



POLICY ON INTERNATIONAL CLERGY VISITORS TO
THE DIOCESE OF VICTORIA IN TEXAS

When an internationally born priest or deacon, on a tourist visa or other non-worker visa, enters into the Diocese of Victoria to visit family/friends or is on vacation, the following restrictions apply, as based on the federal laws enforced by the Department of Homeland Security and Immigration Services, the Internal Revenue Service and diocesan Safe Environment Regulations:

THE PRIEST MAY ONLY CELEBRATE A PRIVATE MASS OR CONCELEBRATE WITH A PRIEST ASSIGNED TO THE PARISH. He may not celebrate alone a regularly scheduled Mass that ordinarily would be done by a priest assigned to the parish. The same restrictions apply to deacons.

Celebrating Mass, or providing pastoral services for parishioners of any kind, is considered “work” by Immigration laws and requires that the ordained cleric have a worker visa, green card or is a U.S. citizen. Furthermore, such clerics would not have the required criminal clearance and the required safe environment training of the Diocese of Victoria.

Violations of the federal law not only could result in costly fines to the parish and diocese, but could possibly jeopardize the diocese’s ability to secure worker visas for the international priests being assigned to parishes in the diocese. If a visiting cleric violates restrictions and causes any harm or injury, liability insurance could possibly be voided. Therefore, the parish and diocese would be on its own to compensate individuals for any damage caused by the priest or deacon, as well as possible legal costs.

Those with questions on this policy are to contact the *Office of the Chancellor* at 361-573-0828.

Approved and promulgated by Bishop Cahill on March 2, 2016