

## **STIPENDS AND BENEFITS**

### **General Explanation of Stipends and Benefits**

This section briefly explains the benefits found in the “Priest Benefits” which present the various amounts.

The monthly stipend and benefits for priests is to be reviewed every two years (even years) by the Priests Council and any recommendations are brought to the bishop. The benefits described below come from the source of salary. All priests are reminded that we are called to witness to the Gospel values by our simplicity of lifestyle. All priests must constantly examine their own lifestyle (not the lifestyle of other priests).

- *Personal Continuing Education*: This money is for workshops that deal with pastoral ministry and priestly life. These workshops may or may not be sponsored by the Diocese. One example would be the annual Religious Education Congress sponsored by the Archdiocese of Los Angeles. This money is only reimbursed for personal continuing ongoing education. It is not simply added to the salary. If it is not used, the priest waives the benefit. It can be accrued for no more than two years.
- *Diocesan Sponsored Continuing Education*: This amount is for the yearly Clergy Convocation which all priests and deacons are expected to attend. If one does not attend the convocation, the priest or deacon waives the benefit.
- *Homiletic Materials*: This is for subscriptions for homiletic helps or priestly magazines that provide homiletic helps. If it is not used, the benefit is waived after a year passes.
- *Priests’ Retreat*: This amount is for the diocesan sponsored priests’ retreat at St. Anthony Retreat Center that all the priests are expected to attend. If it is not used, the benefit is waived.
- *Priest’s Privately Directed Retreat*: Besides the responsibility to attend the annual priests’ retreat, which naturally has a strong emphasis on priestly fraternity and support, the bishop also encourages every priest to attend a few days of a privately directed retreat on their own each year. This amount is to help offset the cost of the retreat. This retreat is meant to provide quality time alone with God. This is not a time for vacation, but a time of prayer. It normally would be held in a recognized retreat house. If the benefit is not used, it is waived.
- *Monthly Day of Recollection or Support Group*: The bishop encourages each priest to be part of a support group with his fellow priests. If this is not possible, he encourages a priest to have a monthly day of recollection. This amount is specifically for this. It is not simply to have dinner with one’s fellow priests. It is to pay the cost for a retreat house, or for a facilitator. If the benefit is not used, it is waived.
- *Car Insurance*: The Diocese helps with the cost of insurance for the personal car of each priest engaged in ministry in the Diocese. The source of salary provides up to a certain amount, half given each six months. If the insurance is less, it helps with that amount. If the insurance is more, it only helps up to a certain

amount. Beyond that amount, the priest is personally responsible.

- *Room and Board:* This is not a cash benefit. This amount is for Social Security purposes only for declaring on one's income tax return. The amount specified is the amount officially recognized by the Diocese, which is to be declared on one's income tax return. All priests should be enrolled in Social Security for retirement and medical benefits. We should become aware of our Social Security rights as well as opportunities to increase benefits by higher payments in the final years before retirement.
- *Group Life Insurance:* This is for a policy for priests paid by their source of income. All active and incardinated priests and all such priests retiring after February 1, 1993, are included in this plan. The beneficiary is the Diocese of Fresno. This is explained more in the Insurance section.
- *Health Insurance:* This includes dental and vision care. The health insurance is explained more in the Insurance section. (see Appendix for information about the premium health plan)
- *Disability Insurance:* This provides for the unforeseen possibility of a priest becoming temporarily or permanently disabled. This is explained more in the Insurance section.
- *Retirement:* The monthly amount that is given for the Priests' Retirement Fund for each incardinated priest. For non-incardinated priests who have retirement plans in a religious order or another diocese, up to this amount is given to the source of this plan. For non-incardinated priests who have no retirement plans, this amount is put into a general fund of the Diocese to help with the retirement of those not included in any plan. The Diocese will help in this latter case, with a minimal amount for retirement for those who have served the Diocese for at least ten years. This amount in no way can equal the amount given by the Retirement Plan for incardinated priests.