

§300 APPOINTMENT OF PASTORS

Introduction

The Pastor is an ordained priest called and sent by the Diocesan Bishop to exercise the pastoral care of the community entrusted to him under the authority of the Diocesan Bishop, in whose ministry of Christ he has been called to share. He possesses the special responsibility of overseeing the Catholic community within a specific locale or for a specific group. The Pastor is responsible for the growth and development of a particular Catholic parish in response to the needs of a community and the mandate of his Bishop and in conjunction with a pastoral staff who minister with him. Through the leadership of the pastor, characterized by service in the manner of Jesus, the various ministries of the parish are coordinated. The Pastor carries out for his community the duties of teaching, sanctifying, and governing, with the cooperation of other priests or deacons and the assistance of men and women religious and lay members of the Christian faithful.¹

§301 IDENTIFICATION OF OPEN PARISHES AND PASTOR CANDIDATES

§301.1. Annual Pastor Placement Cycle

301.1. Policy Each pastor's assignment ordinarily shall conclude at the end of the day on June 30 of the fiscal year in which his term of assignment is scheduled to expire or his resignation is accepted due to retirement or some other reason. New pastors' assignments ordinarily shall begin at the start of the day on July 1 unless provided otherwise by the Archbishop.

Procedures

In case of the death or unexpected departure of a pastor, a priest normally will be appointed temporary Parochial Administrator until a new pastor is appointed on July 1 following the pastor's death, unless the Archbishop determines that pastoral need requires him to appoint a pastor sooner, outside of the annual pastor placement cycle.

§301.2. Parish Pool

¹ Cf. Vatican Council II, *Christus Dominus* 30, and the *Code of Canon Law*, canon 519.

301.2. Policy The Episcopal Council and the Priests' Placement Board (hereinafter "Board") shall assess anticipated parish vacancies and advise the Archbishop of open pastorates for inclusion in the Parish Pool, unless in his judgment, the circumstances of a particular parish raise a question about the continued viability of the parish or the circumstances require direct appointment by the Archbishop.

Procedures

- a) Normally, an opening of a pastorate position occurs after the death, retirement, or accepted resignation of a pastor, the expiration of a pastor's term of office, or the transfer of a pastor.
- b) Planning for anticipated openings of pastorate positions due to term expiration or retirement will begin at least two years in advance of the term expiration or retirement date.
- c) The Episcopal Council and the Board will consult with the Office of Research and Planning if there is some question about the future viability of a given parish.
- d) The ordinary expectation is that a pastor will continue for a second term unless there are significant issues and/or the pastor prefers to transition earlier. It is also expected that the pastorate will not extend past the end of the second term unless there are exceptional circumstances (see § 304). Requests for second terms and any additional extension must be made before the established deadline of the year prior to that in which the first term expires.

§301.3. Pastor Pool

301.3. Policy The priest applicant pool for open pastorates in any given cycle year shall consist of the following:

- Pastors whose second term will expire at the end of the cycle (June 30);
- Associate pastors who have adequate experience and are ready to be pastor; and
- Priests currently in other roles who are capable of serving as pastor.

Procedures

- a) Application. Priests can join the applicant pool by completing all pastor application paperwork and by filling out a specific intention to enter the applicant pool. Forms must be received prior to the established deadline in each year. Members of the Episcopal Council and Board may also encourage priests to join the applicant pool if these priests do not submit intention forms themselves.

- b) Acknowledgement. When a priest writes to the Board to join the applicant pool, his letter is acknowledged and a Pastor Application Form and Curriculum Vitae is sent (if he has not already filed one.) This form will ask him to list his previous ministerial experiences and accomplishments, as well as his attitude toward rectory life, parish life and extra-parochial involvement. He also will be asked to list names of individuals who can provide "letters of recommendation". In addition, the Board may consult with present or former co-workers of the applicant.
- c) Letters of Recommendation for First-Time Pastors. The letter of recommendation will ask for a short description of:
- 1) The nature of the relationship to the applicant;
 - 2) An estimation of the applicant's sense of responsibility, commitment, initiative, ability to relate to priests and people, administrative ability, his particular strengths for assuming the pastorate, and any areas of concern; and
 - 3) Degree of recommendation, e.g., recommend enthusiastically, without hesitation, with qualifications, or do not recommend.
- d) Existing Pastors prior to end of term. Pastors whose terms are not schedule to expire also can enter the applicant pool in any given year. The parishes of these pastors automatically will be added to the available parish list for that year.
- e) Sabbaticals. Priests will be requested not to schedule sabbaticals during a year in which they will be part of the pastor pool or, if they are currently serving as pastors, during the year in which their parishes will be part of the parish pool.

§302 PLACEMENT OF PASTORS

§302.1. Consultation

302.1. Policy In order to develop a profile of the parish, a consultation with parishioners, parish staff and others shall be completed in a timely fashion (cf. c. 524).

Procedures

- a) Contact. Contact will be made with the outgoing pastor or the temporary administrator and the placement process is explained. A member of the Board will schedule a personal discussion with the parish staff. The Episcopal Vicar will schedule the general parish consultation meeting.

- b) Follow-Up. A follow-up letter will be sent to the outgoing pastor (or temporary administrator) asking the names of people to whom the Board will send "Letters of Consultation." A parish checklist asking for pertinent parish statistics will be included with this letter.
- c) Letters of Consultation will be sent to:
- 1) The Vicar and Dean
 - 2) The present Associate(s) and other Priests living in the rectory
 - 3) The Presbyteral Council Representative
 - 4) Deacons, Religious, the Principal of the parish school, the Director of Religious Education, and lay ministers on the parish staff
 - 5) The Presidents/Chairpersons of the Parish Pastoral Council, School Board, the Religious Education Board, and the Finance Council Chair
 - 6) The Presidents/Chairpersons of the major lay organizations of the parish
 - 7) Other significant parishioners suggested by the pastor or administrator.
- d) Pastoral Staff Meeting. At this meeting, members of the staff will be asked to describe the goals and challenges of the parish and to discuss the qualities that they see as important for the next pastor to possess.
- e) General Parish Meeting. At this meeting parishioners will be asked to describe the parish, what they think the parish needs and the qualities that the new pastor will need. The open meeting will be followed by an opportunity to provide written comments.
- f) Parish Profile and Parish Information Night. Using the information obtained from the parish staff meeting and at the general consultation meeting, a parish profile will be formulated and provided to interested priests at the Parish Information Night. The profile also will contain reports from the Office of Research & Planning, the Department of Financial Services, the Office of Catholic Schools, the Office for Catechesis, and the Office for the Diaconate Community.
- g) Background Review. The Executive Secretary of the Board will submit the names of all priests in the Pastor Pool to the Vicars for Priests, the Chancellor and the Vicar General to determine whether each individual can be considered for the office of pastor.
- h) Priest Preferences. The assignment of priests is primarily driven by the mission of the archdiocese. However, priest preferences will be factored into the process as follows:

- 1) Priests will be given the opportunity to state parish preferences (i.e., general types of parishes in which they are interested and specific parish names).
 - 2) Each priest in the Pastor Pool will be able to meet with a member of the Episcopal Council and a member of the Board to discuss his preferences as well as his background and skills.
- i) Seniority. In cases where all things are equal, preference ordinarily will be given to the applicant's seniority according to years ordained and years served as pastor. Existing Pastors ordinarily will receive preference for placement within a given cycle.

§302.2. Annual Pastor Placement Meeting

302.2. Policy The Episcopal Council, consisting of the Archbishop, his Vicar General and the regional Episcopal Vicars (§102.2), and the Vicars for Priests shall meet annually with the Board to discuss and recommend new pastor placements to the Archbishop.

Procedures

- a) The Annual Pastor Placement Meeting normally will take place over one to two days in late January or early February of each year. A follow-up meeting should be scheduled a week later to review the status of any pending placements.
- b) The Board and the Episcopal Council also will meet approximately every other month to assess current cycle status and to plan for upcoming needs.
- c) The Board will meet prior to the Annual Priest Placement Meeting to formulate recommendations for new pastors.

§302.3. Appointment by the Archbishop

302.3. Policy The Archbishop shall make the appointment of a pastor upon recommendation of the Episcopal Council and the Board following the Annual Priest Placement Meeting. Under exceptional circumstances, the Archbishop may make a direct appointment by consulting only with the regional Episcopal Vicar and the local Dean. (See Canons 157 and 523-24.)

Procedures

- a) Call to Service as Pastor. After the Archbishop has approved the appointment, the Episcopal Vicar of the parish to which the new

pastor is being assigned will call the new pastor and the outgoing pastor or administrator.

- b) Priests not Receiving a Pastorate. A member of the Board or Episcopal Vicar (as determined at the Annual Pastor Placement Meeting) will contact each priest in the Pastor Pool who will not receive a pastorate in that cycle to inform him and to discuss why he was not appointed pastor and any other issues related to his application.
- c) Ongoing Formation and Preparation. During a preparation period (e.g., March to June) prior to July 1, the Office of Ongoing Formation of Priests will coordinate a pastor retreat and any appropriate training programs.

§302.4. Six Year Term

<p>302.4. Policy Pastors shall be appointed for a six year term of office.²</p>

§303 RENEWAL OF SIX YEAR TERM

<p>303.1. Policy After an evaluation process in the fifth year of a pastor's first term, the Board and the local Episcopal Vicar shall make a recommendation to the Archbishop on whether a pastor's appointment should be renewed for another six-year term. The evaluation process shall include assessment of the pastor's skills as a spiritual leader, as well as his cooperation with any required audit(s) and best practices, submission of annual budgets and periodic reports, payment of the parish's Archdiocesan assessments, and compliance with pertinent policies and procedures regarding the establishment and effective functioning of a Parish Finance Council and Parish Pastoral Council.</p>
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Procedures

- a) Pastor Intention. By the deadline set during the fifth year of his first term, the pastor will send a letter to the Executive Secretary of the Board stating his desire to be renewed for a second term as pastor or his intention to enter the pastor candidate pool for the upcoming cycle. If the pastor chooses to enter the candidate pool, the parish at which he is serving automatically will become an open pastorate within the same placement cycle. (See § 303.2)

²An Indult was received from Rome dated March 22,1973, that gave the Diocesan Bishop "faculties" for making future appointments of pastors for a term of six years, renewable for additional six year terms. After the revision of the Code of Canon Law (1983), The National Conference of Catholic Bishops received approval to continue this policy on Terms of Office. Confer Senate Bill No. 72-55 and 72-43.

- b) Evaluation Report. The first term review is conducted according to the process outlined in §802 *Review of Pastor's First Term*.
- c) Letter of Support. Before the end of the fifth year, the Board will request a letter of support from the Episcopal Vicar and Dean.
- d) Recommendation to the Archbishop. The Board will forward its recommendation to the Archbishop with regard to the possible renewal of the pastor's term of office, taking into account the evaluation report and the letters of support.

§304 COMPLETION OF SECOND TERM

§304.1. Policy Ordinarily, a pastor will serve no more than two consecutive six-year terms as pastor in a specific pastorate.

Procedures

Upon completing his 12th year as pastor in a specific parish, a pastor will be expected to accept a new assignment. With the advice of the Episcopal Council and the Board and under exceptional circumstances, the Archbishop may renew the term for a full six years or allow it to extend for a shorter period in accord with canon 186. While not sufficient to result in an automatic extension, the following factors may be adequate reasons to consider a waiver of the ordinary policy:

- a) Parish Situation. Unique circumstances in the life of a parish.
- b) Age. A pastor who will be age 64 or older at the time of completion of his second term as pastor.
- c) Cultural Needs. Foreign language proficiency, cultural awareness, and other ethnic, racial or cultural considerations.
- d) Special Project. A special project within the parish, such as a fund drive that is about to be started or is already in progress, the construction of a new building, etc. In these instances, consideration ordinarily will be given to extending the term for a specified period of less than six years.
- e) Health. A particular health problem of the requesting pastor.

§305 RESIGNATION OR REMOVAL OF PASTOR CALLED TO EXTENDED ACTIVE MILITARY SERVICE

306.1. Policy Because a Pastor is obliged to residency in his parish per canon 533, for the good of the people of the parish and to provide for their stable pastoral care, a Pastor who is called up to extended active military service for more than six continuous months shall resign his pastorate in accord with canon 538, §1. Upon his return to the Archdiocese from extended active military service, he will be eligible for placement in the pool for open pastorates.