

LIFE AND MINISTRY OF PRIESTS

“Priests by sacred ordination and mission which they receive from the bishops are promoted to the service of Christ the Teacher, Priest and King. They share in his ministry, a ministry whereby the Church here on earth is unceasingly built up into the People of God, the Body of Christ and the Temple of the Holy Spirit...” (Vatican II Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests, 1)

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Spiritual Formation

1. It is expected that every priest will:
 - a. set aside quality time for daily prayer
 - b. attend scheduled days of recollection for priests
 - c. take advantage of opportunities for spiritual growth
 - d. make an annual retreat
 - i) Particular law of the Diocese of Dodge City obliges every priest to make a retreat each year. No one is excused except on an individual case, for a just cause and with expressed permission of the diocesan bishop. A priest may choose from these options:
 - make the annual priest retreat
 - make a preached retreat at another time or in another place
 - make an individually directed retreat at a time and place of the priest's choosing and under the direction of the priest's choosing
 - if a priest wishes to make a **self-directed** retreat, he must obtain expressed permission of the diocesan bishop to determine if this will meet the requirements of taking part in an annual retreat
 - current policy allows for parish(es) of assignment to pay an annual allowance of \$225 toward the cost of retreat (if not made at the annual priest retreat)

Intellectual/Professional Formation

1. Priests are to be allowed adequate time for:
 - a. study and reading
 - b. homily preparation
 - c. parish and diocesan meetings
2. Continuing education through conferences, seminars or workshops:
 - a. Each year expenses (see below) for one **approved** continuing education conference [i.e., approved by the bishop] will be provided using the following formula:
 - b. 1/3 of the expenses will be reimbursed by the Continuing Education Fund
 - c. 1/3 of the expenses will be reimbursed by the parish(es) of assignment
 - d. 1/3 of the expenses will be the responsibility of the priest
 - e. Expenses include: tuition or registration fee, travel, room and board, and the cost of a substitute priest if needed.
3. Sabbatical for Renewal
 - a. A sabbatical is considered a maximum of four months leave of absence from active ministry in the diocese, and may be spent at the discretion of the eligible priest for the improvement of his professional competence.
 - b. To be eligible the priest must be incardinated in the diocese and have ministered/served a minimum of ten years for the diocese.
 - c. Sabbatical leave may not be accumulated
 - d. Only one priest may be on sabbatical at any given time
 - e. It is the responsibility of the priest to make arrangements for a substitute priest during his absence on sabbatical. The parish shall pay the substitute priest, while the diocese shall pay the priest on sabbatical his regular salary and benefits.
 - f. The diocese shall pay the tuition and room and board if the priest is attending a university or other educational institution. The priest is responsible for travel expenses.
 - g. The bishop, in consultation with the presbyteral council, oversees the norms for sabbatical leave. Applications for sabbatical leave shall be forwarded to the bishop.

Human Formation

1. Every priest is entitled to:
 - a. one day off weekly
 - b. four weeks of vacation annually (taken in segments or continuously)
 - c. time for obligations arising from personal or family members
2. Preventative health care is expected through:
 - a. adequate physical exercise and proper diet
 - b. regular health checkups
 - c. medical recovery time
 - d. time for nurturing friendships
3. Personal Leave policy
 - a. for a just cause a priest may request a maximum six month personal leave
 - b. the priest who is granted personal leave will need to resign from his current office(s)
 - c. during the time of the leave, the diocese will pay the priest 2/3 of the base salary and his health insurance premiums

- d. the priest is responsible for housing or living arrangements
- e. the priest is to provide as much supply help as possible. One half of any honorariums are to be paid to the diocese to contribute toward the salary. The priest may keep Mass stipends, mileage reimbursements and monies received on the occasion of celebrating a marriage, baptism, funeral, etc.
- f. each request for personal leave will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

Priest as Collaborator

- 1. The entire presbyterate of a diocese functions as collaborator with the diocesan bishop. The bishop, in turn, is to listen to his priests, consult and discuss with them matters which concern the pastoral welfare of the diocese.
- 2. In order to give effective assistance to the bishop in his leadership of the diocese, the presbyteral council serves as an advisor to the diocesan bishop on a wide-range of pastoral matters.
- 3. The presbyteral council consists of seven priests: four elected, two appointed by the bishop, and the vicar general who serves as an *ex-officio* member.

Priest as Pastoral Minister

- 1. The priest as LEADER:

“Priests must sincerely acknowledge and promote the dignity of the laity and the part proper to them in the mission of the Church... They must willingly listen to the laity, consider their wants in a fraternal spirit, recognize their experience and competence in the different areas of human activity, so that together with them they will be able to recognize the signs of the times.”

(Vatican II Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests, 9)

- a. Develops lines of communication and opportunities for collaboration among the laity through finance councils, pastoral councils, commissions and service organizations within the parish or cluster. Regarding finance and pastoral councils:
 - meetings should have a definite agenda with advance distribution to the participants
 - minutes are to be recorded and published to the parish/cluster community
 - other than the pastoral and finance council, the pastor cannot be expected to attend every meeting of other commissions and organizations
- b. Has in place adequate staff (paid or volunteer) to meet the administrative and pastoral needs of the parish or cluster
- c. Encourages and supports the laity to share in the pastoral ministry needs of the parish or cluster. Encouragement of participation in the diocesan Pastoral Ministry Formation program would be one significant way to support and prepare the laity for ministry.
- d. In parishes whose pastoral care is being provided according to canon 517, §2, the diocesan guideline *Administration of Parishes without a Resident Pastor: Canon 517, §2* is to be followed.

- 2. The priest as TEACHER:

“Priests share the teaching role of their bishops and are the immediate collaborators with them in the proclamation of the Gospel. The special role in the diocesan catechetical mission that they exercise arises directly from the Sacrament of Holy Orders, which constitutes priests as educators in the faith. Since a priest ‘must be the catechist of catechists, forming... a veritable community of disciples of the Lord,’ in his preaching and teaching and in the sacramental

ministry of the Church, the priest transmits the Gospel of Christ, encourages conversion to him, fosters the life of faith and ongoing formation of faith, and inspires the prayer of the community of faith.” (National Directory for Catechesis, 54.2)

- a. Oversees the overall catechetical formation of adults, children and youth
- b. Oversees the formation and preparation for each sacrament
- c. Maintains open communication with the diocese, parish leadership and parishioners
- d. Facilitates the role of the laity by inviting them to share in the catechetical ministry of the parish or cluster
- e. Prepares and supports the laity for catechetical ministry by encouraging them to attend Catechist Formation sessions, adult formation sessions, Pastoral Ministry Formation courses and other workshops.

Priest as Liturgical Minister

“God, who alone is holy and who alone bestows holiness, willed to take as his companions and helpers men who would humbly dedicate themselves to the work of sanctification. Hence, through the ministry of the bishop, God consecrates priests, that being made sharers by special title in the priesthood of Christ, they might act as his ministers in performing sacred functions. By Baptism [persons] are truly brought into the People of God: by the sacrament of Penance sinners are reconciled to God and his Church; by the Anointing of the Sick, the ill are given solace; and especially by the celebration of Mass they offer sacramentally the Sacrifice of Christ.” (Vatican II Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests, 5)

1. To keep themselves informed, priests are expected to read and study current liturgical documents.
2. Priests are expected to comply with all universal, national and diocesan liturgical laws and norms.
3. Celebrations of the Eucharist (to view the entire *pagella* of faculties for priests, see *Faculties Granted to Priests*):
 - a. A priest is granted the faculty by law to celebrate the Eucharist twice on weekdays and, if pastoral necessity requires it, three times on Sundays and holy days of obligation. If pastoral necessity requires that a priest regularly celebrate more than two Masses on weekdays and more than three Masses on Sundays, the diocesan bishop may dispense in individual cases.
 - b. Weddings may be celebrated during Sunday Mass if the priest wishes and if the church can accommodate the additional people.
 - c. When possible, celebrations of first communion and confirmation should be celebrated during a regularly scheduled Mass.
 - d. Considerations should be given to celebrating wedding anniversaries (and other such occasions) during a regular Sunday Mass.
 - e. With regard to funeral rites, deacons (ordinary ministers) and lay persons (extraordinary ministers) are permitted to preside at the vigil and rite of committal (i.e., burial).
 - f. In the absence of a priest, the document *Sunday Celebrations in the Absence of a Priest* is to be followed.

Standard Honorarium (as revised by administrative decree effective 1 July 2011)

1. Communal Penance Service \$50 plus roundtrip mileage at current IRS rate
2. Weekday Mass \$20 plus roundtrip mileage at current IRS rate
3. Weekend/Holy Day Mass \$50 plus roundtrip mileage at current IRS rate
4. Mass stipend always goes to the priest

[Regularly scheduled celebrations of the Sacrament of Penance are included in 2 & 3 above.]

Reimbursement for Specific Circumstances

1. Regular help out as part of an assignment by the bishop and/or ongoing agreement with the approval of the bishop:
 - a. Active Priests – Standard honorarium rates would apply for each Mass celebrated outside the parish(es) of assignment and beyond the three that a priest in the diocese would ordinarily celebrate.
 - b. Retired Priests – Standard honorarium rates apply (see above)
2. Sacramental Ministers (Canon 517, §2)
 - a. Active Priests – Standard honorarium rates apply (see above)
 - i) 50% of the honorarium goes to the priest
 - ii) 50% of the honorarium goes to the place of assignment from which the priest receives his salary
 - iii) Round trip mileage goes to the priest
 - iv) Mass stipend goes to the priest
 - b. Retired Priests – Standard honorarium rates apply (see above)
 - i) All of the honorarium goes to the priest
 - ii) Mileage goes to the priest
 - iii) Mass stipend goes to the priest
3. Priest Supervisor (Canon 517, §2)
 - a. Compensation for a priest supervisor will be \$100 per month, payable by the parish(es). The amount is split equally between the priest and the place of assignment from which he receives his salary.
 - b. If the priest drives in excess of 25,000 miles annually as a result of his Priest Supervisor responsibilities, he is entitled to an additional compensation from the parish cluster based on the number of miles in excess of 25,000 at the current IRS rate, subject to written approval by the diocesan finance officer.

Priest Salary and Benefits

1. ACTIVE PRIESTS - All priests active in the diocese, regardless of canonical office (i.e., pastor or parochial vicar or chaplain) or additional responsibilities, receive the same base salary.

a. Base Salary (effective 7/1/11)	\$2,475.00/month	\$29,700.00/year
b. Additional benefit based on years of service:		
0-3 years ordained	\$ 0.00/month	\$ 0/year
4-8 years ordained	\$ 12.50/month	\$ 150/year
9-14 years ordained	\$ 25.00/month	\$ 300/year
15-24 years ordained	\$ 50.00/month	\$ 600/year
25-34 years ordained	\$ 75.00/month	\$ 900/year
35+ years ordained	\$ 100.00/month	\$ 1,200/year

- c. Base salary includes:
 - Reimbursement for priests' portion of Social Security
 - Annual mileage up to 25,000 miles. If a priest drives in excess of 25,000 miles annually, he is entitled to additional compensation from the parish or cluster based on the number of miles in excess of 25,000 at the current IRS rate, subject to written approval from the diocesan finance officer.
 - Health insurance deductible
 - Monthly food expense
 - Monthly cell phone expense
 - Vestment expense
- d. Health Insurance – The parish cluster pays premiums for Blue Cross Blue Shield major medical health insurance plan, which includes prescription drug coverage and dental coverage. As of 1 May 2007 the deductible is \$1,500 which is the responsibility of the priest.
- e. Room and Board – The parish or cluster will provide room and board for the priest(s) assigned to the parish or cluster. This provision includes a residence, utilities (gas, water, trash, electric, cable, telephone, internet service), maintenance, insurance, as well as laundry, housekeeping and meal preparation when done by a person or persons other than the priest. Personal telephone lines are the responsibility of the priest.

On 15 March 2011 the Presbyteral Council recommended and the Bishop approved the value of priest housing to remain \$350 per month (or \$4,200 annually). This amount is not taxable to the priest for income tax purposes; however, the amount is taxable for Social Security purposes. The value of priest housing will be reviewed annually.

- f. Moving expenses – the cost of moving from one parish assignment to another are the responsibility of the parish(es) from which the priest is moving (not the new parish(es) to which the priest is being assigned).
- g. Illness – the parish will pay the first month's salary; the Diocesan Priests' Retirement Fund will pay the salary thereafter.
- h. Long Term Care and Assisted Care – the diocese provides a long-term benefit and assisted living benefit for all eligible priests through participation in the Catholic Mutual *Priests' Long Term Care Fund*. A long-term benefit of \$100 per day or assisted living benefit of \$50 per day, is paid when a priest is in a licensed long-term care facility and cannot, without substantial assistance, perform at least two of the following seven activities of daily living: ambulation (walking), bathing, continence, dressing, eating, toileting, and transferring (moving into or out of bed, chair or wheelchair). The benefit is payable for a maximum of ten years. The bishop makes the determination of a priest's eligibility for either of these benefits on a case-by-case basis.

3. RETIRED PRIESTS

- a. Health insurance premiums are provided for by Plan 65, a supplement to Medicare, and are paid for by the diocese. This coverage pays costs not covered by Medicare, including the deductible. Additionally, since Plan 65 does not provide prescription drug coverage, the diocese reimburses retired priests for prescription drugs using the same formula as provided for under the active priests'

plan (\$15 deductible for generic, and \$30 deductible for name brand drugs). Requests for reimbursement, along with the prescription documentation, can be sent to the diocesan finance office. Finally, since most Plan 65 do not provide for dental coverage, the diocese reimburses retired priests for dental costs incurred using the benefit schedule for the active priests' plan. Requests for reimbursement, along with documentation, can be sent to the finance office.

- b. A retired priest is responsible for housing/room and board. Upon retirement, normally a pastor may not continue to reside in the rectory or other facility of the parish from which he is retiring. His residing in a rectory elsewhere in the diocese as a "senior priest in residence" is encouraged if the resident pastor is agreeable to the arrangement. Residing in an apartment or house of his own choosing and at his own expense is an option to a priest in retirement. Nursing home care is determined on an individual basis of need.
 - c. Retirement benefits for all incardinated priests are provided through the Diocesan Priests' Retirement Fund, a separate corporation.
 - d. An eligible priest begins receiving a partial retirement benefit at age 65 or after being ordained 40 years in the amount of \$250 per month, as long as the priest remains in an assignment.
 - e. At age 70 and if still in an assignment, the priest will then receive \$500 per month.
 - f. At full retirement, an eligible priest receives full retirement benefits, which are adjusted occasionally to reflect changing cost of living. As of 1 July 2011, the current retirement benefit is \$1,950 per month, of which one half of the amount (\$975) is considered a housing allowance and is therefore not taxable to the priest as a retirement benefit.
 - g. Priests of religious institutes and other non-incardinated priests do not participate in the Diocesan Priests' Retirement Fund. However, in the event that retirement benefits are required to be paid to a participating plan, assessments to these plans will be made by the Diocesan Priests' Retirement Fund.
 - h. Presently, parish contributions in support of the retirement fund have been suspended.
4. Social Security Coverage for Priests – Since 1955, diocesan priests have had the option of being covered by the provisions of the Social Security Act or not. Since 1968 priests were covered automatically unless they applied for exemption within two years of ordination. Once exemption was granted, it was to be irrevocable.

The 1986 Tax Reform contained two provisions. First, priests who had previously elected to be exempt were permitted to revoke the exemption. Second, priests who wish to apply for exemption in the future may only do so for religious reasons (i.e., because coverage violates their understanding of the vow of poverty).

The diocese recommends incardinated priests not to choose to be exempted from the social security tax, although it will require them to pay the social security self-employment tax. This recommendation is made because the diocesan health care plan for priests is truly enhanced when the individual is at age 65 and enrolled in Medicare, which is a social security program. Also, the priests' retirement plan is predicated on

each priest receiving the social security old age benefit which allows the priest greater monthly income.

5. Income Taxes – It is required of priests that in completing your federal and state income tax forms the parish report your gross income on a W-2 IRS Form (as opposed to 1099 Form). If you have questions, contact the diocesan finance office.

Temporary Medical Care of Priests

The Dominican Sisters at the motherhouse in Great Bend may provide medical care on a temporary basis to priests of the Dodge City Diocese.

1. The acceptance of the priest in need will be determined on a case-by-case basis through consultation with the infirmary supervisor and the Prioress. Acceptance of a priest will be based upon the relationship the priest has with the Dominican Sisters, the availability of room and staff to care for the priest, and the particular medical needs the priest may have.
2. Since the infirmary is part of the Sisters' private home and is not licensed for Medicare, the Dominican Sisters will ask that a priest offer a donation for this service.
3. If a priest is accepted for temporary medical care, the following information is requested:
 - a. a signed "Release of Information" form so that the infirmary supervisor may contact the priest's doctor on an as-needed basis
 - b. a copy of the Durable Power of Attorney and Living Will on the day of arrival
 - c. a family member or other designee as a contact person who can make provision for items the priest may need (e.g., clothing, toiletries, medications, etc.)
 - d. a priest contact and an alternate in case of emergency, and to facilitate the priest returning to his home or rectory.

Last Will and Testament

1. Every incardinated priests should have a valid will on file at the chancery. Other priests serving in the diocese should at least provide the chancery with complete information for whom we are to contact in case of serious illness or death.
 - a. The will (or a copy of it) is to be in a sealed envelope with the name, address, and phone number of the executor. Wills should be revised occasionally, especially if a beneficiary or the executor dies or if circumstances change.
 - b. A second envelope, which the chancery may open at the time of death, should be on file that contains the priest's desires regarding funeral arrangements. Things to include would be the name of the homilist, specific music, particular vestments to be buried in, the cemetery to be buried in, etc.
 - c. If a priest wishes to leave a legacy to the diocese or a parish, the proper form is: "I give and bequeath to [the Catholic Diocese of Dodge City, a Kansas not-for-profit corporation] or [*name of parish* of city, a Kansas not-for-profit corporation] for the purpose of [state the intention]." In case the bequests do not total the amount of assets, a line such as the following may be added: "Any residue of my estate I give and bequeath to..."

Assignment

1. The Priest Personnel Board is an advisory body to the bishop in matters relevant to the assignment or placement of priests serving in the diocese. The Board consists of seven

members: three elected members and four *ex-officio* members (i.e., the three deans and the vicar general).

- a. The Personnel Board annually sends a comprehensive survey to each priest which, among other things, inquires of his desire to stay in his current assignment or whether he is open to being assigned elsewhere.
 - b. All of the information is studied by the bishop and the members of the Board.
 - c. The bishop, in consultation with the Personnel Board, makes the appointment of pastors, parochial administrators and parochial vicars balancing the good of the priest, the good of the parish and the good of the diocese. (see *Priest Personnel Board Guidelines*)
2. Ordinarily, a pastor will serve at least six years, and may continue serving after the initial six years has passed. Ordinarily, a parochial vicar will serve in two parishes before becoming a pastor.

Living Conditions

1. A priest having more than one parish is entitled to live in one place of residence.
2. Living quarters for priests should be in a separate residence. Offices, meeting rooms and staff work rooms should not be in the rectory unless the rectory is so designed as to provide the priest with the privacy needed for normal living.
3. Priests with adjoining assignments may choose to reside together, in consultation with the bishop.

Absences from the Parish or Pastoral Assignment

1. Priests are to notify the bishop's office (by phone, email or letter) when they will be away from their parish/pastoral assignment over a weekend or longer. This applies even when there is more than one priest in residence. The purpose of this notification is to provide proper and timely pastoral care to the people of God who could well suffer a family emergency or loss of a loved one in the priest's absence. The notification should include:
 - a. The name of the priest who will be substituting and providing pastoral coverage. This is to include weekend coverage as well as the priest on call in the event of funerals or other critical pastoral needs.
 - b. Names and phone numbers of where you can be contacted, or where messages can be left, in the event of an emergency.

Death in the Family

In a spirit of support and consolation, we desire to be able to inform our priests of the death of a family member of a fellow priest. Frequently, some may be able to attend the funeral or, at least, express his fraternal sympathy and offer prayers. Please inform the bishop's office of the death of an immediate family member so that we can inform the presbyterate.

Masses for Deceased Priests (from 9/30/03 Minutes of Presbyteral Council meeting)

At the time of the death of a priest:

1. Four Masses should be offered for each deceased priest (i.e., the funeral Mass plus three other Masses)
2. At a Mass on retreat and at a Mass at the annual Convocation, an intention for all deceased priests will be offered.

Deans

1. Also known as *vicar forane*, in each of the three deaneries of the diocese (Great Bend, Garden City and Dodge City), one priest is appointed by the diocesan bishop as dean. The overarching concern of the dean for the priests in his deanery is to support their spiritual life and ministry, and come to their aid especially in times of illness, sorrow or conflict. Responsibilities of a dean include:
 - a. serve as an *ex-officio* member of the Priest Personnel Board
 - b. coordinate for his deanery liturgical celebrations or pastoral meetings at the direction of the bishop
 - c. on the occasion of the illness or death of a pastor, the dean is to make provision that the registers, documents, sacred furnishings and other things which belong to the Church are not lost or removed.