



PROTOCOL FOR EXTERN PRIESTS SEEKING TO SERVE IN THE DIOCESE

POLICY

The issuance, denial, extension or revocation of faculties, as well as any condition on their exercise or duration are in accord with the norm of law, within the sole discretion of the Bishop and/or his Delegate for Externs and International Priests.

The following is the procedure to be observed when a diocesan priest from another diocese or a religious priest seeks to exercise his priestly ministry in the Diocese of Las Cruces. The purpose of this procedure is to safeguard the faithful who implicitly place their trust in any priest serving publicly in the Diocese of Las Cruces. It also protects the Diocese of Las Cruces from liabilities incurred by permitting a priest to exercise his ministry within the Diocese when he is not qualified to do so.

A. AD HOC OR SINGLE EVENT

1. An extern priest who comes to the Diocese of Las Cruces for a single ministerial event (e.g., baptism, wedding, funeral) is only required to present a current *celebret* issued by his diocese of incardination or his religious major superior to the pastor/administrator before being permitted to celebrate the sacraments. There is no need to request faculties through the Pastoral Center. A note should be made on the Mass schedule that the visiting priest was the celebrant. A copy of the *celebret* should be procured if possible.
2. During this same visit, the pastor/administrator may permit this priest to celebrate Mass publicly in the parish during the course of one weekend.
3. A priest on vacation should be welcomed to concelebrate Mass. The celebrant has the right to request to see a *celebret*. A vacationing priest with a current *celebret* may be permitted by the pastor to celebrate Mass in the parish, but not to exceed one weekend. If the pastor/or administrator wishes for the priest to have faculties for the duration of his stay beyond one weekend, the pastor must file a proper request form for faculties, including request for a Certificate of Aptitude, as outlined below.
4. If that same priest is to have any unsupervised contact with minors regardless of the length of stay, the pastor must file a *Request for Faculties in the Diocese of Las Cruces* and present a *Certificate of Aptitude for Priestly Ministry* signed by either his diocesan bishop or religious major superior, in order for faculties to be granted, as outlined below.

B. INTERMEDIATE TIME OF SERVICE

1. An extern priest who is invited or seeks to exercise priestly ministry in the Diocese of Las Cruces for more than a single event (wedding, baptism, funeral, etc) but not more than two months is required to complete a *Request for Faculties in the Diocese of Las Cruces* and present a *Certificate of Aptitude for Priestly Ministry* signed by either his diocesan bishop or religious major superior, in order for faculties to be granted. This includes all priests offering parish missions or retreats, spiritual or catechetical talks, conferences, summer assistance, etc.



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2. The Pastor who invites the priest in need of faculties procures the blank *Request for Faculties* form from the Chancellor's Office at the Pastoral Center, completes the form and sends via e-mail or fax to the Diocese of Las Cruces Chancery.

At the same time the Pastor sends the blank *Certificate of Aptitude for Priestly Ministry* and the accompanying instructions to the priest invited to the Diocese, either electronically or by mail. The pastor will direct the priest to submit the *Certificate of Aptitude* to the Chancery of his Arch/Diocese or Religious Order, to be completed by his Arch/Bishop (no stamp signatures will be accepted) or Religious superior. The instructions included with the forms direct that the priest's Arch/Diocese's Chancery send the *Certificate of Aptitude* directly from his chancery office to the Diocese of Las Cruces Chancery Office, with an original signature of the priest's diocesan bishop or provincial.

Both the pastor's written *Request for Faculties* and the completed *Certificate of Aptitude* is required even if the priest has served in the Diocese of Las Cruces in the past (e.g. previous retreats or summer assistance etc).

For priests from the United States, a *Certificate of Aptitude* can ordinarily be obtained within a month. For priests from other countries, a period of three months is usually needed.

3. After proper consideration of the *Request for Faculties* sent by the inviting pastor and the *Certificate of Aptitude* sent from the priest's Chancery, faculties will either be granted or denied. The priest will be required to sign the *Priest's Pledge to Promote a Safe Environment*.
4. An extern priest who wishes to receive faculties to exercise his ministry in the Diocese of Las Cruces for a short period (remaining within the Diocese for less than two (2) months) but who wishes faculties for several repeat visits within a 12 month period is required to complete the Diocesan process for fingerprinting and VIRTUS training within sixty (60) days for the initial exercise of the granted faculties.

C. EXTENDED SERVICE IN THE DIOCESE OF LAS CRUCES

The following is the procedure for any priest who seeks to serve in the Diocese of Las Cruces for an extended period of time (i.e. more than two months or in residence in a facility owned by the Diocese of Las Cruces). This process is to be fully completed before the priest moves into the Diocese of Las Cruces.

1. The priest's diocesan bishop or religious major superior writes personally and directly to the Bishop indicating the priest's availability to serve in the Diocese of Las Cruces. Whenever possible he will also indicate the length of time for which the priest has permission to function away from his home diocese.



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A retired priest who intends to live in the Diocese of Las Cruces may write directly to the Bishop, indicating his desire to serve here. Or, his bishop may write as indicated above.

2. The Bishop will consider the request in light of the priest's suitability for ministry and the pastoral needs of the Diocese of Las Cruces.
3. The Chancellor requests a signed *Certificate of Aptitude for Priestly Ministry* from the priest's current diocesan bishop as well as bishops of other dioceses where he has served. For priests from the United States, a *Certificate of Aptitude* can ordinarily be obtained within one month. For priests from other countries, a period of three months is usually needed.
4. International priests must submit a background check report along with their request for faculties.
5. Letters of recommendation from priests of the Diocese of Las Cruces will be accepted.
6. The priest will be asked to complete forms providing information on his personal background, his education, language abilities, previous ministerial service, etc.
7. Once all the documents are submitted, the file is presented to the Bishop for his consideration. The Bishop may decide to interview the priest applicant and/or delegate other member(s) of the personnel board or pastor(s) to do so.
8. Upon a favorable decision by the Bishop, faculties will be granted to the priest. If the priest has requested or is being considered for an assignment, his name will be referred to the Priests' Personnel Board for a recommended official appointment. When assigned, faculties are granted for the duration of the assignment.
9. An extern priest who wishes to receive faculties to exercise his ministry in the Diocese of Las Cruces is required to complete the Diocesan process for fingerprinting and VIRTUS training within sixty (60) days for the initial exercise of the granted faculties or, if given an assignment by the Bishop, prior to beginning an assignment.
10. If only faculties are granted, ordinarily this is for an initial period of one year. Upon the request of the pastor/administrator where the priest is serving, faculties can be renewed on a yearly basis. Requests for the renewal of faculties should be submitted in writing to the Chancery at least one month before faculties are due to expire.
11. For an assigned religious, faculties can be granted for the duration of his assignment.



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12. An extern priest who only enjoys faculties (and does not have an official appointment) does not qualify to participate in the Health Plan or Retirement benefits of the Diocese of Las Cruces.
13. An extern priest with an official assignment is eligible for benefits including enrollment in the Health Plan of the Diocese of Las Cruces and retirement benefits as defined by policy of the Diocese, paid for by the parish or entity where he serves.
14. An extern priest will be required to leave the Diocese of Las Cruces when called home by his diocesan bishop or religious superior or at the instruction of the Bishop of Las Cruces. When this occurs the faculties of the Diocese of Las Cruces will either expire or be formally removed. When an extern priest concludes his assignment and departs the Diocese, his pastor is to notify the Chancery of his departure.

Forms available from the Chancellor's Office:

Request for Faculties

Certificate of Aptitude for Priestly Ministry English

Certificate of Aptitude for Priestly Ministry Spanish

Initial: August, 2019

Revised: August, 2019



REQUEST FOR FACULTIES
IN THE DIOCESE OF LAS CRUCES

For official use of the Chancery

Date: _____

- Process
- Approved
- Not approved

Initials: _____

Date Request Submitted: _____

Extern Diocesan Priest

Religious Priest

Deacon

Name of Priest/Deacon:

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

First Time Request for Faculties

Renewal of Faculties

Diocese of Incardination/Religious Congregation: _____

Bishop/Superior's name:

Address: _____

Telephone: _____ Cell: _____ Fax: _____

E-mail: _____

PROPOSED MINISTRY IN THE DIOCESE OF LAS CRUCES:

Date(s): From _____ To _____

Place: (Parish, Mission, Apostolate, etc.): _____

Event Name: _____

Parish Retreat /Mission

Workshop/ Conference

Other:

Name of Pastor/Director requesting permission:

Address: _____

Email: _____

Phone: _____

Pastor's/Director's Signature: _____

Revised: August, 2019



Certificate of Aptitude for Priestly Ministry in the Diocese of Las Cruces

I, the undersigned, _____, Ordinary of the Arch/Diocese of _____, hereby certify that Father _____ is a priest in good standing from our Diocese who enjoys all the faculties for the exercise of his priestly ministry.

After reviewing his personal file, checking with those who worked with him in previous assignments, and from my own personal knowledge of the subject, I am able to certify without qualification that:

1. He is a priest in good standing.
2. He has never been suspended or otherwise canonically disciplined.
3. No criminal charges have ever been brought against him nor does he have a criminal record.
4. He has never behaved in such a manner as to indicate that he might engage in sexual behavior inconsistent with priestly celibacy.
5. He has never behaved in such a way as to indicate that he might deal with minors in an inappropriate manner.
6. He does not have a current untreated alcohol or substance abuse problem.
7. He does not have a current, untreated emotional or mental health problem.
8. He has never been involved in any incident, to my knowledge, which called into question his fitness or suitability to fulfill the responsibilities and duties of his priestly ministry.
9. He has, as mandated by the *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*, participated in an approved training session on how to provide a safe environment for children and young people.
10. He is a person fully qualified to serve as an effective speaker in union with the *Magisterium* of the Roman Catholic Church with respect to faith and morals.

I am able to state without qualification that Fr. _____ is of good character and reputation and qualified to perform his priestly duties in the Diocese of Las Cruces.

I hereby grant him permission to pursue pastoral ministry in the Diocese of Las Cruces for a period of ____ () month(s) / () year(s), with the understanding that such ministry is temporary and not aimed at incardination.

L.S.

Signature _____

Title _____

Date _____



CERTIFICADO DE APTITUD PARA EJERCER EL MINISTERIO SACERDOTAL EN LA DIOCESIS DE LAS CRUCES

El que suscribe, **Monseñor** _____, Ordinario de la Arqui/Diócesis de _____, _____ (ciudad y país), por este medio certifico que el Padre _____ es un sacerdote de esta Arqui/Diócesis que actualmente goza de las debidas licencias para ejercer su ministerio sacerdotal.

Después de examinar los archivos relativos a su historia personal y de obtener informes de quienes han trabajado con él en el desempeño de sus anteriores funciones, así como por mi propio conocimiento de su persona, vengo a hacer constar sin restricción alguna que:

1. Está en buena posición en esta archi/diócesis.
2. Nunca ha sido suspendido “a divinis” ni de otro modo sancionado canónicamente.
3. Nunca ha sido objeto de cargos criminales y que no tiene antecedentes penales.
4. Nunca se ha comportado de tal manera que ponga en tela de juicio su celibato sacerdotal.
5. Nunca ha manifestado problemas de conducta que ponga en tela de juicio su trato con menores.
6. No tiene ningún problema de abuso de alcohol o sustancias químicas, sin tratamiento.
7. No tiene ningún problema emocional o mental, sin tratamiento.
8. No exhibe ninguna condición mental o física que pudiera afectar negativamente el desempeño de su ministerio sacerdotal.
9. El participó en el entrenamiento aprobado por los Obispos Católicos Americanos sobre el *Estatuto para la Protección de Niños y Jóvenes*, en cómo proporcionar un ambiente seguro para los mismos.
10. Está calificado como un orador eficaz en unión con el *Magisterio* de la Iglesia Católica Romana con respecto a la Fe y la Moral de la Iglesia.

En vista de todo lo anteriormente expuesto, puedo afirmar sin restricción alguna que el Padre _____ es persona de buena conducta y moralidad, apto para desempeñar sus obligaciones sacerdotales en la Diócesis de Las Cruces.

Por este medio concedo el permiso necesario para que pueda ejercer su ministerio pastoral en la Diócesis de Las Cruces hasta un máximo de un año.

Para los sacerdotes internacionales en lugar de las huellas digitales nacionales y locales de los Estados Unidos, se requiere una verificación de antecedentes de su país de origen junto con este certificado.

L.S.

Firma _____

Cargo _____

Fecha _____



CLERGY PLEDGE TO PROMOTE A SAFE ENVIRONMENT

As a member of the clergy of the Diocese of Las Cruces serving in a professional role, I am committed to being a person of good moral character and to being conscious of the unique authority and responsibility that I hold due to the trust placed in me by way of service to minors and/or vulnerable adults. I am expected to uphold the following **Pledge to Promote a Safe Environment** which covers activities in which I may be working with minors or vulnerable persons. The pledge supports the Diocesan policy outlined in “*Safe Environment and Sexual Abuse Policy of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Las Cruces.*”

I also declare that I have read the following and have been given a copy for reference. Based on the following I pledge to:

1. Treat everyone with respect, loyalty, patience, integrity, courtesy, dignity and consideration, regardless of the circumstances of the encounter.
2. Assume the full burden of responsibility for setting and maintaining clear and appropriate physical and emotional boundaries with minors or vulnerable adults.
3. Be proactive in identifying minors and/or vulnerable adults who may be at risk of unhealthy relationships and to assist them in developing their sense of self-worth and avoiding emotional manipulation.
4. Avoid any covert or overt sexual behavior with minors or vulnerable adults even if they initiate such behavior. This includes seductive speech or gestures as well as physical contact that sexually abuses, exploits, or harasses a person.
5. Never initiate sexual behavior with a minor or vulnerable adult. Such behavior, if witnessed, must be reported to a supervisor immediately.
6. Do not create, distribute or maintain child pornography in any form as it is a crime in the State of New Mexico and will be immediately reported to law enforcement officials.
7. Understand and comply with mandatory New Mexico law for all persons who know or have reasonable cause to suspect that a child or vulnerable adult has been a victim of abuse to immediately report to New Mexico Children, Youth & Families Abuse Hotline by calling the toll-free statewide abuse or neglect registry at 1-855-333-SAFE or #SAFE from a cell phone) and to notify my supervisor of the report, including the case number, as soon as possible.
8. Show prudent discretion in the expression of affections used with minors or vulnerable adults and to adhere to the **PAN** principle -- keeping all touch **P**ublic, **A**ppropriate and **N**onsexual. Discretion should include refraining from giving or receiving gifts from minors or vulnerable adults, and/or their parents, except small tokens of appreciation on occasions such as Christmas or birthdays.
9. Use positive reinforcement rather than criticism, competition, or comparison when working with others, especially minors or vulnerable adults.
10. Never strike, spank, or shake anyone; and avoid forms of touch with those in your ministry which could be construed as sexual especially with minors or vulnerable adults.
11. Assure that a meeting space with a minor or vulnerable adult is accessible and visible to others.



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12. Never lock the room when only one adult is present with minors or vulnerable adults except for reasons of safety, such as a “lock-down” scenario.
13. Never allow a situation where a child or vulnerable adult is alone in a car with an adult if that adult is neither the parent nor guardian.
14. Never share a bedroom with anyone with whom I am in ministry, especially minors or vulnerable adults.
15. Never use profanity in the presence of anyone.
16. Never provide anyone, especially minors or vulnerable adults, with videos, readings or graphic materials which are inappropriately sexual in nature.
17. Never possess, consume, or offer alcohol products, tobacco products, or illegal drugs, nor be under the influence of alcohol products or illegal drugs when engaged in ministry to anyone, especially minors or vulnerable adults.
18. Never engage in sexual behavior over the internet with anyone when engaged in ministry, especially minors or vulnerable adults.
19. Comply with the ratio of adults to minors required by the institution or department of the Diocese under which my ministry program operates.
20. Never communicate electronically, including social networking sites and text messaging, with minors or vulnerable adults, except as specifically authorized by Diocesan and/or school policy. Parents/guardians should always be the primary contact source and all communication must be copied to the supervisor.
21. Immediately report suspected violations of this Pledge to the Principal, Program Director, Pastor or Chancellor. If the suspected violator is the Principal, Program Director or Clergy the report should be made to the Chancellor (575-222-4252).

I pledge to follow these guidelines in my relationships with all persons with whom I have contact in my ministry, especially minors or vulnerable adults.

Printed Name: _____

Signature: _____

Institution: _____

Date: _____

See additional reporting requirements contained in the Diocesan Policy entitled “*Safe Environment and Sexual Abuse Policy of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Las Cruces*”

Initial: August, 2019

Current: