

**DIOCESE OF ERIE
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To: **All pastors and parish administrators**

From: John A. Dey, CFO

Subject: **New Procedures for the Buying or Selling of Parish Real Estate**

Under Pennsylvania civil law, most real property of the parishes in the Diocese of Erie has, for many years, been titled or deeded in the name of Bishop of Erie in trust for the particular parish by name. However, given the fact that the parishes have now been constituted as Parish Charitable Trusts, we are currently in the process of retitling the deeds to reflect this development.

The Bishop is often asked to sign various documents concerning property transfers, such as sales agreements, settlement statements, tax forms, leases, subdivision maps, easements, right-of-way agreements, etc. This memo serves to inform you that, as Trust Administrator of the Parish Charitable Trust, *you have the authority to sign these types of documents on behalf of the parish, provided that you observe all applicable provisions of diocesan norms and have obtained the written authorization of the Bishop to proceed.* The only document requiring the Bishop's signature is the actual deed itself.

With this as background, the following procedures are to be observed in matters pertaining to the acquisition, sale, leasing, or encumbrance of parish real property:

- After consulting with the parish finance council, the pastor is to prepare and submit to the Bishop a letter describing the transaction in detail and requesting permission to proceed.
- At the Bishops' direction, the Chief Financial Officer will review said proposal and, provided that everything is in order, will communicate to the you the Bishop's permission to proceed. You can use the attached *Certificate of Authorization* as evidence of your having the authority to sign those documents (excluding any deeds) necessary to complete the transaction.
- The Bishop himself will sign all deeds. Prior to that happening, you will need to send each deed to the Finance Office, for forwarding to the diocesan attorney for review. The purpose of the review is to make sure that all property titles going forward follow the same consistent pattern and that the Bishop is correctly referenced as the Grantor.

If you have any questions concerning this procedure, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Thank you for your attention and cooperation.