

SECTION 3: PRIESTS

The following policies shall be followed by priests in the Archdiocese of New Orleans.

3.1 FACULTIES

To assist in the exercise of their priestly ministry within the Archdiocese of New Orleans, priests are granted the following faculties:

3.1.1 PREACHING

Priests are granted the faculty to preach the Word of God, including the homily at the sacred liturgy (Canons 764 and 765).

This faculty is granted by the universal law of the Church and is to be exercised with at least the presumed permission of the pastor or rector of the church in which the priest is preaching or the permission of the proper superior when the priest is preaching in a church or oratory of a religious institute. *This faculty permits the priest to preach throughout the world* unless a particular diocese has required that a priest receive express permission to preach there.

3.1.2 BAPTISM AND CONFIRMATION

Priests are granted the faculty to baptize or receive into full communion with the Catholic Church all persons, including those who have completed their fourteenth year (Canon 863).

As a rule, an adult is to be confirmed, participate in the Eucharist, and receive Holy Communion immediately after baptism (Canon 866). The term *catechumen* includes any non-baptized person (Canon 851§1). A married person should not be received into the Church unless he or she is living with a spouse in a valid marriage.

Priests in this Archdiocese who baptize an adult or a child of catechetical age may confer the sacrament of confirmation on the occasion of the baptism (RCIA #14; Canon 883§2).

Priests in this Archdiocese may also confirm a baptized Christian of catechetical age during the rite of reception into the full communion of the Catholic Church (RCIA #481; Canon 883§2).

In all other instances, when a just cause may suggest that a priest celebrate confirmation in an individual case, prior permission must be obtained from the Archbishop or the vicar general for validity (Canon 884).

Any priest may confirm any member of the Christian faithful in danger of death (Canon 883§3).

3.1.3 THE HOLY EUCHARIST

Priests are granted the faculty to:

- Celebrate the Eucharist twice on weekdays and three times on Sundays and Holy Days of obligation, and on their vigils (Canon 905§2).
- Celebrate Mass on a weekday outside a church edifice provided there is a legitimate

pastoral reason, the place is liturgically suitable, and the local pastor has no objection (Canon 932§1).

- Celebrate Mass outside a Church on Sundays and Holy Days, and their vigils, only with the permission of the Archbishop or the Vicar General.
- Celebrate Mass in a suitable place outside a church edifice any day of the week if retired, on vacation, ill or convalescing (Canon 932§1).
- Celebrate a Sunday or Holy Day Mass the afternoon of the preceding day (Canon 931).
- Conduct a public procession with the blessed Eucharist on the Solemnity of the Body and Blood of Christ or other special occasions provided this can be done in a dignified manner (Canon 944§1 & §2). When necessary, to permit the use of low-gluten hosts for parishioners who suffer from gluten intolerance. Medical certification of a condition justifying the use of low-gluten hosts for Holy Communion is no longer required. Such permission, once granted, stands for as long as the condition persists which occasioned the request for the original permission. Hosts that are *completely* gluten-free are invalid matter for the celebration of the Eucharist. Low-gluten hosts (*partially* gluten-free) are valid matter, provided they contain a sufficient amount of gluten to obtain the confection of bread without the addition of foreign materials and without the use of procedures that would alter the nature of bread. (See *USCCB Committee on Divine Worship Newsletter* Vol. XXXIX, November, 03). Permission for the use of low-gluten hosts is a personal permission. No other person at the celebration of Mass has permission to receive a low-gluten host. The Office of Worship maintains a list of approved sources of low-gluten hosts and is available to provide further information regarding this matter.

The obligation of attending Mass is satisfied wherever the Mass is celebrated in a Catholic Rite on Sundays or on a Holy Day, or on the afternoon of the preceding day. This includes a nuptial or funeral Mass (Canon 1248§1).

3.1.4 DISPENSATIONS: MASS OF PRECEPT, FAST AND ABSTINENCE

Priests are granted the faculty to:

- Dispense persons, in individual cases and for a just cause, from the obligation of observing a day of precept or a day of penance, or to commute such obligations into other pious activities (Canon 1245). This faculty may be used on behalf of all those committed to the priest's pastoral care, wherever they may be at the time, as well as those who are visiting the priest's parish or ecclesiastical institution (Canon 91).
- Dispense from the Eucharistic fast, in particular cases and for a just reason (Canons 919; 87§1; & 90§1). This dispensation may not be granted generally or indiscriminately.

3.1.5 PENANCE - CONFESSIONS

Priests are granted the faculty to:

- Hear confessions and grant sacramental absolution within the territory of the

Archdiocese of New Orleans. If the priest is an incardinated priest of this Archdiocese or has established a canonical domicile here (Canon 102), this concession of habitual faculties to hear confession *authorizes the priest to hear confessions validly and licitly throughout the world* unless he is specifically prohibited from doing so in a particular diocese by the ordinary of the place (Canon 967§2). Any priest, even without faculties for confession, may validly and licitly absolve any penitent who is in danger of death from all censures and sins, even if a priest with faculties is present (Canon 976).

- Grant to any priest in good standing the faculty to hear confessions for not more than three days provided the proper authorities cannot be reached (Canon 969§1).
- Remit in the internal or external forum any *latae sententiae* (automatically incurred) penalty established by law, provided it is not reserved to the apostolic see and has not been juridically declared (Canon 1355§2).

This faculty may be exercised anywhere, either in the act of sacramental confession or apart from it, on behalf of the members of this Archdiocese or of those who incurred the penalty in this Archdiocese. It may be exercised within the archdiocese on behalf of anyone who has incurred the penalty elsewhere. By this faculty a priest may remit the excommunication attached to the *procuring of abortion* (Canon 1398) and that attached to *apostasy, heresy or schism* (Canon 1364). An appropriate penance should be given to the penitent when absolving from these censures. In the case of apostasy, heresy or schism, the remission should if possible be granted in the external forum so that a record may be had of the penitent's reconciliation and subsequent ecclesial rights and obligations, such as the right to marry in accord with canonical form (Canon 1117). The following excommunications are reserved to the Apostolic See: desecration of the Sacred Species (Canon 1367); violence against the Roman Pontiff (Canon 1370); a t t e m p t e d absolution of one's accomplice (Canon 1378); consecration of a bishop without pontifical mandate (Canon 1382); direct violation of the seal of confession (Canon 1388).

3.1.6 VOWS-OATHS

Priests are granted the faculty to suspend, dispense, or commute a private vow or promissory oath on behalf of a member of this Archdiocese or anyone visiting it, provided that this action does no injury to the acquired rights of others nor harm others who refuse to remit the obligation (Canons 1195, 1196, 1203).

3.1.7 MARRIAGE

Priests are granted the faculty to:

- Assist at marriages within the parish or other territory or church in which the priest possesses ordinary power, or for which he is generally or specifically delegated by the local pastor or the Ordinary of the place (Canons 1109-1111). This faculty allows a priest to assist validly at all marriages within the limits of his parish territory (Canon 1109). If the parish is a *personal* parish, a priest validly assists, within the confines of his jurisdiction, at marriages when at least one of the parties is a parishioner (Canon 1110). The pastor may delegate or the parochial vicar may sub delegate a priest or deacon to assist at marriages; this must be expressly given to a specific person for a

specific marriage (Canons 1111§1 & §2; C.137§1, §3, & §4). This faculty gives to the pastors of African-American parishes and their parochial vicars delegation for the marriages of those of other races who are considered members of that parish.

All priests assisting at marriages in this Archdiocese are to follow the policies and guidelines as established by the bishops of Louisiana for the preparation of couples for this sacrament.

- Permit, for a just and reasonable cause, the marriage between a Catholic and a baptized non-Catholic, after the usual promises have been made, and when the baptism of the non-Catholic has been proven (Canon 1125). The priest is to note the permission given for mixed religion on the Archdiocesan Request for Marriage Dispensation Form, with the signed promises, and file the form with the Pre-Nuptial Questionnaire. Baptism can be proven by an authentic certificate, or if this is unavailable, by a sworn affidavit from a parent, sponsor, witness, or an older member of the family; or if the baptism was conferred upon an adult, the sworn testimony of the baptized person (Canon 876). A marriage between a practicing Catholic and a person who has notoriously rejected the Catholic faith (Canon 1071§2), or between a practicing Catholic and one who has left the Church by a formal act is to be treated in the same way, i.e., with permission given by the priest after the promises are made. In doubt about the fact or validity of baptism, the priest must obtain a dispensation for disparity of worship *ad cautelam*.
- Dispense from all ecclesiastical impediments to marriage from which the Ordinary of the place may dispense, when everything has been prepared for the wedding (or convalidation) and the delay to obtain a dispensation from competent authority would be likely to cause serious harm (Canon 1080). The Office of the Chancellor is to be notified when such a dispensation has been granted so that it may be properly recorded. This faculty does not extend to dispensations from the impediment arising from sacred orders or from a public perpetual vow of chastity in a pontifical religious institute.
- Waive the publication of the matrimonial banns whenever the priest considers it inappropriate or unnecessary (Canon 1067). The local custom has generally been to publish banns in parish bulletins, especially the parish where the marriage is to take place. It would seem wise to provide this sort of publicity, even for mixed marriages.

3.1.8 SEPARATIONS

Priests are granted the faculty to allow the separation of spouses from common conjugal life When grave danger of soul or body exists to them or their children (Canons 1692§1 & §2; 1153§1 & §2; 1151; 1152§1, §2, & §3; 1154; & 1155).

3.1.8 SACRAMENTALS-BLESSINGS

Priests are granted the faculty to administer the sacramentals of the church, especially blessings, in accord with the liturgical books (Canons 1168; 1169§2 & §3; and 1170).

3.1.10 FUNERALS

Priests are granted the faculty to:

- Permit the celebration of the rite of Christian burial, including Mass, for an unbaptized child if the parents had intended to have the child baptized (Canon 1183§2).
- Permit the celebration of the Rite of Christian burial, including Mass, for a baptized member of a non-Catholic church or ecclesial community if the minister of the deceased is not available and provided that such an arrangement is not contrary to the will of the deceased (Canon 1183§3). In such celebrations the Rite of Christian burial should be appropriately accommodated to the special ecumenical situation. Non-Catholics participating in the celebration are not to receive Holy Communion.

3.2 INVENTORY OF PRIEST'S PERSONAL PROPERTY AND PARISH PROPERTY

3.2.1 Pastors and associate pastors are to compile a written inventory of their personal movable property located in the parish rectory or elsewhere on parish property. Only property stipulated in the written inventory shall be considered the personal property of the priest.

3.2.2 Pastors are to compile an inventory every three (3) years of parish movable property, and this inventory is to be reviewed and certified by the Parish Finance Council; one (1) copy of the parish property inventory is to be forwarded to the office of the Executive Director for Clergy and another is to be retained in the parish office.

3.3 PRIESTS' RETREATS

The Department of Clergy in consultation with the Continuing Formation Committee will offer three preached retreats for priests each calendar year. According to Canon Law, all priests are required to make a retreat annually. This requirement can be filled by attending one of the three retreats sponsored by the Department of Clergy or a priest can make arrangements for another retreat. In the annual review submitted to the archbishop, priests will account for their attendance at a retreat during the past year.

3.4 SABBATICALS FOR PRIESTS

The Church urges priests to pursue personal and spiritual growth, professional and theological updating, and development of pastoral and ministerial skills. The sabbatical experience for priests, as directed to those goals, should not be considered an unusual experience or special exception, but a regular feature of the continuing education and formation program of the Archdiocese of New Orleans. While a sabbatical is primarily a benefit to the individual priest, it is also a real benefit to the people to whom he brings a renewed ministry in the parish and in the Archdiocese.

3.4.1 DEFINITION

A sabbatical is an extended time away from one's normal assignment, for the purpose of personal

and professional growth and renewal through an approved program of study, work, prayer and rest. A sabbatical is not considered a leave from ministry, but a time of personal and professional renewal for ministry. A sabbatical is further distinguished from:

- Special studies to meet diocesan needs
- Extended vacation
- Therapeutic leave
- Leave of absence from ministry

3.4.2 KINDS AND LENGTH

The kinds of sabbaticals are *study programs* and *spiritual development*. Sabbatical programs offer help in three areas:

- Growth in theological understanding;
- Training in practical skills
- Spiritual and personal growth.

Some programs address all three areas, other more specific interests and needs. The choice of the best program is primarily the responsibility and the right of the priest after consulting with those who might help him clarify his needs. A *normal sabbatical* is four months, or an academic semester. An *extended sabbatical* is more than an academic semester.

3.4.3 ELIGIBILITY

All priests serving the Archdiocese shall have the right to apply for a sabbatical of four months for every ten years of service. The sabbatical leave shall be cumulative to a maximum of one year.

3.4.4 NUMBERS

Every reasonable effort will be made to provide for four priests on sabbatical at any given time. The number of priests taking sabbaticals shall not exceed eight a year.

3.4.5 SELECTION

The following criteria will be used in approving sabbaticals:

- The amount of time the priest has been working in the Archdiocese
- The age of the priest
- The priest's record in attending the programs of the continuing Education Committee
- The priest's demonstrated interest in the ministry and in the need for personal growth
- The amount of time since the last sabbatical taken by the individual

3.4.6 PROCEDURES

The first step for any priest interested in a sabbatical is to become familiar with diocesan policies and to seek information concerning the various programs, their availability and requirements. The Chairman of the Continuing Formation Committee and the Executive Director for Clergy are able to provide such information.

The individual priest, after consultation, should select a program that meets diocesan guidelines, project sabbatical costs, and look into the possibility of finding a replacement. While the Personnel Board may be of assistance in finding a replacement, it is primarily the priest's responsibility to obtain his own replacement.

The priest shall apply in writing to the Archbishop, with copies sent to the Chairman of the Continuing Formation committee and the Executive Director for Clergy. This application for a normal sabbatical shall be made a year in advance of the projected starting date of the sabbatical.

The Continuing Formation Committee will interview the applicant and make a recommendation to the Archbishop.

If the sabbatical is approved, the priest shall make known to the Parish Council and his pastoral co-workers the diocesan policy on sabbaticals and discuss with them the pastoral and ministerial implications of his proposed sabbatical.

Sabbaticals shall generally be considered during pastoral assignments. A normal sabbatical between assignments will be considered on request and the necessary arrangements for replacement are to be made between the priest applicant, the Archbishop, and the Personnel Board.

3.4.7 FINANCING

A priest on approved sabbatical will continue to receive his regular salary and benefits from his assignment. The parish or institution will also pay for the priest's replacement.

The cost of tuition, transportation, and course books for each approved sabbatical will be shared equally by the priest, the Archdiocese, and the parish or institution. For a normal sabbatical, the diocesan share will be limited to \$1,500 or, in the event the priest has a diocesan assignment, to \$3,000.

The Archdiocese will establish an account titled *Sabbaticals*, which will be used for the sole purpose of funding normal sabbaticals. The amount of this fund will not exceed \$15,000 a year.

Funding and support for extended sabbaticals shall be administered by the Archbishop from funds at his discretion since he is solely responsible for the approval of extended sabbaticals.

3.4.8 EXTENDED SABBATICALS

Extended sabbaticals are considered exceptions. Application for and approval of an extended sabbatical shall be made exclusively to and by the Archbishop. Likewise, financial arrangements shall be negotiated with the Archbishop.

3.5 COMPENSATION POLICIES

The parish/institution to which a priest is canonically assigned is financially responsible for the

following benefits:

3.5.1 REMUNERATION

In accord with Canon 281 and based on his dedication to his ministry, each priest is entitled to a just remuneration. This income should be sufficient to enable him to live with fitting dignity in conformity with the general economic conditions found in the Archdiocese as well as meet his financial obligations.

In addition to his basic necessities, a suitable livelihood includes sufficient income for vacations (Canon 283§2), hospitality, charitable giving (Canon 282§2) and provision for the future.

Regardless of the number of canonically assigned duties a priest has, he receives only one salary. Each Archdiocesan entity to which the priest is assigned shares in the percentage of his salary according to the time allotted to each.

A priest is entitled to shelter and sustenance. *A priest in residence* in a parish should discuss fully with the pastor the responsibilities of both parties regarding shelter and sustenance and the resident priest's responsibility to the parish.

Those priests who are pastors or administrators shall be entitled to additional monthly compensation as determined by the approved salary scale.

Those priests who remain in active ministry beyond the age of 70 shall be entitled to additional monthly compensation as determined by the approved salary scale.

A priest is entitled to this remuneration even if the parish is unable to pay it.

Unless otherwise stated, all salary and benefit changes are effective at the beginning of the new fiscal year (July 1).

Remuneration for *Priests Without Assignments* after 30 days shall be calculated in a different manner and reviewed on a case-by-case basis by the Archbishop (Effective September 1, 2003).

Remuneration for *Priests in Extended Residential Treatment* shall be calculated in a different manner and reviewed on a case-by-case basis by the Archbishop.

NOTE: This remuneration policy does not supersede the Archdiocesan obligation of Canon Law regarding the basic support of the priest.

3.5.2 VACATION/DAY OFF

In accord with Canon 283§2, a priest shall be entitled to four weeks' vacation (one month/four weekends) during a given fiscal year.

He shall have one day (24 hours) off per week, and adequate time off daily to engage in a reasonable amount of recreational (wellness) activities.

Military service – if a priest is a designated military chaplain and is expected to serve two weeks out of the year on active duty – the priest chaplain may choose to use two weeks of his vacation time and thus the parish pays for his substitute, if however, he does not wish to use his vacation time, then he is responsible to pay for his substitute for those two weeks.

3.5.3 BUSINESS ALLOWANCE

A priest who is canonically assigned receives a monthly business allowance for business-related expenses, including automobile expenses, vestments and clerical clothing expenses (including the cost of cleaning), dues and subscriptions, library expenses, computer and other equipment, and business entertainment and business gifts. A *Priest Without Assignment* after 30 days will not be eligible for the business allowance.

A priest must account (provide receipts or other documentation) for the expenses. Expenses not accounted for must be returned to the parish/agency/archdiocesan office or be included on the W-2 as taxable income. The net amount paid to a priest represents a tax-free reimbursement.

Cell Phones & Technology – If the priests of the parish are expected to be on call at all times, it is a legitimate expense to the parish to purchase a cell phone for each priest canonically assigned to the parish. It is strongly recommended that all parish offices and rectories be technologically advanced to the needs of the day.

3.5.4 RETIREMENT CONTRIBUTIONS

The parish/institution contributes an amount approved by the Archbishop for the support of retired priests based on the number of priests canonically assigned to the parish.

3.5.5 RETREAT AND CONTINUING EDUCATION

In accord with Archdiocesan policy regarding priests' retreats and continuing education, these annual events are paid by the parish/institution with the approval of the Archbishop.

3.5.6 HEALTH CARE FOR ARCHDIOCESAN PRIESTS

A priest is entitled to comprehensive medical coverage, including physical, psychiatric, optical, hearing, and dental coverage. Details of the medical coverage for priests can be obtained from the Archdiocesan Human Resources Office. An annual summary of clergy benefits is distributed to all diocesan priests.

3.5.7 AUTOMOBILE INSURANCE

Because of the vast difference in car insurance between the various civil parishes that make up the Archdiocese and so as not to penalize the priests serving in the highest risk area, the Archdiocese covers the auto insurance for the priests of the Archdiocese. Other priests' vehicles must also be covered by the Archdiocesan insurance.

3.5.8 OTHER COMPENSATION

3.5.8.1 Social Security. All diocesan priests incardinated into the Archdiocese of New Orleans are required to qualify for Social Security and Medicare benefits. In order to qualify for Social Security and Medicare benefits, all diocesan priests must pay self-employment tax. Schedule SE (Form 1040) Self-Employment Tax must be filed to pay self-employment tax. This is usually done quarterly unless other arrangements have been made with the parish.

3.5.8.2 Moving Expenses. Priests are entitled to a maximum of \$500 reimbursement for moving expenses. The reimbursement is to be shared equally between the parish he is leaving and the parish/institution to which he is being transferred.

3.5.8.3 Compensation for Weekend Help. Since the Archdiocese has established a uniform remuneration scale, the established amount for weekend help with Masses should not exceed \$50 Weekdays/\$75 Weekend per Mass. This amount includes ordinary travel expense. However, travel expenses for parishes that are a longer distance (over 20 miles) can be negotiated with the pastor. Compensation for assistance with Confessions will be a Deanery decision but should not exceed \$35 per event.

3.5.8.4 International Diocesan Priests. The Archdiocese of New Orleans pays for the international portion of airfare for diocesan priests born in a country other than the United States to visit their home country every three years. In the event of an emergency (to be determined by the Archbishop) or death of an immediate member of the family (father, mother, brother, sister or grandparent or another at the discretion of the Archbishop) the Archdiocese will pay for the emergency trip.

3.5.8.5 Extern Visiting Priests. Parishes, schools, agencies or offices of the Archdiocese of New Orleans benefiting from the service of a full-time canonically assigned priest from other dioceses who receives an Archdiocesan salary will incur the same benefit charges (automobile insurance, health care, retreat/continuing education, retirement contribution) as do parishes benefiting from the service of an Archdiocesan incardinated priest. Only if the Archbishop has accepted a written understanding with the extern priest's diocese will any of the benefit charges accrue to the benefit of the extern priest's diocese.

3.5.8.6 Religious Order Priests. Members of religious orders or societies are not eligible for the benefits provided herein. Parishes in the care of a religious order or society shall, for each priest or brother canonically assigned to the ministry of the parish, pay into the Infirm Priests or Pension Fund of the order or society the same contribution required of other parishes.

A religious order priest who is canonically assigned to a parish that is in the care of the diocesan clergy shall be entitled to have the same contribution paid into the Infirm Priests

or Pension Fund of his order or society.

3.6 HEALTH CARE POLICIES

3.6.1 HEALTH INSURANCE

Priests are covered by Blue Cross/Blue Shield HMO of Louisiana. All newly ordained priests must fill out a Blue Cross enrollment form within the first two weeks of ordination and submit it to the Benefits Office of the Archdiocese at 1000 Howard Ave Suite 1200, NO. LA 70113.

Please note: The health insurance becomes effective the 1st of the month following ordination.

The premiums for priests' health insurance are paid by the Archdiocese, financed by parish assessments. The Archdiocese reimburses the priest for out-of-pocket expenses like deductibles and co-payments when proof of payment is submitted to the Benefits Office of the Archdiocese at 1000 Howard Ave. Suite 1200, NO. LA 70113. Reimbursements may be submitted weekly, but they must not be more than six months old.

Blue Cross covers durable medical goods, such as wheelchairs, crutches, etc. in some cases. A doctor needs to obtain authorization through Blue Cross. If authorization is denied, the request can be submitted to the Priest Benefits Committee for review.

The Archdiocese has reimbursed for some expenses that Blue Cross may not cover, but it's important that all medical care go through Blue Cross first. (If a priest is retired, and Medicare is the primary medical provider, then Blue Cross is secondary).

The Archdiocese has been asked to consider reimbursements for some expenses that are not covered by health insurance, and these will be considered on a case-by-case basis. The Archdiocese will not pay for health club memberships, exercise equipment, massages, or chiropractic care (Blue Cross covers chiropractic care when medically necessary). Blue Cross does not cover hearing aids. In order to be reimbursed by the Archdiocese for hearing aids, 2 opinions/estimates are required. If approved, reimbursements will be given up to \$4,000.

The recent enactment of medical privacy laws (HIPAA) has made it difficult for doctor's offices, hospitals, and other providers to discuss medical bills with anyone but the patient. That means that the Employee Benefits Manager can assist in resolving these issues only if each priest completes the attached authorization form and returns it to the Benefits Office of the Archdiocese at 1000 Howard Ave. Suite 1200, New Orleans, LA 70113, or faxed to (504) 5681699. This is not required, but if you choose not to complete it, the Benefits Office may not be able to give you the assistance with medical bills that you have enjoyed until now.

3.6.2 VISION CARE

Blue Cross covers vision checkups once every 24 months, and the \$35 co-payment is reimbursable. Glasses and contact lenses are not covered by insurance, but the Archdiocese reimburses the cost of one pair of glasses or contact lenses per year. The Archdiocese will

reimburse up to \$1,400 for Lasik vision-correcting surgery for both eyes.

3.6.3 DENTAL CARE

It is important to remember that priests do not have dental insurance. The Archdiocese pays 100% for dental care. The Archdiocese will pay for all preventive (cleanings, checkups, X-rays, fluoride treatments) and restorative care (fillings, root canals, restorative caps/crowns). The Archdiocese will **not** pay for any cosmetic dental care (bleaching, whitening procedures, caps/crowns unless restorative).

Priests should have two dental checkups a year. Although many dentists submit their bills directly to the Clergy Health Office, the priest should ask for a copy of the bill to make sure it's correct and that the services for which he/she is requesting payment have been performed.

If a dentist recommends any other treatment, the priest should ascertain the cost. If it is over \$3,000, the dentist must submit a request for pre-approval of the procedure, with a letter saying why the procedure is necessary. This is standard practice for most insurance companies, so dentists are used to complying with this process. It should be submitted to the Benefits Office of the Archdiocese at 1000 Howard Ave. Suite 1200, New Orleans, LA 70113, or faxed to at (504) 568-1699.

3.6.4 CLERGY BENEFITS AND RETIREMENT

All other clergy benefits and retirement benefits are spelled out in the Archdiocesan Policy Manual under the titles "Clergy Benefits" and "Retirement"

3.6.5 PRIESTS' RESPONSIBILITY

Each priest is responsible for keeping himself healthy by taking advantage of preventive services such as regular physicals and dental checkups. Priests are responsible for knowing what services may require notification and/or prior approval and for obtaining that approval before incurring costs. If a priest fails to do so, he may be responsible for those costs. Priests must turn in reimbursement requests no later than six months after they are incurred.

The Benefits Review Committee meets on a bi-monthly basis. At those times, the panel will review requests for dental expenses over \$3,000, and requests for medical services not covered by insurance. All prior approval requests, with the exception of mental health services, must go to the Clergy Benefit Office, and will be referred to the committee.

3.7 POLICY ON RETIREMENT FOR DIOCESAN PRIESTS

3.7.1 ELIGIBILITY

A priest of the Archdiocese of New Orleans shall become eligible for the benefits provided by this plan when:

- His retirement from active service is duly accepted by the Archbishop or administrator (*sede vacante*). A priest shall be considered retired if he no longer is in active salaried priestly assignment and remains canonically incardinated in the Archdiocese of New

Orleans.

- If, by reason of illness or disability, a priest cannot continue to serve, yet remains incardinated in the Archdiocese, he shall be entitled to the benefits of the plan during the period of his illness or disability, as certified by competent medical authority.

3.7.2 RETIREMENT AGE

The normal retirement age is established as seventy (70) years of age. When health or other circumstances warrant, a request for retirement before the age of seventy may be submitted to the archbishop.

In the spirit of Canon 538, §3, a priest who remains in active service after 70 years of age should, upon completing his seventy-fifth year, submit his resignation to the Archbishop, who has the discretion to allow him to remain in active service if he is willing.

3.7.3 MONTHLY BENEFITS

The pension fund for Archdiocesan priests shall provide to eligible priests a monthly income under the following conditions:

- The maximum monthly benefit is to be established by the Archbishop in consultation with the Administrative board of pension fund upon the recommendation of the Priestly Life and Ministry Committee.
- A priest who has served the Archdiocese for a period of twenty years or more (or twenty-five years or more in the case of a priest who was age 60 or younger at January 1, 2003) at the time he becomes eligible for the benefits shall receive the maximum monthly payment, as long as he remains a priest in good standing.
- The monthly payment shall be reduced by one-twentieth (or one twenty-fifth in the case of a priest who was age 60 or younger at January 1, 2003) for each year less than the maximum service requirement of twenty (or alternatively, twenty-five years). The Archbishop shall have the right to allow a lesser reduction if he deems a higher benefit is necessary to allow the priest to live properly.
- Priests who attain their maximum service requirement of twenty (or alternately twenty-five) years and who remain in service beyond the age 70 will accrue an additional monthly retirement benefit of seventy-five (\$75) dollars per year of service (prorated for partial years) for each year up to five additional years. In addition, priests' incardinated years of service exceeding twenty-five years will earn an additional monthly retirement benefit of one dollar (\$1) per incardinated service exceeding twenty-five years. Priests may not receive salary and retirement benefits con-currently. Example: A priest who continues in active ministry to age 75 and was ordained 50 years will receive an additional monthly retirement benefit of \$400 (\$75x5)+ (\$1x25).
- Priests who have been away from active service in the Archdiocese for at least ten years immediately preceding retirement (e.g. military chaplain) must apply directly to

the archbishop and establish a need for the diocesan retirement benefits.

- Priests who are totally disabled will receive the maximum monthly benefit.

3.7.4 OTHER BENEFITS

The Archdiocese of New Orleans covers medical insurance, automobile insurance, retreat and continuing education for retired diocesan priests.

3.7.5 RESIDENCE

The individual retired priest shall retain the right to choose the living facility in which he wants to retire without prejudice to his pension.

- For an individual retired priest who chooses to live in an independent-living residence provided by the Archdiocese: the Archbishop of New Orleans, in consultation with the Priestly Life and Ministry Committee and the Priests Council, has established 60% of the pension as a reasonable charge for an apartment in this independent-living facility. This amount is to be deducted from the retired priest's pension.
- For a retired priest who resides in a rectory, he shall be entitled to his full pension. If he assists in the parish, he will not need to compensate the parish for his room and board. If he shall not assist the parish in any way, the retired priest shall pay a reasonable charge to the parish. This charge is to be negotiated with the pastor of the parish.
- For an individual priest who needs the care provided by an assisted-living facility and chooses such a facility owned and operated by the Archdiocese of New Orleans (i.e., Chateau de Notre Dame Apartments with Assistance): the Archbishop of New Orleans, in consultation with the Priestly Life and Ministry Committee and the Priests Council, has established 80% of the pension as a reasonable charge for room and board at this facility. This amount is to be deducted from the retired priest's pension.
- For an individual priest who needs the care provided by a nursing home facility and chooses such a facility owned and operated by the Archdiocese of New Orleans (i.e., Chateau de Notre Dame, Wynhoven Health Care Center): the Archbishop of New Orleans, in consultation with the Priestly Life and Ministry Committee and the Priests' Council, has established 97% of the pension as a reasonable charge for room and board at these two facilities. This amount is to be deducted from the retired priest's pension.
- If a priest chooses another assisted-living or nursing home facility that is not owned and operated by the Archdiocese of New Orleans, in consultation with the Review Committee depending upon the type of facility chosen; the appropriate percentage (assisted-living 80%, nursing home 97%) would be deducted from the priest's pension. The Archdiocese will pay no more than the amount paid to Chateau de Notre Dame to the facility chosen. The priest would be responsible for the difference.

3.7.6 SITTERS, NURSING CARE ATTENDANTS

The following shall apply:

- For a priest who becomes seriously ill, or has surgery, or has been temporarily disabled by an accident, and who needs the assistance of sitters or nursing care attendants, either at his residence or in the hospital, on a temporary basis (to be reviewed every week or until his condition improves): the Archbishop of New Orleans, in consultation with the Priestly Life and Ministry Committee and the Priests' Council, will provide 100% coverage of the cost of such care. Each case is to be handled on an individual basis and on its own particular facts.
- For a priest in an assisted-living facility, or a nursing home, or in his own residence being cared for by others, and if the priest or his designated, responsible party wants or chooses to have sitters or nursing care attendants on a temporary basis for one shift (8 hours) on a daily basis: the Archbishop of New Orleans, in consultation with the Priestly Life and Ministry Committee and the Priests' Council, will provide 50% coverage of the cost of such care. The priest or his responsible party will be responsible for the remainder of the cost.
- For a priest in an assisted-living facility, or a nursing home, or in his own residence being cared for by others, and if the priest or his designated, responsible party wants or chooses to have sitters or nursing care attendants on a temporary basis on around the clock basis: the Archbishop of New Orleans, in consultation with the Priestly Life and Ministry Committee and the Priests' Council, will provide 25% coverage of the cost of such care. The priest or his responsible party will be responsible for the remainder of the cost.

3.7.7 REVIEWS

The Archbishop of New Orleans shall establish a Review Committee, comprised of the Vicar General, the Chief Financial Officer, the Executive Director for the Clergy, and two members of the Priestly Life and Ministry Committee. The chairman of this committee is eligible to be one of the members from the Priestly Life and Ministry Committee.

Monthly pension benefits and current percentage figures for the reasonable charge for archdiocesan residencies used by retired priests and for the provided coverage of the cost for the chosen use of sitters, as listed above in this Manual of Archdiocesan Policies, will be periodically, or at least annually, reviewed by the Review Committee. Recommendations regarding these figures will be presented to the Archbishop of New Orleans who, in consultation with the full membership of the Priestly Life and Ministry Committee and the Priests' Council, will effect such recommendations.

3.7.8 ARRANGEMENTS WITH THE ARCHDIOCESE

3.7.8.1 Those priests, who have specific situations which are not covered by these

categories or who need to set up different arrangements than those set in this Manual of Archdiocesan Policies, are to request a meeting with the Review Committee in order to present their particular circumstances.

3.7.8.2 Those priests, who already have particular agreements established with the Archdiocese of New Orleans and who need to make new agreements, are to request a meeting with the Review Committee in order to present their new circumstances.

3.7.8.3 The Review Committee will receive, directly, particular cases regarding an individual priest with his unique situation, or exceptional or new circumstances. Recommendations regarding such priests will be presented directly to the Archbishop of New Orleans, who will effect such recommendations.

3.7.8.4 Those priests who already have particular agreements established with the Archdiocese of New Orleans Are not affected by new categories and percentage figures which are made after their arrangements have been set, unless these categories and figures are to their advantage.

3.7.9 THE FUND

The basic fund shall be known as the Priests' Pension Fund of the Archdiocese of New Orleans.

The Priests' Pension Fund shall receive its income and be supported and maintained by the following annual payments:

- An allocation from each Parish Assessment
- An assessment by each parish for the priests assigned to the parish
- An allocation from the annual Archdiocesan Priests Retirement Collection

The amounts of the contributions provided for the above (a, b & c) shall be determined by the Archbishop of New Orleans, in consultation with the Administrative Council and the Finance Council.

3.8 CLERGY BENEFITS REVIEW COMMITTEE

The Archbishop of New Orleans shall establish a Clergy Benefits Review Committee, comprised of the Vicar General, the Chief Financial Officer, the Executive Director of the Clergy, the Chairman of the Priestly Life & Ministry Committee and the Coordinators of Retired and Sick Priests. The Chairman of the Priestly Life and Ministry Committee will serve as the Chair of this committee.

In addition to serving as the Review Committee for the Clergy Retirement Policies of the Archdiocese of New Orleans this Review Committee shall be responsible to review all extraordinary requests for clergy benefits that do not fall within the established Compensation Benefits of the Handbook of Policies of the Archdiocese of New Orleans.

3.9 CONTINUATION OF PASTORATES BEYOND AGE 75

The archdiocese recognizes that the Church's requirement that a pastor submit his resignation to the archbishop at seventy-five years of age is based on the assumption that ordinarily the priest's administrative leadership and abilities are diminishing at that time. The Church, however, wisely distinguishes between an administrative role and the priestly role. It is always hoped that priests who relinquish administration will continue to make a gift of themselves in priestly service. The Church also leaves the ultimate judgment to the bishop.

Some priests laudably want to make themselves available for continued service as pastor after their seventy-fifth birthday. The following procedure may be used at the discretion of the Archbishop in responding to this request and making this kind of decision

3.9.1 PASTOR REVIEW COMMITTEE

To offer the recommendation to the Archbishop, a Pastor Review Committee will be formed. The Executive Director for Clergy in the archdiocese will ask two experienced pastors to serve on this committee. The pastor who is considering continued service after his seventy-fifth birthday will be free to name a third pastor himself. This Pastor Review Committee will meet informally with the pastor, the consultative bodies of the parish (Parish Pastoral Council, Parish Finance Council, School Board where applicable), and the Dean. The Pastor Review Committee may also consult others, particularly those that the seventy-five year old pastor may suggest.

3.9.2 ROLE OF PRIEST PERSONNEL BOARD

The Pastor Review Committee will submit a report to the Chairman of the Priest Personnel Board. After the Priest Personnel Board has had a chance to review the report and make any further recommendations of their own, the report will be submitted to the Executive Director for Clergy and through him to the Archbishop.

The review should ordinarily take place six months prior to a priest's seventy-fifth birthday. Hence, it is important that a pastor who wishes to continue write this intention to the archbishop prior to that time. A similar review will then take place each year to insure that this arrangement is not too taxing for the pastor and that the appropriate pastoral responsibilities are being appropriately fulfilled.

3.9.3 MEDICAL REPORT

Since the physical and mental health of the priest has to be the significant factor in the recommendation that is made, a medical check-up and report will be expected at the time of each review.

3.9.4 CONCLUSION

It is hoped that this policy will encourage priests to continue to make themselves available. Priests whose abilities, by God's grace, make them able to continue will be able to do so in

service to the mission of the Church. It is hoped that this also offers the archbishop the informed and objective information that he needs to make a good pastoral decision.

3.10 NORMS AND PROCEDURES FOR INCARDINATION

Priests from other dioceses or from religious communities will be considered for incardination into the Archdiocese of New Orleans under the following norms:

- They have served for at least three years in the archdiocese.
- A written petition for incardination shall be addressed to the archbishop.
- Upon notification that a petition has been received, the Personnel Board will provide the priest seeking incardination with an application form. The completed form is to be returned to the Office of Clergy together with a letter from the priest's proper bishop or superior granting him permission to proceed with incardination.
- The Personnel Board will conduct the necessary investigation of the application by seeking information from all those under whom the priest has served concerning his vocational fitness, his health, and his personality qualifications.
- The applicant will be interviewed by the Executive Director for Clergy and the Personnel Board.
- Based on its findings, the Board will recommend to the archbishop the approval or rejection of the application. The Board may recommend that the priest be allowed to continue working in the archdiocese for an additional trial period not to exceed three years.

3.11 WILLS AND FUNERAL INSTRUCTIONS

Pastors, associates, and administrators shall prepare a last will and testament as well as a set of appropriate instructions regarding one's funeral and burial, and shall file either the original or copies of these documents with the Office of the Executive Director for Clergy.

3.12 FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILILTY FOR THE FUNERAL OF A PRIEST

It is expected that each priest will pre-plan his own funeral and provide the financial resources necessary. If arrangements are not made prior to death, the archdiocesan officials, in collaboration with the family, will plan the funeral and the costs will be paid by the priest's estate.

If the estate of the priest does not have sufficient funds, the archdiocese will pay for a modest funeral, which will include the following:

ITEM	COST
Casket	Approximately \$1,500
Funeral Home Services:	Approximately \$3,500
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · 3 limousines and hearse · Preparations · Coordination 	
Open and close tomb	No cost to clergy and religious
Death notice publication	Approximately \$175
Certificates	Approximately \$20
TOTAL (as of October 2004)	\$5,195

In the event that the family is not pleased with the arrangements, they may alter them and assume the financial responsibility for the additional expenses.

If a priest has not pre-arranged a place of burial, interment will be in St. Louis #3 Cemetery.

Transportation of the casket to another state should be pre-arranged by the priest and sufficient funds made available. If arrangements have not been made by the priest, and his estate or family cannot assume financial responsibility, the interment will be in St. Louis #3 Cemetery.

The Priestly Life and Ministry Committee should make available to the priests information on pre-planning of funerals, policy for funerals and discounts available.

3.13 TESTIMONIALS OF SUITABILITY

This policy only applies to testimonials concerning Safe Environment. Testimonials concerning theological orthodoxy or qualifications as a presenter in the name of the Church should be handled separately and individually. This applies only to persons coming to minister in the Archdiocese of New Orleans for a single event. Those priests being assigned to ministry in the Archdiocese of New Orleans work with the procedures of the appropriate office.

3.13.1 TESTIMONIALS ON BEHALF OF PRIESTS INCARDINATED IN THE ARCHDIOCESE OF NEW ORLEANS

Priests who are incardinated into the Archdiocese of New Orleans must request a Testimonial of Suitability from the Priest Personnel Office if they are to be engaged in ministry outside of the Archdiocese of New Orleans. Upon receiving the request, the Priest Personnel Office will send the testimonial to the appropriate ordinary. A testimonial should be requested each time a priest travels outside of the Archdiocese of New Orleans to engage in public ministry.

3.13.2 TESTIMONIALS ON BEHALF OF PRIESTS INCARDINATED INTO OTHER DIOCESES

Priests who are incardinated into other dioceses but assigned to ministry in the Archdiocese of New Orleans (extern priests) must request a Testimonial of Suitability from their appropriate ordinary in the diocese of their incardination. The Archdiocese of New Orleans is not able to offer testimonials on behalf of extern priests in the Archdiocese of New Orleans.

3.13.3 TESTIMONIALS ON BEHALF OF RELIGIOUS PRIESTS IN THE ARCHDIOCESE OF NEW ORLEANS

Religious Priests in the Archdiocese of New Orleans must request a Testimonial of Suitability from their appropriate religious superior. The Archdiocese of New Orleans is not able to issue testimonials for religious priests in the Archdiocese of New Orleans.

3.13.4 TESTIMONIALS RECEIVED IN THE ARCHDIOCESE OF NEW ORLEANS ON BEHALF OF VISITING PRIESTS

Any visiting priest who intends to exercise priestly ministry in the Archdiocese of New Orleans is required to present prior to undertaking any such ministry a Testimonial of Suitability from his ordinary, religious superior or their duly authorized delegate for such matters. All testimonials should be sent to the Office of the Archbishop of New Orleans who will forward all of them to the Priest Personnel Office. The Priest Personnel Office will acknowledge receipt and inform the appropriate local ministry site of the reception of the testimonial. The Priest Personnel Office will keep a record of all testimonials received. Testimonials are only valid for the particular time of ministry stated in the document.

3.14 PERSONAL LOANS TO PRIESTS

Loans to any priest from Church or mission funds, without the prior written consent of the Archbishop, are prohibited; such loans, when approved, are to be made through the Archdiocesan Finance Office.

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