

PARISH

PARISH PASTORAL CONCERNS

Availability to God's People¹

Balance is needed in a priest's life: The priest is meant to be found among his people and is meant to be a servant of God's people. The priest should be available to his people. He must also care for himself and see that he has sufficient time for prayer, for study, for homily preparation, for relaxation and exercise. Each priest must seek to find the proper balance.

Set office hours: Each parish should have set office hours, so that people will know that someone will be present to receive them. These days and hours may vary greatly from parish to parish, from rural parishes to city parishes.

Answering machines: Most parishes would have secretaries to receive calls during office hours. Some smaller parishes may not have such secretaries. If no one is available to answer the phone, there should be an answering machine so that people may leave a message for the priest to return the call.

Providing for emergency calls when one is away from the parish: If a priest is to be away from the parish for any length of time, the parish secretary should know whom to contact in an emergency, or the priest should let the people know whom to contact in an emergency through the Sunday bulletin.

Emergency Contact²

Every parish where there is no parochial vicar and no secretary present during the day should have someone designated for the bishop to contact in case of an emergency. The pastor/administrator should give the bishop's office a number of a person to contact in an emergency who would have access to the church and rectory.

Supply Priests³

Supply Priest – For Temporary Coverage One Month or Less

A pastor/administrator has permission to arrange for a supply priest for a month or less from whom

he knows and has an approved assignment in his diocese or in his religious community. A Letter of Suitability from the supply priest's bishop or religious superior must be sent to the Vicar General well in advance of his expected arrival. This allows time for the proper vetting and a letter of permission to be returned to the pastor requiring supply assistance. If the supply priest has faculties for priestly ministry currently in the Diocese of Fresno, then this requirement is not necessary.

A current Letter of Suitability is required of all priests coming into the Diocese of Fresno for priestly ministry, regardless of the length of time he will be in the diocese and for all sacramental or pastoral ministry that he will be doing. The letter must state when, where, how long he will be in the diocese and the purpose of his visit. This applies to all retired priests residing outside of

¹ Issued May 1998

² Issued May 1998

³ Issued May 1998

the Diocese. See example for a suggested Letter of Suitability that can be sent to the visiting priest.

For proper procedure, see the section entitled “PRIESTS SEEKING HOSPITALITY OR PERMISSION TO ASSIST ON A TEMPORARY BASIS IN A PARISH.”

A priest should make a serious effort with plenty of time beforehand to find a supply priest for his vacation time. This is a serious obligation and should not be put off to the last minute. Having the Sunday Celebration in the Absence of a Priest is only for an emergency situation, not for bad planning.

Risk Handbook

The Diocese of Fresno Human Resources and Risk Manual contains all of the policies and procedures of the Diocese related to personnel, Worker’s Compensation, required insurances and benefits provided for the laity and the parishes of the Diocese.