

PROCEDURES FOR PRIESTS' LEAVES OF ABSENCE

Diocese of Davenport

Leaves of Absence

A. Authorized Leave of Absence

Authorized leave of absence is defined as time off from official assignment with permission and without loss of seniority. Application for such leave must be made to the Bishop. The Bishop reserves the right to judge and approve each individual request and/or make such a request of an individual. Routine vacations and retreats do not require the permission of the diocesan bishop.

Types of Authorized Leave:

1. **Military Leave**
Requests for such leave must be made to the Bishop. He reserves the right to judge and approve individual requests.
2. **Vacation Leave**
 - a. All priests assigned by the diocesan bishop are entitled to an annual vacation of 30 days. This may be either continuous or interrupted month. (*Canons 533 and 550*) This will include no more than four weekends.
 - b. If a priest is absent from a parish or institution more than 1 week, he should notify the Bishop.
 - c. Parish priests are not to be absent from their assignments during the season of Lent without the permission of the Bishop.
 - d. Pastors and chaplains are to obtain their substitute for the vacation period. The stipend and board are to be supplied by the parish or institution.
3. **Leave for Retreat**
 - a. All priests assigned by the diocesan bishop are entitled to five (5) days of leave in a calendar year to afford them a period of reflection and prayer.
 - b. The location of the annual retreat is up to the discretion of each priest.
 - c. The Bishop's office must be notified in writing by the end of the calendar year when and where the retreat was made.
 - d. The cost of the annual retreat may be taken from the continuing education allowance.

4. Sabbatical Leave
 - a. See tab 8 of the *Parish Manual: Handbook of Policies and Procedures for Parishes and Priests*

5. Health Leave
 - a. With the recommendation of a personal physician, psychiatrist or psychologist, sick leave may be granted for a period of up to six months. During this period the priest will continue to receive salary and benefits from the parish or institution where he is assigned, less compensation per weekend for Mass coverage. During this period mileage for the substitute priest will be paid by the parish or institution involved.
 - b. When the period of sick leave expires, continued sick leave is subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) Consultation with the physician, psychiatrist or psychologist is required.
 - 2) A periodic report of progress must be made to the Bishop's office.
 - 3) Salary and benefits will be arranged by the Bishop.
 - 4) Should the leave extend over a period of one year, retirement should be considered.

6. Personal Leave
 - a. For personal reasons a leave of six months is granted under the following conditions:
 - 1) Membership in the group insurance plan and participation in Priests' Aid Society continues for the period of the leave up to six months with payment by the Diocese.
 - 2) If leave is extended for more than six months, it is the priest's responsibility to make premium payments during the leave.
 - 3) Residence is not provided, faculties are withdrawn, and salary is discontinued at the beginning of the leave.

7. Release from Diocesan Assignment
 - a. Such a release is understood to be a leave to serve (as priest) in a non-diocesan assignment. Release does not include service in the Archdiocese for the United States Military Services.
 - b. It does include teaching, counseling, research and service in another diocese.
 - c. Request for such release must be made to the Bishop. He reserves the right to judge and approve individual requests.

- d. Release is granted under the following conditions:
 - 1) Membership in the group insurance plan and continued participation in the Priests' Aid Society becomes the responsibility of the individual.
 - 2) Assignment and salary are discontinued.

B. Canonical Compensation Policy for Priests Under the Provision of the Charter

A cleric who is in need of consultation shall be entitled to receive canonical legal counsel.

- 1. The cleric is free to choose his own procurator advocate.
- 2. The diocese will cover legal costs of the trial up to \$5000, at which point the cleric is responsible for the remaining expense.

The diocesan bishop has a responsibility to attend to the priests of his diocese. He must assure that provision is made for their adequate support. (Canon 384) As clerics of the Church, priests "deserve remuneration which is consistent with their condition, taking into account the nature of their function and the conditions of places and times, and by which they can provide for the necessities of their life as well as for the equitable payment of those whose services they need." (Canon 281.1)

Provision is to be made for special assistance for priests of the Church even when they are not able to minister in public priestly roles. (Canon 281.2) If a priest is removed "not by the law itself but by a decree of competent authority from an office which provides the person's support, the same authority is to take care that the support is provided for a suitable period, unless other provision is made." (Canon 195)

The Diocese of Davenport provides for the financial support of priests through its compensation and disability policies. More recently a new challenge has arisen as the Church has faced its responsibility to provide basic financial support for priests no longer able to minister as a result of the application of the *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*. This policy statement is intended to specify the provisions for financial support the Diocese of Davenport will make at the direction of its Bishop to provide for the needs of those men.

- 1. Basic Compensation for Charter Priests
 - a. A priest on administrative leave following an accusation of behavior in violation of the *Charter* will receive from the Diocese of Davenport compensation at the level specified at the time of leave on the *Compensation Scale for Priests* for a period of up to six months following the imposition of the leave. At the end of six months that compensation will cease.

- b. Priests who are prohibited from exercising priestly ministry according to the terms of the Charter will receive compensation from the Diocese of Davenport (1.a.) contingent upon full compliance of the terms stated in any precept imposed by both the Vatican and the Bishop.

2. Special Compensation

a. Initial Compensation

- 1) When basic compensation has ceased, in cases when financial assistance is still needed to provide the priest with adequate support, he will receive a special monthly stipend from the diocese in the same amount a retired priest receives.
- 2) According to the provisions of this policy the cost of health insurance for recipients of this assistance who need it will be borne by the diocese including future costs as health insurance rates increase.
- 3) Payment of special compensation will be made to the priest during each month in which he has legitimate need as determined by the diocesan bishop. These provisions for special compensation will cease at the beginning of the month following that in which the individual reaches 62 years of age. At that date other provisions specified in this policy statement govern.

b. Provisions at age 62

- 1) Under revised terms payments will continue to be paid to priests in need so that total compensation is maintained at a minimum of the monthly stipend provided a retired priest.
- 2) In order to continue receiving special compensation under the provisions of this policy, when a priest reaches age 62 he must apply for Social Security benefits. These benefits will then also form a portion of his monthly support. A priest is free to withdraw his request for special compensation if he judges it beneficial to do so at that time.
- 3) The Vicar General of the diocese is to be notified of the amount of Social Security benefit when an initial determination is made and immediately on reception of notice by the beneficiary priest when an adjustment is made.
- 4) These provisions will continue until the priest reaches age 70.

C. Unauthorized Leave of Absence

A priest who leaves his assignment without the Bishop's permission is considered to be on unauthorized leave. Faculties are withdrawn, and salary, participation in the Priests' Aid Society and group insurance coverage ceases.