

## **CONTINUING FORMATION**

**INTRODUCTION:** All priests and deacons are to take continuing formation as their personal responsibility. They are accountable to the Bishop for this responsibility.

### **INTERNAL GOVERNANCE**

The Continuing Formation of Clergy is directed by a director and a committee. The primary focus of the director and committee is the continuing formation of priests. However, there is collaboration in programs and activities with Deacon Continuing Formation.

### **SPIRITUAL GROWTH**

#### 1. Retreats

Clergy are expected to participate in a retreat every year. To provide a common vision among the presbyterate and diaconate, the Diocese will sponsor mandatory group retreats every odd numbered year. (In the mandatory retreat year, it would be ideal for the same person to be the director for all priests' retreats). During the even numbered year the individual is to make either the retreat sponsored by the Diocese or another type as best suits his own needs, e.g. group, private, directed, etc.

#### 2. Prayer Days

Days of prayer and/or recollection are scheduled in accord with the needs of the presbyterate.

#### 3. Spiritual Direction

All clergy are expected to seek spiritual direction.

#### 4. Support Groups

Clergy are expected to belong to clergy fraternity support groups.

### **ACADEMIC AND PROFESSIONAL GROWTH**

#### 1. Continuing Education

Each priest and deacon of the Diocese is expected to attend annually workshops and seminars related to his ministry and is obligated to fulfill a minimum of (20) hours in continuing education per year. Priority is given to those made mandatory by the Bishop (Canon 279). To do this, each priest and permanent deacon is permitted one week of released time per year in addition to his vacation and annual retreat.

## 2. Funding

In addition to the annual retreat cost, each priest and permanent deacon has an annual Continuing Formation Allowance set by the Bishop for workshops, seminars, books and other continuing formation needs. The Bishop will announce to the clergy what each year's allowance is. This allowance is provided by the parish or office funds.

## 3. Studies

Priests and deacons wishing to further their education are encouraged to enroll as part-time students in local universities or other local educational facilities, while not neglecting their assigned responsibilities. Associates should first seek their pastor's permission. All further study arrangements should be made in consultation with the Director of Continuing Education.

# SABBATICALS

## 1. Definition

Sabbaticals are times of personal and professional study and prayer. Sabbaticals are not to be considered Postgraduate Continuing Education. Sabbaticals may range from one to four consecutive months in length.

## 2. Occurrence

Sabbaticals are a normal part of one's service after ordination. One should expect to have been on at least one sabbatical at least ten years before entering the retirement phase of one's ministry. Every year efforts will be made for some clergy to be on sabbatical. Preference will be given to seniority and need.

## 3. Procedure

Initiatives for a sabbatical will be taken either by the individual or by the Bishop. When one wishes a sabbatical, a written request is to be made to the Bishop. This request should state the purpose of the sabbatical, its relationship to one's personal and spiritual growth, its value to one's ministry, and its cost, location, and length. The deadline for sabbatical application is January 1 for sabbaticals which will take place during the following fiscal year (July 1-June 30) because of budget-building schedules. The Bishop may refer all applications to the Director of the Continuing Formation Committee, who will make recommendations to the Bishop by February 1. The Bishop will notify the applicant of his decision by February 15 concerning the request for a sabbatical and inform the Pastoral Council of diocesan policy concerning the parish's responsibility for partial financing of the sabbatical.

## 4. Criteria

- a. Years of service to the diocese of the applicant
- b. Quality of the program

- c. Degree of usefulness to the pastoral ministry of the Diocese
- d. Date of application

5. Financing

At the discretion of the Bishop, the cost of the sabbatical will be shared by the diocese, the applicant, and the parish or institution of assignment. (USCCB document on Continuing Education of the Clergy).

6. Replacements during Sabbatical

The priest going on sabbatical will be responsible for finding a replacement during the sabbatical.

Approved +Michael J. J. J.

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