

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR THE PRIEST PERSONNEL BOARD

1. The Priest Personnel Director

The appointment of a Priest Personnel Director does not negate the power of the Bishop to deal with his clergy or the right of the clergy to have recourse to the Bishop in ordinary or extraordinary matter. The Priest Personnel Director is to assist the Bishop and the clergy in the following ways:

- a) The Priest Personnel Director will survey the priests of the diocese each year during the Fall. This survey will seek to elicit the priest's level of satisfaction with his current appointment, desire to change assignments, openness to different types of ministry, and the hopes, needs, and expectations that the priest wishes to share with the members of the Priests Personnel Board. The results of this survey will be confidential to the members of the Priests Personnel Board unless accompanied by explicit instructions to the contrary.
- b) The Priest Personnel Director will make himself as available as possible to the clergy for discussion of their assignments, evaluations, or other matters of concern either to him or to the individual cleric.
- c) The Priest Personnel Director will be the principle communication link with the Bishops, the Chancery Office, the Seminary, the Deans, etc. on all matters relating to priestly personnel.
- d) The Priest Personnel Director will receive requests for a pastoral move or assignment from the diocesan authorities, offices, schools, the seminary, deans, pastors, associate pastors, etc. He will also be informed of positions open by reason of death, retirement and re-structuring.
- e) The Priest Personnel Director will inform the other members of the Personnel Board of all vacancies or needs in the various ministries of the diocese and seek their counsel not only as to how to meet these needs in the best way possible, but also in the matter of assessing requests for new ministries and assignments. With the Personnel Board, he will prepare the list of suggested moves taking into account the diocesan policies on term appointments and make recommendations to the Bishop.
- f) The Priest Personnel Director will be the ex officio chair of the Personnel Board and the Priests Sabbatical Committee.
- g) The Priest Personnel Director will oversee the development and revision of priest personnel policies and procedures.
- h) The Priest Personnel Director will be ready to assume any other roles assigned him by the Bishop or necessary in the fulfillment of this role as Priest Personnel Director; e.g. as intervener and conciliator in matters involving dysfunction or conflict in the professional and personal lives and ministry of priests.

2. The Personnel Board

Function: The Personnel Board will assist the Priest Personnel Director in the tasks given to him by the Bishop and as outlined in the job description of the Priest Personnel Director. The Board Members will offer special assistance in the following areas:

- a) The Personnel Board members will make themselves available to the priests of the Diocese in the matter of listening to their concerns, needs and hopes relating both to their personal life and to pastoral moves.
- b) The Personnel Board members will communicate to the Priest Personnel Director, as appropriate, any information which would be helpful in the process of the assignment of clergy.
- c) The Personnel Board members will assist the Priest Personnel Director in formulating the list of recommendations regarding pastoral moves.
- d) The Personnel Board members will assist in visiting parishes, i.e., parish teams, parish personnel.
- e) Individual Personnel Board members might be invited to take on an additional portfolio, i.e., with special responsibility for associate pastors, retired priests, ethnic priests, etc.

Frequency of Meetings: The Personnel Board is to meet at least once every two months.

Membership, Term and Elections

- f) The Personnel Board's membership is the Priest Personnel Director and at least six priests. Four of the priests shall be elected by their peers. The Bishop shall appoint at least two priests.
- g) The term of office of all six is six years, with the possibility of re-election or reappointment. Once a member's term of service is completed, they may choose to allow their name to stand for re-election for no more than one further term.
- h) The election process calls for all priests to nominate other priests by written nomination with the nominated priest co-signing the written nomination in agreement of nomination
- i) Once nominations are received, a list of nominees would be presented to the clergy as a whole and a balloting process would begin.
- j) Should a vacancy occur, the remainder of the term will be filled by the runner-up in the last election in the group concerned or by appointment by the Bishop in the case of appointed members.

3. Confidentiality

The dignity of each individual member of the clergy demands the absolute discretion of each member of the Board. Due to the very nature of the process of consultation and assignment, total secrecy regarding proposed assignments, Board discussion and minutes is important, both for the members of the Board and the individuals consulted. All must be aware, of course, that no assignment is official until made by the Bishop; until that point there are only proposals. The Board is also bound to secrecy in the matter of the personal requests or problems of the clergy for each of us has a natural right to privacy that must be scrupulously respected.

4. The Personnel Board and Commendations, Complaints, Conflict Resolution

In order to recognize and affirm the commendable achievements of our priests and to ensure the fair handling of complaints, in accordance with the sensitivities of all involved and the due process procedures of Canon Law, the following principles and procedures will be followed:

- a) Communications commending a priest of the Diocese and received by the Bishop or the Priest Personnel Director will be forwarded to the priest, normally accompanied by a personnel letter.
- b) The Personnel Board discourages petitions circulated to gather signatures regarding the appointment or transfer of personnel.
- c) Due process demands that no anonymous telephone calls or letters are to be accepted, recorded or filed by the Board.
- d) In accordance with the principle of subsidiarity, conflicts should be resolved at the lowest level possible. The Priest Personnel Director and/or the Personnel Board may be requested by the Bishop to mediate and seek to resolve conflicts. In individual instances, the Priest Personnel Director may call upon the assistance and expertise of the Human Resources Office of the Diocese.
- e) Communications concerning sexual abuse are to be directed to the chairperson of the Sexual Abuse Committee and are to be dealt with in accordance with diocesan policy.
- f) Other communications of concern (e.g. health, etc.) or complaint may be turned over to the Priest Personnel Director. At his discretion the person expressing the concern or complaint may be contacted for permission to use his or her name in discussing the matter with the priest concerned. In more serious matters, the Priest Personnel Director shall insist on such a permission prior to meeting with the priest. Whenever possible, assurance should be given that the matter will be given consideration.
- g) With prudence and brotherly concern, the Priest Personnel Director shall contact the priest in question to deal with the matter. The priest shall have the right to see written materials relative to concerns or complaints and in more serious matters to know the name of the person expressing the concern or complaint.

5. Guidelines for the Board's Operation

- a) The Board will work toward the best possible system for assignment. All assignments proposed to the Bishop will keep in mind and balance these factors:
 - i) the needs of the of the Diocese as a whole;
 - ii) the needs of the local community parish; and
 - iii) the needs of the individual priest.
- b) Requests for new assignments, for additional help or for entrance into a new form of ministry should be made in writing. A period of six months will normally allow for an orderly and considered response to such requests. Similarly, maximum lead-time in the matter of retirements, sabbaticals, resignations or transfers for whatever reason will allow the Board to make better recommendations and to ensure adequate consultation.

- c) The tradition of the Diocese will be maintained of effecting the major reassignment of the clergy in June.
Assignments are made throughout the year as needs arise and personnel become available, or new ministries begun.
- d) Our concept of service and of ministry to God's people does not include the notion that priests choose their own assignments. Nevertheless, each member of the clergy may make a positive contribution both to planning and to his own ministerial effectiveness by openly indicating to the Priest Personnel Director and to the Board any specific assignment for which he would like to offer himself.
- e) The placement of Seminarian Interns will be made by the Bishop upon the advice of the Board who will have consulted with the Seminary.

6. Incardination / Excardination Policy of the Diocese

The Personnel Board operates as an **ad hoc** committee for the Bishop in the consideration of requests for incardination - excardination.

- a) The priest seeking incardination - excardination, should first seek an appointment with the Personnel Director to obtain information about the canonical procedures involved and the Diocesan policy.
- b) Bishop and Personnel Director will have the initial meeting with the priest seeking incardination - excardination.
- c) If approved after the initial meeting, the Personnel Director will obtain all necessary documentation, recommendations as well as a "Letter of Release" or "Clearance" from the Diocese or Religious Community.
- d) Before incardination is granted within the Diocese, the priest will be invited to take part in a thorough assessment (i.e. Pastoral Ministry Effectiveness Appraisal and Southdown).
- e) The Board will then have the opportunity to discuss the matter once the documentation is complete and then offer advice to the Bishop.
- f) Letters of excardination from the home Diocese (or a document of exclauration from the Sacred Congregation for Religious in the case of a Religious) will specify a three year trial period, unless the Diocesan priest has already spent three years here in the ministry. Near the end of this trial period, the Personnel Director will interview the priest as to his wishes and the possibilities for permanent ministry in the Diocese. The Deans, as well as the Chancery, will be consulted. A final recommendation will be given to the Bishop by the Board before the three years have elapsed. The trial period may be further extended to six years before incardination is considered, at the discretion of the Bishop.
- g) Priests who were ordained to the service of the Diocese will consult with the Personnel Director about Diocesan Excardination policies should they wish to minister in another Diocese on a permanent basis.

7. Retirement Policy of the Diocese

- a) At any age, a pastor may request that he be relieved of the responsibility of administration in order to take up an appointment in another parish as Associate Pastor and remain active in priestly ministry.
- b) When a pastor reaches his seventieth birthday, he is to submit his resignation to the Bishop, who then has the option of accepting it or of extending the term of office on a year to year basis. The wishes of the priest himself, as well as the situation of his health and the needs of the parish, are additional factors which the Bishop will consider. Normally all resignations will be accepted at age 75.
- c) Those who hold appointments to office ministries will follow the same norms as pastors in this matter of retirement, as will associate pastors.
- d) Voluntary retirement, before the age of 70, for reasons of health is possible at the discretion of the Bishop.
- e) Pension benefits for retired priests are reviewed annually along with the salaries of those in full-time ministry. Hence they are not listed here. Retired priests may choose to live on their own or in Diocesan parishes or institutions. If for health reasons, the priest must retire before the age of 70, and with the permission of the Bishop, he may make application to the St. John the Evangelist Pension Fund Society for full retirement and benefits.
- f) Normally no priest may remain in the same rectory from which he retired as Pastor or Associate Pastor.
- g) Retired priests now make and will continue to make a significant contribution to many parishes, both as senior priests in many rectories and as emergency or vacation replacements. Retirement is looked upon in the narrow sense, since as priests always, we continue to exercise our priesthood in an active way to the extent that our health will permit. The Board will maintain a list of those parishes interested in or able to provide accommodations for a retired priest. This will enable him to enjoy the company and fraternity of his fellow priests and to exercise his priesthood, both important for and beneficial to our social and spiritual well-being.
- h) Priests who have retired should be aware of the alternatives available:
 - i) initiate an assignment himself or through the Personnel Board.;
 - ii) be assigned full-time or part-time in a parish;
 - iii) be assigned "in residence" with no responsibilities save those which he chooses to accept in the parish;
 - iv) Residence in Chatham Retirement Resort, a Diocesan Institution, or in private housing of his choice. In this later case, should he wish to offer his services at a parish or another institution, he can arrange this through the Board if he wishes.

8. Guidelines for Transition Period of a Pastor in the event of Transfer, Retirement, Death, or Extended Illness

- a) The goals of the transition process are twofold: I) to address the human needs of the priest involved and the parishioners during the transition period; and ii) to assure, as much as possible, continuity in the pastoral goals and priorities of the particular parish.
- b) The outgoing pastor is to appoint a “transition team” of about six members, composed of the other members of the parish team (associate pastor, lay ministers), plus some members of the parish pastoral council and finance committee. This committee will be formed soon after the change of pastors has been publicly announced and will finish its mandate after the incoming pastor has been canonically installed and the new parish pastoral council has been installed. The outgoing pastor will name the chairperson of this transition team and communicate this information to the Priest Personnel Office, providing an open line of communication with the parish and Chancery Office, other than the parish priest himself.
- c) A change of pastors is an opportune time to review certain aspects of parish and rectory responsibilities. The transition team will facilitate the following:
 - I) the preparation of the farewell celebration and a recommendation of the parish gift to be offered, according to diocesan guidelines;
 - ii) offering advice, if requested, regarding the details of moving the personal belongings of the priest to his next assignment;
 - iii) assuring that the rectory is clean and ready to receive the incoming pastor. In some instances, there may be some consideration in shared responsibility and cost for such cleaning, i.e., shared between outgoing pastor and parish;
 - iv) assisting the outgoing pastor in updating the financial and spiritual records before the arrival of the incoming pastor;
 - v) contacting the incoming pastor before the pastoral move, in an effort to prepare the welcome celebrations and to open lines of communication; and
 - vi) meet with the incoming pastor to inform him of the particular priorities and concerns of parishioners.
- d) There is to be a meeting of the outgoing and incoming pastor to discuss the following:
 - i) the parish profile;
 - ii) the staff, full-time and part-time, regarding job description [which should be in writing and on file], salary, appraisal reports and general spirit of cooperation; and,
 - iii) the parish pastoral priorities and concerns.
- e) The diocesan business administrator will contact the outgoing pastor regarding the requisite audit of parish financial records.
- f) Parishioners are to be dissuaded from petitioning the Bishop and the Board regarding the pastoral move.

