

DIOCESE OF SUPERIOR

GUIDELINES FOR CLERGY AND PASTORAL APPOINTMENTS

PREAMBLE

Vatican II offers the most recent and authoritative teaching about the nature of the Church and the role of its ministers. The role of the priest is to extend the work of the bishop to a portion of the diocese. He is to be a helper and a collaborator with the bishop in his pastoral office (*Lumen Gentium* 20,21,28; *Christus Dominus* 11,15,30; *Presbyterorum Ordinis* 2,7,12). Just as the ministry of the Bishop is the service of leadership, so also is the ministry of the priest. Indeed, priests exercise the function of Christ as shepherd and head within the limit of their authority. By ordination they are so configured to Christ the Priest that they can act in the person of Christ (*P.O.* 2,12). Priests, therefore, exercise this mission of leadership just as the bishop does by preaching the gospel, shepherding the faithful and celebrating divine worship. This leadership involves care of the faithful as individuals as well as the formation of genuine Christian communities. This service truly continues the mission of Christ in building up the Kingdom of God.

The role of priestly ministry to the people of God in this era of renewal of Christ's Church has grown more complex and is filled with ever increasing difficulties and responsibilities. Therefore, in order that priestly ministry be carried forth most effectively, guidelines for clergy appointments are eminently necessary.

The Bishop, with the Personnel Board, has the shared responsibility of evaluating the needs of the people of the Diocese of Superior and of the parishes, offices and institutions which serve them, and to see that these needs are met by qualified personnel.

The Personnel Board is an advisory body to the Bishop. It is made up of six (6) diocesan priests. Four (4) members are elected by the entire Presbyterate for four years (one new member each year) and two (2) are appointed by the Bishop. The Personnel Board serves the needs of the people and the parishes of the Diocese and the priests by proposing assignments and tasks which meet as nearly as possible the individual priest's qualifications and preferences.

The complexity of assigning priests is such that personal preference simply cannot be honored completely in every assignment. Every priest, in the course of his priestly life, will be confronted with accepting a position which does not meet his approval. Service to the people of God and the basic needs of the parish must be the first priority. "I am in your midst as one who serves you." (Luke 22:27) "The Son of Man has not come to be served but to serve - to give His life in ransom for the many." (Mark 10:45)

At times certain confidential matters must be shared with a priest in offering him an assignment. It is presumed he will preserve confidentiality. Grave harm can be done when individual cases are discussed without knowledge of all of the facts. All should observe a

silence, which respects the good name of all when in possession of facts of a confidential nature.

RESPONSIBILITY

1. The Personnel Board, with the Bishop, is to concern itself with the placement of all the diocesan priests, deacons and parochial administrators in the Diocese of Superior.
2. Religious priests are presented to the Bishop by their respective superiors.
3. The Bishop shall finalize all appointments by personal notifications. Appointments become final only when the official letter of appointment is received. Any prior oral commitment is only tentative in view of the fact that unforeseen circumstances may make it necessary to reconsider the appointment offered. No announcement of an appointment is permitted until the appointment is readied for official publication in the diocesan newspaper.

PROCEDURES

The Personnel Board keeps ongoing communication with the priests and the people of the diocese in order to be aware of their changing needs. Questionnaires and personal interviews and parish personnel profiles are the main means of accomplishing this goal of the board.

1. A questionnaire is to be sent to every priest of the diocese each year. It is the responsibility of each priest to return the completed form and the personnel board to secure the completed questionnaire.
2. Every active priest of the Diocese will be asked to meet with a minimum of two members of the Personnel Board every two years for a personal interview. However, the Personnel Board will be available for an interview any time upon request.
3. Parish profiles will be available through planning and research data and individual parish files at the Chancery.

APPOINTMENTS

The Personnel Board will give public notice to the priests of the diocese regarding any available openings for pastorates, associate pastorates or special assignments, when possible.

I. PASTORS

- A. First assignments as Pastor (or administrator) shall ordinarily be made according to seniority of ordination.

- B. Seniority among priests ordained for the Diocese shall be computed from date of their ordination to the priesthood.
- C. Priests who wish to join the Diocese shall have their seniority in the Diocese computed by crediting every two years of ordination as equivalent to one year of service in the Diocese of Superior.
- D. Priests of the Diocese who are assigned to specialized work outside of the Diocese retain their seniority as if they were working in the Diocese.
- E. Priests who take unauthorized leaves of absence do not gain any seniority in the Diocese during their unauthorized absence.
- F. If a priest declines a first parish due to special work or for personal reasons, his opportunity for first parish will be deferred.
- G. Special care shall be given to pastoral assignments involving parochial schools and associates.
- H. Pastors are to be consulted by the Personnel Board before an associate is assigned to that parish.
- I. A term of office policy for Pastors is herewith established for the Diocese of Superior.

In November 1983, the National Conference of Catholic Bishops voted to allow diocesan Bishops the option of adopting Terms of Office policies for the assignment of Pastors; they also voted to leave it up to the diocesan Bishop to determine the length and renewability of such terms. The Holy See approved this action but stipulated that the term must be six (6) years; such a term may be renewed. (*The Code of Canon Law a Text and Commentary*, c. 522, p.422)

In general, the law affords the diocesan Bishop maximum freedom in conferring the Office of Pastor (cf. c.157).

Term of Office Policy for Pastors

Priests will be appointed Pastors according to the following policy:

1. Each Pastor will be appointed for a six-year term of office.
2. After an evaluation, a six-year term of office will be granted unless the pastor opts for an alternative assignment.
3. After the twelfth year in office a pastor will ordinarily be appointed to an alternate assignment by the diocesan Bishop.

4. Exceptional situations may warrant a variance from the term of office policy provided that in the judgment of the diocesan Bishop the basic needs of the parish are being satisfied (cf. c. 1741). Exceptional situations include but are not limited to the following:
 - a) Age of the Pastor.
 - b) Language or cultural needs of the parish.
 - c) Unavailability of a suitable alternate assignment.
 - d) An unresolved parish crisis.
 - e) Special financial situation.
 - f) Imminence of parish clustering or closing, etc.
5. The diocesan Bishop will judge the extent to which the basic needs of the parish are being satisfied on the basis of data provided by the Pastor, the Personnel Board, the local Dean, reliable evaluative instruments, annual parish reports and parishioners when appropriate.
6. In the event the diocesan Bishop judges that the basic needs of the parish are not being satisfied regardless of the Pastor's length of term, the canonical norms will prevail (cc. 1740-1747).

The administration and implementation of this policy shall be governed by the following principles:

1. Because of the unique nature of every Pastor and parish the policy should be implemented with optimum flexibility and consideration of the circumstances related to each situation.
2. Valid and reliable criteria should be used in evaluating each situation in regard to the needs of the Diocese, the parish and Pastor.
3. The common good supersedes the individual good.
4. Exceptions to the policy should be sufficient enough to provide flexibility but restrictive enough to assure that the policy is not undermined.

II. TEAM MINISTRY

Opportunity should be offered those who wish and whose talents and personalities could best be utilized in a team ministry.

III. ASSOCIATES AND PRIESTS IN SPECIAL MINISTRY

- A. Care shall be given to qualification of associates assigned to positions with special needs, e.g., parishes with educational programs, parish with ethnic or racial situations.
- B. Future needs of diocesan offices, schools, etc., shall be periodically assessed and provision made for training and preparation of personnel to fill those needs.
- C. Associates are to be consulted by members of the Personnel Board or a member of the Personnel Board prior to their assignment.

IV. NEWLY ORDAINED PRIESTS AND DEACONS

- A. The newly ordained shall have a personal interview with a minimum of two members of the Personnel Board and Vocation Director prior to his first assignment.
- B. Transitional deacons shall be assigned by the Bishop in consultation with the Vocation Director.

V. PRIESTS TRANSFERRING INTO THE DIOCESE

- A. A priest coming into the Diocese will not ordinarily be considered for a pastoral assignment before two years of full time service in the Diocese.
- B. He will then receive additional credit for half of his years of ordination at the time of his arrival to the diocese.

VI. BELATED VOCATION

A priest ordained for the Diocese at the age of 32 years or more will receive a two year of service credit towards a first parish assignment for each succeeding year after his second year of full time service.

VII. PERMANENT DEACONS

The Deacon's Pastoral Service

A deacon is an official member of the clergy and his pastoral service is a public ministry of the local church, the Diocese of Superior. Consequently, the pastoral service of the deacon is controlled and specified by the diocesan Bishop who will appoint each deacon to his particular pastoral service.

Details of the deacon's pastoral service will be specified by a *Pastoral Service Agreement* similar to the one used for permanent deacon candidates. The agreement will be signed by the deacon, pastor and diocesan Bishop.

Because a deacon most often will serve on a part-time basis, his geographic living will not be a matter of choice for the Diocese. The part-time nature of his work, on the other hand, does allow for some flexibility in the kind of service he can provide.

The cooperation of priests and deacons is essential for the ministerial well being of the Church. Their fraternity is a sign of the unity of the Church and the love Christians bear for each other. In the assignment of priests, the presence of a permanent deacon must be acknowledged and considered as an element in the priest's assignment.

RETIREMENT:

1. At age 65 a priest has the option to retire. If he wishes to remain in active services, his situation is to be reviewed annually by the Personnel Board.
2. At age 75 retirement is mandatory.
3. If a priest desires to retire at age 65 and wishes to give limited service, the board will provide opportunity for work within the Diocese.

SPECIAL CASES:

Policy on Alcoholism/Chemical Dependency

Policy: It is the policy of the Diocese of Superior that the Bishop with the Deans and Personnel Board assist any priest of the Diocese suffering from the disease of alcoholism and/or chemical dependency.

Rationale: Alcoholism and/or chemical dependency is a terminal disease. The affected person, unless treated, will die from liver damage, suicide, auto accidents while intoxicated, or insanity to name a few. The priest suffering from this, in turn, will affect those persons with whom he comes into contact. In short, the ministry and the Church will suffer.

Procedure: If a priest acknowledges a drug or alcohol problem, the Bishop or his delegate will be notified to assist the priest in getting appropriate treatment. This may include assessment by an alcohol or drug abuse counselor as to whether inpatient or outpatient treatment is appropriate (the majority of cases require inpatient treatment). If a priest acknowledges a need for treatment, this is an indication that the priest is in a crisis and immediate (same day or next) assessment is of the utmost importance.

There may be a need to intervene to require a priest to obtain counseling and/or treatment. If a priest's ministry has been affected by his drinking/drug using behavior, an "intervention" will be arranged to confront the priest with the facts concerning his behavior (e.g. intoxicated

while celebrating Mass, DWI). This should be conducted by an alcohol and drug abuse counselor.

Those present for the intervention should be, or may include the Bishop, brother priests with concerns about the priest's drinking or using behavior, family members, and members of the parish/institution served by the priest. Ideally, the priest would accept treatment. If not, it may be necessary for the Bishop to suspend the faculties of the priest in question if it is clear that the priest has not stopped his drinking or using behavior. This is clearly within the Bishop's authority. (Education may be needed for an intervention. The film *I'll Quit Tomorrow* is excellent for this purpose and is on file at the office of religious education of the diocese.)

Compensation: Since alcoholism and chemical dependency is a disease and may require hospitalization, expenses will normally be covered by health insurance. Compensation will also be given according to the norms and rules of the St. Pius Priest Fund while the person is in treatment or subsequent half-way house.

EVALUATIVE CRITERIA:

The following criteria are supposed to guide the individual priest involved in a transfer and/or evaluation of his pastoral work as a basis for discussion in his personal interview with the personnel board:

1. Liturgy: How do you try to involve yourself and the people in an effective liturgy? Is the Eucharist in your parish the source and summit of the Christian life?
2. Preaching: How do you attempt through your preaching to help the people realize who they are and their relationship to each other in the risen Christ? What theological matters have you read or discussed in this past year?
3. Teaching: How do you become involved in deepening the understanding and the handling of faith among the people you serve, to extend the liturgy into your everyday life? Religious Education? School? Adults? What is your idea of C.C.D.? Adult Education? Catholic Schools?
4. Availability: Do your people find you approachable to discuss their problems and their concerns? Do you make an effort to be available at important occasions to the families in your care? Baptism? Marriage? Sickness and death?
5. Administration: What do you feel are your strongest leadership abilities and talents? What age group do you find the most rewarding to work with? How effective is your elected parish council? How do you attempt to help the people to understand that Christian stewardship involves time, talent and treasure because he/she believes in the redemptive act of Christ?
6. Cooperation: How do you give evidence of your concern for your fellow Catholic priests and other Christian pastors in your area? What efforts do you make to show

the unity of Christ and the Church by cooperating in inter-parish needs? How do you give evidence of your concern for the community in which you live? How well do you contribute to the building up of the unity of the diocesan church and the universal church?

Raphael M. Fliss
Bishop of Superior

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