and capable workforce by:

- Implementing rigorous recruitment procedures that prioritise individuals who genuinely embody the Church's ethos not merely those with the right academic qualifications.
- Offering comprehensive induction programmes that communicate institutional mission, values, governance structures and expectations clearly.
- Providing ongoing training and professional development opportunities that foster both professional competence and personal spiritual growth.
- Creating clear career pathways that reward performance, commitment and growth.
- Investing in leadership development at every level of the institution.

#### **A Reflective Note on Interviews**

*The author poses the question: "Are interviews really necessary when the preferred candidate is already known?" The dilemma is real. However, bypassing a fair process even for seemingly practical reasons risks undermining the principles of meritocracy, transparency and equal opportunity. The solution is to involve all relevant stakeholders in the selection process and to conduct it with integrity, regardless of the outcome that may seem most likely.*

### **Creating a Positive Work Environment**

Administrators are essential in creating an inclusive, respectful and supportive culture for all who serve the institution volunteers, staff, and clergy alike. A positive work environment requires:

- An organisational culture that explicitly values diversity, open communication and mutual respect.
- Clear policies on workplace conduct, anti-harassment, non-discrimination and fair treatment.
- Regular team meetings, staff development days and opportunities for spiritual renewal.
- Recognition and appreciation of staff contributions not only through financial rewards but through acknowledgement, delegation of responsibility and opportunities for growth.
- Leadership that models servant leadership consistently treating all colleagues, regardless of role or status, with dignity and respect.

### **Addressing Personnel Challenges and Conflict Resolution**

Addressing personnel challenges and resolving conflicts is a critical function of human resource management (Osewa & Osewa, 2020). Every institution will face conflict between staff members, between management and employees, or between institutional and individual interests. What matters is how conflict is addressed.

Administrators must:

- Ensure that transparent grievance procedures and reporting lines are in place, understood by all staff and applied consistently.
- Approach conflict resolution with fairness, impartiality and a commitment to justice never with favouritism.
- Address poor performance and misconduct promptly and fairly, in accordance with both institutional policy and applicable labour law. Silence on underperformance is not charity; it is an injustice to the mission.
- Provide pastoral care and support to staff experiencing personal difficulties, recognising that the Church's institutions should model the compassion they preach.
- Where necessary, engage external mediation or pastoral support services.

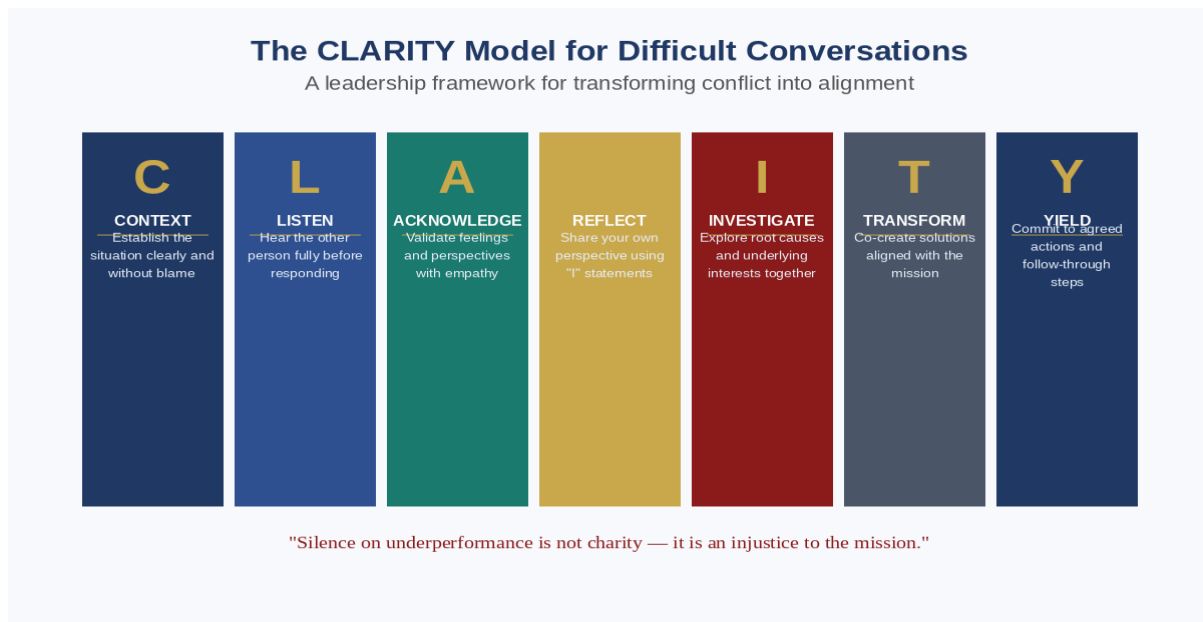


Figure 4.2: The CLARITY Model — a framework for transforming conflict into alignment

The CLARITY Model (Context, Listen, Acknowledge, Reflect, Investigate, Transform, Yield) provides a practical framework for approaching difficult conversations not as confrontations but as pathways to alignment. Church administrators who embrace this model will find that most conflicts, when addressed promptly and honestly, become opportunities for growth rather than sources of institutional damage.

### Theoretical Frameworks Underpinning Human Resource Management in the Church

Effective human resource management in Church institutions is not merely a matter of administrative practice; it is grounded in established theoretical frameworks that explain why people, skills, and organisational capability are the most consequential resources any institution possesses. Two theories are particularly relevant to the Church context: The Human Capital Theory (HCT) and the Resource-Based View (RBV). Applied together, they provide Church administrators with a rigorous analytical lens through which to understand, develop, and deploy the human and organisational resources entrusted to them.

#### The Human Capital Theory (HCT)

Mallon (2024) attributes the Human Capital Theory to Schultz (1961:140) who defines human capital as the collective knowledge, skills, and abilities possessed by individuals employed inside an organisation. In this theory, human capital refers to valuable attributes that can be enhanced through suitable investments. The theory posits that individuals prioritise personal well-being and the acquisition of knowledge through educational pursuits, and that these investments yield measurable returns both for the individual and for the organisation (Goldin & Katz, 2023; Costa et al., 2023).

The HCT assumes that: an individual's cognitive ability is enhanced by education and training; enhanced cognitive function boosts output; employee productivity increases wages; and increased production improves overall organisational performance (Islam & Amin, 2022). The theory identifies three foundational elements: investment in education and training; employee effectiveness and productivity; and the advancement of the population as a whole (Mallon, 2024).

#### HCT Applied to the Catholic Church

The Church is one of the world's largest employers, operating schools, hospitals, universities, social welfare institutions and parishes across every continent. Every priest, religious sister, lay administrator, teacher, nurse, social worker and support staff member represents an investment in human capital — and the quality of that investment directly determines the quality of the Church's mission and witness.

Applying HCT to the Church context, Aryee et al. (2020) identify time and financial resources as critical inputs into staff training. Akeke et al. (2022) confirm that resources allocated to training enhance an organisation's overall productivity and profitability. For Church institutions, this means that investment in formation, professional development, and ongoing training is not a discretionary expense — it is a strategic necessity.

**Church Human Capital in Practice**

The Church in Zimbabwe and across Africa possesses extraordinary human capital: thousands of catechists, teachers, health workers, social welfare staff, administrators and volunteers whose combined knowledge, skill and commitment constitutes an irreplaceable institutional asset. The question is not whether this capital exists, but whether it is being strategically developed and deployed. HCT provides the analytical framework for answering this question.

The HCT is particularly relevant to the study of SMMEs and church institutions in developing country contexts (Islam & Amin, 2022; Costa et al., 2023), where the inability to attract or retain highly skilled employees is a primary driver of institutional underperformance. Staff turnover a significant challenge in many African Church institutions represents a direct loss of human capital investment, as trained and experienced personnel take their knowledge and capabilities elsewhere (Mamabolo & Myres, 2020).

**What Human Capital Does the Church Possess?**

Church administrators must be able to identify, inventory, and strategically deploy the human capital of their institutions. The following categories of human capital are present in most Church institutions:

- **Spiritual and Pastoral Capital:** The theological formation, spiritual wisdom, and pastoral experience of priests, religious and deacon's irreplaceable assets that cannot be replicated by secular institutions.
- **Professional Expertise:** Qualified teachers, nurses, doctors, accountants, engineers, lawyers and social workers who serve the Church's educational, health and welfare missions.
- **Administrative Competence:** Trained administrators, finance officers, HR managers and governance professionals who ensure institutional sustainability and canonical compliance.
- **Volunteer Commitment:** Catechists, parish council members, lay ministers and community volunteers whose unpaid contribution constitutes a substantial resource of time, skill and community knowledge.
- **Institutional Memory:** Long-serving staff and leaders who carry the organisation's history, relationships, values and accumulated wisdom an intangible asset of enormous strategic value.

A resource that cannot be exploited is not a resource and should not be counted. Strategic planning must therefore identify not only what human capital the institution possesses, but what proportion of that capital is being actively deployed, developed, and retained in service of the mission. Capital that is untrained, unmotivated, or misaligned with the mission is capital that is being wasted.

**Criticism of HCT in the Church Context**

Islam and Amin (2022) criticise HCT for viewing human performance through a single analytical lens that of education. This criticism has particular resonance in the Church context, where spiritual formation, character, vocation and pastoral sensitivity often matter more than formal educational qualifications. Educational attainment is a signal of capability, not capability itself (Asad et al., 2021; Costa et al., 2023). Costa et al. (2023) assert that intelligence and commitment are more important for employee productivity than education and training alone. The Church administrator who selects on qualifications alone, ignoring character, vocation and mission-alignment, has misapplied HCT. The HCT framework must therefore be adapted to incorporate the Church's distinctive requirements for spiritual formation and Gospel-centred motivation.

**The Resource-Based View (RBV)**

The Resource-Based View (RBV), introduced by Wernerfelt (1984) and building on Penrose (1959), explains organisational performance by reference to the strategic resources that a firm possesses. Grounded in strategic management and economics (Tariq, Tariq & Tariq, 2022), the RBV proposes that sustainable competitive advantage derives from resources that are valuable, rare, inimitable, and non-substitutable the so-called VRIN attributes (Asad et al., 2021; Barney, 2021). An institution's success depends on its ability to access, develop and deploy these strategic resources effectively (Jancenelle, 2021; Dogbe et al., 2020).

**The Church's Strategic Resources: A VRIN Analysis**

The Catholic Church possesses a remarkable portfolio of strategic resources. Applying the VRIN framework, the following resources stand out as sources of enduring institutional advantage:

- **Valuable The Universal Mission and Brand:** The Church's association with the Gospel, the poor and the common good constitutes a powerful source of moral legitimacy (Suchman, 1995) that no secular institution can replicate. Donors, governments and communities invest in Church institutions because they trust the mission. This reputational capital is arguably the Church's most valuable strategic resource.
- **Rare Canonical Authority and Sacramental Identity:** The Church's canonical structure, its sacramental life and

its 2,000-year tradition of service constitute resources of extraordinary rarity. No competitor organisation can replicate the authority of the Bishop, the sacramental ministry of the priest, or the vowed life of religious sisters and brothers.

- **Inimitable Community Trust and Social Capital:** Built over generations of faithful service, the Church's deep roots in local communities particularly in rural Africa represent social capital that cannot be quickly replicated by newer entrants. A Church that has served a community for 100 years possesses inimitable relational equity.
- **Non-substitutable Spiritual Formation and Vocation:** The Church's capacity to form and motivate people through vocation, faith and a sense of divine calling produces a quality of commitment that salary packages alone cannot purchase. A lay administrator who understands their work as a vocation not merely a job brings intrinsic motivation that no secular HR system can substitute.

#### **Strategic Insight — RBV and Church Resource Management**

The RBV framework demands that administrators ask: Which of our resources are truly strategic? Which are valuable, rare, inimitable and non-substitutable? The answers will vary by institution, but three resources are almost universally strategic in the Church context: (1) trusted leadership with moral authority; (2) deep community relationships built over generations; and (3) staff whose vocation aligns with the mission. These must be protected, developed and never taken for granted. A resource that cannot be exploited is not a resource and should not be counted in strategic planning.

#### **Financial, Human and Management Resources in the Church**

The RBV identifies three categories of resources particularly relevant to Church administration: financial capital, human capital, and management resources (Barney, 2021).

Financial capital resources encompass both the Church's debt and equity position its cash reserves, investment portfolios, property assets, endowments and donor relationships. As Chundu et al. (2020) argue, institutions with robust financial foundations are better positioned to capitalise on opportunities. However, Varadarajan (2020) cautions that financial resources alone do not determine success a financially wealthy institution that lacks mission clarity, skilled leadership or community trust will underperform its resources.

Human resources as discussed under HCT above includes all the people within and around the institution: their training, experience, judgement, intelligence, relationships and networks (Asad et al., 2021:2). Social capital the interconnected networks and trust that enable people to work toward shared goals is a particularly important dimension of human resources in the Church context (Islam & Amin, 2022; Mamabolo & Myres, 2020). The Church's network of bishops, priests, religious, lay leaders and community volunteers constitutes a social capital infrastructure of extraordinary reach and depth.

Management resources encompass the organisational systems, processes and competencies that convert inputs into mission outcomes (Aryal, 2021; Mashingaidze, 2020). Effective business and institutional performance requires proficient operational management and the cultivation of leadership abilities at every level. MAED (2023) emphasises that institutions must transition from a narrow focus on operational survival to a strategic orientation toward growth and mission impact a transition that requires sophisticated management capability.

#### **Criticism of the RBV in the Church Context**

The RBV has been criticised for its excessive focus on internal resources at the expense of the external environment (Varadarajan, 2020; Lawrence, 2020). This is a significant limitation in the Church context, where external factors government policy, economic conditions, demographic change, donor priorities and community needs profoundly shape institutional strategy. Aryee et al. (2020) confirm that resources alone cannot compensate for adverse market forces. Tariq et al. (2022) find that volatile environments frustrate the contribution of even well-managed resources. For the Church administrator, this means that resource management must always be conducted with a clear-eyed assessment of the external environment in which the institution operates.

Additionally, the RBV is criticised for treating resources as static rather than dynamic (Khan et al., 2020; Shiri & Jafari-Sadeghi, 2023). The postmodern environment in which Church institutions operate characterised by rapid digital transformation, shifting donor expectations, evolving government relations and demographic change requires dynamic resource management, not the static optimisation of existing assets.

### Why the Church Needs Both HCT and RBV

Neither HCT nor RBV alone provides a sufficient framework for Church human resource management. HCT focuses on the development of individual human capability through education and training; RBV focuses on the strategic deployment of organisational resources for competitive advantage. The Church administrator needs both: the HCT to guide investment in people, and the RBV to ensure those people are deployed in ways that maximise institutional advantage and mission impact.

Together, these frameworks affirm a principle that the Gospel itself articulates: stewardship requires not only the faithful custody of what has been entrusted, but the productive exploitation of every gift in service of the mission. As the Parable of the Talents makes clear (Matthew 25:14–30), a resource that is buried and not put to work is a resource wasted and the administrator who buries it will be held to account. In the language of the RBV: a resource that cannot be exploited is not a resource and should not be counted.

“All administrators are to perform their duties with the diligence of a good householder.”

— Canon 1284 §1, Code of Canon Law (1983)

The primary governance risk of Church entrepreneurship is mission drift, which refers to the gradual displacement of the institution's spiritual and social purpose by the logic of commercial efficiency (Soko et al., 2012). Administrators must put in place structural safeguards that prevent this drift.

- Separate legal and financial entities for commercial ventures, ring-fenced from mission budgets, with independent boards and transparent profit-transfer mechanisms to the mission.
- Mission alignment audits: Every entrepreneurial venture must be reviewed annually against the institution's mission statement. If the venture cannot demonstrate a credible contribution to the mission, it should be discontinued regardless of its financial performance.
- Canon Law compliance: Canon 1254 affirms the Church's right to acquire and administer temporal goods for mission purposes. Canon 1291 requires authority approval for transactions above established thresholds. Canon 1295 governs extraordinary administration. All entrepreneurial ventures must be conducted within this canonical framework.
- Safeguarding in commercial operations: Any commercial programme that involves children, young people or vulnerable adults in skills training, agricultural internships or hospitality programmes must operate under the full safeguarding framework set out in Chapter 11 (Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors, 2022; Pope Francis, 2019).

## Conclusion: Human Resource Management for Church Sustainability

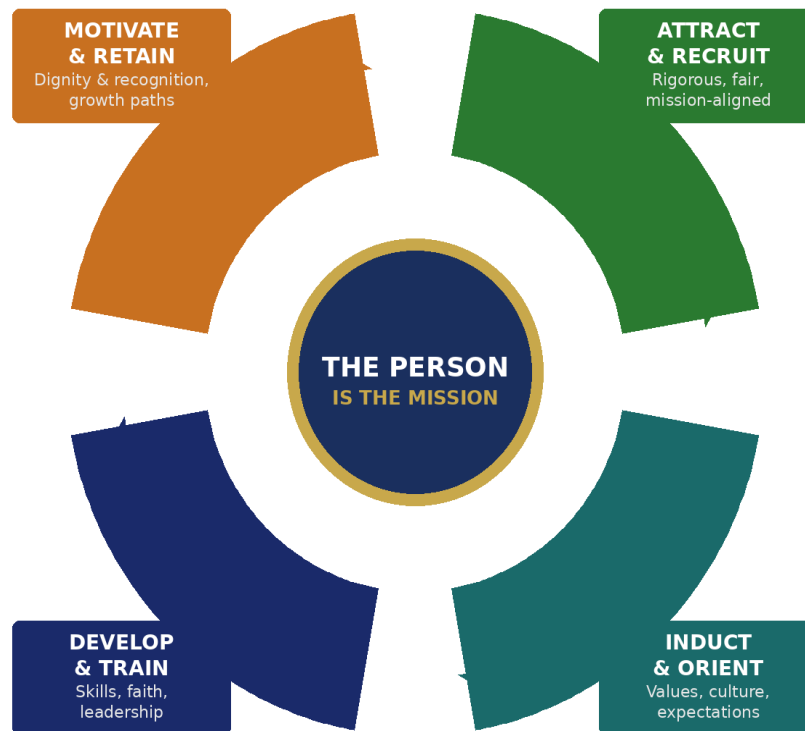
### The HR Sustainability Cycle: Attract, Induct, Develop, Retain

The human being is not a resource in the conventional management sense. Resources can be stockpiled, depreciated, liquidated and replaced. The human person made in the image and likeness of God (Genesis 1:27), endowed with dignity, intelligence, conscience and vocation cannot be managed in these terms without doing violence to both the person and the Gospel. The Church's institutions carry a double obligation: to honour the dignity of those who serve them, and to model in their employment practices the very values they proclaim to the world.

This is not idealism; it is strategy. Research by Asamoah (2018) and Nyatsanza (2021) on HR management in African Church contexts demonstrates consistently that institutions with high levels of staff satisfaction, clear professional development pathways and fair conflict resolution processes achieve significantly better mission outcomes than those where staff feel devalued, unsupported or treated unjustly. The human being who experiences their work as a vocation who feels seen, developed and fairly treated brings to that work a quality of commitment that no job description can mandate and no salary scale can purchase.

The HR Sustainability Cycle below models the virtuous cycle that high-performing Church institutions must build and maintain. It begins with attraction and recruitment bringing in people whose values align with the mission, not merely whose qualifications satisfy the job description. It moves through induction, development and motivational retention, returning always to the centre: the person is the mission. When this cycle turns freely, an institution builds a self-renewing human capital base. When it breaks down at any point when recruitment is nepotistic, when development is neglected, when conflict is avoided rather than resolved the cycle stalls and the mission suffers.

## THE HR SUSTAINABILITY CYCLE



*Attract → Induct → Develop → Motivate → Retain (Colossians 3:23; ZCBC HR Policy)*

Figure 4.3: The HR Sustainability Cycle Attract, Induct, Develop, Motivate, Retain The Person is the Mission (Colossians 3:23; ZCBC HR Policy; Asamoah, 2018)

### Scientific Insight — Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory in the Church Context

Frederick Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory (1959) distinguishes between hygiene factors conditions whose absence causes dissatisfaction (fair pay, safe working conditions, clear job descriptions, just grievance procedures) and motivators conditions that actively produce engagement and excellence (meaningful work, recognition, growth opportunities, responsibility and personal mission-alignment). Church institutions frequently invest in motivators' chapel, prayer, and community while neglecting hygiene factors: staff are underpaid, overworked, given no job security and subjected to arbitrary decisions by supervisors. The result is not spiritually motivated excellence; it is resentment masked by surface piety. Hygiene factors must be in place before motivators can work.

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

①	People are the Church's most important asset. Buildings can be rebuilt; budgets can be replenished; but the departure of a committed, mission-aligned person is a loss that no financial recovery can fully repair.
②	The CLARITY Model (Context, Listen, Acknowledge, Reflect, Investigate, Transform, Yield) transforms difficult conversations from confrontations into pathways to alignment. The willingness to have these conversations promptly is a sign of respect, not harshness.
③	Silence on underperformance is not mercy it is an injustice accumulated at the expense of every team member who is working faithfully alongside the underperformer.
④	Fair and transparent recruitment processes must be followed even when a preferred candidate is known. Bypassing fair process however practically convenient undermines the principles of meritocracy, transparency and equal opportunity.
⑤	The Church's institutions should model the compassion they preach. An administrator who treats staff as costs to be minimised rather than persons to be developed is not managing a Church institution they are managing against the Church's own values.

*"Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters."*

**Colossians 3:23**

## Chapter 5: Asset Management and Investment Decisions

The temporal goods of the Church exist for a single purpose: to support the Church's mission of proclaiming the Gospel, serving the poor and fostering human dignity. Administrators are custodians not owners of these goods, and their management of them will be judged both by the law of the Church and by the Lord of the Church.

Book V of the Code of Canon Law (canons 1254–1310) provides the legal framework within which all Church temporal goods must be managed. Every administrator must be familiar with these canons, which govern the acquisition, administration, alienation and use of Church property. Canon 1291 requires the permission of the competent authority for the valid alienation of goods whose value exceeds the minimum amount established by the Episcopal Conference. Holy See approval is required for transactions above higher thresholds. This regulatory structure is designed to protect the Church's assets for future generations.

### Canon Law Anchor

*Canon 1254 §1: "By virtue of innate right, independent of civil power, the Catholic Church can acquire, retain, administer and alienate temporal goods in pursuit of its own ends." — These ends are: the proper ordering of divine worship; the provision for the decent support of clerics and other ministers; and the exercise of works of the sacred apostolate and of charity, especially towards the needy.*

### Managing Church Properties, Buildings and Infrastructure

Church administrators oversee the maintenance, utilisation and upkeep of physical assets owned by the Church. This is not merely a facilities management function; it is an act of stewardship of sacred resources entrusted by generations of faithful donors and builders. Key responsibilities include:

- Developing and maintaining a comprehensive inventory of all Church properties, buildings and significant assets.
- Ensuring that all properties are properly registered in the name of the Church with the appropriate legal entities.
- Managing property leases and licences with proper documentation and regular review.
- Ensuring the security of Church assets through appropriate physical security measures, insurance coverage and access controls.
- Optimising the use of space to generate income for the mission while serving the community.

Archbishop Robert Ndlovu's (then Apostolic Administrator), speaking at a meeting of the Masvingo Diocesan Clergy, made a caution worth repeating: "the alienation of Church property should be considered only as a last resort" (Minutes of the Association of Masvingo Diocesan Clergy, 2022). The Church should be acquiring property to expand her mission, not disposing of it to resolve financial crises caused by poor administration.

### **Maintenance, Repairs and Renovations**

Administrators must ensure that Church buildings are properly maintained, repaired and renovated on an ongoing basis. Deferred maintenance is a false economy: small problems left unaddressed become expensive crises. A well-maintained institution communicates to staff, communities and donors that the organisation takes its responsibilities seriously. Infrastructure development requirements in the African context include:

- Counselling and psychosocial support centres serving communities in need.
- Ongoing formation centres for clergy, religious and lay leaders.
- Retreat centres that generate income while serving the Church's spiritual mission.
- Parishes, schools and health clinics located close to the communities they serve, not in inaccessible compounds removed from the people.

### **Ensuring Compliance with Legal and Regulatory Requirements**

Compliance with legal and regulatory requirements is paramount in the management of Church properties and facilities. Church administrators must stay informed about zoning laws, building codes, safety regulations, environmental requirements and other legal mandates that govern the operation of Church properties. In Zimbabwe, this includes registration with the City or Municipal Council, compliance with the Health Professions Authority for health institutions, and compliance with the Ministry of Education for schools. Non-compliance is not merely an administrative inconvenience; it is a reputational risk that can damage the Church's standing with government and community alike.

## **Chapter 5 Conclusion: Asset Management and Investment Decisions**

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### **The Asset Stewardship House: Four Pillars on a Canonical Foundation**

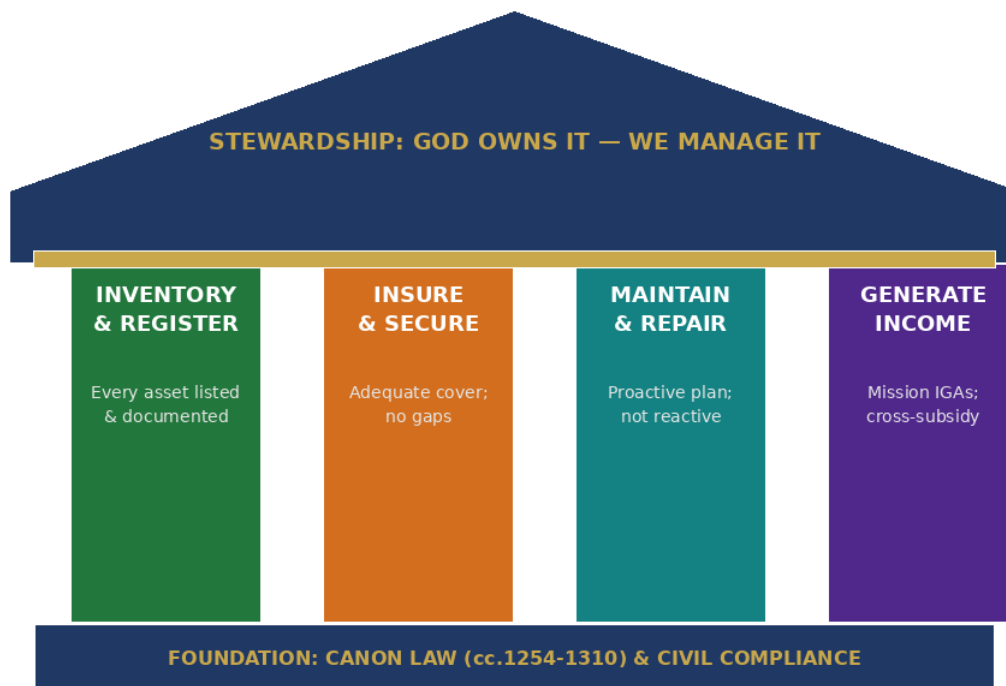
Every building owned by the Church was built by someone's sacrifice. Every plot of land was purchased by the accumulated offerings of faithful communities. Every vehicle, every generator, every chair in every classroom and every bed in every clinic represents the invested trust of generations of donors, builders and workers who believed that the Church's mission was worth their contribution. The administrator who forgets this will treat Church property as personal convenience. The one who remembers it will treat it as a sacred trust and will manage it accordingly.

The Stewardship House diagram below captures the architecture of sound asset management. The four structural pillars Inventory and Register, Insure and Secure, Maintain and Repair, and Generate Income are the operational disciplines that keep Church assets in active, productive and accountable use. These four pillars rest on a single non-negotiable foundation: Canon Law (cc.1254–1310) and civil compliance. Without this foundation, even the most diligently maintained pillar becomes structurally unstable legally vulnerable, canonically non-compliant and reputationally exposed.

Above the pillars, the roof of the house carries the governing theological principle: Stewardship God Owns It, We Manage It (Psalm 24:1). This is not merely a pious slogan; it is a managerial discipline. The administrator who truly believes that God owns every asset in their care will not treat Church property as a personal resource, will not delay maintenance in order to divert funds elsewhere, will not alienate assets without proper canonical and governance authority, and will not leave a property unregistered, uninsured or undocumented simply because nobody has been checking.

Archbishop Ndlovu's caution, cited in this chapter, bears repeating as the chapter's practical conclusion: the alienation of Church property should be a last resort. The Church should be acquiring assets to expand her mission, not disposing of them to compensate for poor administration. The administrator who inherits a healthy asset base has a responsibility to leave it healthier than they found it.

### THE ASSET STEWARDSHIP HOUSE



Four pillars resting on Canon Law (Psalm 24:1; cc.1254-1310)

Figure 5.1: The Asset Stewardship House: (Psalm 24:1; Canon 1254–1310)

#### Scientific Insight. Asset Life-Cycle Management

Professional asset management employs the concept of Total Cost of Ownership (TCO) — the full cost of an asset across its entire life cycle, from acquisition through operation, maintenance and eventual disposal. Research consistently shows that deferred maintenance increases TCO dramatically: a building that needs a \$500 roof repair today will need a \$15,000 structural intervention in five years if the repair is postponed (KPMG, 2026). Church administrators who defer maintenance to free up short-term cash are not saving money; they are accumulating a hidden liability that will present itself at the worst possible moment. A scientifically managed maintenance schedule, based on asset condition assessments and life-cycle costing, is both fiscally responsible and canonically sound.

#### KEY TAKEAWAYS

- ① The temporal goods of the Church exist for a single purpose: to support the Church's mission of proclaiming the Gospel, serving the poor and fostering human dignity. Every asset decision must be tested against this purpose.
- ② Every Church asset should be inventoried, valued, insured, registered in the name of the Church (not in the name of an individual), and documented in a comprehensive and up-to-date asset register.
- ③ Deferred maintenance is a false economy. Small problems left unaddressed become expensive crises. A well-maintained institution communicates to staff, communities and donors that it takes its responsibilities seriously.
- ④ Canon 1291 requires the permission of the competent authority for any alienation above the approved threshold. Ignorance of this requirement is not a legal defence and the consequences of non-compliance can include the invalidity of the transaction.
- ⑤ The administrator who leaves an institution's asset base weaker than they found it has failed a fundamental stewardship test regardless of any other accomplishments during their tenure.

"The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it."  
**Psalm 24:1**

## Chapter 6: Ethical and Corporate Governance in Church Administration

"Let your Yes Be Yes and your No Be No." (Matthew 5:37)

Ethics and corporate governance are not external impositions on the Church; they are expressions of her deepest values. The teachings of Jesus Christ serve as a moral compass for believers, emphasising principles of integrity, honesty and ethical conduct in all dimensions of life, including the governance and administration of institutions established in his name.

This chapter examines the principles of corporate governance and the ethical challenges that Church administrators face, with particular attention to the structural challenges that arise from the Church's unique nature as a hierarchical, volunteer-dependent and mission-driven organisation. It also introduces a practical framework — the High-Impact Sweet Spot for ensuring that every governance decision satisfies both Mission Fidelity and Operational Excellence.

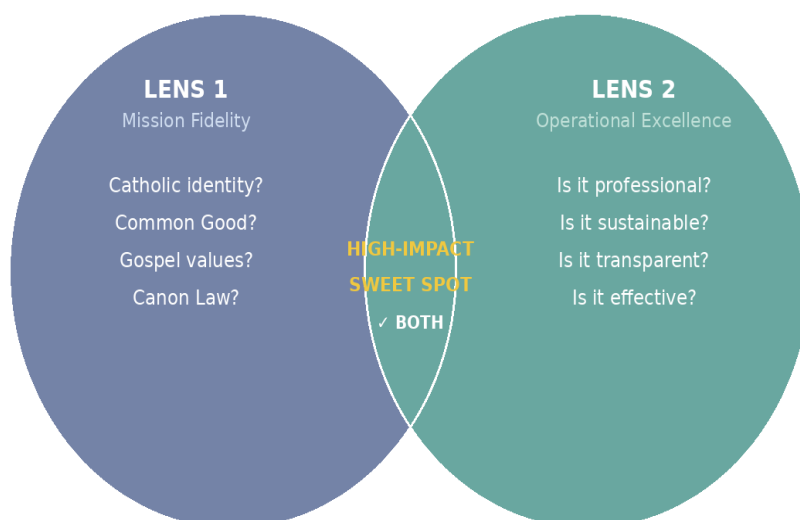
### Definitions: Ethics and Corporate Governance

Ethics refers to the capacity to distinguish good from evil and to act in accordance with that distinction. In the Church context, ethical conduct is not merely a matter of compliance; it is a reflection of the administrator's personal integrity and spiritual maturity.

Corporate Governance (CG) is the framework of rules, practices and processes by which an organisation is directed and controlled to protect the interests of its stakeholders (Soko et al., 2012). This handbook defines CG in the Church context as the framework of rules, practices and processes that direct and control the administration of the Church to protect the interests of the faithful, the mission and the institution as a whole recognising that, in this context, Jesus Christ is the primary stakeholder.

## The High-Impact Sweet Spot

Every decision must satisfy both Mission Fidelity and Operational Excellence



"If one lens is missing, the mission is at risk."

Figure 6.1: The High-Impact Sweet Spot. Every decision must satisfy both Mission Fidelity and Operational Excellence

### Principles of Corporate Governance in the Church

The following principles are foundational to sound corporate governance in Catholic institutions:

- **Accountability:** Individuals are held responsible for their decisions and actions. In the Church context, this accountability extends upward to God as well as horizontally to the community served.
- **Transparency:** Stakeholders receive timely, accurate and understandable information about the institution’s activities, finances and governance.
- **Fairness:** All stakeholders staff, donors, community members and the wider faithful are treated equitably and without discrimination.
- **Responsibility:** Decision-makers act honourably and in the institution’s best interests, not in their own personal interest.
- **Independence:** Those responsible for oversight are free from conflicts of interest that would compromise their judgement.
- **Effective Leadership:** The board and management work together towards the institution’s goals, with clearly defined and respected roles.
- **Stewardship:** A deep commitment to sustainable development and responsible management of all the institution’s resources and assets.

Some words are not clear.

### Governance Maturity Model for Catholic Institutions

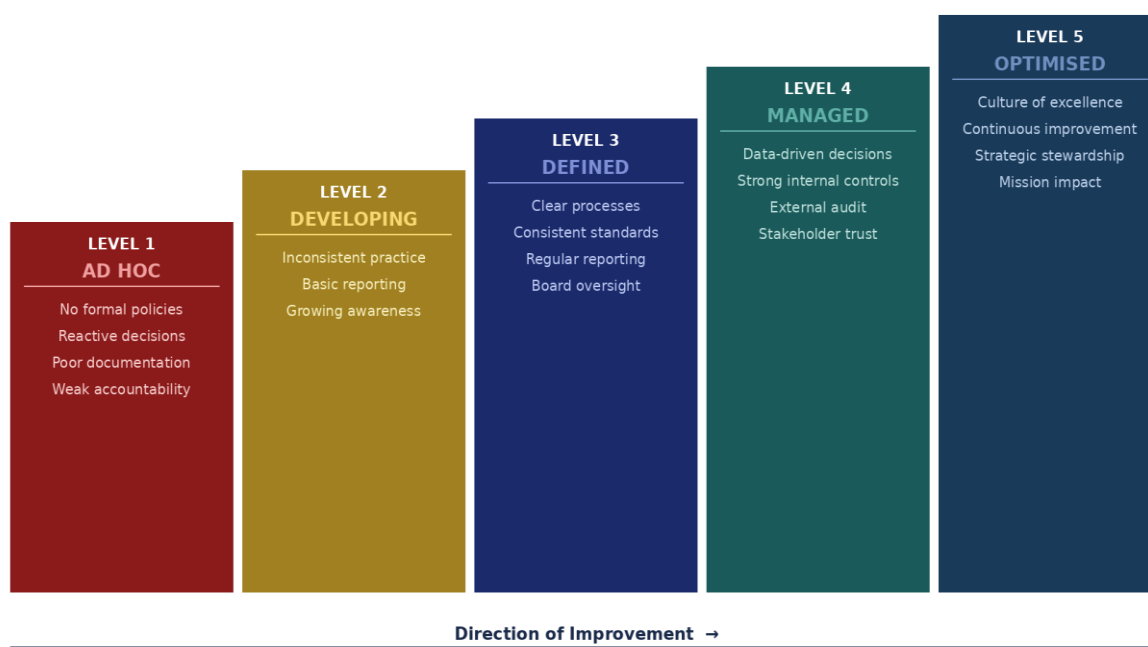


Figure 6.2: The Governance Maturity Model from ad hoc to optimised governance

### Challenges of Corporate Governance in Church Institutions

Implementing corporate governance principles in Church management presents unique challenges:

- **Hierarchy and Decision-Making:** The Church’s hierarchical structure can, if not carefully managed, concentrate decision-making power in ways that undermine transparency and accountability. The principle of subsidiarity decisions made at the most appropriate level is the canonical and ethical corrective.
- **Volunteerism versus Professionalism:** Many church roles are filled by volunteers who may not have formal training in governance. Balancing the value of volunteer participation with the need for professional governance standards is a real and ongoing challenge.
- **Spiritual versus Administrative Focus:** The Church’s dual focus on spiritual matters and administrative functions can create tension. Some leaders resist administrative rigour as somehow unspiritual. This is a false dichotomy: faithful administration is itself a spiritual act.
- **Limited Resources:** Many institutions operate with limited financial and human resources, constraining their ability to implement robust governance structures.
- **Cultural and Traditional Factors:** Cultural norms around authority, deference and decision-making within religious institutions may resist the introduction of modern governance principles.

**Case Study: The Kindness Trap**

*A long-standing Catholic community centre has seen a 30% drop in funding. The manager (Leader) wants to cut the "Outreach to the Marginalised" programme to save costs, as it generates no revenue. However, this programme is the reason the centre was founded 50 years ago. The Governance Failure: There is no clear policy distinguishing "Mission-Critical" from "Revenue-Critical" activities. The Leadership Challenge: Apply the Subsidiarity Framework. Who should make the final call? What data is missing? How do we balance "The Ledger" with "The Legacy"? "Silence on underperformance is not charity; it is an injustice to the mission. Be who God meant you to be, and you will set the world on fire." — St Catherine of Siena*

**Handling Confidentiality and Sensitive Information**

Confidentiality and discretion are key ethical considerations in Church administration. Church administrators often have access to sensitive information relating to individuals, personnel matters, legal disputes and internal governance. The following principles should guide the handling of confidential information:

- Information shared in the course of administration is held in trust and may not be disclosed without proper authorisation.
- Personnel matters, disciplinary proceedings and financial details must be handled with the utmost confidentiality.
- The principle of information disclosure required by good governance must be balanced against the rights of individuals to privacy.
- Administrators who are unsure about what can or should be disclosed should always seek guidance from their canonical superior or legal adviser before acting.

**Ethical Guidelines in Human Resources Management**

Church Administrators are called to promote fairness, respect and integrity in all personnel matters. Ethical HR management requires:

- Fair and transparent recruitment processes, even when a preferred candidate is known.
- Consistent application of policies and procedures no exceptions for personal relationships or institutional convenience.
- Protection of staff rights in accordance with labour legislation and the Church's own HR policies.
- A zero-tolerance approach to workplace harassment, discrimination and abuse of authority.

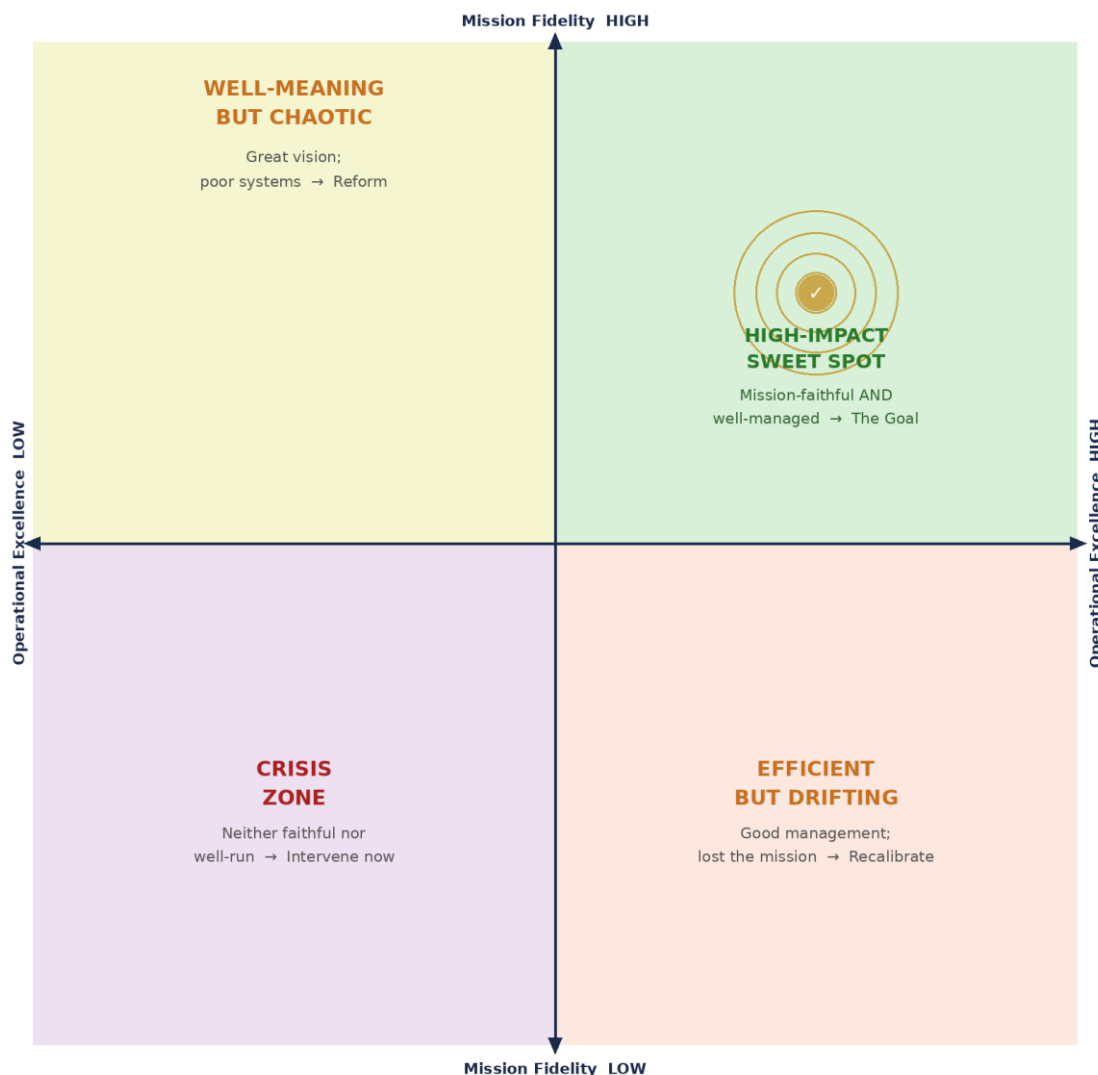
**Conclusion: Ethical and Corporate Governance in Church Administration****The High-Impact Governance Matrix: Mission Fidelity × Operational Excellence**

Corporate governance and ethics are not the Church's concession to modernity; they are her ancient inheritance, recovered and structured for the contemporary institutional context. The prophet Micah demanded just weights and honest measures. Jesus taught that those entrusted with much would be required to account for much. Paul instructed Church leaders to handle communal resources with such transparency that no one could legitimately question their integrity (2 Corinthians 8:21). What contemporary governance frameworks offer is not a new standard; it is a disciplined vocabulary for requirements the Gospel has always contained.

The High-Impact Governance Matrix below provides every administrator with a precise diagnostic tool. It plots every institutional decision on two axes: Mission Fidelity (vertical) and Operational Excellence (horizontal). The four resulting quadrants reveal four distinct institutional conditions and each demands a different leadership response. The High-Impact Sweet Spot, marked by the gold circle in the upper-right quadrant, is not a comfortable destination but a constant aspiration: the intersection where every decision is both faithful to the mission and excellently executed.

Empirical research by Soko et al. (2012) on corporate governance in African institutions, and by Okonkwo (2021) on Church management in the Nigerian context, identifies the failure to occupy the High-Impact Sweet Spot as the primary driver of institutional reputational damage in Church organisations. Institutions that are mission-faithful but operationally chaotic generate scandal through incompetence. Institutions that are operationally excellent but mission-drifting generate scandal through worldliness. Only institutions that consistently pursue both are able to sustain the trust of the faithful, the confidence of donors, and the credibility of their witness in the world.

### THE HIGH-IMPACT GOVERNANCE MATRIX



Mission Fidelity × Operational Excellence (Matthew 5:37; Soko et al., 2012)

Figure 6.3: The High-Impact Governance Matrix, Mission Fidelity × Operational Excellence The Gold Circle marks the Sweet Spot (Matthew 5:37; Soko et al., 2012; Okonkwo, 2021)

#### Scientific Insight, Institutional Legitimacy Theory

Institutional legitimacy theory (Suchman, 1995) holds that organisations survive and thrive to the extent that their actions are perceived as desirable, proper and appropriate by the societies in which they operate. Church institutions enjoy a powerful source of moral legitimacy their association with the Gospel, the poor and the common good. But moral legitimacy is the easiest to lose and the hardest to rebuild. A single governance scandal a misappropriated fund, a nepotistic appointment, an undisclosed conflict of interest can destroy decades of accumulated institutional trust. The governance matrix is therefore not merely a management tool; it is a legitimacy maintenance system. Staying in the High-Impact Sweet Spot is how a Church institution protects the credibility of its witness.

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

①	The High-Impact Sweet Spot sits at the intersection of Mission Fidelity and Operational Excellence. Both are necessary; neither is sufficient. A decision that serves the mission badly executed is not faithful stewardship. A decision that is efficiently executed but mission-betraying is not good governance.
②	The culture of corporate governance is ultimately a culture of character. No policy document can substitute for the integrity of the people who administer the institution. Policy and character are partners, not alternatives.
③	The principle of subsidiarity is the canonical and ethical corrective to the concentration of decision-making power. When authority is concentrated in one person however gifted the institution becomes dependent on that person's character for its entire ethical standard.
④	Confidentiality is a governance discipline, not merely a social courtesy. Information shared in the course of administration is held in trust. The administrator who discloses confidential information without proper authorisation is not being transparent they are breaching a fiduciary obligation.
⑤	Let your Yes be Yes and your No be No. The simplest governance standard in the entire handbook is also the most demanding: say what you mean, mean what you say, and do what you commit to do. Every time. Without exception.

*"Let your Yes be Yes and your No be No."*

— **Matthew 5:37**

## Chapter 7: Synodality as a Solution in Church Administration

*"A Synodal Church, in announcing the Gospel, journeys together. The Lord Jesus, when he sent forth his disciples, did so in community." Pope Francis, Evangelii Gaudium (2013)*

### 7.1 Introduction: Pope Francis and the Vision of Synodality

Pope Francis was profoundly prophetic when he placed synodality at the centre of his pontificate. In his address to the Ceremony Commemorating the 50th Anniversary of the Institution of the Synod of Bishops on 17 October 2015, he declared without ambiguity: "The path of synodality is the path that God expects of the Church of the third millennium." This was not a casual theological observation. It was a deliberate, carefully reasoned programme for the renewal of the whole Church from the Roman Curia to the smallest rural parish through a return to the ancient practice of walking together, listening together, and discerning together under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Synodality, from the Greek *syn-hodos* ("walking together on the same road"), expresses the essential nature of the Church as a community of disciples who journey together toward the Kingdom of God. It is not a new invention of the Second Vatican Council or of Pope Francis. It is as ancient as the Council of Jerusalem described in Acts 15, where apostles, elders and the whole community gathered, deliberated, discerned and decided together and where the Holy Spirit was acknowledged as the primary actor in the process. What Pope Francis has done is recover this ancient ecclesial instinct and insist that it must inform every dimension of Church life, including its administration.

For Church administrators in Zimbabwe and across Africa, synodality is not merely a theological concept to be studied in seminaries. It is a practical governance imperative. It asks whether our finance committees are genuinely consultative or merely rubber-stamping decisions already made. It asks whether Parish Councils have a real voice in planning or are simply told what has been decided. It asks whether diocesan bodies represent the full diversity of the People of God or only those already holding power. These are not peripheral questions. They go to the heart of whether a Church institution is authentically Catholic or merely institutionally convenient.

This chapter examines synodality as both a theological vision and a practical governance solution, explores the tensions between synodal aspiration and canonical structure, maps the hierarchy of potential hindrances to synodality in the Church, and proposes a concrete way forward that honours both the Spirit's prompting and the law of the Church.

7.2 A Picture of the Synodal Church

The Second Vatican Council's Dogmatic Constitution Lumen Gentium (1964) provides the theological foundation for a synodal ecclesiology. Chapter 2, "The People of God," insists that all the baptised share in the priestly, prophetic and kingly mission of Christ. This is not a concession to democratic sentiment; it is a doctrinal affirmation rooted in Baptism. Every member of the Church lay person, religious, deacon, priest, bishop participates in the *sensus fidei*, the instinctive sense of the faith that belongs to the whole Church. When the whole body of the faithful listens, prays, speaks and discerns together, the Holy Spirit speaks through the assembly in ways that no single office-holder, however gifted, can replicate alone.

The International Theological Commission's document *The Sensus Fidei in the Life of the Church* (2014) affirms that "the whole body of the faithful ... cannot err in matters of belief" (quoting Lumen Gentium 12). This infallibility of the whole People of God is not an excuse for populism or for overriding doctrinal authority; it is a theological reason to take seriously the voices, experiences and wisdom of all the baptised in the governance of the Church.

Pope Francis in *Evangelii Gaudium* (2013) paints a vivid picture of a synodal Church as one that moves from a "self-referential" institution absorbed in its own structures, processes and internal debates to a "missionary" one that goes out to the peripheries, listens to the marginalised, and allows the encounter with the poor to reshape its priorities. A synodal Church is not a Church that simply talks more; it is a Church that listens more first to the Holy Spirit, then to the People of God, then to the signs of the times.

The 2021–2024 Synod on Synodality, the most extensive consultative exercise in the modern history of the Church, produced a document the Synthesis Report (2023) that identified three essential dimensions of synodality: Communion (*koinonia*), Mission (*diakonia*) and Participation (*leitourgía*). These three dimensions must shape not only the Church's evangelisation but its internal governance. A diocese that practices communion, pursues mission and enables genuine participation in its decision-making processes is, to that degree, a synodal Church in action.

Figure 7.1: The Three Pillars of the Synodal Church

COMMUNION ( <i>Koinonia</i> )	PARTICIPATION ( <i>Leitourgia</i> )	MISSION ( <i>Diakonia</i> )
Unity in diversity; all the baptised belong to the same Body of Christ. No voice is irrelevant; no person dispensable.	Active, structured involvement of all the faithful in discernment, planning and governance — not passive attendance at announcements.	The purpose of all synodal processes is the Church's mission of evangelisation and service to the poor, not institutional self-maintenance.
In administration: Finance committees, Parish Councils and diocesan bodies must reflect the diversity of the People of God, not only the powerful.	In administration: Consultation must be genuine — decisions must demonstrably reflect the input received, not merely process it symbolically.	In administration: Every governance decision must be tested against the mission. Does this serve the Gospel? Does it reach the marginalised?

Table 7.1: The Three Pillars of the Synodal Church and Their Administrative Application (cf. Lumen Gentium, 1964; Synod Synthesis Report, 2023; Pope Francis, Evangelii Gaudium, 2013)

8.3 The Efficacy of Synodality and Church Law: A Complex Relationship

The relationship between synodality and Canon Law is not one of opposition but of creative tension. Canon Law, properly understood, is not the enemy of synodal governance; it is its legal architecture. The Code of Canon Law (1983) explicitly provides for a range of consultative bodies at every level of Church governance. The critical word is "consultative." Canon Law is unambiguous: these bodies advise; they do not govern. The decision-making authority remains with the officeholder for example the bishop, the parish priest, the administrator. This is the fundamental canonical reality within which all synodal aspiration must operate.

**Canon Law Anchor. The Consultative Principle**

*Canon 127 §2: "If the law requires consent or counsel of some persons, the superior is not required to act according to the opinion they express, even unanimous, although without a just and serious cause assessed in the light of the whole situation, he should not depart from what they unanimously expressed, especially from the consent." Canon 536 §2 (Parish Pastoral Council): "This council possesses a consultative vote only." Canon 502 §1 (College of Consultors): "Among the members of the presbyteral council the bishop is to freely appoint some priests who are to constitute the college of consultors for five years." Canon 512 §1 (Diocesan Pastoral Council): "The diocesan pastoral council ... has only a consultative vote." Canon 492 §1 (Diocesan Finance Council): "In every diocese there is to be established a finance council ... which consists of at least three members of the Christian faithful." (cf. Canon 493 for its advisory role)*

These canons reveal both the opportunity and the limitation of synodality within the current canonical framework. The opportunity is this: the law mandates participation. No bishop may govern without consulting the College of Consultors, the Presbyteral Council, the Diocesan Finance Council or in certain grave matters the Diocesan Pastoral Council. In this sense, Canon Law is already synodal in structure. The limitation is this: the law stops short of binding officeholders to the outcome of consultation. A bishop may, with just and serious cause, depart from even the unanimous counsel of his advisers. This is not a defect of the law; it reflects the theology of episcopal ministry as articulated in Lumen Gentium and confirmed by Canon 381 §1.

The challenge arises not from the law itself but from how it is lived. When consultative bodies are constituted perfunctorily, when their meetings are infrequent or merely ceremonial, when their advice is systematically ignored without explanation, or when they are stacked with loyalists rather than representative voices then the canonical provision for consultation becomes a dead letter and synodality is reduced to a bureaucratic fiction. This is the real problem that Pope Francis identified, and it is widespread in the Church across the world.

**7.4 Hierarchy, Hindrances and the Synodal Challenge**

**7.4.1 The Hierarchy of Church Governance**

Every level of the Church's governance structure is simultaneously a potential vehicle for synodality and a potential obstacle to it. The diagram below maps the hierarchy from the lay faithful at the base to the Holy See at the summit, together with the specific synodal hindrance that each level can generate when its authority is exercised poorly or its role is misunderstood.

**Figure 7.2: Hierarchy of Church Governance Levels, Roles and Synodal Hindrances**

Level	Title / Body	Synodal Role	Potential Hindrance to Synodality
1 — Base	The Lay Faithful (People of God)	Primary bearers of the <i>sensus fidei</i> ; called to active participation in parish and diocesan consultative processes (cf. Lumen Gentium 12; Canon 212 §3)	Passivity, apathy or a culture of deference that prevents the faithful from speaking freely. Lack of formation in what synodality means can reduce participation to silence.
2	Parish Pastoral Council	Assists the parish priest in planning and pastoral discernment; represents the diversity of the parish community (Canon 536)	Rubber-stamp culture; council members appointed for loyalty rather than representativeness; meetings infrequent or agendas controlled exclusively by the priest in charge.
3	Assistant Priest (Curate / Associate Pastor)	Collaborates in pastoral ministry; brings younger or different perspectives to the parish team; participates in parish consultations	May be sidelined by the priest in charge, reducing collegial discernment to a monologue. Where assistant priests are disempowered, a culture of unilateral decision-making is normalised.

4	Priest in Charge (Parish Priest or Assitstant(s))	Primary canonical administrator of the parish (Canon 519); must convene the Parish Pastoral Council and listen to its counsel; accountable to the Bishop	Authoritarian leadership style that treats consultation as a formality. Failure to share financial information with the Parish Finance Committee. Treating the parish as a personal domain rather than the Body of Christ.
5	Dean	Co-ordinates pastoral work among a group of parishes; convenes deanery meetings; channels communication between parish priests and the diocese (Canon 553–555)	May function as a relay point rather than a genuine facilitator of synodal discernment; deanery meetings can become administrative briefings rather than consultative forums.
6	Bishop (Diocesan Bishop)	Supreme administrator and pastor of the diocese (Canon 381); must consult the Presbyteral Council, College of Consultors, Diocesan Finance Council and where established the Diocesan Pastoral Council before major decisions	Governing by decree without genuine consultation; constituting advisory bodies with loyalists rather than representative voices; treating Canon Law's consultative bodies as bureaucratic requirements to be processed rather than as genuine sources of wisdom.
7 — Summit	The Holy See (The Pope and Roman Curia)	Sets universal doctrine and Canon Law; provides the synodal framework through the Synod of Bishops and papal teaching; does not micro-administer individual dioceses or parishes	Over-centralisation that crowds out local discernment; curial cultures that filter synodal input before it reaches the Pope; slow institutional reform that leaves synodal aspirations unrealised at the local level.

Table 7.2: Hierarchy of Church Governance, Synodal Roles and Potential Hindrances (cf. Code of Canon Law, 1983; Lumen Gentium, 1964; Synod Synthesis Report, 2023)

#### 8.4.2 The Consultative Bodies: What Canon Law Provides

Canon Law provides a remarkably rich framework of consultative bodies at every level of the Church. What is striking is not the absence of synodal structures but their underutilisation. The table below maps the principal consultative bodies, their canonical basis, their composition and their function:

Consultative Body	Canon(s)	Composition	Function and Synodal Significance
College of Consultors	Can. 502	At least 6 priests freely appointed by the bishop from members of the Presbyteral Council; serve for 5 years	Provides consent or counsel on the most serious diocesan governance decisions, including financial alienation above the approved threshold, appointment of the diocesan administrator sede vacante, and other grave matters. Its existence is mandatory.

<b>Presbyteral Council</b>	Can. 495–501	Priests representing the diocesan presbyterate some ex officio, some freely appointed by the bishop, some elected by priests	The principal consultative body to the bishop on governance of the presbyterate and significant pastoral decisions. Must be consulted before the bishop can publish general decrees, erect or suppress parishes, and impose taxes on juridical persons in the diocese. Synodal significance: gives the clergy a structured, canonical voice in governance.
<b>Diocesan Pastoral Council</b>	Can. 511–514	Lay faithful, religious and clergy representing the whole People of God in the diocese; convoked and presided over by the bishop	Investigates and weighs matters pertaining to pastoral activity in the diocese; proposes practical conclusions. Critically, this is the body that most directly embodies synodality lay faithful, religious and clergy deliberating together. Synodal significance: it is the primary vehicle for the participation of the whole People of God in diocesan governance.
<b>Diocesan Finance Council</b>	Can. 492–494	At least three lay faithful (or others) with expertise in finance and civil law; appointed by the bishop for five-year terms	Reviews the annual diocesan budget and accounts; provides consent above the approved financial threshold for acts of extraordinary administration. Must include persons expert in civil law — not just theologians. Synodal significance: brings the competence of the laity to bear on financial governance.
<b>Parish Pastoral Council</b>	Can. 536	Members of the parish community, under the parish priest's presidency; constituted according to diocesan norms	Assists the parish priest in fostering pastoral activity. Consultative vote only (Can. 536 §2). Synodal significance: the most accessible point of entry for lay participation in Church governance. Where it functions well, it is the living experience of synodality for the average Catholic.
<b>Parish Finance Council</b>	Can. 537	Members of the faithful with financial competence; constituted according to diocesan norms	Assists the parish priest in the administration of parish goods. Provides financial oversight and accountability at the most local level. Synodal significance: ensures that the laity's competence in financial matters is harnessed rather than sidelined.

Table 7.3: Principal Consultative Bodies in Canon Law and Their Synodal Significance (Code of Canon Law, 1983; cf. Okonkwo, 2021; KPMG, 2026)

### 7.5 The Efficacy of the Synod versus Canon Law: The Central Tension

The central tension between synodality and the current canonical framework can be stated precisely: the Synod on Synodality (2021–2024) called for a Church in which "all are protagonists" of the Church's mission and governance. Canon Law, as it currently stands, provides for a Church in which "all are consultees" but decision-making authority remains concentrated in ordained officeholders. This is not a minor procedural difference. It

reflects a deep theological question about the relationship between the baptismal dignity of all the faithful and the sacramental authority of those ordained.

Pope Francis has navigated this tension carefully but consistently. He has not called for the abolition of hierarchical authority. He has called for its conversion from a model of authority-over to a model of authority-with. In his address to the Roman Curia in December 2021, he described "the pyramidal Church" as one that places God at the top and the People of God at the bottom, with authority flowing downward. He contrasted this with what he called "the circular Church" — a concentric model in which the People of God are at the centre, surrounding Christ, with authority understood as service flowing outward from the centre to the periphery.

This theological vision has profound administrative implications. An administrator who understands authority as service will convene consultative bodies not because the law requires it but because genuine discernment requires it. They will share information transparently, present real options rather than foregone conclusions, listen attentively to minority voices, explain their reasoning when they depart from the counsel they have received, and hold themselves accountable for the consequences of their decisions. This is synodality not as a formal process but as a personal disposition — what Pope Francis calls the "conversion" of Church governance.

**The Synod's Own Words on the Tension**

*"The Synod invites a critical reflection on the exercise of authority in the Church. Many testimonies have expressed the desire for a less hierarchical, more collaborative exercise of authority at all levels. The challenge is to find forms of governance that are both faithful to the tradition of the Church and genuinely responsive to the needs of the People of God."* — Synod on Synodality, Synthesis Report (2023), paragraph 9h.

**8.6 Way Forward: Solutions That Honour Both Synodality and Canon Law**

The good news is that genuine synodality does not require the revision of Canon Law. It requires the faithful, courageous and creative living of Canon Law. The following proposals are grounded in canonical possibility and pastoral urgency. They do not require legislative change at the universal level; they require conversion, formation and commitment at individual level.

**7.6.1 Structural Solutions Within the Canonical Framework**

Challenge	Canonical Possibility	Proposed Action
Consultative bodies meet only when required by law for a specific act	Canon Law sets no maximum frequency for consultative meetings; diocesan statutes can mandate regular meetings	Dioceses should establish statutes requiring quarterly meetings of the Presbyteral Council, bi-annual Diocesan Pastoral Council sessions and monthly Parish Pastoral Council meetings with published agendas and minutes.
Consultative bodies lack representativeness dominated by clergy and the already-powerful	Canon 512 §2 requires that Diocesan Pastoral Council members represent the whole People of God; diocesan statutes may specify quotas for women, youth and lay professionals	Each community should introduce mandatory representation targets:
No culture of explanation when officeholders depart from advice received	Canon 127 §2 requires a just and serious cause for departing from unanimous counsel; diocesan policy can require written explanation	Diocesan governance statutes should require that whenever an individual departs from the unanimous advice of a consultative body, the spirit of a synodal church require fraternal explanation.

Lay members of consultative bodies lack formation to participate substantively	Canon 229 §1 obliges the laity to acquire knowledge of Christian doctrine; dioceses have canonical authority to provide formation programmes	Diocese or parishes should establish an annual formation programme for members of all consultative bodies: covering Canon Law basics, financial governance, synodal discernment methods and Catholic Social Teaching.
Transparency deficits: financial and governance information withheld from consultative bodies	Canon 1287 §2 requires administrators to render an account of their administration to the faithful; Canon 537 gives the Parish Finance Council an oversight role	All parishes and institutions should publish an annual financial summary accessible to the faithful. Finance committees should receive complete, unredacted financial accounts, not summaries prepared by the administrator they are meant to oversee.

Table 7.4: Synodality Challenges, Canonical Possibilities and Proposed Actions (cf. Code of Canon Law, 1983; Synod Synthesis Report, 2023; Pope Francis, 2015)

### 7.6.2 Spiritual and Cultural Conversion: The Deeper Foundation

Structural solutions are necessary but not sufficient. The deeper requirement is what Pope Francis calls a "conversion of the heart", a genuine change in how Church leaders understand and exercise authority. No statute can mandate humility. No policy document can produce genuine listening. The following spiritual and cultural practices are proposed as the deeper foundation of synodal governance:

- Prayer as the starting point of all governance: Every meeting of every consultative body should begin with substantive prayer not a formality but a genuine invocation of the Holy Spirit as the real moderator of the assembly (cf. Acts 15:28: "It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us").
- Ignatian discernment methods in institutional decision-making: The practice of communal discernment presenting a question, entering into prayer, listening without premature debate, then sharing what each person has heard can be adapted for Parish Councils, Finance Committees and Presbyteral Councils. This is not a foreign import; it is a recovery of the Church's own spiritual tradition.
- Pastoral visits that listen rather than inspect: Pastoral visits to parishes and institutions should include structured listening sessions with the faithful not only with the parish priest modelled on the diocesan phase of the Synod on Synodality. These sessions should produce written reports that inform diocesan planning.
- Formation of seminary students in synodal governance: Future priests must be formed not only in liturgy and theology but in the skills of facilitation, consultation, financial transparency and shared governance. The seminary curriculum must produce pastors who know how to listen as well as how to teach.
- Accountability to the broader community: Parish and diocesan financial summaries should be published annually and discussed at parish meetings. The practice of the early Church described in Acts 4:32–35 where resources were shared transparently and according to need remains a compelling model.

### Conclusion

Synodality is not a threat to Canon Law; it is Canon Law's deepest aspiration made visible. Pope Francis was not overturning the tradition when he placed synodality at the centre of his pontificate; he was recovering what the tradition had always known but too often neglected that the Church of Christ is constitutionally a community of disciples who walk together, listen together, and decide together under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

The canonical framework already provides the structures for this: The Presbyteral Council, the College of Consultors, the Diocesan Pastoral Council, the Diocesan Finance Council, the Parish Pastoral Council, the Parish Finance Council. What is needed is not legal reform but pastoral courage that is, the courage to use these structures genuinely, to listen to what they say, to explain openly when decisions diverge from the counsel received, and to form the whole People of God to participate intelligently and faithfully in the governance of their Church.

The hierarchy of Church governance from the lay faithful at the base to the summit is not a ladder of power but a network of service. Every level has gifts the others need. Every level has blindspots the others can correct. Synodality, properly understood, is the mechanism by which these gifts are shared and these blindspots are addressed. It is, as Pope Francis said, "the path that God expects of the Church of the third millennium."

*"The path of synodality is the path that God expects of the Church of the third millennium. What the Lord is asking of us is already contained, in a sense, in the word 'synod.' Journeying together, the lay people, pastors, the Bishop of Rome, is an easy concept to put into words, but not so easy to put into practice." Pope Francis, Address on the 50th Anniversary of the Institution of the Synod of Bishops, 17 October 2015.*

#### Reflective Questions for Administrators

1. Does your Parish Pastoral Council or Finance Committee genuinely influence decisions, or does it serve as a rubber stamp for conclusions already reached?
2. When did your consultative body last disagree with you and how did you respond?
3. Can every member of the faithful in your parish or institution access a clear summary of how their financial contributions were used last year?
4. Are women, young people and the poor genuinely represented in your governance structures or do your consultative bodies reflect only the already powerful?
5. What formation have you provided for the lay members of your consultative bodies, so that they can participate knowledgeably and confidently?

## Chapter 8: Leadership in the Church Biblical Foundations and Practical Application

*"Whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve." (Matthew 20:26–28)*

Leadership is the animating force behind every other dimension of Church administration. Without effective, virtuous and mission-centred leadership, even the simplest financial systems, governance structures and human resource policies will fall short. This chapter draws on biblical tradition and contemporary leadership scholarship to articulate a distinctively Catholic theology and practice of leadership one that is not merely competent but genuinely holy. As Pope Francis teaches: "Let us not forget that authentic power is service" (Evangeliu Gaudium, 2013).

### Definition of Leadership and Leadership Styles

#### Defining Leadership

Leadership is one of the most studied and least understood concepts in human history. Thousands of definitions exist. For the purposes of this handbook, leadership in the Church is defined as follows:

#### DEFINITION OF LEADERSHIP

**Leadership in the Church is the God-given capacity to influence people toward the fulfilment of the Church's mission, through character, vision, service and the power of the Holy Spirit, in a way that builds up the Body of Christ, honours the dignity of every person, and remains accountable to the community and to God.**

This definition has several important components worth unpacking:

**God-given capacity:** Leadership in the Church is not self-appointed or self-made. It is a charism, a gift of grace given for the service of others, not for personal advancement (1 Corinthians 12:28; Romans 12:8). The administrator who forgets this will inevitably become self-serving.

**To influence:** Leadership operates through influence, not coercion. A leader who must threaten, manipulate or exclude in order to be followed has revealed the absence of genuine leadership. Authentic influence flows from trust, which is earned through consistency of character over time.

**Toward the fulfilment of the Church's mission:** Every act of leadership in a Church institution must be directional oriented toward the mission of proclaiming the Gospel, serving the poor and building the Kingdom. Leadership that is merely self-perpetuating or institution-preserving has lost its purpose.

**Through character, vision, service and the power of the Holy Spirit:** These are the four sources of a Church leader's authority. Character establishes credibility. Vision provides direction. Service demonstrates authenticity. The Holy Spirit makes it all possible (Zechariah 4:6).

**Accountable to the community and to God:** Church leadership is never autonomous. Every leader is embedded

in a web of relationships and obligations to their staff, their bishop, their canonical structures, the faithful they serve, and ultimately to God, who is the primary stakeholder of every Church institution.

*"Leadership is not about being in charge. It is about taking care of those in your charge."* **Simon Sinek**

*"Whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave — just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve."*  
**Matthew 20:26–28**

**Leadership Styles Required in the Church**

There is no single leadership style that fits every situation in Church administration. The most effective Church leaders are those who have developed a repertoire of styles and the wisdom to know which style a given situation demands. This is what scholars call situational or adaptive leadership (Hersey & Blanchard, 1969; Spears, 2010). The following seven styles are the most relevant to the Catholic Church context in Africa. Each is presented with its definition, its strengths, its cautions and its biblical anchor.

**Figure 8.1: Leadership Styles for Church Administration — A Visual Overview**

Style	What It Is & Biblical Anchor	Key Strengths	Cautions for Church Use
† <b>Servant Leadership</b>	The leader exists to serve, not to be served (Matthew 20:26). Power is understood as a resource to deploy for others, not a status to protect. The administrator who clears obstacles for their team rather than demanding the team clear obstacles for them is practising servant leadership (Spears, 2010; Onaga, 2022).	Builds deep trust and loyalty. Releases the potential of the whole team. Consistent with the Gospel. Produces long-term institutional resilience.	Can be mistaken for weakness; requires personal maturity to hold authority and humility simultaneously. Boundaries must still be set and decisions made.
🔥 <b>Transformational Leadership</b>	The leader inspires others to transcend self-interest and work toward a larger vision. Transformational leaders appeal to purpose, not just procedure. Nehemiah inspired the whole community to rebuild the walls in 52 days not through compulsion but through a shared vision (Nehemiah 2:18).	Mobilises collective energy around a compelling mission. Produces institutional renewal. Particularly effective in times of crisis or stagnation.	Vision without accountability produces charisma without governance. Transformational leaders must balance inspiration with transparency and measurable outcomes.

☞	<b>Visionary Strategic Leadership</b> /	The leader sees beyond the immediate to the long-term; sets direction with clarity and builds the plans to get there. Moses received a vision of the Promised Land and spent forty years building toward it. Proverbs 29:18: 'Where there is no vision, the people perish.'	Provides institutional direction and purpose. Prevents reactive, ad hoc administration. Aligns resources with long-term mission.	Vision without operational follow-through is wishful thinking. Strategic leaders must build teams capable of executing what they envision.
□	<b>Collaborative Synodal Leadership</b> /	The leader works with others rather than over them; decisions emerge from genuine discernment involving multiple voices. This is the model Pope Francis identifies as synodality, walking together. Canon 536 and 512 establish the consultative structures that make collaborative leadership canonical.	Produces decisions with broad ownership and acceptance. Surfaces information and wisdom the leader alone cannot access. Models the Church's synodal nature.	Can be slow; requires skilled facilitation to prevent drift or lowest-common-denominator decisions. The leader must still decide when discernment has run its course.
☞	<b>Coaching Developmental Leadership</b> /	The leader invests in growing others, not only in getting results. Moses trained Joshua; Paul mentored Timothy; Barnabas invested in Paul. This style treats every staff interaction as an opportunity for formation and growth (2 Timothy 2:2).	Builds institutional capacity and leadership pipeline. Produces staff loyalty and morale. Essential for succession planning.	Requires time and patience; may feel slow to task-oriented administrators. Coaching is not counselling, boundaries must be maintained.
♠	<b>Authoritative Prophetic Leadership</b> /	The leader makes clear, unambiguous decisions when clarity and direction are urgently needed especially on ethical matters. Elijah on Mount Carmel, Paul confronting the Galatian churches, Nehemiah confronting those exploiting the poor (Nehemiah 5:6-13). This is not authoritarianism; it is moral courage.	Essential in crises, ethical failures and moments requiring clear direction. Prevents governance paralysis. Demonstrates conviction.	Easily slides into authoritarianism if the leader lacks humility. Must be used sparingly and always within the canonical consultative framework.


	<b>Stewardship / Administrative Leadership</b>	The leader manages systems, resources and processes with discipline, transparency and accountability. This is the primary style demanded by Canon 1284 §1: 'All administrators are to perform their duties with the diligence of a good householder.' Stewardship leadership treats every asset, every budget line and every staff member as entrusted by God.	Produces institutional order, financial integrity and operational reliability. Essential for regulatory compliance and donor confidence.	Without vision and people-skills, stewardship leadership becomes bureaucracy. Systems should serve people and mission, never the reverse.
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Figure 8.2: Leadership Styles for Church Administration (Spears, 2010; Hersey & Blanchard, 1969; Onaga, 2022; Asamoah, 2018; Scripture references as cited)

**Which Style? The Situational Matrix**

No single style is always right. The following matrix helps the Church administrator diagnose which style is most appropriate to a given situation. In practice, the most effective leaders blend styles fluidly, moving between collaboration and decision, vision and accountability, challenge and pastoral care, as the moment requires.

Situation	Primary Style Recommended	Secondary Style to Combine
Institution is drifting without direction; staff are confused about priorities	Visionary/Strategic clarifies purpose, rebuild a shared plan	Transformational inspires the team around the renewed mission
A major financial decision requires broad buy-in from diverse stakeholders	Collaborative/Synodal convenes the relevant consultative bodies genuinely	Stewardship/Administrative ensures the decision is properly documented and executed
A staff member or colleague is engaged in misconduct or ethical failure	Authoritative/Prophetic able to name the problem clearly and act decisively	Servant Leadership able to handle the process with dignity and due process
The institution has talented young staff with potential but lacking confidence	Coaching/Developmental invests in their growth deliberately	Servant Leadership removes obstacles and create opportunities for them to shine
A pastoral crisis demands rapid response and clear public communication	Authoritative/Prophetic provides calm, confident, clear direction	Transformational rally the community around shared faith and resilience
Routine governance and financial management	Stewardship/Administrative maintain systems, controls and reporting	Servant Leadership ensures systems serve people, not the reverse

Table 8.1: The Leadership Style Situational Matrix for Church Administration (adapted from Hersey & Blanchard, 1969; Goleman, 2000; Spears, 2010)

**8.1 Qualities of a Good Leader: A Biblical Framework**

Scripture provides the most enduring account of what constitutes good leadership. The following table maps key biblical texts to their corresponding leadership qualities and their direct application in Church administration. Taken together, they describe not an office to be occupied but a vocation to be lived (1 Timothy 3:1–12; Titus 1:6–9).

Scripture Reference	Leadership Quality	Application in Church Administration
<b>1 Timothy 3:1–12; Titus 1:6–9</b>	Moral and character qualifications for leadership	Every appointment to Church leadership — pastoral or administrative — must prioritise character over profile. Competence without integrity is a liability in a Church institution.
<b>Nehemiah 7:2</b>	Faithfulness and reverence	Administrators are entrusted with God’s resources. Fidelity to that trust is the foundation of institutional credibility and donor confidence.
<b>Matthew 20:26</b>	A servant’s heart	Authority in the Church is always authority for service, never for personal comfort or status. The administrator who treats a position as a privilege rather than a burden misunderstands the Gospel.
<b>2 Chronicles 32:20</b>	A heart for prayer	Strategic decisions must be grounded in discernment and prayer, not merely financial modelling or institutional pressure. Hezekiah and Isaiah prayed before acting; Church leaders must do the same.
<b>1 Chronicles 21:8</b>	Accepting responsibility for actions	Church leaders who deflect blame onto staff or external circumstances erode institutional trust. Accountability must begin at the top. David confessed; every administrator must be prepared to do the same.
<b>Daniel 6:10</b>	Consistency between words and actions; moral courage	Institutional values must be lived, not merely displayed. Daniel’s courage cost him personally. Church leaders must be prepared to pay a price for integrity when it conflicts with self-interest.
<b>John 3:30</b>	Humility; not emphasising self	“He must increase; I must decrease.” The Church’s mission, not the leader’s personal profile, must always be pre-eminent in every institutional decision.
<b>Micah 3:1–11</b>	Consumed with doing what is right; justice	Corrupt leadership in the Church is doubly scandalous. Administrators must never sacrifice justice for institutional convenience, donor appeasement or political calculation.
<b>1 Chronicles 12:1–2</b>	Not threatened by skilled subordinates; gathers skillful people	The best Church administrators build teams of people more skilled than themselves in specialist areas — finance, human resources, legal compliance — and celebrate their contributions.
<b>Proverbs 12:15</b>	Accountability; heeding wise counsel	No Church leader should operate without a board, spiritual director or peer who is empowered to speak truth in love. Unaccountable leadership eventually becomes abusive leadership.

Table 8.2: Biblical Qualities of Good Leadership Applied to Church Administration (1 Tim 3:1–12; Titus 1:6–9; Spears, 2010)

### 8.2 Biblical Leadership Archetypes and Their Lessons for Administrators

The lives of biblical figures offer not abstract theories but lived archetypes of leadership in action. Each provides a distinctive lesson that remains profoundly relevant to the contemporary Church administrator. The following profiles are drawn from the canonical tradition.

**Nehemiah: The Visionary Administrator**

Nehemiah was a common man in a unique position secure and successful as cupbearer to King Artaxerxes, with little formal power but great personal influence. When news reached him that Jerusalem's walls lay in ruins, he did not react impulsively. He prayed for four months before acting (Nehemiah 1:4), assessed the situation covertly before making his proposal (Nehemiah 2:11–16), built a broad coalition of workers, delegated effectively, and confronted opposition with calm firmness. The wall was rebuilt in fifty-two days a feat Israel's enemies attributed to God himself (Nehemiah 6:16).

**Key lesson:** Pray first; plan carefully; act decisively; and remain accountable throughout. There are two parts to real service for God: talking with him and walking with him (Nehemiah 2:18).

**Moses: Leadership Shaped by God**

Moses illustrates both the extraordinary power of a leader shaped by God and the sobering consequences of even a single act of disobedience (Numbers 20:12). God did not give Moses new abilities; he took Moses' existing characteristics his passion for justice, his capacity for reaction, his Egyptian education and moulded them to his purposes (Exodus 3–4). Moses also demonstrated the necessity of distributed leadership: at Jethro's counsel, he appointed capable leaders over thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens one of the earliest documented applications of subsidiarity in organisational governance (Exodus 18:21–22).

**Key lesson:** God prepares, then uses. Do not ask "What should I change into?" but "How should I use my own gifts and strengths to do God's will?" No leader can carry an institution alone: build a leadership team and delegate.

**Paul: The Strategic Mission Leader**

No person apart from Jesus himself shaped the history of Christianity like the apostle Paul (Acts 7:58–28:31). His leadership combined fierce intensity with pastoral tenderness, theological depth with practical action, personal vulnerability with institutional accountability. Every organisational decision he made where to plant a church, how to address a conflict, when to appeal to his civic rights was made in service of the gospel's advance. In 2 Corinthians 8:20–21, Paul insisted on handling the Jerusalem collection through a team of accountable persons, establishing one of the earliest models of financial governance in Church history. God did not waste any part of Paul his background, training, citizenship, mind, or even his weaknesses. He will do the same for any administrator who yields to him (Philippians 1:21–24).

**Key lesson:** Handle all resources with such transparency that no one can legitimately question your integrity. God does not waste any part of a leader allow him to use all that you are (2 Corinthians 8:21).

**Deborah: Leadership Without Borders**

Deborah, the only female judge of Israel, stands as a powerful affirmation that effective Church leadership is not the exclusive preserve of those in formal positions of clerical authority. She was prophet, judge, counsellor and strategist never seeking power for its own sake but exercising it entirely in service of God's people (Judges 4–5). Wise leaders are rare: they accomplish great amounts of work without direct involvement because they know how to work through other people. They see the big picture that escapes those directly involved. Deborah fit this description perfectly. For the Church in Africa, where gifted lay women and men frequently exercise extraordinary leadership in parishes, schools and hospitals, Deborah provides a theological affirmation that God chooses leaders by his standards, not ours.

**Key lesson:** Wise leaders choose good helpers and give God the credit. Do not allow convention or personal insecurity to prevent the recognition and deployment of others' gifts (Judges 4:4).

**8.3 Choosing and Treating Leaders: Biblical Principles****Choosing a Good Leader (1 Samuel 16:7)**

When Samuel went to anoint the next king of Israel, God corrected his instinct to choose by outward appearance: "The LORD does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart" (1 Samuel 16:7). Selection processes that prioritise charisma, seniority or political affiliation over character, competence and mission commitment are not merely poor governance; they are a failure of spiritual discernment. Every leadership appointment in the Church must be preceded by prayer, structured assessment and reference checks that look beyond the CV to the character of the candidate.

**How to Treat Our Leaders: A Framework of Mutual Accountability**

Scripture is equally clear that the faithful have obligations toward their leaders, just as leaders have obligations toward the faithful. This mutual accountability is essential for healthy institutional life.

Scripture	Obligation Toward Leaders	Institutional Implication
<b>Hebrews 13:17; Romans 13:1–5</b>	Work with leaders rather than against them; use proper channels to effect change	Staff must use grievance procedures and consultative forums rather than undermining leadership through gossip or factionalism
<b>1 Thessalonians 5:12–13; Exodus 17:10–13</b>	Encourage leaders actively; hold up their arms as Aaron and Hur held up Moses during battle	Cultures that consistently demoralise leadership violate a biblical obligation and ultimately harm the institution’s mission
<b>Hebrews 13:18–19</b>	Pray for leaders consistently and specifically	Parish and institutional communities should include intercessory prayer for their administrators as a regular and deliberate spiritual practice
<b>Romans 14:10</b>	Resist the temptation to quick, unconstructive criticism	Leaders carry pressures often invisible to those they serve; criticism should be offered constructively and through proper channels, not publicly
<b>2 Samuel 12:1–13</b>	Hold leaders accountable with courage and love; Nathan confronted David directly	Boards, councils and peers must be willing to speak uncomfortable truths. Silence in the face of leadership failure is not charity — it is a failure of stewardship

Table 8.3: Biblical Obligations Toward Church Leaders and Their Institutional Application

**8.4 God Uses Ordinary People: A Theology of Inclusive Leadership Development**

One of the most consistent themes of Scripture is that God chooses unlikely people to accomplish his purposes. The canon of Church history is populated not only by the powerful and educated but by shepherds, fishermen, tax collectors, widows, slaves and peasant girls. This has direct implications for how Church institutions approach leadership development and succession planning. The following table presents key biblical examples and their leadership implications:

Person	Known As	Task God Assigned	Leadership Lesson for Administrators
<b>Moses</b>	Shepherd in exile; a murderer	Lead Israel out of bondage and receive the Law (Exodus 3)	Past failures do not disqualify a person from future leadership; God redeems and repurposes
<b>David</b>	Youngest shepherd boy; last in the family	Become Israel’s greatest king and ancestor of the Messiah (1 Samuel 16)	Never overlook potential leaders because of their youth, family position or apparent lack of status
<b>Esther</b>	An orphaned slave girl	Save her people from genocide through courage and strategic wisdom (Esther 4:16)	Serving God often demands risking personal security; God positions people for purposes they cannot yet see

Person	Known As	Task God Assigned	Leadership Lesson for Administrators
<b>Mary</b>	A peasant girl from Nazareth	Become the mother of the Son of God; model of total availability (Luke 1:27–38)	God’s best servants are ordinary people who make themselves available; a person’s character is revealed in their response to the unexpected
<b>Peter</b>	A fisherman; impulsive and prone to failure	Lead the early Church; preach at Pentecost; write two canonical letters (Matthew 4:18–20; Acts 2:14)	Christians falter; when they return to Jesus, he forgives and strengthens them. Failure is not the end of a leadership story

Table 8.4: *God Uses Ordinary People — Biblical Leaders and Their Lesson for Church Administration*

No person should be written off as a potential leader on the basis of background, gender, ethnicity or socioeconomic status. Intentional leadership development identifying potential leaders early, investing in their formation, mentoring them through challenges and entrusting them with growing responsibility is not merely good organisational practice. It is obedience to the pattern established by God throughout salvation history (Nyatsanza, 2021).

**8.5 The Danger of Criticising Leaders: A Biblical Warning**

Scripture is consistent and sobering on the dangers of unjust criticism of God’s appointed leaders. This is not a call to blind obedience or the suppression of legitimate grievance as Table 7.2 makes clear, holding leaders accountable is itself a biblical obligation. Rather, it is a warning against the destructive culture of cynicism, gossip and factional opposition that corrodes institutional life. The table below illustrates the biblical record:

Person and Situation	Consequence	Reference	Lesson for Institutions
Miriam mocked Moses over his personal choice of wife	Stricken with leprosy	Numbers 12	Personal criticism of a leader’s private life is not a governance matter and has no place in institutional settings
Korah and his followers led the people to rebel against Moses’ leadership	Swallowed by the earth	Numbers 16	Factionalism and power struggles destroy institutional mission; use proper grievance mechanisms instead
Sanballat and Tobiah spread lies to stop Nehemiah’s wall-building	Frightened, humiliated and excluded from the covenant community	Nehemiah 2, 4, 6	External opposition and internal detractors must be handled firmly and without compromise when the mission is at stake
Bar-Jesus the sorcerer lied about Paul to turn the proconsul against him	Stricken with blindness	Acts 13	Those who use deception to undermine legitimate Church leadership are working against God’s purposes

Table 8.5: *Biblical Warnings Against Unjust Criticism of Church Leaders (cf. Numbers 12; 16; Nehemiah 2, 4, 6; Acts 13)*

### 8.6 Leadership Succession: Building for the Future

One of the greatest challenges facing Church institutions is leadership succession. When a strong leader departs through retirement, transfer, death or removal many institutions struggle to maintain momentum, identity and institutional memory. The failure to plan for succession reflects an implicit belief that the institution belongs to the current leader rather than to God and his mission.

The model of Moses and Joshua is instructive. Moses' greatest act of institutional leadership may have been the deliberate, patient preparation of Joshua as his successor. God himself ratified this succession plan (Numbers 27:15–23). Joshua had been Moses' constant shadow: he accompanied Moses partway up Sinai, served as field general of the army, and was one of only two scouts who trusted God's promise about the Promised Land. His basic training was simply living with Moses — experiencing firsthand what it meant to lead God's people. This is modelling at its best. Every Church leader must ask: "Who is my Joshua? Am I investing in that person deliberately and consistently today?" The promise God gave Joshua at the beginning of his leadership remains the promise given to every leader who serves with integrity: "Be strong and courageous ... for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go" (Joshua 1:9).

### 8.7 Chapter Summary: Reflective Questions for Church Leaders

This chapter has argued that leadership is not merely a functional competency in Church administration but a theological vocation. Grounded in the scriptural qualities of 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1, illustrated through the archetypes of Nehemiah, Moses, Paul and Deborah, and anchored in the servant leadership tradition (Spears, 2010; Onaga, 2022; Asamoah, 2018), the chapter calls every Church administrator to a standard simultaneously higher and more liberating than any secular management framework — higher because it demands holiness, and more liberating because it rests not on personal capacity but on God's faithfulness.

**For personal reflection:** Which of the biblical leadership qualities in Table 7.1 do you most naturally embody? Which do you most urgently need to develop? What one concrete step will you take this month?

**For institutional reflection:** Does your institution have a formal leadership development pipeline and a documented succession plan for each senior role? If not, what would it take to build one within the next twelve months?

**For governance reflection:** Does your board or Parish Council actively encourage leadership, pray for leaders and hold them to account? Or has a culture of passivity or destructive criticism taken root? What structural change is needed?

## Chapter 9: Safeguarding — The Administrator's Ultimate Duty of Care

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*"Whoever welcomes one of these little children in my name welcomes me; and whoever causes one of these little ones those who believe in me to stumble, it would be better for them to have a large millstone hung around their neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea." (Matthew 18:5–6)*

Safeguarding is the final, and in many ways the most morally urgent, responsibility of the Church administrator. It is the duty that integrates and supersedes every other administrative function discussed in this handbook. An institution may be financially sound, well-governed, professionally staffed, and strategically resourced but if it fails in its duty to protect the vulnerable people in its care, it has failed at the most fundamental level of its Gospel calling. The administrator who safeguards assets but neglects the safety of children, young people, and vulnerable adults has inverted the priorities that the Church's mission demands.

This chapter examines what safeguarding means, why it has become a defining priority for the contemporary Church, what practical systems every Church institution must have in place, and how the safeguarding of people relates to the broader administrative duty to protect all of the Church's resources physical, financial, human, and intangible.

### What is Safeguarding?

Safeguarding, in the Church context, refers to the policies, practices, systems and culture that an institution puts in place to protect children, young people, and vulnerable adults from abuse, exploitation, harm, and neglect. It encompasses proactive prevention, responsive support, and accountable governance. It is not merely a legal compliance function it is a theological imperative rooted in the dignity of every human person.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) defines a child as any person under 18 years of age and establishes the right of every child to protection from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury, abuse, neglect, maltreatment or exploitation. The Catholic Church's own Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors (PCPM), established by Pope Francis in 2014, defines safeguarding as "the ongoing effort of the Church to ensure the safety and protection of all those who interact with its institutions, particularly children and vulnerable adults."

In a broader institutional sense, safeguarding extends beyond the protection of persons to encompass the protection of all the Church's resources its assets, finances, reputation, mission and integrity from misuse, misappropriation, and institutional harm. This broader understanding connects safeguarding directly to the stewardship obligations of Canon 1284 §1, which require administrators to exercise the diligence of a good householder in the management of everything entrusted to them.

### **Why Safeguarding Matters So Urgently in the Church Today**

The contemporary urgency of safeguarding in the Catholic Church is inseparable from the crisis of clerical sexual abuse and institutional cover-up that has unfolded across the globe since the late 20th century. The Australian Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse (2017), the Pennsylvania Grand Jury Report (2018), the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse in England and Wales (2022), and similar investigations in Ireland, Germany, Chile, and across Africa have demonstrated with devastating clarity what happens when safeguarding fails: children are harmed; perpetrators are protected; survivors are silenced; and the Church's moral credibility is shattered.

Pope Francis responded with landmark legislative reform. The Apostolic Constitution *Vos Estis Lux Mundi* (2019) "You are the light of the world" established universal protocols for reporting allegations of abuse against clergy, religious, and Church personnel. It mandates that every diocese and religious congregation establish a system for receiving reports, conducting investigations, and reporting to civil authorities. Crucially, it makes the cover-up of abuse itself a canonical offence.

#### **Key Legislative Milestones in Church Safeguarding**

Canon 1395 establishes penalties for clergy who commit offences against the sixth commandment with minors. | 2001 *Sacramentorum Sanctitatis Tutela*: Pope John Paul II establishes the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith as the body responsible for adjudicating abuse cases. | 2011 Circular Letter to Bishops' Conferences: Instructs every Conference to develop safeguarding guidelines. | 2014 Establishment of PCPM: Pope Francis creates the Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors. | 2019 *Vos Estis Lux Mundi*: Universal protocols for reporting, investigation and accountability.

For Church administrators in Zimbabwe and across Africa, the safeguarding imperative is equally pressing. Cultural norms that discourage disclosure of abuse, power dynamics that silence victims, and institutional structures that prioritise reputation over truth have enabled harm in African Church institutions as they have elsewhere. The administrator who believes that safeguarding is a "Western concern" irrelevant to the African context has misunderstood both the scope of the problem and the universality of the Church's obligation.

### **The Scope of Safeguarding: What Must Be Protected**

Safeguarding in the Church covers five interconnected domains. An administrator who addresses only one or two of these domains has an incomplete safeguarding framework.

#### **Protection of Children and Young People**

Every child who enters a Church school, attends a parish youth group, participates in a Church camp or sports programme, receives pastoral care, or encounters any Church representative in any context has the right to be safe. Safeguarding policy must cover every context in which children interact with Church institutions or personnel including online and digital environments, which are increasingly the site of grooming and exploitation.

Practical requirements include: comprehensive background checks (including criminal record checks) for all staff and volunteers working with children; mandatory safeguarding training for all personnel; child-friendly reporting mechanisms; and a designated Safeguarding Officer in every institution. No adult should ever be alone with a child in a closed, unobserved space. All allegations must be reported to both Church authorities and civil authorities.

#### **Protection of Vulnerable Adults**

The Church serves many vulnerable adults the elderly, the mentally ill, the physically disabled, refugees, persons in poverty, and those in crisis through its hospitals, social welfare programmes, hospices, and pastoral care. These individuals are entitled to the same protections as children. Administrators must ensure that staff working with vulnerable adults are trained, supervised, and subject to clear codes of conduct. Particular care must be taken in contexts where power dynamics are inherently unequal: confessional relationships, spiritual direction, hospital chaplaincy, and counselling.

### **Protection of Institutional Integrity and Reputation**

The Church's institutional reputation is itself a resource to be safeguarded (Suchman, 1995). A single well-publicised safeguarding failure can destroy decades of community trust, devastate donor confidence, and provide grounds for government intervention or regulatory sanction. Administrators must understand that safeguarding failures are not merely pastoral failures they are institutional governance failures that carry reputational, legal, and financial consequences.

This is where safeguarding connects directly to the RBV framework discussed in this chapter: the Church's reputation for moral integrity is one of its most valuable, rare, and non-substitutable strategic resources. It must be protected with the same rigour and indeed with greater rigour as the Church's financial assets.

### **Protection of Financial and Physical Assets from Misuse**

Safeguarding extends to the protection of the Church's physical and financial assets from misappropriation, fraud, and misuse. Canon 1284 §2 obliges administrators to insure goods, maintain records, prepare budgets, and render accounts. These obligations are safeguarding obligations they protect the Church's resources from the harm caused by negligent or corrupt administration. An administrator who diverts parish funds for personal use is not merely a financial offender; they are a safeguarding failure, because their actions deprive the poor and vulnerable of resources intended for their benefit.

### **Protection of Digital and Informational Assets**

In the digital age, safeguarding must extend to the protection of personal data, confidential records, and digital communications. Church institutions hold sensitive personal information about staff, donors, beneficiaries and community members. Breaches of this information whether through negligence, hacking, or deliberate disclosure cause real harm to real people. Administrators must ensure that data protection policies are in place, that digital systems are secured, and that staff understand their obligations regarding confidentiality.

### **A Safeguarding Framework for Church Institutions: Practical Application**

The following framework provides Church administrators with a practical, implementable approach to safeguarding across all five domains identified above. It is structured around four pillars: Policy, People, Procedures, and Culture.

#### **Pillar 1: Policy**

Every Church institution must have a written safeguarding policy that is reviewed annually, approved by the governing board or bishop, and made available to all staff, volunteers and community members. The policy must:

- Define safeguarding and its scope, covering children, vulnerable adults, institutional integrity, assets and data.
- State clearly the institution's zero-tolerance approach to abuse, exploitation and cover-up.
- Identify the Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO) and their contact details.
- Specify the reporting obligations of all staff and volunteers — including mandatory reporting to civil authorities as required by law.
- Be aligned with the requirements of Vos Estis Lux Mundi (2019), the relevant national Bishops' Conference safeguarding guidelines, and applicable civil legislation.

#### **Pillar 2: People**

Safeguarding is only as strong as the people who implement it. Every institution must invest in:

- A Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO) a trained, empowered individual with explicit responsibility for receiving reports, coordinating responses, and liaising with authorities. The DSO must have direct access to the institutional leader.
- Mandatory pre-employment screening including criminal background checks, reference checks, and identity verification for all staff and volunteers working with children or vulnerable adults.
- Mandatory safeguarding training for all staff and volunteers, refreshed at least every two years. Training must cover: recognising signs of abuse; reporting obligations; appropriate behaviour standards; and responding to disclosures.
- Leadership accountability. The institutional leader (bishop, parish priest, school principal, hospital director) is ultimately responsible for safeguarding. Leadership accountability cannot be delegated to the DSO alone.

#### **Pillar 3: Procedures**

Clear, written procedures must be in place before a safeguarding concern arises not invented in the moment of crisis. Essential procedures include:

- A confidential reporting mechanism including a telephone hotline, written reporting form, or email address through which any person can report a concern without fear of retaliation.

- A clear investigation protocol specifying who conducts investigations, what standard of evidence applies, how confidentiality is maintained, and when civil authorities must be notified.
- A survivor support pathway ensuring that persons who report abuse receive immediate pastoral support, access to counselling, and ongoing communication about the progress of their case.
- A case recording and management system maintaining confidential records of all reports, investigations and outcomes in accordance with data protection requirements.
- A review and learning mechanism ensuring that every safeguarding incident results in institutional learning and policy improvement.

#### **Pillar 4: Culture**

Policy and procedures are necessary but not sufficient. The deepest safeguarding failures occur not in the absence of written policies but in the presence of institutional cultures that silence victims, protect perpetrators and prize reputation over truth. Building a safeguarding culture requires:

- Open communication creating environments where staff, volunteers, children and community members feel safe to raise concerns without fear of ridicule, dismissal or retaliation.
- The consistent modelling of appropriate boundaries by leaders, clergy, religious and senior staff in every interaction with children, young people and vulnerable adults.
- Survivor-centred responses placing the needs, safety and dignity of the person harmed at the centre of every institutional response, not the reputation of the institution or the accused.
- Ongoing formation integrating safeguarding awareness into the spiritual formation of seminarians, novices, and lay ministry programmes, so that it is understood as a Gospel imperative, not merely a legal compliance requirement.

#### **Safeguarding as an Integrated Stewardship Responsibility**

The ultimate theological ground for safeguarding is the doctrine of the human person: every human being, made in the image and likeness of God (Genesis 1:27), possesses inherent dignity that demands protection. The administrator who safeguards buildings, budgets and balance sheets while failing to protect the people in their care has fundamentally misunderstood what belongs to God.

Drawing the theoretical frameworks of this handbook together: HCT reminds us that the people in our institutions are the most valuable capital we possess and capital that is damaged or destroyed by abuse is capital lost forever. The RBV reminds us that the Church's most strategic resource is its moral legitimacy, its community trust and its reputation for integrity and nothing destroys these resources more thoroughly than safeguarding failure. The administrator who regards safeguarding as a burden imposed by external regulators has missed its deeper logic: safeguarding is the ultimate expression of the stewardship calling that underlies every page of this handbook.

#### **Connecting Safeguarding to the Four Pillars of Church Administration**

Financial Management Safeguard funds so that resources reach those for whom they are intended. | Human Resource Management Screen, train and supervise all staff and volunteers to prevent harm. | Asset Management Protect physical environments to ensure they are safe for children and vulnerable adults. | Corporate Governance Build accountability structures that make cover-up institutionally impossible.

Pope Francis expressed the moral imperative plainly: "In the Church, there is no place for those who commit these abuses, and we will deal with this with God's strength. The Church will never go backwards on this matter." (Address to the Summit on Protection of Minors, 2019). For the Church administrator in Zimbabwe and across Africa, this is not an optional aspiration. It is a canonical obligation, a Gospel imperative, and a condition of institutional credibility.

#### **Conclusion: The Administrator as Guardian**

This chapter has argued that safeguarding the protection of all persons and all resources entrusted to the Church's care is the integrating duty that gives meaning to every other administrative function. The five pillars of safeguarding protection of children, protection of vulnerable adults, protection of institutional integrity, protection of assets, and protection of data correspond precisely to the five chapters of this handbook. An administrator who excels in all five administrative functions but fails in safeguarding has not been a faithful steward; they have been a technically proficient one.

The call of the Gospel is higher than technical proficiency. It calls administrators to be guardian’s people who stand between the vulnerable and those who would harm them, between the Church’s resources and those who would misuse them, between the mission and those institutional failures that would undermine it. To be a guardian in this sense is to fulfil, in institutional form, what Jesus modelled in personal form: the Good Shepherd who lays down his life for the sheep.

*“See that you do not despise one of these little ones. For I tell you that their angels in heaven always see the face of my Father in heaven.”*

**Matthew 18:10**

**KEY TAKEAWAYS**

- ① Safeguarding is not a compliance burden. It is a Gospel imperative rooted in the dignity of every human person. The administrator who protects assets but neglects people has inverted the priorities of the mission.
- ② Vos Estis Lux Mundi (2019) makes reporting and accountability universal obligations for every Catholic institution. Cover-up is itself a canonical offence. No administrator in any diocese or religious congregation is exempt.
- ③ The Four Pillars of safeguarding Policy, People, Procedures, and Culture are all required. A safeguarding framework that has strong policies but a weak culture, or trained people but no procedures, is structurally incomplete.
- ④ The Church’s most strategic resource its moral legitimacy and community trust is destroyed more thoroughly by safeguarding failure than by any other institutional failure. Protecting it is both a pastoral and a governance imperative.
- ⑤ The administrator who wishes to hear “Well done, good and faithful servant” (Matthew 25:21) must be able to answer truthfully: every person entrusted to my care was protected; every resource entrusted to my institution was faithfully managed; and the mission I was given was advanced not undermined on my watch.

**Chapter 10: Summary, Synthesis and Reflections**

*“From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked.” (Luke 12:48)*

This concluding chapter does three things. First, it synthesises the core learning of each chapter into a summary that busy administrators can use as a reference guide and a checklist. Second, it defines leadership as understood in the context of the Catholic Church, presents the leadership styles most applicable to Church administration, and offers a visual overview of those styles with their strengths and cautions. Third, it closes with an integrated set of reflective questions and a word of encouragement to every administrator who has engaged seriously with this handbook.

**Part A: Chapter-by-Chapter Summary and Reflections**

The table below distils the central insight of each chapter and pairs it with a reflective question designed to move the reader from comprehension to application. The most important question for any administrator is not "Do I understand this?" but "Am I living this?"

**Chapter-by-Chapter Summary and Reflective Questions**

Ch.	Title	Core Insight	Reflective Question
Intro	Introduction & Objectives	Church administration is not merely managerial; it is a theological vocation rooted in stewardship and servant leadership. The administrator is a custodian of God's gifts, not an owner. Canon 1284 §1 demands the diligence of a good householder.	Am I administering this institution as if it belongs to me — or as if it belongs to God? What concrete evidence supports my answer?

1	<b>Overview of Church Administration</b>	The five classical management functions — Planning, Organising, Staffing, Directing and Controlling — apply fully to the Church but must be animated by faith. Strategic plans that are written and then ignored are governance failures. Decision-making must apply the principle of subsidiarity: decisions belong at the most appropriate level.	Does my institution have a living strategic plan that shapes daily decisions — or a decorative document on a shelf? When did I last review it with my team?
2	<b>Financial Management in the Church</b>	Financial management is a canonical obligation (Canon 1284–1287), not an optional administrative virtue. Segregation of duties, transparent reporting, external audit, and a sound budget are the non-negotiables. The love of money is a root of all kinds of evil; yet the lack of financial discipline is a root of institutional collapse.	Can I demonstrate to any donor, bishop or community member exactly how every shilling contributed to this institution was used last year? If not, what needs to change?
3	<b>Resource Mobilisation and Fundraising</b>	Resource mobilisation is the strategic process of identifying, attracting and managing all resources needed to sustain the mission. It is not the same as fundraising. The era of passive collection-plate dependence is over. Diversification, transparency, relationship-building and digital engagement are now essential competencies for every Church administrator.	What percentage of our institutional income comes from a single source? What would happen to the mission if that source dried up tomorrow?
4	<b>Human Resource Management</b>	People are the Church's most important asset. Recruitment, formation, fair treatment and dignified conflict resolution are not HR bureaucracy; they are expressions of the Gospel. Poor HR management damages the Church's witness as surely as financial misconduct. The CLARITY Model provides a practical framework for difficult conversations.	Do all staff in my institution know that they matter — not just as function-fillers but as human persons made in God's image? What is one concrete change I could make this week to demonstrate this?
5	<b>Asset Management</b>	The temporal goods of the Church exist to serve the mission, not to serve the administrator. Canon 1254 establishes the Church's right to hold property; Canon 1291 requires competent authority for alienation. Every asset should be inventoried, insured, properly registered and actively deployed for the mission. Deferred maintenance is a false economy.	Is every property owned by this institution properly registered in the name of the Church, insured, and documented in a current asset register? If not, what is the risk we are carrying?

6	<b>Ethics and Corporate Governance</b>	Governance without ethics is compliance theatre. Ethics without governance is sentiment without accountability. The High-Impact Sweet Spot sits at the intersection of Mission Fidelity and Operational Excellence. The principle of subsidiarity is the canonical and ethical corrective to the concentration of decision-making in one person.	Can I name one governance decision made in the past year where I chose Mission Fidelity over financial convenience? What made that decision difficult?
7	<b>Synodality as a Solution in Church Administration</b>	Synodality is the path God expects of the Church of the third millennium (Pope Francis, 2015). It is not a threat to Canon Law; it is Canon Law's deepest aspiration made visible. The College of Consultors, Presbyteral Council, Diocesan Pastoral Council, Finance Council and Parish Pastoral Council are the canonical structures of synodality. The challenge is not structural; it is cultural.	Does the consultative body that advises me genuinely influence my decisions, or does it serve as a rubber stamp? Can I name a specific decision that was changed because of its counsel?
8	<b>Leadership in the Church</b>	Biblical leadership is not about personality or power; it is about character, prayer, faithfulness and service. Nehemiah planned; Moses delegated; Paul was transparent; Deborah was wise. Good leaders choose good helpers, accept accountability, and do not emphasise themselves. God consistently uses ordinary people for extraordinary purposes.	Who is my Joshua — the person I am deliberately mentoring and preparing to lead after me? What am I investing in that person right now?
8	<b>Synodality as a Solution</b>	Synodality is the path God expects of the Church of the third millennium (Pope Francis, 2015). It is not a threat to Canon Law; it is Canon Law's deepest aspiration made visible. The College of Consultors, Presbyteral Council, Diocesan Pastoral Council, Finance Council and Parish Pastoral Council are the canonical structures of synodality. The challenge is not structural; it is cultural.	Does the consultative body that advises me genuinely influence my decisions — or does it serve as a rubber stamp? Can I name a specific decision that was changed because of its counsel?
9	<b>Safeguarding: The Administrator's Ultimate Duty of Care</b>	Safeguarding is the integrating and ultimate administrative duty. An institution may be financially sound, well-governed and professionally staffed, but if it fails in its duty to protect the vulnerable, it has failed at the most fundamental level of its Gospel calling. The four pillars of safeguarding, Policy, People, Procedures and Culture, are all required. Vos Estis Lux Mundi (2019) makes accountability universal: cover-up is itself a canonical offence.	Does my institution have a written safeguarding policy, a trained Designated Safeguarding Officer, and a culture in which staff and community members feel safe to raise concerns without fear of retaliation?

<b>10</b>	<b>Lessons Learned and the Future</b>	The Church administrator of the future must combine courage, humility, discipline and creativity. The Kaizen culture of continuous improvement, digital transformation, impact measurement, talent development and financial sustainability are not optional aspirations; they are survival imperatives for Church institutions in the coming decades.	What is the one administrative practice in my institution most in need of urgent reform? What is preventing me from beginning that reform today?
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Table 10.1: Chapter-by-Chapter Summary and Reflective Questions (Jongwe, 2025; cf. Code of Canon Law, 1983; Lumen Gentium, 1964; Robbins & Coulter, 2016)

### An Integrated Synthesis

Every chapter of this handbook converges on a single central conviction: the four pillars of Church administration Financial Management, Human Resource Management, Asset Management and Corporate Governance — are not independent silos. They are facets of a single integrated vocation: faithful stewardship of God's gifts in service of God's mission.

Financial Management	Human Resource Management	Asset Management	Corporate Governance & Ethics
Canon 1284–1287 Finance Policy Transparency • Budget • Audit Stewardship of money "All that we have is God's; we are only stewards."	HR Policy, Recruitment, Develop, Retain Dignity of the worker "People are the mission-bearers, not the cost-centre."	Canon 1254–1310 Inventory • Insure • Register Stewardship of property "We hold these goods in trust for those who come after us."	Subsidiarity • Transparency Accountability • Mission Fidelity The High-Impact Sweet Spot "Let your Yes be Yes." (Matthew 5:37)
<b>Cutting through all four pillars: RESOURCE MOBILISATION the active, strategic, diversified pursuit of the resources the Church needs to fulfil her mission.</b>			
<b>FOUNDATION: SERVANT LEADERSHIP • STEWARDSHIP • SYNODALITY • CANON LAW</b>			

Figure 10.1: The Four Pillars of Church Administration — Integrated Synthesis (Jongwe, 2025; cf. Code of Canon Law, 1983; ZCBC HR Policy; Pope Francis, Evangelii Gaudium, 2013)

### Master Reflective Questions for Church Administrators

The following questions integrate the learning of the entire handbook. They are designed for use in personal prayer and reflection, in team retreats, and in governance review sessions with boards and parish councils. They are not rhetorical; they demand honest, evidence-based answers.

#### On Identity and Vocation

□ **Reflective Questions**

1. Why am I in this role? Is my motivation service to the mission — or personal status, security or influence? How has my answer to this question changed since I began?
2. How does my personal prayer life shape my administrative decisions? Can I name a specific decision that was changed because of what I heard in prayer?
3. What would the people I serve most need to know about how I exercise authority — and would they be comfortable if I told them?

### On Financial Integrity

#### □ Reflective Questions

1. *If the faithful in my parish or institution could see every financial decision made in the last twelve months, would they find evidence of faithful stewardship — or would they find waste, opacity, or preferential treatment?*
2. *When did I last commission an independent external financial audit? What did it find? What did I do about the findings?*
3. *Do I genuinely diversify our income sources, or do I rely on the same few donors and hope they never leave?*

### On People and Culture

#### □ Reflective Questions

1. *Do the people who work with me experience their work as a vocation — or merely as a job? What is the evidence for my answer?*
2. *Have I ever addressed a personnel problem I knew existed but found uncomfortable to confront? What did my silence cost the institution and the people involved?*
3. *Who in my institution is being overlooked, undervalued or underutilised? What am I going to do about it?*

### On Governance and Synodality

#### □ Reflective Questions

1. *Do the consultative bodies that Canon Law requires me to convene function genuinely — or ceremonially? What would change if they met more frequently, with broader agendas and published minutes?*
2. *Can I name a decision in the past year where I departed from the unanimous advice of a consultative body? Did I explain my reasoning to that body?*
3. *Are women, young people and the poor genuinely represented in our governance structures? If not, what is stopping me from changing that today?*

### On Leadership Legacy

#### □ Reflective Questions

1. *If I left this role tomorrow, what would endure? What systems, people and values have I built that will outlast my tenure?*
2. *Am I investing in my successor — the person who will lead after me? Or is the institution dependent on my personal presence in a way that will create a crisis when I leave?*
3. *In twenty years, what will the people I served most remember about how I led — and is that what I want them to remember?*

### A Closing Word

Church administration is, at its best, an act of love. It is love for God, expressed in the diligent and prayerful care of the gifts he has entrusted to the Church. It is love for the faithful, expressed in the transparent and accountable management of the resources they have sacrificed to contribute. It is love for the poor, expressed in the efficient and mission-driven deployment of the Church's institutional capacity to reach those on the margins. It is love for those who come after us, expressed in the building of institutions strong enough to outlast any individual leader.

This handbook has covered a great deal of ground: financial controls and audit frameworks, resource mobilisation strategies, human resource management principles, asset administration, corporate governance, biblical leadership, synodality and the future of Church administration. But all of it reduces to a single sentence from the prophet Micah: "What does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God" (Micah 6:8).

Act justly: in your financial decisions, your personnel processes, your governance structures and your use of authority. Love mercy: in your approach to staff who struggle, community members who are marginalised, and colleagues who make mistakes. Walk humbly with your God: because it is his mission, his institution, his resources and his people — and you are, at most, a careful and temporary custodian of them all.

*"Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness."*  
— **Matthew 25:21**

*May every Church administrator who reads these pages be confirmed in their vocation of service, strengthened in their commitment to integrity, and inspired to build institutions worthy of the Gospel they proclaim.*

### **Appendix A: Key Canon Law References for Administrators**

The following canons from the Code of Canon Law (1983) are of particular relevance to Church administrators. Every administrator should be familiar with them and should have access to a copy of the Code.

- Canon 1254: The Church's right to acquire, retain, administer and alienate temporal goods.
- Canon 1273: The Supreme Pontiff as supreme administrator and steward of all Church goods.
- Canon 1279: The obligation of administrators to observe the norms of the Code.
- Canon 1284 §1: Administrators must perform their duties with the diligence of a good householder.
- Canon 1284 §2: Administrators must ensure that goods are insured, records are kept, budgets are prepared and accounts are rendered.
- Canon 1287 §1: Annual financial reporting obligation to the local ordinary.
- Canon 1291: Permission required for valid alienation of goods above established thresholds.
- Canon 1295: Requirements for acts of extraordinary administration.
- Canon 1298: Prohibition on selling Church goods to administrators or their relatives without special permission.
- Canon 1310: The obligation to fulfil pious wills faithfully.

### **Appendix B: Principles of Catholic Social Teaching Relevant to Administration**

The following principles of Catholic Social Teaching should inform every aspect of Church administration. They are not abstract theological concepts but practical guides for institutional decision-making.

- **Human Dignity:** Every person served by and working in Church institutions possesses inherent, God-given dignity. All administrative decisions must respect this dignity.
- **The Common Good:** Institutional decisions must consider not only the interests of the institution but the good of the broader community and society.
- **Subsidiarity:** Decisions should be made at the most appropriate and lowest possible level of authority. Higher bodies should support, not supplant, lower bodies.
- **Solidarity:** The Church's institutions share a common mission and common resources. Wealthier institutions should support struggling ones. Administrators should mentor and develop their peers.
- **Preferential Option for the Poor:** Catholic institutions should prioritise the needs of the marginalised, the vulnerable and the least powerful.
- **Care for Creation:** Church institutions should manage their physical assets in ways that respect and protect the environment (*Laudato Si*).
- **Participation:** Those affected by institutional decisions should have the opportunity to participate in making them.
- **Stewardship:** Everything belongs to God. Administrators are stewards, not owners. Their task is to use God's gifts faithfully for God's purposes.

### **Appendix C: Self-Assessment Tool for Church Administrators**

Use the following questions for personal reflection and institutional self-assessment. They can also be used as a framework for board or management team discussions.

#### **Financial Management**

- Do we have a written, board-approved annual budget that is monitored quarterly?
- Are financial duties segregated so that no single person can authorise, record and reconcile the same transaction?
- When did we last commission an external financial audit?
- Can we demonstrate to any donor or stakeholder exactly how their resources have been used?

#### **Resource Mobilisation**

- Do we have a written resource mobilisation strategy covering the next three to five years?
- What percentage of our income comes from a single source? Are we comfortable with our level of funding?

diversification?

- Do we have a dedicated person or function responsible for donor relations and grant management?
- When did we last map our potential donors and partners and invest deliberately in those relationships?

#### **Human Resource Management**

- Do all staff have written contracts that comply with labour legislation and the diocesan policies
- When did we last conduct a staff satisfaction survey or seek structured feedback from our team?
- Do we have a documented grievance procedure that all staff know about and trust?
- Are we developing the next generation of institutional leaders intentionally?

#### **Asset Management and Governance**

- Do we have a comprehensive, up-to-date inventory of all institutional assets?
- Are all properties properly registered in the name of the Church and adequately insured?
- Do our governance decisions satisfy both the Mission Fidelity lens and the Operational Excellence lens?
- Does our board governance meet the standards appropriate to our level on the Governance Maturity Model?

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