

CLERGY SABBATICAL POLICY

Sabbatical time for clergy invites participation in the rhythm established in creation, a rhythm of creativity and work, followed by restoration and renewal. In the pattern of our Lord's life we see intense activity and contact with people alternating with time apart, time to listen and to be replenished. Clergy sabbatical time is necessary for the ongoing growth, nourishment and renewal of those who are ordained to lead the people of God and the congregations which they serve. Sabbatical allows space and time for the renewal of vision and hope, through the gift of rest from regular work schedules. The daily pressures of parochial ministry can obscure the vocation that is the foundation of the profession; sabbatical leave allows clergy the opportunity to listen to the call of the living God and to discern direction for ministry. With careful planning and good communication, clergy sabbatical may be a source of newness for the whole parish; the time apart is an opportunity for the priest to be made new, then to preach, teach and minister from that newness in Christ. As a consequence, provision for sabbatical leave will be included in the terms of call for each new pastoral relationship.

I. PURPOSE

The fundamental purpose of a clergy sabbatical is to allow rededication to priestly vocation. Therefore, sabbaticals should provide opportunities for reflection and renewal toward the end of being re-grounded in the life of God who calls us to servant leadership. Continuing education can and often should be part of sabbaticals. The clergy vocation requires certain skills and capacities appropriate to the particular situation in which a priest serves. As needed and appropriate, the clergy sabbatical may enable the priest to deepen and enhance existing vocational skills or to acquire new ones.

The normal expectation would be that sabbatical leave would be agreed upon only with a commitment to a mutually discerned period of continuing service.

II. ELIGIBILITY

A priest becomes eligible for a clergy sabbatical when:

- 1) the priest has served at least seven full years as a priest in the ordained ministry
- 2) the priest has served at least five years continuously in the congregation granting the sabbatical
- 3) the priest has followed the steps outlined in "Guidelines for Implementation of Clergy Sabbatical"

All clergy fulfilling the conditions indicated above, whether serving as rectors, vicars, or assistants, are eligible for consideration for a sabbatical. Those clergy serving the church in a non-parochial setting may also be eligible for sabbatical leave. There may be situations in which a priest may be eligible, yet sabbatical leave cannot be granted.

III. FINANCING

Each cleric is given full pay and benefits while on sabbatical.

The Diocesan Department of the Commission on Ministry, through the Executive Board and the Diocesan Council will cause to be created a Clergy Sabbatical Fund through which to assist clergy with the funding of sabbaticals.