

WELCOME

INFORMATION FOR EXTERN PRIESTS



**DIOCESE OF ROCKFORD
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We hope this booklet will assist you with some of your questions if you are inquiring about an assignment in the Diocese of Rockford or as you begin your assignment with the Diocese. If you have any questions, please contact the Vicar for Clergy office. Thank you for wanting to be part of our Presbyterate.

The steps listed on the following pages are required of both an international priest and a priest from a diocese within the United States. A priest from within the United States will not need to follow the requirements pertaining to immigration.

**STEPS FOR AN EXTERN PRIEST
TO COME TO THE DIOCESE OF ROCKFORD**

1. A priest requesting an assignment in the Diocese of Rockford must submit a letter to the Vicar for Clergy of this Diocese requesting an assignment in the Diocese of Rockford.
2. If the Vicar for Clergy establishes a need in one of the parishes for the priest, the priest is required to submit the following documents to the Vicar for Clergy:
 - ▶ A letter from his Bishop to the Bishop of this Diocese, in which his Bishop states the priest is in good standing (in the format established by the U.S. Bishop's Conference) and releases the priest for 3 years to work in the Diocese of Rockford.
 - ▶ The Priest's Curriculum Vitae
 - ▶ Current dated Baptismal record
 - ▶ Current dated Birth certificate which identifies the priest's mother and father
 - ▶ Current dated ordination certificate
 - ▶ Current police background check result
 - ▶ Copy of the personal pages of current passport and VISA
3. A verbal reference must occur between the Diocesan Bishop, Vicar General, or Chancery member of the requesting priest's diocese and an authorized priest of the Diocese of Rockford.
4. Once a favorable recommendation on this priest is received and the Diocese of Rockford has all the paperwork listed above, our diocesan counsel will file the necessary immigration petition to obtain an R-1 VISA for an international priest. This is at no expense to the priest.
5. When notification is received that the R-1 VISA has been approved, counsel will notify the international priest and forward a package of materials to the priest, for him to present to the U.S. Consulate in his country. The priest makes an appointment with the Consulate once the package is received.
6. After the appointment, the priest notifies the Diocese of Rockford of his arrival date at Chicago O'Hare Airport. The Diocese will pick him up at O'Hare Airport and take him to his assigned parish.

7. An appointment letter is written for the day the priest will arrive. The Vicar for Clergy will notify the Diocesan Payroll and parish before the priest is scheduled to arrive. The priest receives the following:
 - ▶ The extern priest will be compensated beginning on the date of his assignment, at the first year ordained salary level, which will be adjusted incrementally for each year of service to the Diocese thereafter, until such time as he is canonically incardinated, if that occurs.
 - ▶ Health insurance
 - ▶ Auto insurance
 - ▶ Professional expense reimbursement
8. The pastor of the parish will mentor the new priest to help him adjust to the new culture and our Diocese. The advice and direction of the pastor will be of great benefit to the new priest. The pastor will explain the hierarchy of the Diocese and the Diocesan offices. The Diocesan staff can be of assistance to the new priest during his stay in our Diocese.
9. The pastor or his representative will take the international priest to apply for a Social Security card on the first day he is at the parish. When it is received, the priest is to notify the Diocesan Payroll Department.

ARRIVAL AT FIRST ASSIGNMENT

1. **WELCOME** — The pastor will greet the priest and welcome him to the parish.
2. **INTRODUCTIONS** — The pastor will introduce him to the parish staff.
3. **INTRODUCE TO THE PARISH** — A welcome announcement should be placed in the bulletin for the first Sunday the priest is at the parish and he is to be introduced at all Masses.
4. **SOCIAL SECURITY CARD** — The pastor should explain the tax system if necessary and he or his representative should assist the priest in obtaining a Social Security Card if he does not have one.
5. **REQUIRED FORMS** — The pastor or business manager of the parish will have the priest read the documents and sign all the required forms for the Diocese. Once completed, they are to be sent to the Vicar for Clergy office to be kept in his personnel file. The forms are:
 - ▶ Protecting God's Children certificate of completion
 - ▶ Mandated Reporter
 - ▶ Code of Pastoral Conduct
 - ▶ Sexual Misconduct Norms
 - ▶ Guidelines for Youth
 - ▶ Code of Technology & Social Media
 - ▶ I-9
 - ▶ Copy of his U.S. or international driver's license
 - ▶ Tax withholding forms (Taxes will not be withheld until the Social Security Card is received.)
 - ▶ Copy of his Social Security Card
6. **PROFESSIONAL EXPENSE** — The pastor should explain the guidelines for this reimbursement. Also, he should explain the form that must be completed and accompanied by receipts.
7. **CAR** — The pastor or his representative should assist the new priest in looking for a car if he does not own one. Neither the parish, pastor nor the Diocese can assist financially in this purchase.
8. **DRIVER's LICENSE** — The pastor or his representative should assist the new

priest in obtaining an Illinois driver's license if he does not have one.

9. **BANK ACCOUNT** — The pastor or his representative should help him open a checking account.
10. **DOCTOR** — The pastor should refer the new priest to a physician for physicals, an eye doctor or whatever medical attention the new priest requires.
11. **FOOD** — The pastor should inquire as to the new priest's diet and assist the priest in getting the necessary food at the rectory.
12. **E-MAIL** — The Diocese will provide a Diocesan email account for the priest while being assigned in the Diocese. This will be sent to the new priest from the Vicar for Clergy Office.
13. **CELL PHONE** — The priest is required to have a cell phone for his assignment in the Diocese and is to notify the Vicar for Clergy of the number. The pastor, parish and Diocese should not advance funds to the priest for the purchase of a phone or to initiate service. The priest is to pay the monthly invoices and charge them against his monthly Professional Expense for reimbursement. The priest should speak to the pastor about recording expenses on the Professional Expense form.

DIOCESAN POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

SALARY AND BENEFITS — The new priest will receive 1st year salary as listed on the Priests' Salary Scale. He will receive health and auto insurance which will be paid by the parish where he is assigned according to Diocesan policy. His assigned parish will reimburse Professional Expenses by his completing the proper forms.

MASS STIPENDS — Sometimes after Mass, parishioners will give the priest a Mass stipend and intention to be celebrated at a later date. The priest should direct that person to contact the parish office to schedule the Mass and the donation of the stipend. The priest will receive only one Mass stipend per day, even if he celebrates 2 or more Masses, even if the Masses are in different parishes.

GUESTS — The priest may entertain guests in the rectory, but not in his living quarters. If a priest friend is coming to celebrate Mass at the parish, he must have a Good Standing letter sent to the Vicar for Clergy Office prior to his visit. This visit will be previously coordinated with the pastor.

DIOCESAN E-MAIL — The Diocese often sends correspondence by e-mail to save on postage. Priests are required to use the diocesan email address for all diocesan correspondence and are to check their email account daily for information from the Diocese.

FUNDRAISING — Priests are not permitted to ask parishioners to donate to a personal cause or need in the priest's home country or diocese, or to the priest personally. Fundraising is permitted only with Diocesan Bishop's permission, according to Diocesan practice.

SYNOD AND PRIESTS' PERSONNEL POLICIES — The new priest will receive each of these books from the Vicar for Clergy. It is the priest's responsibility to know all the Diocesan norms and to follow them. If he has any questions, he should ask his pastor or call the Vicar for Clergy office.

INCARDINATION — If the priest wishes to be incardinated in the Diocese of Rockford, he must first be assigned in the Diocese for 5 years. Steps for incardination are listed in the Priests' Personnel Policy or call the Vicar for Clergy Office.

IMMIGRATION — All paperwork will be filed by the Diocesan Counsel. An international priest will be assigned in the Diocese on an R-1 VISA for 3 years, which may be renewed with the permission of this Diocese and the priest's Bishop for another 2 years. Thereafter, the priest will have to return to his home country or be incardinated in this Diocese. Fees for the immigration work are paid by the Diocese.

ASSISTING IN ANOTHER DIOCESE — The Diocese of Rockford sponsors the

international priest to be assigned in this Diocese. Under immigration law, he is not permitted to assist in another Diocese and be paid.

PERSONAL INFORMATION — The priest is required to ensure he has provided the Vicar for Clergy Office with his current cell phone number.

APPROPRIATE BOUNDARIES — All priests are required to observe appropriate boundaries with others. Review the Diocese's *Norms for the Prohibition of Sexual Misconduct with Minors and Adults* and specifically Article One of that policy for comprehensive information on appropriate boundaries.

SACRAMENTAL FEES — See the pastor for appropriate fees.

VACATION AND DAY OFF — Each priest is to have one day off per week. The day of the week is to be agreed upon between the Pastor and the Parochial Vicar according to Canon 533§2. Each priest is allowed up to 4 weeks vacation per year which may be taken at once or in segments and which include no more than 3 Sundays. The pastor should be consulted before scheduling vacation times. Diocesan Counsel is to be notified of vacations planned by international priests and Counsel will send a letter with the priest for his use when re-entering the U.S. Vacation is not permitted during Lent or Advent. The days the priest spends on the annual retreat are not considered vacation.

LANGUAGE CLASS — If necessary, the international priest will be enrolled in ESL (English as second language) classes during his stay in the Diocese. This is at no expense to the priest.

CLERICAL CLOTHING – There are several places to purchase new albs, clerics and vestments. All priests should have their own alb. Consult the pastor or the Vicar for Clergy office for recommendations.

EMERGENCY CONTACTS — The priest is required to provide the Vicar for Clergy office with names and phone numbers of 2 people to be notified in case of an emergency. The priest is also required to complete and submit to the Vicar's office an up to date Power of Attorney for Health, should something unforeseen happen. The priest should identify someone in the United States and close by, as his power of attorney to make immediate health decisions in the event the priest is not able.

CO-SIGN LOANS — No priest is permitted to co-sign a loan, whether in the United States or a home country.

ASSIGNMENT — The pastor will explain to the priest what he expects of him in the assignment. The priest may be asked occasionally to assist in another parish in the Diocese if there is a priest on vacation or on sick leave. He may do so with the pastor's prior permission.

PARISH RECORD KEEPING — All first sacraments are to be recorded in the parish

books according to Canon Law. Speak to the pastor as to what information is needed.

RECTORY LIVING — Unless the parish has a housekeeper, each priest is responsible to keep the rectory clean, do his own laundry, and cook. It is important to respect that others are living in the house. Security is also an important concern. The pastor should share his Parish security policy with the priest.

PETS — Keep in mind others live in the rectory. The priest should obtain the permission of the pastor if he wants to have a pet.

OVERNIGHT GUESTS — If the priest plans to have a priest friend stay in the rectory overnight, he must discuss this with the pastor prior to inviting the priest friend. The pastor will generally give his permission for another priest to spend the night, provided there is an unoccupied guest room. No lay persons are permitted to stay overnight in the rectory.

ABUSE HOTLINE — If the priest receives a report of sexual abuse against one of our priests or a parish staff member or diocesan staff member, the priest should tell the person making the report to call the Diocesan Abuse Hotline at 815-293-7540. The person making the report should leave his or her name and phone number and the Diocese will return the call.