

Sabbaticals for Priests of the Diocese of Davenport

Introduction:

A sabbatical leave is an educational or spiritual experience that is available periodically so a priest might remain effective and satisfied in his ministry. The priest himself, therefore, primarily initiates sabbaticals, as a way to pursue his own needs and interests.

The various sabbatical programs available offer resources in two basic areas: 1) spiritual and personal growth, and 2) growth in theological understanding. The choice of the best program is primarily the responsibility of the priest after consulting with those who might help him clarify his needs.

Definition:

A sabbatical will be defined as an extended period of time away from a priest's normal assignment - 1) for the purpose of spiritual and personal growth at a place established for those purposes or 2) for the purpose of study in a formal program which will allow the priest to become more effective, skilled, satisfied and knowledgeable. A sabbatical is distinguished from other authorized leaves such as vacation, sick leave, assigned and/or special studies.

Length of Time:

Sabbaticals will ordinarily be for one academic semester or fourteen (14) weeks of an approved program.

No more than one priest may be on sabbatical at any given time in the diocese.

Eligibility:

Priests in the diocese are eligible for a sabbatical after seven (7) years and may reapply for another sabbatical every ten (10) years.

The priest should not take a sabbatical in the year prior to his retirement.

Application Procedure:

Sabbatical applications normally will be made one year in advance of the expected sabbatical.

Initial inquiry regarding a sabbatical will be made with the priest's representative on the Priest Personnel Board. Together they will explore sabbatical possibilities. The priest will formulate his personal plan and complete the application form received from his representative. The individual priest will submit the application form along with his personal letter to the Bishop and the Priest Personnel Board. The personal letter should include:

- A statement of goals
- Steps to achieve those goals
- How this will aid his ministry
- Implications for the diocese
- Commitment to an evaluation

The Bishop, consulting with others, will inform the priest of the status of his request within one month.

Absence from Assignment:

A priest's absence from his assignment for a sabbatical will be determined in light of the needs of his present assignment, after consultation with staff members, the availability of replacement, and due consultation with the Priest Personnel Board.

Method of Selection of Priests:

- Fulfillment of eligibility requirements
- Personal interest and need for personal growth
- Relationship to the overall needs of the diocese
- Availability of the applicant at a particular time and the availability of replacement personnel, if required
- Quality of the program and potential for profiting from the experience
- Seniority (length and quality of previous service)
- Plans for future service to the diocese
- Date of application
- Number of previous sabbaticals taken

Financing of Sabbaticals:

The Diocese will provide up to \$8,000 (one semester sabbatical), subject to review, for payment of tuition and board/room.

A priest on sabbatical retains his right to salary and benefits from the institution to which he is assigned less compensation per weekend for Mass coverage.

The priest will provide for transportation, books and other costs associated with his sabbatical.

The priest will return from sabbatical to his present assignment.

Replacement Procedures While Priest Is On Sabbatical:

It is the responsibility of the priest going on sabbatical to make arrangements so that the essential work in his assignment is covered (including sacramental ministry).

Sabbatical help in excess of the compensation paid by the priest is paid for by the place of assignment.

Evaluation:

The evaluation of a sabbatical is an essential component in the learning process and establishes accountability for the sabbatical.

Upon completion of his sabbatical the priest will evaluate the sabbatical with the Priest Personnel Board.

This policy can be superceded at the discretion of the Bishop.