

# The Parish Finance Committee

## ***Westminster Diocesan Administration Manual, 1.5 - The Parish***

In Canon Law, the parish has a distinct juridical personality and is entrusted to the care of a parish priest (Canon 515) who must ensure that the temporal goods of the parish are administered 'with the diligence of a good householder'. The norms for this administration are Canons 1281-1288, together with any other particular legislation established by the Cardinal (Canon 1276 §2).

The parish priest is assisted in this administration by a mandatory Parish Finance Committee (*Canon 537: in each parish there is to be a Finance Committee to help the parish priest in the administration of the goods of the parish, without prejudice to Canon 532. It is ruled by the universal law and by the norms laid down by the diocesan Bishop and it is comprised of members of the faithful selected according to these norms*).

In addition to submitting an annual financial return to the Diocese, accounts must be published annually for members of the parish (*Canon 1287, Section 2: Administrators are to render accounts to the faithful concerning the goods they have given to the Church, in accordance with the norms to be laid down by particular law*).

In English Civil Law a parish is not a separate legal entity but a part of a diocese. All property is vested in the name of Westminster Roman Catholic Diocesan Trustees and all contracts and legal documents must be in the name of the WRCDT. In spite of the canonical position of parish priests, the Directors of the WRCDT are liable under Civil Law for all the parochial assets of the Trust.