

Handbook
on
Priest Personnel

Policies and Guidelines

ARCHDIOCESE OF SUVA

2015

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SECTION A

1. INTRODUCTION

This handbook establishes just and orderly procedures in all priest personnel matters. Such procedures benefit the dignity of any human person as a creature of God and member of the family that is Church. These procedures are necessary if the priests are to experience the well-being that comes from personal satisfaction and a sense of worth and achievement. Priests who are contented with their work and living situations best serve God's people.

The priesthood is more than an ordinary job. Through the Sacrament of Holy Orders the priest is configured to Christ - Head, Shepherd, and Bridegroom of the Church - and is empowered to act in his person on behalf of the people He has redeemed by His blood. Accordingly, priestly ministry involves a total commitment of a person, which is willing to give of self beyond mere requirements and even to suffer for the sake of ministry.

"Have among yourselves the same attitude that is also yours in Christ Jesus, Who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God something to be grasped. Rather, he emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, coming in human likeness; and found human in appearance, he humbled himself, becoming obedient to death, even death on a cross." (Philippians 2: 5-8 - New American Bible with Revised New Testament and Revised Psalms © 1970)

While attempting to eliminate injustices and hardship, these guidelines cannot remove all difficulties from the life of the priests. In fact, the service of the people requires that the priests give generously of themselves even in trying circumstances. Moreover, inter-personal and professional relationships among priests require more than rules and regulations. Courtesy, respect and charity are always expected but cannot be legislated.

The Archdiocese of Suva as a whole and each parish as a unit have particular challenges and opportunities. Each priest should be willing to serve wherever he is needed. The demographic and economic characteristics of the Archdiocese present special problems. The priests of the Archdiocese, together with the Bishop, are responsible for the entire Archdiocese. Because of this, each priest should have an attitude of readiness to take his turn in the variety of needed ministries. Two beneficial fruits of this are: first, the experience of the ethnic and economic diversity that marks the Archdiocese and which should contribute to personal growth; secondly, the solidarity and common interest that will be the mark of all and be an aid and support to those who at the moment are carrying more difficult assignments.

The "option for the poor" spoken of by the Pope and the bishops of Latin America applies to the Archdiocese as does the recent emphasis on evangelization. The priests of the Archdiocese should recognize the importance of ministry to the poor and should regard it as the responsibility of the whole Archdiocese, and not simply of a few priests assigned to certain parishes. The desire of any priest to serve in urban communities should be recognized and given due consideration. Priests should be ready personally to serve in difficult assignments on their own initiative or on request of the Bishop and Pastoral Leadership Placement Board.

It is hoped that the guidelines that follow will prove practical and that they will answer the needs expressed by the priests of the Archdiocese. These guidelines shall be reviewed and revised as necessary at least every five years.

2. ACCOUNTABILITY

It will be the responsibility of a Review Committee of the Presbyteral Council to review the Handbook, at least every five years, in consultation with the Bishop and the Vicar for Priests, making needed revisions, developing appropriate sections, adding those which

correspond to new or changing conditions, and, in general, striving for personnel and practices which will increase the satisfaction of priests in their work and facilitate the development of their personal talents. Changes recommended by the Review Committee (through solicitation from all the priests) shall be approved by the Presbyteral Council and the Bishop.

SECTION B STATUS IN THE ARCHDIOCESE

1. INCARDINATED PRIESTS

All priests incardinated in the Archdiocese of Suva of enjoy the rights, privileges, and responsibilities granted them by their Faculties and according to the norms of Canon Law (see Canons 764, 883§3, 931, 919, 999§2, and 1003).

2. PRIESTS SEEKING INCARDINATION

Incardination means the affiliation of a Religious cleric to this Archdiocese (Canons 265 - 272). The following process shall be observed:

2.1 Eligibility

A priest should indicate his wish to be considered for incardination in the Archdiocese by submitting his application in writing to the Bishop.

Accompanying the application must be a statement from his provincial or bishop acknowledging his request and a letter of suitability.

The letter of suitability must state that the priest:

- a) is in good standing;
- b) has never been suspended or canonically disciplined;

- c) has had no criminal charges brought against him, nor does he have any criminal record;
- d) has never behaved in such a way as to indicate he might engage in sexual behavior inconsistent with priestly celibacy, including inappropriate behavior (or accusation thereof) with any minor;
- e) is not impeded by alcoholism, drug addiction, or any form of substance abuse;
- f) is not affected by any mental, moral, emotional, or physical condition which might adversely affect his performance as a priest.

A minimum of three years of living and working full time in the Archdiocese is required before the request for incardination will be approved. The priest seeking incardination shall have served in at least two full time assignments in the Archdiocese before incardination.

In conformity with Canon Law, a priest having fulfilled A & B shall be canonically incardinated in the Archdiocese after having served five years, unless the incardination process has been officially extended or the application for incardination has been given negative decision.

2.2 Requirements

The Vicar for Priests will request an evaluation of the candidate and his ministry from each of the pastors, or superiors of agencies or institutions, in which the candidate has served in both the Archdiocese of Suva and elsewhere. The evaluation shall include an assessment of his priestliness and ministerial skills along with an indication of the evaluator's willingness to have the petitioner as a parochial vicar.

The priest may be required to submit reports of complete physical examinations and/or psychological assessment as far as canon and civil law permit. These reports are strictly confidential and are solely for the use of the Vicar for Priests in the incardination and assignment process. An annual status review by the Vicar for Priests shall be held with each priest seeking incardination.

2.3 *Decision*

- Normally no decision regarding incardination will be made by the Bishop, until one full year has elapsed from the time of written application.
- Information for decisions regarding incardination is gathered by the Vicar for Priests and the Pastoral Leadership Placement Board.
- The final decision on the request for incardination is the responsibility of the Bishop of Suva in consultation with his College of Consultors.
- In the case of a negative decision on his request for incardination, the non-incardinated priest has the option of requesting a hearing before the Vicar for Priests, the Judicial Vicar, the Vicar General, or the Bishop.
- If accepted for incardination, normally the priest will be formally incardinated in a formal ceremony with members of the presbyterate present, in accord with the practices of the Archdiocese.
- Priests accepted for incardination receive full benefits based upon their years of service to the Archdiocese, retroactive to the date of their first official assignment in the Archdiocese (See Section F: Priest Assignments)

3. PRIESTS NOT SEEKING INCARDINATION

Priests not incardinated in the Archdiocese of Suva include:

3.1 *Priests in the Diocese for less than 30 days*

This category may include priests who have come into the Archdiocese to visit, to study, to provide temporary supply, to give retreats, missions, etc. The visiting priest needs to present a valid celebret or a current "Letter of Suitability" from his Diocese or Religious Community.

The "Letter of Suitability" must state that the priest:

- a) is in good standing;
 - b) has never been suspended or canonically disciplined;
 - c) has had no criminal charges brought against him, nor does he have any criminal record;
 - d) has never behaved in such a way as to indicate he might engage in sexual behavior inconsistent with priestly celibacy, including inappropriate behavior (or accusation thereof) with any minor;
 - e) is not impeded by alcoholism, drug addiction, or any form of substance abuse;
 - f) is not affected by any mental, moral, emotional, or physical condition which might adversely affect his performance as a priest.
- Priests who do not receive a diocesan assignment may not be hired by a parish and are not eligible for regular compensation, medical insurance, and other benefits.

3.2 *Priests in the Archdiocese for more than 30 days (including student priests)*

Since it is likely that all priests will come into contact with children, even when not performing any "official" ministry on behalf of the Church, the following are required:

3.2.1 Faculties

The priest must request formal Faculties from the Bishop.

Supporting documents required for the granting of Faculties include:

- a. A letter of suitability from his Bishop or Religious superior
- b. A letter of permission from his Bishop or Religious superior, stating that he has permission to be outside of his Diocese or province, and specifying the length of time.

Faculties will be granted only for the time period specified.

(n. b. These letters may be combined by some Bishops or Religious superiors.)

3.2.2 Fingerprinting

All priests requesting Faculties in the Archdiocese of Suva are required to be fingerprinted as part of the mandatory background check. Police clearance from home country is needed.

3.2.3 Safe Environment Training

In accord with the "Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People," all priests requesting Faculties in the Archdiocese of Suva are required to complete the Diocesan "Safe Environment Program". (ref. Dallas Diocese document)

Those who have recently completed similar training programs in other dioceses may submit proof of completion to the Archdiocese of Suva. The coordinator of the Safe Environment for Children Project will determine if the training program is acceptable according to diocesan policies.

Priests who do not receive a diocesan assignment may not be hired by a parish and are not eligible for regular compensation, medical insurance, and other benefits.

3.2.4 Priests serving in a diocesan assignment

A priest who desires to serve in a diocesan pastoral assignment but who does not seek incardination may be accepted only with the approval of the Bishop. The following process shall be observed:

- i) The priest will make a formal application in person or in writing to the Vicar for Priests.
 - ii) The priest must provide the following from his own bishop or Religious superior giving him permission:
 - iii) A letter of suitability from his Bishop or Religious superior
 - iv) A letter of permission from his Bishop or Religious superior, stating that he has permission to be outside of his Diocese or province, and specifying when the priest is to return to his diocese or Religious Order. Diocesan appointments are granted only for a specific period.
(n. b. These letters may be combined by some Bishops or Religious superiors.)
- 3.2.5 The priest is required to be fingerprinted and complete the "Safe Environment for Children" training, as explained above.
- 3.2.6 Upon fulfillment of the above, the Vicar for Priests will interview the candidate and make an appropriate recommendation to the Bishop.
- 3.2.7 If the application is rejected, the applicant will be informed in writing by the Vicar for Priests.
- 3.2.8 If the candidate is accepted, diocesan Faculties will be granted for a specific time (concluding with the date of conclusion agreed

upon by the priest's bishop or religious superior) and an assignment will be approved or given.

- 3.2.9 Six months after the priest is accepted, the Vicar for Priests will arrange for a visitation of the priest. In lieu of said visitation, a written report by the Pastor or supervisor may be accepted.
- 3.3.0 The status of such priests will be reviewed annually by the Vicar for Priests.
- 3.3.1 The Vicar for Priests, through the Office of Clergy and Deacon Formation, shall provide an orientation program for priests new to service in the Diocese. This orientation will provide a review of the diocesan Statutes and an introduction to the diocesan departments such as the diocesan Tribunal, Archdiocesan Commissions, Catholic Charities, Department of Education, Ethnic Concerns, and the staffs of those departments.

3.3. Priests In-Residence

Priests in the Archdiocese of Suva solely "in residence" with their Religious community or from another diocese.

Those who are in residence in the Archdiocese without diocesan Faculties are required to inform the bishop of their residence in the diocese. These priests are understood to have no Faculties or permission of any nature to minister or present themselves as priests in any manner within the Diocese. The Archdiocese of Suva assumes no oversight or responsibility for these priests; that remains with their diocese or Religious community. The proper Religious superior or Ordinary of the diocese of incardination shall inform the Bishop of the Archdiocese of Suva of the priest's residence in the Diocese.

4. NON-ACTIVE. NON-LAICIZED PRIESTS

A priest wishing to return to priestly ministry, including non-active, non-laicized priests, Religious or diocesan, shall submit his application in writing to the Bishop.

The applicable norms of Canon Law must be observed.

Procedures, indicated above, for acceptance of non-incardinated priests and/or incardination shall be observed.

Benefits applicable to such non-incardinated priests will take effect after reinstatement, on the date of official assignment.

Benefits applicable to priests incardinated in the Archdiocese of Suva will be those to which they would normally be entitled in view of their service. Inactive time shall not be counted for benefits unless specified in this document or previously agreed to in writing.

5. REIMBURSEMENT TO RELIGIOUS PRIESTS

A priest who is a member of a Religious Institute or other community that professes the evangelical counsel of poverty (c.f. Canon 668§5) is not eligible for personal remuneration for services rendered. Remuneration for services must be made to their Institute, in accord with that institute's norms. This also applies to Mass Offerings and Stole Fees, which are remitted to the Institute according to its norms. These priests may be reimbursed for out-of-pocket expenses, provided appropriate documentation is supplied.

SECTION C: DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF PARISH PRIESTS

1. PASTORAL LEADERSHIP

A resident priest as pastor is the normative model for the Catholic Church. When the "normative" model is not available, for whatever reason, the bishop, nevertheless, continues to have the responsibility to provide leadership to each parish. Canon Law specifically provides for this eventuality, (Canons 523 & 524).

OTHER MODELS OF PARISH LEADERSHIP

In order to provide leadership whereby parish communities maintain a healthy pastoral life alternative models are available and include:

1. Team of Priests (cc. 517§1, 542)
2. Parochial Administrator (c. 540)
3. Parish Life Director (c. 517§2)

2. PARISH PRIEST OR PASTOR

This position includes responsibilities for both the temporal and pastoral needs of a parish (as noted in Canons 528 - 537). N.B.: a good number of the following areas may be delegated, but the final responsibility is that of the Pastor. Major areas of responsibility will be listed with greater detail following each area.

2.1 The Role of Pastor

The role of a Pastor may be summed up in the following/:

- Spiritual Leader - one who promotes spiritual growth among members of the community and models personal holiness
- Shepherd - sensitive to the community needs, responds to those needs and is involved in the life of the community

- Leader of Community - develops a vision and sense of mission for the parish and gathers the people together
- Staff Developer - recruits and supervises staff; evaluates and supports staff members in their ministry, giving direction and continuity to parish programs
- Administrator - oversees the stewardship of the fiscal and physical plant resources of the Parish
- Teacher - an instructor in theology, Scripture, and Church teaching
A Pastor is also one who exhibits the following basic qualifications:
- Operates out of the teachings of Vatican II, and is guided by diocesan documents.
- A proven ability to work collegially with staff and representative groups of laity
- A proven ability to develop ministries among the people
- Good interpersonal skills
- Willing and able to give time and energy as pastoral leader
- Open to continuing growth and takes his own spiritual development seriously
- Familiar with Diocesan Administration Handbook

2.2.Pastoral Responsibilities

2.2.1. Worship

- Be responsible for coordinating prayer, worship, and spiritual formation of the people of the parish.
- Preside over the worshipping community, especially the Eucharist, as well as the celebration of the Sacraments of Baptism, Anointing

of the Sick, and Penance Contact and schedule celebrants for Eucharist, funerals, wakes, marriages, homilies as needed.

- Contact the Bishop's office regarding the annual celebration of the Sacrament of Confirmation.
- Work with Liturgy Committee to plan for liturgical seasons and feasts. Oversee development and training of liturgical ministers.
- Apply personally or through another priest, the *Missa pro populo* (Mass for the intention of the parishioners) each Sunday (c. 534).

2. *Empowerment*

- Encourage, promote and cultivate the talents and gifts of all members of the parish community.
- Coordinate and support all who minister in the parish, especially the parish staff.

3. *Visitation/Outreach*

- Provide for the care of parishioners in crisis, illness, or bereavement.
- Be responsible for meeting the sacramental needs of the homebound, hospitalized, or dying.
- Be responsible for ministry and outreach to the alienated, marginalized, and needy. Be attentive to issues of Evangelization.

4. *Staff*

- Professional staff meetings should be held at least once a month at regularly scheduled day and time for the purpose of communication and planning. Staff meetings should include at least all full-time ministerial staff of the parish.
- Convene, support, and provide direction for staff.
- Oversee staff members and evaluate them on an ongoing basis.

- Be responsible for the hiring, supervising, and terminating of staff members; seeing that all staff members have contracts and job descriptions.
5. *Resource*
- Be knowledgeable about community, parish, and diocesan resources and use these resources to further the life and goals of the parish.
 - Be aware of the strengths and diversity of the parish and endeavor to bring a unity to the faith community.
6. *Planning/Evaluation*
- With the Parish Council and other representative groups, help create, review, and implement a 5 year plan for the parish, with specific short and long term goals.
 - Support the implementation of diocesan goals, such as the Bishop's annual appeal.
7. *Ministry*
- Be responsible for the development and coordination of all the ministries of the parish and seek feedback.
 - Be attuned to the need for development of new ministries.
 - With the Principal, oversee the smooth operation of the Catholic School.
8. *Policy Implementation*
- Be aware of and comply with diocesan policies that affect parish personnel, buildings, and pastoral and temporal aspects of parish life.
 - See that diocesan policy is followed in regard to sacramental preparation and celebration, catechesis of children and young adults, the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults, Marriage, Young Marriage, and Baptism, and aspects of Canon Law that apply.

2.3. Temporal Responsibilities

2.3.1 Finances

- a. Work with the Parish Finance Council to plan and to make recommendations pertaining to the fiscal life of the parish.

- b. Ensure that parish expenditures comply to the following diocesan policy: the pastor can spend \$2,500 at his discretion; the pastor should consult the Parish Finance Council on any project more than \$2,500 but less than \$7,500; the pastor should consult the Diocesan Finance Council on projects over \$7,500.

- c. Work with the Parish Finance Council to prepare and manage an annual budget.

- d. Oversee the person(s) responsible for bookkeeping, accounting, and financial reports.

- e. Give the required annual financial report to the parish.

- f. Coordinate the triennial, and other, diocesan fiscal audits.

2.1.2. Office Management

- Coordinate the organization and work of the parish offices in accordance with effective standards, procedures, and working methods.

- Arrange for workshops, in-service classes, and other forms of training for parish staff.

2.1.3. Buildings Plant

- Work with Parish Building-Maintenance Committee, or its equivalent, so that the plant is adequately maintained and improved as needed.
- Maintain adequate insurance for all properties.

2.3.4 *Chancery Reporting*

- Be the primary liaison with Chancery and other diocesan structures.
- Oversee filing of all reports requested by Diocese.
- Respond to Chancery requests.

2.1.4. *Accountability*

- The pastor is accountable to the Bishop and subject to the evaluation procedures of the Diocese.

3. PAROCHIAL ADMINISTRATOR

In certain cases, it may become necessary to appoint a Parish Administrator who is to be a priest. The Parochial Administrator fulfills the role and the pastoral and temporal responsibilities of a Pastor, as listed above, according to the norms of Canon Law (c. 517§2).

It is diocesan policy that a priest who is being named for the first time as a parochial leader is assigned as Parochial Administrator for a period of two years. Following that time, the Vicar for Priests conducts a formal evaluation, and presents his findings to the Bishop. It is the sole discretion of the Bishop regarding the extension as Parochial Administrator or assigning the priest as Pastor of the parish.

The Parochial Administrator is accountable to the Bishop, who is ultimately responsible for this person's supervision, evaluation, and termination. The Pastoral Leadership Placement Board and the Vicar for Priests will be involved in this appointment as they are in other pastoral appointments.

4. PAROCHIAL VICAR (ASSISTANT PASTOR)

Although the Pastor has the primary responsibility for the care of the people of the parish, the Parochial Vicar (Associate Pastor) shares that responsibility because of ordination and official parish appointment. A Pastor will respect the Parochial Vicar's opinions, judgments and knowledge, receive his suggestions for new programs or the revitalization of existing ones in a spirit of trust and mutual regard, and will encourage him to exercise his talents and abilities within the parochial structure, setting for him an example of holiness and priestly dedication to the People of God.

The Pastor and the Parochial Vicar(s) should make every effort to work collaboratively to fulfill their pastoral and temporal responsibilities, always seeking to serve the needs of the parish, the Diocese, the wider local community, and the Church. By means of open communication and dialogue, they share together in the pastoral and temporal responsibilities of the parish.

4.1 Responsibilities of Parochial Vicar

The rights and responsibilities of the Parochial Vicar are described in Canons 545 - 552, of particular importance is Canon 548:

4.1.1 Canon 548§2 "Unless the letter of the diocesan bishop expressly states otherwise, the parochial vicar is obliged by reason of his office to assist the pastor in fulfilling the total parochial ministry, except for the obligation to apply Mass for the people, and if circumstances warrant it, to substitute for the pastor in accord with the norm of law."

4.1.2 Canon 548§3 "The parochial vicar is regularly to consult with the pastor on planned or existing programs so that the pastor and the parochial vicar

or vicars can provide through their combined efforts of the pastoral care of the parish for which they are responsible together."

4.1.3 To accomplish this mandate, prospective Pastor and Parochial Vicar shall meet to negotiate their expectations of each other before the finalizing of an assignment. Within the first three months of an assignment, the Pastor and Parochial Vicar shall agree in a written job description to the following areas of responsibilities:

- Time frame for regularity of consultation (weekly, bi-weekly, etc.)
- Areas in which the Pastor has primary responsibility
- Areas in which the Parochial Vicar has responsibility
- Areas in which the Pastor and Parochial Vicar share responsibility

Once the Pastor and Parochial Vicar reach an agreement, a copy of this job description shall be sent to the Vicar for Priests for their personnel files, and the Parish Profile for the sake of future evaluation of both parties.

When a Pastor is assigned to a parish, a similar type of agreement shall be made between the Pastor and Parochial Vicar(s) and submitted to the Vicar for Priests within the first three months of the Pastor's assignment.

SECTION D: PASTORAL LEADERSHIP PLACEMENT BOARD (PLPB)

1. PURPOSE

The Pastoral Leadership Placement Board (hereafter, The Board) exists to assist the Bishop in serving the pastoral needs of the People of God in the Archdiocese of Suva through analysis and assessment of personnel matters and appropriate assignments of pastoral leaders. It aims to increase the efficiency and satisfaction of the clergy in their work and to facilitate the development of their personal talents. The Board plans and recommends candidates for the bishop to appoint a resident pastor to each parish, when

possible, or as an alternative, to appoint a priest pastor to more than one parish, or to entrust pastoral care to a parochial vicar, a deacon, a Religious, or lay man or woman, or several priests in solidum (c. 517§1) or a 'community of persons' (c. 517§2).

2. MAKE-UP OF THE BOARD

- Five priest members who are elected from the presbyterate
(The priest members represent the span of ordination years within the presbyterate)
- Four lay people appointed by the bishop
- The Vicar for Priests
- The Vicar General (ex officio)
- The Bishop
(The bishop may appoint additional members to reflect the diversity of the presbyterate)

2. TERM OF OFFICE

The term of office is four years for all elected and appointed members.

A Chairperson and Vice Chairperson are elected annually from among the elected priest members. The term of office for the Chair and Vice Chair is one year.

3. RESPONSIBILITIES

3.1 As part of its ongoing responsibility, the Board maintains a description of the qualities, skills, and spiritual formation necessary for an effective pastoral administrator, assesses the readiness and competence of

candidates for such a position, and establishes and monitors a program for continued training and formation of pastoral leadership.

3.2 The Board's task is to create an inclusive, collaborative, and comprehensive strategy for identification, development, and placement of ordained and non-ordained pastoral leaders by use of a Personnel Planning System.

3.3 The Board members swear by an oath to observe the following policy of confidentiality:

"All information shared at Pastoral Leadership Placement Board meetings concerning priests, pastoral leaders and parishes is to be held in strict confidence and is not to be disclosed outside of the Pastoral Leadership Placement Board."

3.4 Monthly meetings are held on the first Thursday of each month. The Board members are required to attend all meetings. Unexcused absences of two consecutive board meetings will result in dismissal of the Board member.

3.5 In times of Pastoral Leadership transition in parishes, Board members are expected to participate in parish listening sessions.

4. ACCOUNTABILITY

The Board reports to and serves at the pleasure of the Bishop. From an administrative standpoint, the Board receives operational leadership from the Vicar General and the Vicar for Priest. Authorized absences are exempt from the above statement.

SECTION E: VICAR FOR PRIESTS

1. REASON FOR THE POSITION

1.1 To coordinate the process of pastoral leadership placements for priest pastors, parochial vicars, and special workers, as well as for deacon and ordained and non-ordained pastoral administrators.

1.2 To work with the Pastoral Leadership Placement Board in making recommendations to the Bishop for such appointments.

1.3 To collaborate with the Vicar General and the Bishop in matters concerning the life of priests.

2. AUTHORITY

The Archbishop of Suva is the ultimate authority in matters of the appointment of Pastoral Leaders. The Bishop may reserve to himself decisions or actions in a particular case, while informing the Vicar for Priests of his action.

The Vicar for Priests ordinarily acts in collaboration with the Pastoral Leadership Placement Board in recommending assignments to the Bishop. These recommendations are advisory.

The Vicar for Priests may act independently of the Board and/or with the delegation of the Bishop in emergency situations. If the Vicar for Priests should, in an exceptional case, act contrary to the Board's recommendations, he will obtain the Bishop's permission and inform the board of his intention.

3. ACCOUNTABILITIES

The Vicar for Priests works under the supervision of the Vicar General. His responsibilities include the following:

3.1. Administration

- To supervise the Bishop's Representative to the Catechists, the Director of Vocations, Clergy Formation, and the Administrative Assistant of the

office of Clergy.

- To participate in meeting of the diocesan department heads.
- To prepare and monitor the budgets for the Office of Clergy.
- To maintain files on all priests and to safeguard their confidentiality.

3.2.Placement of Priests

- To oversee the activities of the Pastoral Leadership Placement Board (PLPB) in recommending pastoral assignments of priests.
- To work with the Bishop and the Chair of the PLPB in preparing the confidential agenda for the monthly PLPB meetings.
- To prepare confidential minutes of the PLPB.
- To work closely as an advisor to the Bishop regarding assignments of priests
- To oversee the “Transition Processes” of parishes that are in need of new pastoral leadership.
- To oversee the transition process of parish leadership.
- To implement the decisions of the Bishop regarding pastoral placement of priests, with special regard for confidentiality, timeliness of communication, and communication with all parties who should have information (e.g. other priests in the parish, the dean, the Chancellor, the presbyterate, the Catholic Voice).
- To oversee a periodic Review of Ministry for all priests according to the norms of the Priest Personnel Handbook, and to communicate the results of the review to the priest.
- To oversee the periodic revision of the Priest Personnel Handbook, in collaboration with the Presbyteral Council.

3.3.Pastoral Care of Priests

- To meet regularly with the Bishop and the Vicar General to discuss the needs of the priests.
- To be available to priests who may be experiencing particular challenges or difficulties and to help them find means to deal with their difficulties, including counseling, therapy or intervention with the priest himself or with the parish.
- To visit sick priests and oversee the health needs of priests, assisting them to connect with resources in the community.
- To oversee the pastoral care of retired priests.
- To see that each priest has on file in the chancery information regarding next of kin, final will and testament, and desires for funeral services.
- To coordinate funeral services for a deceased priest, in accord with his stated wishes, the schedule of the Bishop and the parish, and the desires of the priest's family.

3.4.Receiving Extern Priests

- To receive inquiries of extern priests.
- To screen extern priests who wish to minister in the diocese, in conjunction with the Chancellor.
- To negotiate terms of assignment with the extern priest and his immediate superior.
- To monitor the ministry of extern priests assigned to work in the diocese.
- Monitoring the incardination process
- To review the initial application of priest for incardination and to see that all documents are prepared and filed, both from the Archbishop of Suva and from the priest's current ordinary or Religious Superior.

- To monitor the progress toward incardination, normally including two assignments in the Archdiocese of Suva, with review of ministry, over a five year period.
- To make a final recommendation for incardination and to prepare materials for the review of the College of Consulters.
- To see to the preparation of incardination documents, once the Bishop has decided to incardinate the priest, and to communicate the Bishop's decision to all appropriate parties.

SECTION F: PRIEST ASSIGNMENTS

1. POLICY

Assignments vitally affect parishes, ministries, the presbyterate, and the priests themselves. Priorities must be assessed and charisms recognized. Ideally, the person should match the position and find satisfaction in the work. However, it must also be recognized that the clergy of the Diocese have a common responsibility to assist with meeting the needs and mission of the local Church. It shall be the policy of the Diocese to recognize the complexity of making assignments and to employ a process of discernment that includes prayer, consultation, and discussion.

It shall be the policy of the Pastoral Leadership Placement Board (hereafter referred to as "the Board") to follow an orderly specific procedure in recommending assignments to the Bishop. The Board shall recommend pastoral assignments in the best interests of the Diocese and the local Church. The Board's decision shall be based on the individual's competence, previous experience, and the particular needs of the assignment.

The Board shall consider seniority a significant factor in making assignments. (Service as a Religious priest or as a diocesan priest, outside as well as in the Diocese, should be

taken into consideration in computing seniority). In special circumstances, the Board may set seniority aside in order to make the best assignment possible.

The Vicar for Priests shall inform each priest regarding his suitability for the office of Pastor after two successive assignments in the Diocese. In cases where a priest eligible for the office of Pastor by reason of seniority is considered unsuitable for other reasons, the Vicar for Priests shall explain the reasons to the priest. The Vicar for Priests shall agree upon a program whereby the priest may become eligible for the office of Pastor, or they shall come to some other definite arrangement regarding the use of the priest's talents in a future ministry in the Diocese.

All new pastoral leaders should attend the "new pastor's workshop" after receiving their assignment. They should also have had at least one review of ministry done before being assigned as a pastor.

A priest has the right to be consulted regarding assignment, reassignment, or transfer. The priest should assist in the process of discernment through cooperation with the Board and personal prayer. Priests should recognize that the Diocese does not offer an unlimited choice of personnel or assignments, and that the good of the Diocese can require obedient acceptance of an assignment not perceived as ideal. Any priest in the Archdiocese of Suva has the right to talk with any member of the Board, the Vicar for Priests, or the Bishop, regarding his assignment.

A Pastor who anticipates leaving that assignment is encouraged to make recommendations regarding a successor.

2. OPTIONS

Ordinarily, a priest shall have the following options for assignment: Pastor, Parochial Vicar, or Special Ministry (diocesan curia, chaplaincy, education, etc.). A priest may also be assigned to Extended Study, Sabbatical, a leave of absence, or retirement (See Section H: Residence and Section K: Leave).

3. PROCEDURES

3.1.Change of Pastor: Six Years or More in Parish

When there is a transition of pastoral leadership where the Pastor has been in place for six years or more, the Board assembles a Diocesan Transition Team, which will assist the transition process. (Refer to Archdiocese of Suva Parish Leadership Transition Process)

- 3.1.1. The Pastor is to make the announcement to the parish regarding the change in leadership.
- 3.1.2. A Parish Transition Team is formed made up of persons presented by the Pastor. The Diocesan Transition Team works with the Parish Transition Team in developing the detailed Parish Profile. The Parish Transition Team's primary roles are to assist in 'saying goodbye' to the outgoing pastor, to help in communication between Diocese and the parish, and to welcome the new pastor. They are the "bridge" between the Board and the Parish.
- 3.1.3. The Parish Profile is presented to the Board. If needed, the Board may consult the Priest Personnel Profiles and Reviews of Priestly Ministry. The Board then presents the name(s) of persons for assignment. The Bishop approves the names; the Vicar for priests then notifies the priest(s) and asks them to discern this recommendation.
- 3.1.4. The priest considering assignment shall have access to the Parish Profile, the job description, and the results of the Board consultations with staff and

people, and other relevant parish documentation. The priest may request a more in-depth interview with the Vicar for Priests or the Bishop.

- 3.1.5. The priest considering assignment has the right to have contact with a member(s) of the Pastoral Leadership Placement Board, either in writing or in person.
- 3.1.6. If the priest indicates willingness to accept the proposed assignment, the Vicar for Priests notifies the Bishop, who makes the assignment by letter.

3.2.Change of Pastor: Six Years or Less in Parish

If there is no profile in the parish, the Diocesan Transition Team will conduct the transition process.

- 3.2.1. The Pastor is to make the announcement to the parish regarding the change in leadership.
- 3.2.2. The Diocesan Transition Team meets with the Parish Council to evaluate the Parish Profile. Changes are made, as necessary. This amended Parish Profile is then presented to the PLPB. At the discretion of the Vicar for Priests, the old Parish Transition Team may be reinstated to assist in the transition process, however, in a limited role.
- 3.2.3. If needed, the Board may consult the Priest Personnel Profiles and Reviews of Priestly Ministry. The Board then presents the name(s) of persons for assignment. The Bishop approves the names; the Vicar for priests then notifies the priest(s) and asks them to discern this recommendation.
- 3.2.4. The priest considering assignment shall have access to the Parish Profile, the job description, and the results of the Board consultations with staff and people, and other relevant parish documentation. The priest may request a more in-depth interview with the Vicar for Priests or the Bishop.

- 3.2.5. The priest considering assignment has the right to have contact with a member(s) of the Pastoral Leadership Placement Board, either in writing or in person.
- 3.2.6. If the priest indicates willingness to accept the proposed assignment, the Vicar for Priests notifies the Bishop, who, if he wills it makes the assignment by letter.

3.3.Mentor Program for New Pastors

The Mentor Program for New Pastors is coordinated by the Vicar of Priests.

3.4.Change of Parochial Vicar

The normal term of office for a Parochial Vicar incardinated in the Diocese shall be three years. There are three normal considerations for the transfer of a Parochial Vicar:

1. They have reached the 3-year term in a parish
2. If the gifts and talents are needed elsewhere in the diocese.
3. The priest personally requests the change

The Parochial Vicar's profile is examined by the Board; the Board recommends to the Bishop a community where they feel that his gifts and talents can be best used. The Bishop then notifies the Vicar for Priests of his decision. The Vicar for Priests then informs the Parochial Vicar of his new assignment.

4. PARISH PROFILE

Every parish shall have a Profile that gives an accurate outline of the needs and resources of the parish. It is the responsibility of the Pastor, in consultation with the staff and the

parishioners, to complete and maintain the Profile. When there is a transition of pastoral leadership, the Board may initiate further consultation in special circumstances. The Vicar for Priests shall keep a file of Parish Profiles in the Chancery Office and shall ensure their periodic updating. The Board and priests being considered for a particular assignment shall have access to the Profile for that assignment.

5. PERSONNEL PROFILE

Every priest shall have a Personnel Profile that gives an accurate outline of his needs, preferences, skills, and expectations. The priest shall complete his Personnel Profile before his first assignment in the Diocese. He shall review and update the Profile every three years thereafter.

The Vicar for Priests shall keep a file of Personnel Profiles and shall ensure their periodic updating.

6. PERSONNEL FILE

The Vicar for Priests maintains the official personnel file for each Diocesan Priest. The Vicar for Religious maintains the official personnel file for each Religious Priest.

The contents of the Personnel File may include (but are not limited to):

1. Matters of public record (i.e. newspaper clippings, published materials)
2. Letters of commendation
3. Letters of Complaint or concern (See Section L)
4. Official communications between all offices of the Diocese and the priest
5. Personnel profile
6. Immigration and naturalization documents
7. Record Retention

The materials contained in the personnel file will be reviewed every five years by the Diocesan Bishop. Anything that is not relevant should be

excised in accordance with Civil and Canon law. Matters of a biographic, academic, or documentary nature are normally retained.

8. Access

Each Priest has the right to review his personnel file, according to the norms of civil and canon law. This is to be done after receiving the approval of the Bishop and is done in the presence of the Chancellor. Only the Bishop, the Vicar General, the Chancellor, the Vicar for Priests, and the Vicar for Religious shall have access to the Personnel Files.

SECTION G: TERMS OF PRESBYTERAL OFFICES

1. POLICY

The norms of Canon Law, the decrees of Vatican II, and authoritative post-conciliar documents being observed, it shall be the policy of the Diocese to have terms of office for Pastors, Parochial Administrators, Parochial Vicars, and clergy in Special Ministries, insofar as such a policy fosters the good of the People of God and helps the priest or deacon to minister most effectively.

The expiration of a term of office shall not, in itself, necessitate a change of assignment. However, it should, be a time for dialogue between the Vicar for Priests, Pastoral Leadership Placement Board and by the priest himself. A priest may seek a change of assignment before the expiration of a term. The Pastoral Leadership Placement Board may advise change of assignment before the expiration of a term.

2. PASTORS

Pastors "should enjoy that security of tenure which the good of souls requires". (Decree on Bishops, |30) Security of tenure shall be understood as a term sufficient to provide

continuity of service, to carry out programs, to build a faith community, and to provide the people with a familiar and continuing shepherd.

Canon 522 states: "The pastor ought to possess stability in office and therefore he is to be named for an indefinite period of time; the diocesan bishop can name him for a certain period of time only if a decree of the conference has permitted this."

Although there is no set 'term of office', the normal expectation for a new assignment for a Pastor shall be six years, renewable after discernment by the Pastor, in consultation with the Vicar for Priests, with approval of the diocesan Bishop.

3. PAROCHIAL ADMINISTRATOR

3.1. First Time Parochial Administrator

The normal assignment for a Parochial Administrator is for two years. At the end of this time, the Vicar for Priests will perform a "Review of Priestly Ministry" with the Parochial Administrator. Further assignments will be recommended by the Vicar for Priests, based on the results of the Review, to the Bishop for his approval.

Temporary Parochial Administrator

There are occasions when a Parochial Administrator is assigned where a specific circumstance limits the beginning and ending dates of the assignment. This is normally where there is a vacancy of office of Pastor due to death, illness, or other circumstances. The beginning and ending dates of the assignment are dependent on the specific circumstances of each individual case.

3.2. Parochial Vicars

For the good of the people, Parochial Vicars should also enjoy security of tenure. For the sake of greater experience, recently ordained Parochial Vicars should also have the benefit of a variety of assignments.

The normal term of office for a Parochial Vicar shall be three years.

3.3.Special Ministries

The normal term of office for a priest in "Special Ministry" shall be three years.

3.4.Change of Assignment

A priest shall submit a written request for change of assignment to the Vicar for Priests.

If a priest requests a change of assignment, it will be acknowledged by the Vicar for Priests and presented before the Pastoral Leadership Placement Board.

SECTION H: RESIDENCE

1. INTRODUCTION

Since the promulgation of the Vatican Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests (Presbyterorum ordinis) on December 7, 1965, the ordained priesthood has undergone profound changes that have personally affected members of the presbyteral order. One recurring issue among priests individually and within diocesan presbyterates has been the issue of residence and its effect on the holistic health of the priest.

The Bishop, as chief pastor of the diocese, through the apostolic ministry of authority and administration exercised through his office in the Church, oversees and approves all types

of residences for priests. The residence requirement, therefore, for pastors and for parochial vicars, can be dispensed by the diocesan bishop.

2. RESIDENCE IN RECTORY

Normally priests shall reside in rectories provided by the parish

3. RECTORY AS HOME

The rectory is currently the common form of residence,

3.1. The rectory is the home of the priests. It may also serve as the parish office.

3.2. Communal residence has the following advantages:

- The Pastor and Parochial Vicar, who have the primary responsibility of providing service day and night for the faithful reasonably requesting it, are better able to coordinate efforts in that responsibility.

- It is conducive to the priest's material and spiritual welfare
- It provides the opportunity for priests to live as a community
- It helps maintain the security of the parish property

3.3. Priests living together in a rectory should recognize that the rectory belongs to none of them individually but rather is their common home provided by the parish. They should make an effort to live in harmony while respecting each other's privacy and comfort, especially in matters of noise, smoking, times of rest, etc.

3.4. A priest has the right to entertain guests in his private living quarters qualified by the "Policy of Expectations and Guidelines for Ministry to Minors of the Archdiocese of Suva. (Adapted from Oakland Diocese)." He also has the right to entertain in common areas of the rectory provided it does not cause undue disturbance to other members of the household. The living areas of the rectory shall not ordinarily be open to the general public.

3.4 Although pets can be a source of companionship for a priest, mutual agreement should be reached among the priests in a rectory before any pets are introduced there. Pets shall not infringe upon the privacy, comfort, or well-being of other priests in the rectory, or the accessibility of parishioners to the rectory. Each time there is a change in assignment of a priest to a rectory the mutual agreement concerning pets should be discussed.

3.5 Other than immediate relatives on short visits and other priests, no others shall reside in the rectory. Rooms or other spaces are not to be used for residence of non-priests. Diocesan-owned properties including rectories, are not to be rented, leased, sublet, or contracted in any other manner for residence without the specific written permission of the Bishop.

4. PARISH OFFICE

4.1. If the Rectory serves as the parish office, accommodation must be made for appropriate privacy for the priest's living quarters.

4.2. Normally a lay person shall act as receptionist. Within reason, even when a priest is on vacation or away for some other cause, someone in the rectory or the institution where he regularly discharges his duties should know how to contact him in special needs or emergencies.

- 4.3. Each priest shall have access to a suitable room for counseling and private instructions, distinct from his living quarters, and situated to provide confidentiality at all times.
- 4.4. The parish shall have an administrative assistant available to all priests in the rectory.
- 4.5. Each priest shall have access to the parish files, financial books and reports, record books, and office equipment.
- 4.6. The parish shall provide telephone lines sufficient to maintain availability, efficiency, and confidentiality.
- 4.7. Counseling sessions and spiritual direction are to be conducted only in appropriate settings, at appropriate times, and in a professional manner. An appropriate setting would be a parish office or counseling room, a reception, or meeting area. No sessions may be conducted in the private quarters of either the priest or the client.

5.1. Authorization

- 5.1.1 The Bishop, or his delegate, oversees and approves all types of residences for priests.
- 4.1.2. The individual priest is responsible for his own personal health and well-being. Priests in parish work as well as in specialized ministry demonstrate a genuine self-interest when they attend to the matters of stress management and supportive living arrangements. In light of this self-interest, priests in parish work or in special ministry may choose to apply for approval of a special living arrangement. Care should be taken to discern with the Bishop and the individual

priest the appropriate response to a request for an alternate living arrangement.

4.1.3. The discernment process leading to authorization for an alternate living arrangement should include such other concerned parties as pastor and members of the parish council and members of the Pastoral Leadership Placement Board. The authorization process is concluded by the Bishop acting on the request from the individual priest.

5.2 Guidelines for Implementation

5.2.1 Availability of Priest

Since the Catholic community has long expected and prized the service and availability of its parish priests, each priest, regardless of residence, is responsible for making certain that co-workers are respected as well as served. In pastoral assignments where two or more priests are serving together, any priest living away from the place of assignment is obliged to:

- Be as available as other priests in the assignment to respond to ordinary and emergency pastoral situations
- Share administrative and pastoral responsibility equally with those with whom he ministers

5.3.2 Financial Arrangements

Financial accountability and proper stewardship of institutional and/or parish resources are expected of all persons in the contemporary church. The amount of parish resources budgeted for priest's residences, therefore, should be a collaborative decision reached through consultation with parish staffs, priests in assignment, parish councils, parish finance councils, and special ministry advisory boards. The needs of the priests for

an adequate and supportive place to live as well as the need for proper stewardship forms the basis for the discussions during this consultative process. The source of the priest's income is the place in which the financial arrangements are worked out.

5.3 Further Considerations

5.3.1 Parishioners being served must be made aware of new forms of ministry that do not demand the service of a priest. Reduced numbers of priests will require some changes in people's expectations of the involvement of clergy.

5.3.2 Upon assignment, a priest living in a special residence will be expected to live in the usual place of residence at the new assignment. The priest, however, may request another dispensation for an alternate living situation from the diocesan Bishop.

5.3.3 The living arrangement must provide an atmosphere that ensures the safety and security of the priest(s) living there.

5.3.4 Principal consideration should be given to the use of diocesan facilities or properties. Properties owned by Religious communities may also be considered, with the approval of that Religious community.

5.3.5 Special care is to be given to the newly ordained to insure a strong community experience in the first assignment. It is not recommended that newly ordained live in an alternate living situation for any but the most severe reasons.

5.3.6 Ideally, residences with more than one priest should be homes that encourage the development of a sense of community among the priests, while at the same time respecting an individual priest's right to privacy.

5.3.7 In planning parish plant construction and renovation, this policy should be taken into consideration.

5. PRIESTS IN RESIDENCE

A priest in residence is one who is assigned by the Diocese to reside in a parish rectory either for sick leave, retirement, further studies, chaplaincies, or while assigned full-time to a special ministry other than parish work, e.g., in Catholic Charities, the Department of Education, the Tribunal, etc.

At other times, a priest may reside in a rectory at the invitation of one of the priests assigned to that rectory and with the agreement of all other residents. In such a case, the pastor and priest in residence are to agree on the parochial responsibilities that the resident may have.

The pastor is responsible to see that a visiting priest who is to stay in a parish house more than 30 days for purposes other than vacation must present himself to the Bishop or his delegate with a "letter of permission" and a "letter of good standing" from his own provincial or bishop and a completed "Memo of Understanding." His health insurance coverage will be clarified at this time. The diocese will verify his good standing by contacting his diocesan bishop or religious superior.

(See also Section B: Status in the Diocese regarding priests not seeking incardination).

5.1. The Spirit

Priests of the Archdiocese of Suva are one Presbyterium; together they are responsible for the priestly ministry. They are brothers in the service of God's people.

Their ministry takes many different forms. Priests should welcome brother priests who minister in ways other than in parish ministry. Wherever there is living space

available, priests need to be willing to extend hospitality to one another, that these priests may find support and a home.

Ordinarily, priests of the diocese have first priority for available rooms in a rectory. Only serious reasons would be sufficient to overcome this presumption.

5.2.Norms for Priests in Residence - Duties and Compensation

The following seems equitable as to the service to the parish that the priest-in-residence should render to compensate the parish for that expense:

- He should take part in the weekend schedule of liturgies, including his regular turn at celebrating the Sacrament of Penance, preaching, and presiding.
- He should help out in some other way in the parish regularly, e.g., weekday liturgies, taking duty when other priests are on vacation or on a day off, working consistently with some other one ministry group in the parish.
- If he does substantially more than this, the parish should consider offering him some additional money in stipend for those services.
- If he does considerably less, e.g., is not usually around on weekends, etc., he should compensate the parish for the money they are out of pocket in having him live there.

5.3.Processes to Implement

A pastor who considers having a priest in residence should consult the other priests living in the parish house regarding the nature of the priest's assignment and any adjustments to be made in ministerial duties and living conditions.

He should also communicate with the secretarial and domestic staff about any change in job description, work times, or pay adjustments that may result from the priest's residing in the parish.

The letter of assignment for a priest includes his place of residence. Normally, the parish will be responsible only for room

SECTION I: COMPENSATION

1. Stipend and Salary

Income for the Priest should be realistic yet not excessive. An ostentatious lifestyle or the accumulation of notable wealth is not a hallmark of priests dedicated to working for the Kingdom of God.

Each year before parishes submit new budgets the Financial Officer and/or advisors shall review salary and car insurance allowance in consultation with the Presbyteral Council, with the possibility of adjustment to compensate for the adverse effects of inflation.

The Archdiocese, acting through the Financial Officer and/or advisors, shall address the concerns of providing supplementary income to priests in assignments where one or more of the following sources of income is deficient:

1.1 Salary

Each priest, transitional deacon and catechist shall receive a monthly salary, normally paid from the place of assignment each month. The pastor, the catechist and village community will decide the catechist's remuneration.

1.2 Retirement Fund

The Archdiocese of Suva or the Religious Congregation shall establish a priests' retirement fund.

1.3 Stipends

The freewill offering (\$10) belongs to the presider of the Eucharist. Other stipends and stole fees whether in cash or kind belong partially to the presiding minister unless the giver specifically gives it to the priests. (Ref: canons 848, 1264 952, 1299)

1.4 Stole Fees

Stole Fees are offerings on the occasion of Pastoral Service/s.

Stole Fees should not be regarded as FEES or PAYMENTS for services rendered. The Code of Canon Law understands that STOLE FEES ARE THE PROPERTY OF THE CHURCH (go to the Finance Committee of the parish) while a MASS STIPEND belongs to the priest who celebrates the Mass for a particular intention/s.

2. BENEFITS

2.1 Room

Priests shall receive adequate private living facilities either on or off the parish plant for study, relaxation, sleep, and hygiene. The parish shall provide house cleaning service and laundry.

2. Board

Priests shall receive adequate food (normally three meals a day or equivalent). The parish may provide a cook. If meals are not provided in the rectory, the parish will pay for them.

3. Medical Insurance, Continuing Education, Retirement

The Diocese or Religious Congregation is responsible for their priests' medical insurance, continuing education and retirement.

2.4 Automobile Insurance

The Archdiocese of Suva recommends that all vehicles should have comprehensive insurance.

2. FINANCIAL HARDSHIPS

Any priest who is suffering any severe financial difficulties is invited to consult the Financial Officer of the Diocese.

3. DAY OFF

Each priest is entitled to take one full day off each week, which is owed to the priest himself as well as to the people he serves. He may take an overnight in connection with his day off. Days off may not be carried over to the following week (are not 'accrued').

4. VACATION

Each priest is entitled to relaxation and vacation time. For Pastors, Parochial Vicars, and priests in special work, the vacation is three weeks, including two weekends.

The Pastor is responsible for securing extra "supply" clergy while the assigned priests are on vacation. Priests in special ministry are responsible to secure their own replacement for their primary duties while away.

Vacations may not be carried over to the following year (are not 'accrued').

SECTION J: RETIREMENT

1. POLICY

The Vicar for Priests and Pastoral Leadership Placement Board, in conjunction with the Office of Clergy Formation, shall help priests before retirement to minimize the difficulties and maximize the opportunities of this turning point in life, which can involve

considerable emotional strain. The Office of Clergy Formation shall offer assistance in preparing priests of the Diocese for retirement. A priest preparing for retirement shall have the opportunity for thorough consultation with the Vicar for Priests, the Pastoral Leadership Placement Board, and/or the Bishop. The Pastoral Leadership Placement Board shall make every effort to help the priest continue in some form of ministry suited to his ability and capacity.

Ordinarily, retirement does not imply the foregoing of priestly ministry. To the extent his energies allow, a priest should remain active for his own well-being and for the spiritual well-being of the People of God.

2. AGE OF RETIREMENT

2.1 Retirement Age

The normal age for retirement is 75. At age 75, a priest may request retirement or change of status with full pension benefits or at age 60 with reduced benefits, and at age 65 with no reduction in benefits. One year before the priest wants to retire, a priest having a formal assignment shall notify the Vicar for Priests, in person, of his intentions regarding retirement. (According to Canon 538 §3, a pastor reaching the age of 75 is asked to submit his resignation from office). The Pastoral Leadership Placement Board shall automatically be informed of the request for retirement. The Board shall handle all matters resulting from the retirement according to the same process outlined for appointments.

2.2. Early Retirement

For reasons of health or other serious causes, a priest may request retirement at an earlier age. Using established criteria, the retirement board will determine the appropriate compensation and benefits.

3. BROTHERLY CONCERN FOR RETIRED PRIESTS

A priest is a priest forever. The Bishop and all priests should have a special concern for their retired brothers.

3.1 Communications

The retired priest should receive diocesan communications and be welcomed to priestly and diocesan activities.

3.2. Brotherly Care

Fellow priests especially should respond to any unique or pastoral needs of retired priests.

3.3 Spirituality

The Director of Clergy Formation shall invite retired priests to participate in clergy retreats, days of recollection and other spiritual exercises for their own spiritual benefit and the edification of their brother priests. The Diocese shall pay required fees.

The Director of Clergy Formation shall also provide special programs for further spiritual growth among retired priests

3.4 Pension Benefits

The Diocese (the Religious congregation for religious) provides a pension plan for retired priests in conjunction with Social Security Insurance. The Diocese also provides medical benefits.

3.4.1 Residence

A retired priest shall have the option to request living in a rectory (if space is sufficient), in his own home or apartment, or any other diocesan-approved residence.

3.4.2 Retirement Income

Each congregation will take care of their priests' retirement income.

SECTION K: LEAVES

1. SICK LEAVE

With the recommendation of a priest's personal physician, the Pastoral Leadership Placement Board may advise sick leave. During this period, the priest continues to receive his salary from the place of assignment. After three months, the Diocese will be responsible for the priest's salary as long as there is need.

The priest shall give the Vicar for Priests a progress report periodically during the time of sick leave.

2. EXTENDED LEAVE

If, after serious deliberation, consultation, and prayer, a priest feels a leave of absence necessary for his spiritual welfare or ministerial effectiveness, he shall consult the Vicar for Priests who will, as circumstances warrant, discuss it with the Pastoral Leadership Placement Board and the Bishop, or with the Bishop alone. The following procedure is used:

2.1 The total length of the leave is requested, i.e., the date it begins and the date it ends.

2.2 During this time the priest, unless he is gainfully employed elsewhere, will continue to receive his salary from the Diocese and accrue diocesan benefits, including seniority.

- 2.3 In the case of a Pastor, if his leave will extend beyond a period of three months, the Bishop, in the interests of the people of the parish, may assign either an administrator or a new Pastor.
- 2.4 Whether or not the priest wishes to be consulted about policy matters dealing with his pastoral responsibility, e.g., the replacement of a Parochial Vicar, shall be put in writing before leave is granted.
- 2.5 Each priest on leave should have ongoing spiritual direction and shall maintain regular contact with the Bishop or the Vicar for Priests.
- 2.6 Regular diocesan mailings will be sent to the priest on leave of absence.
- 2.7 Leave will be reviewed after one year) and normally will not be extended beyond a second year. Where there is need for an extension of salary, a request will be made to the Pastoral Leadership Placement Board, which will send a recommendation to the Bishop for approval.
- 2.8 The Diocese shall be responsible for salary and other benefits for a priest on extended leave, normally no longer than a two-year period, except in the case where a priest is judged to be emotionally or physically incapacitated for pastoral ministry.
- 2.9 The costs of residence are not normally supplied by the Diocese in the case of an extended leave, except in such cases as medical coverage or specific arrangements to cover such need.

3. RELEASE FROM DIOCESAN ASSIGNMENT

A priest requesting release from assignment in the Diocese, other than to service in the Military, in order to teach, counsel, do research, or provide other service in another diocese shall make such request through the Vicar for Priests.

Upon such release, his assignment in the Diocese of Oakland and salary cease.

Membership in the diocesan Retirement Program and the Group Insurance Plan is suspended unless other arrangements are made.

4. UNAUTHORIZED LEAVE

A priest who leaves his assignment without permission of the Bishop is on unauthorized leave. As a result, his Faculties are withdrawn, and his salary and participation in the Priests' Retirement Fund cease. Group Insurance coverage will continue until the priest obtains alternate coverage, but no longer than six months, subject to insurance regulations.

Canon 1396: A person who gravely violates the obligations of residence to which he is bound by reason of an ecclesiastical office, is to be punished with a just penalty, not excluding, after a warning, deprivation of the office.

The obligation of residence is incumbent on many who hold office in the Church, e.g. diocesan Bishops (cannon 359), their equivalents in law (Canon 381, §2), their coadjutors and auxiliaries (Canon 410); the diocesan Administrator (Canon 429), parish priests (Canon 543, §1), members of a group of priests to whom a parish has been entrusted (Canon 543, §2, 1°), assistant priests in a parish (Canon 550, §1), religious Superiors (Canon 629). Any such person who repeatedly, habitually, or notoriously is absent from the place of residence is guilty of this offence, assuming it is shown to be gravely imputable.

The principle of the obligation of residence is none other than to assist these office-holders in the discharge of their office for the good of those in their care; accordingly, the violation of this obligation is a serious matter. The competent authority - be that the Holy See or the Ordinary - is required to punish such offenders with a just penalty; if the circumstances so warrant it, this may include deprivation of the office - in which case the judicial penal process must be used (see Canon 1342, S2).

SECTION L: COMMENDATIONS. COMPLAINTS. APPEALS. CONFLICTS

1. LETTERS OF COMMENDATION

A copy of a substantive letter of commendation will be forwarded to the priest or deacon with the original retained in his Personnel File.

2. LETTERS OF COMPLAINT AND CONCERN

In the case of signed letters of concern (health, etc.) or complaint, the writer shall be contacted for permission to use his or her name in discussing the matter with the priest concerned. If the person is unwilling to have a copy of the letter sent to the priest, the complaint will be treated as anonymous and discarded without further action. If the person is willing to have a copy of the letter sent to the priest, the priest will be sent a copy of the letter.

If the Bishop or his delegate (this person may vary depending on the substance of the complaint) finds the matter to be serious of or concern, the matter shall be investigated thoroughly and recommendations will be made to the appropriate person/s. As prudence and brotherly concern indicate, the Bishop, in person or through his appointed delegate, shall contact the priest in question to deal with the matter. The priest shall have the right

to see the letter and to know the name of the writer. Ordinarily, the writer shall receive a written reply indicating that the matter is being resolved.

Anonymous letters to the Pastoral Leadership Placement Board or diocesan authorities shall be ignored and destroyed. However, any letter (anonymous or signed) regarding illegal or sexual misconduct involving minors shall be followed up carefully by the appropriate diocesan authorities. Both discretion and just concern for the persons involved and for the allegation will be used. (Refer to CEPAC Guidelines for Dealing with Cases of Sexual Abuse, 2012)

In cases where a caller(s) identifies him/herself, the name and phone number or address of the party shall be obtained, and the matter shall be dealt with as above. Anonymous phone calls and faxes shall be treated the same as anonymous letters.

3. PETITIONS

Petitions of complaint or petitions regarding the appointment and transfer of personnel shall be ignored. While petitions are not acted upon, they may be retained by the Chancellor. Only signed letters from individuals will be dealt with.

4. APPEALS

A priest has the right to appeal to the Bishop on any grievance or alleged injustice.

5. CONFLICTS

"When conflicts and differences arise between the Pastor and the Parochial Vicar which cannot be amicably settled by them, let them make use of mediation facilities available and acceptable to both parties or, if necessary, refer the matter to the Bishop."

6. SEXUAL MISCONDUCT

6.1 Care for victims

The Archdiocese of Suva is committed to dealing with all reported allegations of sexual misconduct by priests in a prompt, comprehensive and pastoral manner, with due regard for the rights of all involved. The prime concern is for the victim and the victim's family, for their rights, reputation, healing, and spiritual welfare. Prompt contact will be made with the victim and, in the case of sexual abuse of a child, with the victim's family by a person or persons designated by the Bishop. In the case of child abuse, this contact will be made only after appropriate investigation by child protective services or similar governmental agency. Solace, psychological evaluation, counseling, therapy, and other pastoral assistance will be offered to victims of sexual misconduct. (Refer to CEPAC guidelines)

6.2. The Professional Standards Committee (ref. CEPAC Guidelines)

The Professional Standards Committee is the diocesan body responsible for receiving and acting upon all allegations of sexual misconduct received by the Archdiocese of Suva. See CEPAC Guidelines for the composition of the Professional Standards Committee. The Committee meets regularly to deal with sexual misconduct incidents.

The director of the Professional Standards Committee or other designated person will handle all inquiries and make all official statements.

6.3. Procedure for addressing allegations of sexual misconduct

The Archdiocese of Suva is committed to address allegations of sexual misconduct by priests, observing the prescriptions of civil and canon law. It is committed to assist victims of sexual misconduct and priests accused of sexual misconduct with psychological and spiritual support and counsel. It is committed to cooperate with public authorities investigating such allegations.

SECTION M: PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL GROWTH

Priests shall take seriously their obligation to grow as persons and as Christian ministers. It is the policy of the Diocese to encourage and assist the growth of the clergy in holiness of life, psychological integration, and professional competence.

1. HOLINESS OF LIFE

Priests strive for the personal holiness befitting their ministry, as described in the documents of the Second Vatican Council, the Code of Canon Law (Canons 273-289). While finding the active ministry a source of holiness in itself, priests shall allot time for reflective activities which foster their growth in holiness (e.g., Eucharist, Liturgy of the Hours, days of recollection, etc.).

All priests shall make an annual spiritual retreat of at least four full consecutive days. The following options are available to priests:

- Diocesan General Retreat held every three years
- Annual Diocesan or Congregation's annual retreats
- Directed Retreat

- Private Retreat (Report of time and location must be sent to the Vicar of Priests)

The Vicar of Priests shall contact priests who do not report attending one of the above retreat options.

Priests' Annual Convocation:

The Archdiocese will hold an annual priest's convocation.

2. PSYCHOLOGICAL INTEGRATION

It is the policy of the Diocese to recognize that psychological integration is a lifelong process and to provide resources to priests for their continuing growth. At times, priests may seek professional counseling as part of their continuing development. In case of special problems, the Bishop may request a priest to make use of professional counseling. The Diocese shall provide financial assistance to priests for professional counseling. This is normally paid through the health plans. Expenses not covered by the health plans shall be shared equally between the priest and the Diocese.

A priest who must take a leave of absence due to some special problem shall develop as part of the process an orderly plan outlining the steps of his rehabilitation and possibilities for future ministry. The Bishop and the priest shall arrange this process in consultation with whatever other persons are absolutely necessary. Strict confidentiality and the norms of civil and Canon Law shall be observed.

3. PROFESSIONAL GROWTH

Priests must not desist from their studies (Canon 279 §1-3). General continuing education in those subjects which form the common core of ministry should concern every priest.

All priests have the right and obligation to continue professional growth through academic and pastoral education.

The Director of Clergy Formation shall assist the Bishop and priests of the Diocese in fulfilling their responsibility for spiritual and pastoral growth.

1. Short-Term Study

Short-term studies include one-day workshops, study days and sessions, seminars, institutes taking place over several days, an academic course, or a specifically designed program of private study for which the priest is accountable. The Director of Clergy Formation shall provide such study opportunities each year or the priest may seek out such opportunities on his own.

Priests engaged in full-time pastoral work or in special ministries shall take part in at least 30 hours of continuing education programs each year. Each priest is entitled to take a total of 50 hours each year. The Bishop may require attendance at a particular study session. Each priest is accountable to the Director of Clergy Formation for the minimum of 30 hours of continuing education annually.

Priests may make note of any time over the minimum spent in continuing education for inclusion in their personnel file and/or Review of Priestly Ministry. Priests may consult the Director of Clergy Formation regarding the suitability of programs they are considering.

A priest, in conjunction with the parish staff, shall make appropriate arrangements at his parish or place of ministry when contemplating an absence for study.

2. Extended Study

"It is the policy of the Diocese to give, whenever circumstances permit, opportunities for post-ordination study to priests who are judged particularly able and have a desire for it."

It is the policy of the Diocese to encourage extended study for all Diocesan priests. Diocesan priests preparing for or assigned to special ministries shall have the opportunity for special studies fully funded by the Diocese.

Diocesan priests who have served in the Diocese for more than three years may participate in part-time educational programs offered by accredited institutions not requiring absence from their assignment, (e.g., D. Min. or MA. in Marriage and Family Counseling) or short-term, full-time educational programs requiring absence from assignment and exceeding 50 hours. Permission of the Bishop is sought through the Director of Clergy Formation and is needed for attendance at any of these extended programs. (For financing, see Number 5 below).

3. Sabbaticals

A sabbatical is an extended period of time (from three months to one year) away from a priest's assignment. A sabbatical is part of the normal pattern of growth in a priest's ministry. Sabbaticals are meant not for the few but for everyone. Any priest incardinated in the Archdiocese of Suva may claim three months sabbatical time for each six years of service in the Archdiocese, cumulative to a maximum of 9 months, not including the usual month's vacation.

The Director of Clergy Formation shall make every effort to provide that at least one eligible priest be on sabbatical at any given time. (For financing, see Number 5 below).

3.3.1 Application Process for Extended Study or Sabbatical Leaves

Religious priests shall adhere to their congregation's policy on sabbatical leaves.

The following applies for diocesan priests:

- i) The priest shall consult with the Director of Diocesan Clergy Formation.
- ii) For a sabbatical, the priest ordinarily shall submit a written application to Director of Clergy Formation at least before October first of the year prior to the beginning of the desired program
- iii) For programs of less than six months, ordinarily, the priest shall arrange for coverage of his pastoral duties, though the parish shall pay the stipends and other related expenses for the "supply" priests. The priest shall submit with this application a written acknowledgement that the other members of the parish staff are aware of the proposed program.
- iv) Sabbaticals of over six months are normally considered transitional with the expectation that a new assignment will be made upon return.

The Director of Clergy Formation in consultation with the Chief Financial Officer and the Vicar for Priests will make recommendations to the Bishop for final approval. Approval of the Bishop will be in writing and communicated to the individual priests through the Director of Clergy Formation. No approval is to be assumed without written confirmation.

The following criteria shall apply (not listed in order of precedence):

- The purpose of the program Relationship of the course to priestly ministry
- The value of the course to the individual
- The value of the course to the Diocese, parish or special ministry Seniority
- Number of extended studies already experienced by the priest
- Participation in ongoing, continuing education

When permission is granted for extended study or a sabbatical, the Vicar for Priests shall assist the priest in obtaining a replacement if he has difficulty doing so. A cooperative spirit in the presbyterate is encouraged both on parish and on deanery level regarding coverage of essential pastoral duties during the absence of a priest on extended study or sabbatical.

3.3.2 Finances for Extended Study and Sabbatical

It is the policy of the Archdiocese of Suva to provide full or partial support for the continuing education of the diocesan clergy. Expenses for extended study assigned by the Archdiocese will be assumed by the Archdiocese.

4. CLERGY FORMATION BOARD

The purpose of the Clergy Formation Board is to assist the Bishop and priests of the Diocese in fulfilling their responsibility for spiritual and pastoral growth. The Office of Clergy Formation shall consist of a Director and a Board of Advisors.

Along with Study Days, Extended Study, and Sabbaticals, the Director of Clergy Formation, and the Clergy Formation Board, shall provide coordination of the following areas:

4. Specialized Programs

Specialized programs exist for certain groups of priests within the Diocese, e.g., a newly ordained program beginning in the seminarian's pastoral year and up to the completion of five years after ordination, a pre-pastorate certification program, of for a new pastor. Such programs may partially or totally fulfill a priest's responsibilities for continuing education in the year they take place. The priest, however, must attend mandatory diocesan study days. Expenses for these programs will be borne jointly by the Diocese and by the parish or institution to which a priest is assigned.

5. New Pastors Workshop

A pre-pastorate certification program as well as a new pastors' workshop and a new pastors' mentor program are offered by the Diocese.

SECTION L: REVIEW OF PRIESTLY MINISTRY

It is be the policy of the Archdiocese to involve all Diocesan priests in an orderly process of ministerial review. Regular review of ministry enables a priest to recognize and assess their ministerial strengths and weaknesses. It can serve as an incentive toward a more meaningful program of personal growth and development. Both self-review and review by appointed reviewers shall be employed.

The Vicar for Priests shall use instruments approved by the Presbyteral Council to facilitate the process for the review of priestly ministry. He shall appoint persons to assist as needed in the review process, set deadlines and collect completed forms.

A Diocesan priest is to be reviewed every 6 years from the time of his ordination or entrance into the Diocese until his retirement. The Pastoral Leadership Placement Board may call for a review of priestly ministry at other times. A priest may request a review at other times.

1. Reviewers

The Vicar for Priests shall send a form to the priest to be reviewed and develop with him a time line for the process. The priest shall fill out a self-evaluation form.

The priest to be reviewed shall send to the Vicar for Priests a list of names and addresses of the following:

- 1.1. At least one priest who has served or is serving with the priest, or a priest from the deanery, chosen by the priest himself All other priests and deacons on staff All other pastoral staff members Parish leaders Parish members People from special ministries or former parishes and ministries in which he has served
- 1.2. The Vicar for Priests shall ordinarily choose no more than 20 reviewers, using this list as primary resource. The Review of Ministry Questionnaire shall be sent to these reviewers with a deadline for its return to the Vicar for Priests.
- 1.3. Results of the Review: The Vicar for Priests shall summarize the completed forms and convey the summary results of the review to the priest, in writing and in person. Raw data will not be shared. The final review may be revised after this discussion. The revised summary will then become part of the priest's permanent personnel file, for consultation by the Pastoral Leadership Placement Board. When the process is complete, raw data will be destroyed.

- 1.4. If the priest being reviewed disagrees with the results, he may appeal to a priest of the diocese mutually agreed upon by both the priest himself and the Vicar for Priests. This mediation will be completed before the summary goes into the priest's personnel file.
- 1.5. The priest is encouraged to use the results of this review in planning and preparing for his future ministry.

Note: This Review Process is also available for non-ordained Pastoral Administrators and Parochial Vicars.

APPENDICES

Appendix I **Priests Salary**

Clergy monthly stipend	(200)
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Appendix II **Stipends**

Mass Offering	\$10.00
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Stole Fees (cash and in kind)

Baptism	10.00
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Confirmation

First Communion

Marriage	\$50.00
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Funerals	\$50.00
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House Blessing

Supply

Weekday Mass	\$20.00
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Sunday & Holiday of Obligations	\$50.00
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Baptism	\$50.00
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Confession	Regions to decide
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Marriage/Funeral Supply	\$50.00
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Retreats/Workshops	\$100.00 per day
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Appendix III **COLLECTIONS**

Pontifical Mission Society Collections

1. **World Mission Sunday** always on the second last Sunday of October. This Collection is made during the Eucharistic Celebration and it is meant to be given entirely to the Pontifical Society of the Propagation of the Faith. This is one and only collection on **World Mission Sunday**, shows the communion and solidarity of our Church with the poorest Churches. This Collection belongs to the 1250 poorest dioceses that depend on the Pontifical Mission Society of the Propagation of the Faith for their life and work.

2. **Holy Childhood** Collection is for the benefit of children up to the age of 14 years. Holy Childhood Collection also known as “*Children Helping Children*”. There is no special day set for this collection. It is up to the diocese to decide when and how this collection can be done. For example: Some diocese takes up the Lenten Collection for Holy Childhood but some have their own special day such as Epiphany, Holy Innocents, St. Therese of Lusieux or any other Feast that significant for Children Helping Children.

3. **St. Peter the Apostle** Collection supports seminaries and first year novices of Religious Congregations. Therefore this Society is particularly concerned with one of the most urgent necessities for the progress of evangelization; the construction and maintenance of seminaries in Mission Lands. Again this Special Collection is up to diocese again to decide when and how can be done.

Other Collections

1. Holy Places

Every year on Good Friday, a collection is taken up in every Catholic church to support the people and places of the Holy Land.

Christians of the Holy Land rely heavily on the help that comes to them during this special moment of the year. The collection is regulated by specific pontifical provisions that primarily allocate funds to the Holy Land Franciscans who are responsible for the maintenance of the different shrines at the holy places. They are also responsible for the pastoral, educational, welfare, healthcare and social structures that help improve the life of the parishes and of the various ecclesial bodies, so that these communities can be a safeguard of the Gospel. The money raised will go to the completion of urgent restorations, such as the renovation of the roof of the Basilica of the Nativity in Bethlehem, and over several years, it will go to support projects that provide housing to young families so that they can remain in the Holy Land. But that is not all: the collection will go toward implementing a comprehensive school network, especially through the parishes, fostering a widespread level of quality education.

2. Peter's Pence Collection

The Peter's Pence Collection unites us in solidarity to the Holy See and its works of charity to those in need. Your generosity allows the Pope to respond to our suffering brothers and sisters.

The Peter's Pence Collection gives each of us the opportunity to become a pilgrim of charity around the world. Our gifts to this annual Collection help the Holy Father strengthen dioceses, religious orders, and struggling communities of faith.

Archdiocesan Collections

1. Lenten Appeal: For diocesan charity and development projects.
2. Education Sunday: To help finance the Catholic Education Office (This will be complemented by the Archdiocesan Education Tax)
3. Diocesan Seminary Tuition
4. Clergy Retirement Fund: To care for retired and sick priests.

Proposed Special Collection Schedule

Catholic Education Week	St. Thomas Aquinas Jan 28/St John Bosco Jan 31
Lenten Appeal	Lent
Holy Places (Sent to Nuncio)	Good Friday
Clergy Retirement Fund	St Peter Channel April 28
St. Peter the Apostle (PMS)	Feast of St. Peter June 29 (Sunday closest)
Seminarians	Sunday close to August 4 St Jean Vianney
Peter's Pence (Nuncio)	Sunday close to St Vincent de Paul (September 27)
Holy Childhood (PMS)	Sunday Closest to the Feast of St Theresa of the Child Jesus October 1.
Mission Sunday (PMS)	Third Sunday October

Appendix IV **Parish Transition Process**

1. The Pastor is to make the announcement to the parish regarding the change in leadership.
2. The Diocesan Transition Team (DTT) meets with the Parish.
 - 2.1 To facilitate a process where parishioners can participate in the transition process.
 - 2.2 DTT then explains the transition process.
3. Things do be done:
 - i) Form a parish transition team (about six people)
 - ii) Explain to parish transition team how to write a parish profile;
 - iii) Transition teams prepares the parish profile;
 - vi) Parish transition team to send the parish profile within two weeks to the Archbishop;
4. DTT meets with the potential candidate – to discuss the parish profile and consult whether the candidate is willing to take the assignment. If he agrees then the assignment letter is made and assignment is made public.
5. DTT and parish transition team work in consultation to make plans to farewell the outgoing pastor and the installation and welcome for the new pastor.
6. Meanwhile the former pastor and the new pastor should meet for handover process.
7. Parish transition team then implements their other plans for introducing the new pastor into the parish. (review parish profile, meet with commissions, communicate expectations, visitations, etc)
8. Officially bring a closure to the transition process: you can mark this by having a prayer session or mass and dinner. This ends the transition process and the parish transition team.

Appendix V **Safe Environment Program** (To be adapted from the Dallas Diocese Program)

Appendix VI **Policy on Expectations and Guidelines for ministry to Minors**

A POLICY OF EXPECTATIONS AND GUIDELINES FOR MINISTRY TO MINORS FOR THE ARCHDIOCESE OF SUVA

PREAMBLE

As leaders in the Church founded by Christ, priests, deacons and lay ministers within our parishes and institutions must always seek to uphold Christian values and conduct. In addition to following the Gospel and its mandates, these individuals will want to act properly at all times in the light of contemporary society and its needs. This Policy does not presume to provide answers to all the ethical questions facing Church leaders. What it does establish is a set of general guidelines and boundaries when ministering to minors. Many items mentioned in this document are applicable to ministry with adults, but in this Policy we are addressing explicitly proper contact with persons under 18 years of age.

The following Policy is applicable to all persons employed by or volunteering in any of the parishes and institutions of the Archdiocese of Suva. So that it is clear who must be aware of the contents of this document, the addresses include, but are not limited to: priests, religious (men and women), deacons, pastoral coordinators, school/program administrators, teachers, catechists, youth ministers, support staff, custodial staff, coaches, school program volunteers, seminarians serving internships and lay theology students.

This Policy has been developed to help create a safe, appropriate and Christian environment for minors and their relationships with adults involved in Church ministry.

BACKGROUND

This Policy adapted from the Oakland Diocese, CA that was written and published in 2004. It was developed in cooperation with the Oakland Diocesan

Presbyteral Council with the assistance of other protocol documents from other dioceses. It is to be considered a working document that will be revised as needed under the direction of the Archbishop of Suva.

Responsibility for adherence to this Policy rests with those involved in Church ministry or service themselves. It is anticipated however, that disregard of this Policy by such persons will be dealt with by the appropriate employing/appointing organization (e.g. the parish, the religious order, the diocesan bishop). Remedial action may take various forms from counseling to removal from ministry.

The conduct of ministers and employees, both public and private, has the potential to inspire and motivate people or scandalize and tear down their faith. They must be aware of the responsibilities that accompany their ministry. They must also know that God's goodness and graces support them in their ministry.

GUIDELINES WITH REGARD TO MINISTRY TO MINORS

1. Any and all involvement with minors is to be approached from the premise that minors should always be viewed – whether in a social or ministerial situation – as restricted individuals, that is, they are not independent. Wherever they are and whatever they do is to be with the explicit knowledge and consent of their parents or guardians. They are subject to specific civil laws in the Republic of Fiji, which may prohibit certain activities. They are not adults and are not permitted unfettered decisions.
2. Adults should avoid situations which place them in a position to be alone with a minor in the rectory, parish residence, school, or in a closed room other than a confessional.
3. In meeting and/or pastoral counseling situations involving a minor, excluding Sacramental Reconciliation, the presence or proximity of another adult is encouraged. However, in those situations where the presence of another adult is not usual or practical(e.g. piano lessons, disciplinary meeting with an

- administrator, etc.) another adult should be informed that the meeting will be taking place. The meeting place should be accessible and visible with the door where the meeting is taking place left ajar unless there is a clear window built into the door.
4. An unaccompanied minor is allowed only in the professional section of the rectory or parish residence, never in the living quarters.
 5. Minors age 16 and over are permitted to work in the rectory, parish residence, school or parish facility, when there would normally be at least two adults present, i.e. over 21 years of age. Minors under age 16 may not be hired to work in any capacity for a parish, school or diocese.
 6. At the primary level (classes 1-8) at least two adults, one of whom is to be of the same gender as the participants, are to be present when a group of minors engages in organized games, sports or other activities. At the High School level (nine – twelve), one adult is sufficient.
 7. Adults are to avoid being the only adult in a bathroom, shower room locker room or other dressing areas whenever minors are using such facilities.
 8. At the primary level student groups trips of any kind must have a minimum of two adult chaperones, at least one of whom must be the same gender as the young people. (For larger groups a ratio of one adult to 10 students is recommended). At the High School level one adult chaperone or driver per group is sufficient. In all cases, drivers and chaperones must meet the compliance mandates of Live Scan fingerprinting clearance, Megan’s Law screening, and current Safe Environment training (every three years).

Under no circumstances may an adult transport a single (one) student unless the adult driver is a parent or relative of the minor.
 9. While on youth trips, the adults as well as the minors, may not use alcohol or controlled substances and anyone under the influence of these substances may not participate in the event.
 10. One adult alone shall never engage in an overnight trip with a minor or minors.

11. While on youth group trips, clergy or lay leaders are never to stay alone overnight in the same motel/hotelroom with a minor or minors.
12. The sacristy door is always to be unlocked whenever minors are present within the sacristy.
13. Comments of a sexual nature are not to be made to any minor except in response to a specific classroom or otherwise legitimate questions from a minor.
14. Topics or vocabulary such as profanity, cursing and vulgar humor which could not comfortably be used in the presence of parents/guardians or other adult, shall not be used in the presence of a minor/minors.
15. Adults are absolutely prohibited from serving or supplying alcohol, cigarettes, inappropriate reading material or controlled substances to minors. Alcoholic beverages shall not be served or consumed at parish or school social activities intended primarily for minors.
16. Audiovisual music and print resources used in programs must be screened prior to use to ensure their appropriateness for the participants. It is not usually appropriate to use an "R" rated movie or movies rated with an even stronger designation. A clear, compelling, relevant reason must be determined prior to considering use of this media. Music lyrics should also be reviewed to ensure appropriateness.
17. Careful boundaries concerning physical contact with a minor must be observed at all times and (beyond a handshake) should only occur under public circumstances.
Prudent discretion and respect must be shown before touching another person in any way.
18. Some adaptation in applying these guidelines when the minor is a relative ought to be the norm, but appearances in public nevertheless need to be maintained.
19. Clear violations of these standards as well as any sexual misconduct should be reported immediately to the appropriate parish, diocesan or civil authority.

GUIDELINES WITH REGARD TO THE PASTORAL COUNSELING OF MINORS

1. Pastoral counseling of a minor must take place only in the professional portion of a rectory or parish residence never in the living quarters.
2. The Sacrament of Penance/Reconciliation is normally to be celebrated in a place identified for that purpose, e.g. reconciliation chapel, confessional, or other areas with visibility: The location should be acceptable to the confessor and confessee.
3. If possible, offices or classrooms used for pastoral counseling of a minor should have a window in the door or the door is to be left ajar during the counseling session.
4. If possible, another adult should be in close proximity during any counseling session.
5. Unless the subject matter precludes their presence or knowledge, parents or guardians of minors should be made aware of the counseling session.
6. If counseling is expected to extend beyond one session, evaluation of the situation should be made with the parents or guardians.
7. The adult is responsible to recognize any personal/physical attraction to or from a minor. In such a situation, the minor should be immediately referred to another qualified adult or licensed professional