

Priest Personnel Manual



Diocese of Bridgeport

January 1, 2023



By the Grace of God and the Authority of the Apostolic See
Bishop of Bridgeport

DECREE

+ In the name of Our Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

On January 1, 1983, my predecessor, the Most Reverend Walter W. Curtis, following the Third Synod of the Diocese of Bridgeport, published the *Pastoral Book* that contained all policies and procedures of the Diocese. Section 300 of the *Pastoral Book* was concerned with issues related to priests serving in the Diocese.

I promulgated a new *Priest Personnel Manual* for the Diocese of Bridgeport on May 31, 2017, which was to be observed for a period of one year. After further consultation, the current manual was completed and came into effect on August 22, 2019.

Now having taken into consideration additional modifications needed to address the changing circumstances that we have faced over the last few years, I the Most Reverend Frank J. Caggiano, the undersigned Fifth Bishop of the Diocese of Bridgeport, do hereby declare and decree that this *Priest Personnel Manual* shall be in effect for all priests serving in the Diocese of Bridgeport and assigned to pastoral ministry by me or my successors. All norms found in any subsequent revisions of the *Pastoral Book* of 1983, as well as the *Manual* promulgated on May 31, 2017 and on August 22, 2019 are superseded by this updated *Priest Personnel Manual*.

I order that the provisions of this manual have form and stable effect, notwithstanding anything to the contrary, even if worthy of special mention, and that they be promulgated as particular law by publication on the official diocesan website, entering into force on January 1, 2023, the Solemnity of the Holy Mother of God. The contents of the present provisions will also be duly communicated to those subject to these provisions.

Most Reverend Frank J. Caggiano
Bishop of Bridgeport

Reverend Francis Hoffmann
Vicar for Clergy

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND GENERAL NORMS

I. INTRODUCTION

A priest is a sacramental minister, “who, while bestowing the treasures of divine grace, is the representation of Christ in his own right and, while ever remaining with the limits of a humanity wounded by sin, is a mysterious presence in the world” (*Directory for the Ministry and the Life of Priests*, Introduction).

At their ordination, with the Church community as a witness, priests commit themselves to a relationship with their Diocesan Bishop based on respect and obedience, as well as to the exercise of the sacred ministry in fraternal communion with their brother priests. Diocesan priests are called to a ministry of service in the diocese for which they are ordained or into which they have been incardinated. As men of integrity, they must make every effort to develop their personal talents, and willingly and generously offer themselves for the service of the People of God and to respond with trust, respect and generosity to the needs of the particular church, as identified by the Diocesan Bishop.

A unique bond exists between the Diocesan Bishop and the diocesan priest, who functions in the name and person of the Diocesan Bishop and is a co-worker with him. This bond is sacramental, fraternal and juridical. It is a bond expressed through obedience and loyalty, but more fully realized by friendship and mutual dialogue. Furthermore, each priest is part of the presbyterate of the Diocese. He must be aware of his identity and fraternity within the community of his fellow priests. Without this sense of communion, the priest can become isolated and detached from the Diocesan Bishop, his spiritual father, and from his brother priests.

To fulfill such a demanding but rewarding ministry, the priest must possess a deep spirituality rooted in a living relationship with Jesus Christ, a wide range of sound human qualities and a solid and ongoing intellectual formation. He is called to nurture his unique bond with Jesus as Head and Shepherd of the Church precisely so that he can lead those he serves to genuine holiness of life.

This revised *Priest Personnel Manual* of the Diocese of Bridgeport is promulgated to ensure that priests, who exercise the sacred ministry in the Diocese, do so with an awareness of the rights and responsibilities that are theirs through their ordination. It reflects universal principles as applied to local needs and seeks to establish order without imposing undue structure on the presbyterate.

It is within this general context that these policies are to be interpreted. While most of these policies are intended for priests incardinated into the Diocese of Bridgeport, the principles found herein, as well as certain specific policies, are enacted also for priests of other jurisdictions and religious clerics who minister in the Diocese of Bridgeport.

A. GENERAL NORMS

1. Priests shall observe all the norms of the *Code of Canon Law*, especially those that set forth the obligations and rights of clerics (can. 273-289).
2. All priests serving in the Diocese will observe in their entirety the sacramental and liturgical norms of the Universal Church and all diocesan liturgical norms and legislation.
3. All priests must be fully compliant and remain current with all the requirements outlined in the *Safe Environment Handbook*.
4. Priests shall manifest and inculcate in their people a reverential obedience and respect for the Holy Father, the Diocesan Bishop and other ecclesiastical authorities (can. 273).
5. While generously assuming their civic obligations, priests, without the permission of the Diocesan Bishop, shall not serve in any public office or on any civic commission, nor accept an office or a responsible position in any purely secular organization.
6. All priests are prohibited from all direct involvement in partisan politics.
7. When a priest is admitted overnight in the hospital, he is to inform the Diocesan Bishop, Vicar for Clergy or his Dean.
8. Priests shall not write the last Will and Testament of any person and shall avoid all semblance of exercising undue influence on others who are making their Last Will and Testament. A priest shall not act as guardian, administrator, trustee, executor or agent for anyone except a member of his immediate family or another priest; nor shall he endorse promissory notes or post surety in any circumstances (can. 285 §4).
9. Without the permission of the Diocesan Bishop, no priest is to take on the management of goods belonging to lay persons or secular offices which entail an obligation of rendering accounts.
10. Without the permission of the Diocesan Bishop, a priest shall not initiate a civil or criminal action or voluntarily give testimony in any matter brought against another cleric or the Diocese. For all other matters in which a priest initiates a civil or criminal action or gives testimony, the priest shall provide prior written notice to the Diocesan Bishop of such action and shall keep the Diocesan Bishop regularly informed on such matters.
11. Without permission of the Diocesan Bishop, no priest, either personally or through others, shall solicit money or any other substantial gift for himself, for another or for any institution.
12. Without the permission of the Diocesan Bishop, no priest shall establish a personal or charitable foundation.
13. Priests are not to apply for, or accept, any paid position – ministerial or secular – without the prior permission of the Diocesan Bishop.
14. All priests assigned to ministry in the Diocese of Bridgeport must live in a residence approved by the Diocesan Bishop. Permission for residence outside a parish or diocesan institution may be granted in extraordinary cases solely by the Diocesan Bishop.
15. Priests who are not U.S. citizens must be compliant with all U.S. immigration laws and practices.
16. On a weekly basis, all priests are required to check the diocesan email account assigned to them and to use only that account for any diocesan related correspondence.
17. The violation of any of these norms may result in a canonical penalty.

CHAPTER TWO

DIOCESAN SUPPORT FOR PRIESTS

I. OFFICE OF CLERGY

The Office of Clergy is charged with the responsibility of caring for the administrative needs of priests, providing ongoing priestly formation and maintaining priest personnel files and records related to their ministry.

A. PRIEST PERSONNEL FILES

1. Access to personnel files is strictly limited to the Diocesan Bishop, the Vicar General, the Vicar for Clergy and others who have the explicit permission of the Diocesan Bishop.
2. Each priest may request access to view the contents of his own personnel file. Inspection of the file may be arranged by appointment with the Vicar for Clergy or Vicar General. While a priest may not copy or remove anything from his file, he may add any explanation or notation he deems clarifying or helpful.
3. These files contain each priest's biographical information, sacramental records, academic and seminary records (including medical and psychological reports), appointment letters, letters of commendation, estate and funeral planning sheets, publications and other pertinent information. Ordinarily, anonymous letters will not be placed in a priest's file, nor will they be acted upon unless there are extraordinary circumstances that necessitate follow up.
4. Letters of complaint will be filed at the discretion of the Diocesan Bishop, the Vicar General or the Vicar for Clergy, based on the credibility and the gravity of the complaint.
 - a) Complaints will be handled under the principle of subsidiarity in which the proper Dean investigates the matter and attempts, if possible, an acceptable resolution between the priest in question and the complainant. The Vicar for Clergy should be informed of any resolution.
 - b) In all cases of complaint, the priest has the right to utilize procedures as established in the *Code of Canon Law* to protect his good reputation (can. 220).
5. A priest may at any time submit documentation of awards, continuing education, publications, achievements in ministry and any other material he deems relevant for his file.

II. DIOCESAN SUPPORT POSITIONS

A. VICAR GENERAL

For a description of this role, please refer to can. 475-481.

B. JUDICIAL VICAR

For a description of this role, please refer to can. 1420-1427.

C. DEAN (VICAR FORANE)

Deans, also known as Vicars Forane, (can. 553-555), who report directly to the Diocesan Bishop and Vicar General, help to foster fraternity among clergy and oversee regional planning efforts. In their respective Deaneries, they will provide fraternal and spiritual support for the priests, especially the newly ordained, newly appointed pastors and those who are ill, elderly or experiencing difficulties.

1. Term of Office

- a. The Dean is appointed for the term of three years. This term may be renewed only once at the discretion of the Diocesan Bishop.
- b. The Dean must reside within the territory of his own Deanery. If a Dean is moved to an assignment outside of his Deanery, he loses his office as a Dean.
- c. Any executive powers granted to Deans apply only to the faithful and clergy residing within his Deanery, unless stated otherwise.
- d. For a just cause, the Diocesan Bishop may remove a priest from the office of Dean and assign another to finish the term.
- e. The Dean receives the Ministerial Stipend for exercising the office. In addition, the Diocese will provide a discretionary budget to each Dean to cover food expenses and related costs for deanery meetings.

2. Appointment of a Dean

- a. Those who qualify to serve as a Dean are the pastors who serve within a given Deanery, as well as, retired priests who live within the deanery.
- b. Given the necessary collaboration that must exist between the Diocesan Bishop and the Deans, the selection of Deans will be made through direct appointment by the Diocesan Bishop.

3. Responsibilities to the Diocese

- a. The Dean serves as a member of the Council of Deans and an *ex officio* member of the Presbyteral Council. He is expected to attend all the meetings of both Councils, which will be scheduled on a regular basis throughout the year.
- b. Individual Deans may request not to serve on the Presbyteral Council. In those cases, a deanery representative will be elected for that Deanery to serve in his place. As close collaborators with the Diocesan Bishop and Vicar General, Deans will be called occasionally to advise the Diocesan Bishop on matters of importance, in addition to the abovementioned consultative functions.
- c. The Dean might be called to represent the Diocesan Bishop on occasion. In such cases, proper instructions will be provided.

4. Responsibilities to the Deanery

- a. The Dean will directly represent the Diocesan Bishop to the clergy in his Deanery and at the same time bring the concerns and comments of the clergy to the Diocesan Bishop and other appropriate *fora*. Special attention and assistance will be offered to newly ordained priests, newly installed pastors and any priest who is ill or facing personal difficulties.
- b. The Dean will provide immediate assistance to the clergy in his Deanery when they face the need for conflict resolution, ministerial support, and support in emergencies. The meetings should take place one on one in a neutral and convenient setting.
- c. The Dean will conduct Deanery meetings with all priests four times a year. These meetings should include a time of prayer, a time for discussion and planning, and a meal. Two of the four Deanery meetings each year will also include the deacons of the Deanery.
- d. In addition to the annual parish visit, the Dean is encouraged to meet with the deacons of the Deanery either individually or collectively once a year.
- e. The Dean is responsible to oversee all regional, strategic or pastoral planning processes that involve any or all of the parishes in his Deanery. Fostering such regional planning is of the highest importance. The Dean will work closely with the Diocesan Bishop and Chancellor in this work.
- f. In conflict situations involving a Dean, it is the Vicar General who will assign another Dean to assist in resolving the issue.

5. Other Basic Duties

- a. The Dean will visit parishes annually to attend to the following:
 - 1) Assessment and discussion of the condition of the church and other parish buildings and their interior furnishings.
 - 2) Examination of the parish sacramental registers and *visum* (initial or stamp) the registers.
 - 3) Visitation with the parish clergy on an individual basis.
 - 4) Upon completion of the visit, the Dean will write a short report of the visitation that will be mailed to the pastor and Vicar General of the Diocese.
 - 5) When a Dean's parish is to be visited, it is the Vicar General who will assign another Dean for this task.
- b. Upon learning of the death of a priest or a deacon, the Dean may be asked to assist the parish and the Diocese with necessary arrangements. These might include, but are not limited to:
 - 1) Facilitating communication between the Diocese, the parish, and the family.
 - 2) Securing the estate of the deceased person.
 - 3) In case of death of a pastor, arranging for parish Masses until the Diocese makes permanent arrangements, securing the goods of the parish, and be present to the faithful of the parish.
 - 4) The Dean may be asked to preside at the Mass of Transferal of the deceased priest, the evening before the Mass of Christian Burial.

D. COUNCIL OF DEANS

The Council of Deans consists of the Diocesan Bishop, the Vicar General, the Vicar for Clergy, the Chancellor and the Deans of the Diocese. The Council meets on a regular basis, usually every month. Its purpose is to assist the Diocesan Bishop in assigning or transferring priests, approving requests for continuing education, incardination, leaves of absence, sabbaticals and retirements, as well as assessing the needs of various diocesan ministries.

Each member of the Council of Deans is to observe strict confidentiality in all matters discussed at meetings pertaining to assignments. The observance of confidentiality binds each member not only during his term on the Council of Deans but also afterwards.

The recommendations of the Council of Deans are advisory in nature and subject to the approval of the Diocesan Bishop. The Diocesan Bishop reserves the right to make any ministerial appointment without prior consultation.

E. EPISCOPAL VICARS

Episcopal Vicars in the Diocese of Bridgeport act as the Diocesan Bishop's personal representative in a particular aspect of diocesan life - either in the oversight of a particular initiative affecting the entire Diocese or in service to the pastoral needs of an ethnic community or a specific group of persons. For a description of this role, please refer to the *Code of Canon Law* (can. 476).

1. Vicar for Clergy

For a description of this role, please refer to can. 475-481.

2. Episcopal Vicar for Liturgy and Worship

The Episcopal Vicar for Liturgy and Worship serves the Diocesan Bishop, clergy and laity of the Diocese of Bridgeport in all matters relating to Sacred Liturgy, Sacred Music and Sacred Art & Architecture. In service to the Diocesan Bishop, he acts as his primary liturgical advisor, and helps direct the preparation and planning of all liturgical celebrations in the Diocese for which the Bishop is the celebrant. From his role as Director of the Office of Liturgy and Worship, he acts as diocesan spokesman for all liturgical matters, and crafts liturgical norms or guidelines when necessary or when requested by the Bishop. He also assists in the liturgical catechesis and formation of seminarians and men in formation for the diaconate.

In supporting the clergy of the diocese, the Episcopal Vicar for Liturgy and Worship acts as their principal liturgical consultant, responding to any needs or issues pertaining to Sacred Liturgy, Sacred Music and Sacred Art & Architecture. He is to help all clergy to attentively observe and reverently participate in the mysteries contained in the liturgical rites, advising them on their proper practice and ensuring unity, harmony and lawfulness in all liturgical

celebrations. In fulfilling this task, he is to visit parishes as needed or when specifically requested, especially when conducting liturgical catechesis or training liturgical ministers.

3. Episcopal Vicar for Senior Priests

The Episcopal Vicar for Senior Priests, who reports to the Diocesan Bishop, Vicar General and the Vicar for Clergy, in collaboration with the Office of Clergy, will assist priests of the Diocese of Bridgeport who are nearing retirement age, are in the process of retirement or are already retired. This includes senior active priests.

When a priest reaches the age of 65, he should make an appointment with the Episcopal Vicar for Senior Priests to begin discussing his plans for retirement. The Episcopal Vicar will work with each priest regarding retirement procedures, pension payments, housing and benefits. The Episcopal Vicar should meet individually with each retired priest annually.

4. Other Episcopal Vicars

The Diocesan Bishop appoints vicars to oversee the special needs of various racial and ethnic groups present in significant numbers in the diocese.

- Episcopal Vicar for Black Catholics
- Episcopal Vicar for Brazilian Catholics
- Episcopal Vicar for Filipino Catholics
- Episcopal Vicar for Haitian Catholics
- Episcopal Vicar for Hispanic Catholics
- Episcopal Vicar for Polish Catholics
- Episcopal Vicar for Vietnamese Catholics

F. PRESBYTERAL COUNCIL

The Code of Canon Law requires each Diocesan Bishop to convene a “senate” of clergy whose role is to advise the Diocesan Bishop in the matters pertaining to the governance and spiritual good of the People of God of the local Church. This Council represents and concretizes collaboration between the diocesan clergy and the Diocesan Bishop.

Membership of the Presbyteral Council of the Diocese of Bridgeport consists of: the Vicar General (*ex officio*); the Judicial Vicar (*ex officio*); the Chancellor, if the position is held by a priest (*ex officio*); the Vicar for Clergy (*ex officio*); the Director of Seminarians (*ex officio*); the Vocations Director (*ex officio*); the Rector of Redemptoris Mater Diocesan Missionary Seminary (*ex officio*); Deans (*ex officio, Part Two, Section 3a*); a representative of religious clergy appointed by the Diocesan Bishop and four elected age group representatives:

- 1) Representing clergy group with ordination years 0-14.
- 2) Representing clergy group with ordination years 15-29.
- 3) Representing clergy group with ordination years 30+.
- 4) Representing retired clergy (can. 497).

G. COLLEGE OF CONSULTORS

From among the members of the Presbyteral Council the Diocesan Bishop will appoint no fewer than six and no more than twelve priests to constitute the College of Consultors (can. 502 §1-§2).

H. COMMITTEE OF PASTORS

The Committee of Pastors is a group of pastors appointed by the Diocesan Bishop whose task is to advise the Diocesan Bishop in cases where a pastor's ministry has been deemed to be harmful or ineffective for the parish. Canon 1740 states that, "when the ministry of any parish priest has for some reason become harmful or at least ineffective, even though this occurs without any serious fault on his part, he can be removed from the parish by the diocesan bishop."

The Diocesan Bishop convenes the committee upon learning with certainty (determined by a preliminary investigation) that the ministry of a pastor meets this criteria. The committee will review the results of a preliminary investigation with the Diocesan Bishop and propose causes of action to him that he will take into consideration before taking any administrative action.

Even though the task of the committee is consultative in nature, the Diocesan Bishop will weigh with care the measures that the committee proposes. Any administrative action deemed warranted by the Diocesan Bishop will of course, be in accord with the provisions established by universal law.

I. MINISTER FOR PRIESTS

1. The Minister for Priests, who is appointed to serve directly by the Diocesan Bishop, will provide a forum in which a priest may wish to address issues that are of a personal nature and that do not necessarily need to be brought to the attention of the Diocesan Bishop, the proper Dean or diocesan officials. The Diocese will provide the Minister for Priests with information and resources that will enable him to direct priests toward professional help when requested.
2. In general, the Minister for Priests will serve as an advocate or ombudsman for the needs of the priests of the Diocese of Bridgeport. Key to this position is **confidentiality**, which will extend to all issues, save those barred by legal considerations or when the priest has indicated that he may do direct harm to himself or another person. As a matter of policy, the Minister for Priests, unless a priest gives his permission to do so, will not reveal to anyone the identity of priests who have contacted him.
3. Specifically, a priest may wish to speak to the Minister for Priests when he:
 - a) Is feeling depressed, sad, anxious or lonely and is not sure where to turn for help.
 - b) Has or may be developing an addiction of any kind (e.g., substance abuse, pornography, gambling, etc.) and needs references for professional guidance.
 - c) Is having a problem with a personal relationship involving another priest, a member of the lay faithful or with a member of his own family.

- d) Thinks he may need a change of assignment or a temporary leave of absence from ministry but does not feel comfortable speaking to his proper Dean.
 - e) Would like advice about finding a spiritual director, counselor, psychologist/psychiatrist or medical doctor.
 - f) Needs information about conferences, classes (including pronunciation skills classes) that may assist him in his priestly ministry.
 - g) Would like information about retreat houses where he can take his annual retreat.
 - h) Finds himself in financial difficulty.
 - i) Faces other similar issues not otherwise listed here.
4. Although the Minister for Priests may serve as one's spiritual director, the two roles are distinct and should not be confused as one and the same. Issues of a spiritual nature would best be discussed with one's spiritual director first before discussing them with the Minister for Priests.

J. MENTORS

A mentor is ordinarily an experienced pastor, appointed by the Diocesan Bishop, who provides guidance and moral support to first time pastors or first time parochial administrators. A permanent deacon may also be appointed to serve as a mentor in special cases. A mentor is ordinarily appointed to serve for a two year term.

More specifically, mentors will assist first time pastors to transition from a non-pastorate ministry to a pastorate. The role of the mentor is not evaluative in nature. His service is simply to be of assistance.

1. Obligations of Mentors

- a. The newly appointed pastor and his mentor will meet at least three times a year for two years. The meetings can take place in person, via Zoom or by phone.
- b. To review with the newly appointed pastor his experience as a first time pastor.
- c. To provide advice and answer questions from the newly appointed pastor.
- d. To direct the newly appointed pastor to resources that will be of assistance in his pastorate.
- e. To be available at any reasonable time when the newly appointed pastor has questions or concerns.
- f. To offer intentional fraternal support and pray for the new pastor.

2. Obligations of the Newly Appointed Pastors

- a. A first time pastor may be asked to present to the Diocesan Bishop three names of priests, in order of preference, whom he would like to consider for his mentor. The Diocesan Bishop may select a mentor from that list or recommend another.
- b. He is also asked to faithfully schedule meetings with his mentor, avail himself of the experience and expertise of his mentor, welcome whatever advice his mentor should offer and pray for his mentor.

K. DIRECTOR OF VOCATIONS

The diocesan Director of Vocations is responsible to promote the discernment of priestly vocations through marketing, outreach, and coordination of discernment events. He also accompanies men in their discernment of God's will through the fostering of personal relationships and manages the admission process to evaluate and recommend admission for potential seminarians. The Director of Vocations also works to collaborate with other priests and the Vocations Admissions and Advisory Board to create a culture of vocations throughout the diocese.

L. DIRECTOR OF SEMINARIANS

The diocesan Director of Seminarians is the principal liaison between the Bishop and the seminarians of the diocese regarding priestly formation after seminarians are accepted by the Bishop into the priestly formation program. Among his responsibilities are visiting each seminary once a semester and meeting with each seminarian individually, maintaining communication with the seminarians and their formation faculty, establishing and managing a budget for the seminarians, working with the Rector of the *Redemptoris Mater* Diocesan Mission Seminary of Bridgeport and closely collaborating with the diocesan Director of Vocations.

M. VOCATIONS ADMISSIONS AND ADVISORY BOARD

The mission of the Vocations Admissions and Advisory Board is to support the Diocesan Bishop and the Director of Vocations in the screening and evaluation of applicants for priestly formation in the Diocese of Bridgeport. Comprised of lay and clergy members, the board receives summary evaluations of applicants for priestly formation from the Director of Vocations. Based on the discussion of these evaluations in relationship to the goals of priestly formation, the Board offers advisory counsel to the Diocesan Bishop, through the Director of Vocations, on whether or not to admit a candidate to the program of priestly formation. While final decisions about admission remain the exclusive right of the Diocesan Bishop - a decision that he can make even without input from the Board - the Board is a valuable resource in generating discussion and perspective on potential candidates for ordination.

N. DIRECTOR OF CAMPUS MINISTRY

The diocesan Director of Campus Ministry is responsible for the development and oversight of ministry to the campus communities at all secular colleges and universities located within the territorial boundaries of the Diocese of Bridgeport: Housatonic Community College, Norwalk Community College, The University of Bridgeport, The University of Connecticut at Stamford, and Western Connecticut State University. The Director of Campus Ministry works to develop and implement a vision of comprehensive campus ministry that forms the faith community, appropriates the faith, forms Christian conscience, facilitates personal development, develops Catholic student leadership, and promotes vocations. He is also

expected to collaborate, whenever possible, with the campus ministry office of both Fairfield University and Sacred Heart University.

O. PROFESSION OF FAITH AND OATH OF OFFICE

All members of the Curia listed above are required to make the Profession of Faith and take an Oath of Office (can. 833). These canonical requirements will be arranged through the Office of the Bishop.

CHAPTER THREE

PRIESTLY MINISTRY

I. FACULTIES

A. GENERAL NORMS

1. Upon ordination or incardination, faculties are given to each diocesan priest. These faculties remain in force unless explicitly withdrawn in accord with the universal law of the Church.
2. Non-incardinated priests and ordained members of Religious Congregations are granted the faculties of the Diocese of Bridgeport by reason of their appointment by the Diocesan Bishop to a ministry within the Diocese and for the duration of the assignment.
3. Religious priests assigned to their respective houses or ministries in the Diocese of Bridgeport must request from the Diocesan Bishop the appropriate faculties for their circumstances.
4. Visiting priests who enjoy the faculties of another diocese, and who have provided a letter of suitability and received permission to minister in the Diocese of Bridgeport, also enjoy the faculties to preach and to celebrate the sacrament of Reconciliation in the Diocese of Bridgeport, unless those faculties have been revoked.
5. All requests for faculties and for permission to exercise priestly ministry in the Diocese should be directed to the Diocesan Bishop in writing. Records of all requests are kept in the files of the Office of Clergy.

B. THE LITURGICAL EXERCISE OF FACULTIES

1. In the exercise of their faculties, all priests are to follow dutifully the prescriptions contained within all liturgical books of the Universal Church, and are to ensure that they employ the most recently promulgated ritual books in all liturgical celebrations.
2. The Sacramental Norms of the Diocese of Bridgeport are contained within documentation separate from this manual, and are binding for the proper celebration of the sacraments throughout the Diocese. All priests are to obtain, read and follow these prescriptions in the liturgical exercise of their sacramental ministry.

C. THE SACRAMENT OF CONFIRMATION

1. During the Easter Vigil a priest who baptizes RCIA catechumens, or receives RCIA candidates to the Church, by law, has the faculty to confirm these persons at the same ceremony (RCIA norms, 232).
2. By the Diocesan Bishop's general delegation, pastors have been given the faculty to confirm adult Catholics who lack this Sacrament at a single parish Mass celebrated on Pentecost Sunday. For all other cases, the individual delegation ("a mandate") of the Diocesan Bishop is needed (can. 884 §1). Priests seeking such delegation must do so in writing, providing the reasons why the delegation is sought, the name of the candidate

and the intended date and place of the ceremony. All requests should be made in a timely manner.

D. THE MOST HOLY EUCHARIST

1. Permission is granted to priests, for a just cause, to celebrate the Eucharist twice on weekdays, and, if pastoral necessity requires it, three times on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation (can. 905 §2). When, given extreme pastoral situations, a priest may need to celebrate four or more Masses on a Sunday or Holy Day, he should inform his Dean.
2. Permission is granted for a priest who is ill or elderly, if it is difficult for him to stand, to celebrate the Eucharist publicly while seated (can. 930 §1).
3. The faculty is given to all priests in the diocese to dispense persons, in individual cases and for a just cause, from the one hour Eucharistic fast (can. 87 §1; 137 §1; and 919 §1).

E. THE SACRAMENT OF PENANCE

1. The habitual faculty to hear confessions is granted to all priests in the diocese whenever this faculty is not given by the law itself (can. 969). The Diocesan Bishop can revoke this habitual faculty for individual priests for a grave cause (can. 974). Priests who have the habitual faculty to hear confessions, either by office or by grant of the ordinary of the place of incardination or domicile, can exercise that faculty everywhere unless a local ordinary has revoked it for his territory (can. 967 §2; and 974 §2-§3).
2. Priests with the diocesan faculties can absolve anyone from all censures, except those reserved:
 - a) Cases involving desecration of the consecrated species (can. 1367).
 - b) Use of physical force against the Roman Pontiff (can. 1370).
 - c) Absolution of a partner in a sin against the sixth commandment (can. 1378 §1).
 - d) Consecrating a bishop without a pontifical mandate or being consecrated a bishop without a pontifical mandate (can. 1382).
 - e) Direct violation of the sacramental seal (can. 1388).
3. Aside from these noted exceptions, any confessor may absolve and remit in the internal forum the *latae sententiae* penalty of excommunication for:
 - a) Abortion (can. 1398) with the recent law promulgated by Pope Francis on November 20, 2016, this faculty applies to all priests and can be exercised universally throughout the Church.
 - b) Apostasy, heresy or schism (can. 1364 §1) provided that these penalties have not been declared. This faculty can be used by priests within the Diocese of Bridgeport for any penitent. When ministering outside the Diocese, this faculty can be used only for members of the Diocese of Bridgeport.

F. THE SACRAMENT OF MATRIMONY

1. In virtue of their office and within the confines of the Diocese of Bridgeport, pastors (and parochial administrators) have the faculty to assist at the marriages of not only their own parishioners, but also those who are not their parishioners, provided that one of them is of the Latin rite (can. 1109).

2. This faculty is granted to parochial vicars to assist at marriages within the boundaries of the Diocese of Bridgeport (can. 1111 §1). The delegated parochial vicar can sub delegate this faculty in individual cases (can. 137 §3).
3. If the ceremony takes place in the Diocese of Bridgeport but in a parish other than where the priest is assigned, the permission of the pastor (or parochial administrator) of the place is required.
4. To all priests is granted the faculty to permit the marriage of two baptized persons, one of whom was baptized into the Catholic Church or received into it after baptism and who has not departed from the Catholic Church by a formal act; and the other who belongs to a church or ecclesial community not in full communion with the Catholic Church. This permission is not to be given unless the conditions mentioned in can. 1125 are fulfilled. Record of such permission must be attached to Pre-Matrimonial Investigation and a copy of the Form for Marriage Dispensation be sent to the Tribunal (can. 1124).
5. Priests do not have permission to dispense from disparity of cult (a marriage between a Catholic and a non-baptized person) or canonical form. He should refer all such cases to the Diocesan Tribunal.

G. THE CELEBRATION OF FUNERALS

1. Permission is granted to pastors and parochial vicars to celebrate, without recourse to the Diocesan Bishop, ecclesiastical funeral rites, including Mass, in the presence of the cremated remains of the body of a deceased person, with due respect for can. 1184 (Indult, Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, Prot. No. 1589/96/L; Order of Christian Funerals, 426).
2. To all pastors and parochial vicars is given the faculty to allow ecclesiastical funeral rites for deceased children who were not baptized but whom the parents intended to baptize (can. 1183 §2).
3. To all pastors and parochial vicars is given the faculty to allow ecclesiastical funeral rites for baptized persons who belong to a non-Catholic Church or ecclesial community, provided this is not clearly contrary to the wishes of the deceased and provided that their own minister is not available (can. 1183 §3).

H. HOLY DAYS OF OBLIGATION/DAYS OF PENANCE

The faculty is given to all priests, in individual cases and for a just cause, to dispense persons from the obligation of observing a Sunday or Holy Day or days of penance, or to commute the obligation into other pious works. This faculty can be exercised on behalf of persons who belong to the diocese or who are visiting within the diocese. Pastors have this faculty by the law itself. This faculty is hereby delegated to all priests (can. 87; 1245; and 1249-1253).

Please note that the obligation to attend Sunday Mass cannot be dispensed to any congregation that attends a Mass celebrated on a Saturday before 4:00 PM.

II. TESTIMONIAL OF SUITABILITY

A. VISITING CLERGY FROM OUTSIDE THE DIOCESE

1. In response to the USCCB *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People* and in accord with the *Safe Environment Handbook* of the Diocese of Bridgeport, it is the shared responsibility of the Diocese and of every cleric to ensure the safety of children and vulnerable persons within the diocese on occasions when a priest or deacon from outside the diocese visits and serves in any ministerial capacity.
2. Any visiting priest or deacon not incardinated in the Diocese of Bridgeport who intends to serve at any ministerial event (e.g., funeral, wedding or both an ordination and Mass of Thanksgiving) and who will not stay overnight in lodging owned by the diocese, by the host parish or institution or by a host family, must provide a testimonial of suitability from his bishop, eparch (for an Eastern Rite priest) or religious superior.
3. Any visiting priest or deacon who will stay overnight in lodging owned by the diocese, by the host parish or institution or by a host family must also provide proof of background check and VIRTUS training and sign the Executive Summary of the *Safe Environment Handbook*.
 - a) All documents must be sent to the Office of Clergy for archival purposes (See Appendix A: "Authorization and Release for the Procurement of an Investigative Report" and Appendix B: "Executive Summary for Clergy and Men in Formation").
4. Any visiting priest or deacon not incardinated in the Diocese of Bridgeport who intends to provide regular and consistent ministerial assistance in the Diocese (e.g., regularly scheduled celebration of sacraments) or who will remain for an extended time in the Diocese of Bridgeport, and any priest coming from a foreign country who intends to minister in any capacity (e.g. mission appeal) must:
 - a) Provide a testimonial of suitability from his bishop, eparch (for an Eastern Rite priest) or religious superior.
 - b) Provide proof of background check and for international priests, submit the Authorization and Release for the Procurement of an Investigative Report, a copy of passport (See Appendix C: "Declaration of Consent" form).
 - c) Provide proof of VIRTUS training.
 - d) Sign the Executive Summary of the *Safe Environment Handbook*.All of this documentation must be sent to the Office of Clergy for archival purposes.
5. It is the responsibility of the host parish or institution:
 - a) To communicate all Safe Environment requirements beforehand to visiting priests or deacons.
 - b) To pay for any background checks for a visiting priest or deacon, including international background checks that can take up to five weeks to process.
 - c) To make sure that the visiting priest or deacon is made aware that in the State of Connecticut all clergy are mandated to report orally to the DCF Care-line within 12 hours of suspecting that a child has been abused or neglected (800-842-2288).
6. All testimonials of suitability must be signed within six months of the date of the ministerial event(s) to take place in the Diocese of Bridgeport.

7. All background checks must be administered through or approved by the Office of Safe Environments and have been conducted within the last five years.
8. These requirements apply to the celebration of weddings, funerals, Sunday, Holy Day and weekday Masses, ordinations, parish missions, retreats, confessions, baptisms and any act of ministerial function. It also applies to concelebrants as well as principal celebrants.

B. DIOCESAN CLERGY MINISTERING OUTSIDE THE DIOCESE

1. Priests of the Diocese of Bridgeport who wish to travel outside of the diocese for ministry and who need a testimonial of suitability should request one from the Office of Clergy at least four weeks before the ministerial event. In the case of funerals, the request should be made as soon as possible (See Appendix D: "Request for Testimonials and Statement of Suitability for Diocesan Clergy").
2. Letters of suitability and *celebrats* will only be provided to those priests who are up-to-date with VIRTUS training and a background check (required every five years) and who have signed the Executive Summary of the *Safe Environment Handbook*. No exceptions will be made.

III. MINISTERIAL ASSIGNMENTS

The *Code of Canon Law* sets forth that clerics are obliged to accept and fulfill, unless excused by lawful impediment, the office commended to them by their Ordinary (can. 274 §1). When assigning priests to ministry, the Diocesan Bishop considers the mission of Christ as well as the welfare of the entire community of the Church. While it is a human process subject to the limitations of the individuals entrusted with this responsibility, it is a process prayerfully undertaken with faith and the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Occasionally, priests are asked to undertake challenging and difficult assignments in response to the needs of the Church. In such circumstances, the priest's spiritual, emotional and physical needs will be considered, along with sensitivity to the needs of the local community, recognizing that the priest's personal well-being benefits also the community where he serves. While individual preferences of priests will be given serious consideration, the pastoral needs of the Diocese will take priority. Priests are expected to understand this and respond generously through obedience they promised to their Ordinary on the day of their ordination.

A. GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

1. When assigned to a ministry, the priest will receive a letter of appointment from the Diocesan Bishop. Normally, all assignments will be published in *The Fairfield County Catholic*.
2. Priests holding an office who wish to resign for legitimate reasons are asked to submit a letter of resignation from their office to the Diocesan Bishop. Acceptance or deferral of the resignation remains the decision of the Diocesan Bishop.
3. Any priest may ask the proper Dean to voice his concerns or opinions to the Council of Deans. If necessary, any priest may address the Council of Deans personally or in writing.

4. Assignment changes may be initiated by the Diocesan Bishop, by the individual priest, by the pastor of a parish or by the supervisor of the institution to which the priest is assigned.
5. Before making any final decision regarding the assignment of a newly ordained priest, the Diocesan Bishop may also seek the advice of the Director of Seminarians, the Rector of Redemptoris Mater Diocesan Missionary Seminary and the respective rectors of the major seminaries where the men studied.

B. THE OFFICE OF THE PASTOR

1. Criteria for the Selection of a Pastor

Canon 528 of the *Code of Canon Law* provides the basic framework for the criteria that is used when appointing a priest as pastor. He is to manifest:

- a) Spiritual Qualities - be a man of faith with ability to communicate faith to others, spiritual leadership, and prayerful.
- b) Theological/Liturgical Astuteness – presumes personal, spiritual and professional growth by participation in continuing education programs and study, aware of liturgical norms and be able to celebrate accordingly.
- c) Leadership Ability - be comfortable with delegation, staff meeting communications, accountability, motivational skills and conflict management.
- d) Collegial Style – the ability to work with others, i.e., priests, religious, laity.
- e) Administrative Ability - managerial, financial, and public relational skills.
- f) Availability – be personable, present to people and shares in duty.
- g) Physical and Emotional Health.
- h) Diocesan Identification - present at diocesan functions, supportive of and cooperative with diocesan programs and causes.
- i) Specific Skills - language, community organizations, etc.; depending on the needs of the parish.
- j) Ecumenical Interest - reach out to cooperate with and participate in ecumenical endeavors in the area.
- k) Community and Civic Interest.

2. Vacancy

A pastorate becomes vacant in several ways, among which are retirement, expiration of term, resignation, transfer, removal or death.

- a) When a pastorate is vacant or will soon be vacant, the Vicar for Clergy may send out a vacancy announcement and parish profile to all priests. The parish profile will include a brief history and the most recent census of the parish, as well as information about the clergy and staff, ministries and financial highlights.
- b) Any priest in good standing who is interested in being considered for the vacant pastorate may submit a letter to the Vicar for Clergy within the deadline specified. In this letter, the priest is to highlight his personal qualifications that support the request, including, his leadership ability and experience, financial expertise,

human relations skills, organizational and planning skills and most recent educational updates.

- c) Any letter expressing interest on the part of a priest is not an "application" for the pastorate but offered as an aid in the discernment of who is best to be appointed to the vacant position.
- d) Shortly after the vacancy announcement, the Diocesan Bishop, the Vicar for Clergy or the respective Dean ordinarily may meet with the trustees, the pastoral council and the finance council of the parish to hear from them regarding the qualities desired in the new pastor.
- e) The Diocesan Bishop can make a direct appointment or request that the Council of Deans recommend other names for his consideration.
- f) The Diocesan Bishop reserves the right to make appointments as he may see fit.

3. Term of Office

- a. Pastors are ordinarily appointed for a term of six years, at which time he will be reviewed by the Diocesan Bishop. After a satisfactory review, he can be renewed for one additional six year term at the discretion of the Diocesan Bishop.
 - 1) Before the start of the sixth year of his term, a pastor must submit a letter to the Diocesan Bishop indicating whether he would like to be considered for a second term. Upon completing his second six year term, the pastor will submit a letter of resignation to the Diocesan Bishop.
 - 2) Upon completing his first or second term as pastor, a priest who is 68 years of age or older will be allowed to remain as pastor until he submits a letter of resignation six months in advance of either reaching 75 years of age or at an earlier age commensurate with optional full retirement beginning at age 71.
 - 3) After completing two terms (12 years), a pastor should expect to be reassigned.
- b. A new pastor lawfully takes possession of his office when he is duly installed by the Diocesan Bishop or his delegate, unless he has been dispensed from this procedure (can. 527). Before a formal installation procedure, the Diocesan Bishop may ask the priest to assume the functions of a pastor on the date indicated in his assignment letter. When this is the case, the Diocesan Bishop will delegate all the faculties proper to a pastor by law so that the priest may fulfill the duties of pastor until an installation date can be properly determined. Up until the moment of installation, the priest may still use the title "pastor."
 - 1) An Administrative and Financial Review by the Diocesan Office of Finance ordinarily will be conducted before a new pastorate begins.
- c. The pastor must submit a letter of resignation six months in advance of reaching 75 years of age (can. 538 §3) or at an earlier age commensurate with optional full retirement beginning at age 71. Acceptance or deferral of the resignation remains the decision of the Diocesan Bishop.
 - 1) Once his successor has been appointed and an effective date has been set, the outgoing pastor should make provision to vacate the pastor's quarters as soon as reasonably possible to accommodate the new pastor.

- 2) Any former pastor, to allow the new pastor to flourish, should avoid frequent visits back to the parish and should use discretion and prudence when invited to celebrate the sacraments of former parishioners.
- 3) The retiring pastor may not reside in the rectory of the parish from which he is retiring without having the explicit permission of the Diocesan Bishop and the agreement of the new pastor.

4. Installation

- a. Each new pastor, whether a diocesan or religious order priest, will be installed formally by the Diocesan Bishop, Vicar General or proper Dean during a regularly scheduled parish Mass within a reasonable time of his appointment date. The date and principal celebrant of the installation will be arranged through the Office of the Bishop.
 - 1) At the Mass of Installation, the pastor will proclaim the Gospel and preach. He will also sign the Profession of Faith and Oath of Fidelity, which will be co-signed by an approved ecclesiastical authority (See Appendix E: "Profession of Faith" and "Oath of Fidelity").
 - 2) The local Dean should make every effort to attend the installation ceremony.

5. Duties and Responsibilities

- a. The pastor should be familiar with his duties and responsibilities as outlined in Canon Law (can. 519-537), being attentive to the local norms indicated below.
- b. The pastor must always provide coverage for sacramental emergencies by being regularly present in the rectory, providing an emergency line or by having another priest similarly available.
- c. The pastor should be mindful of his duty to encourage healthy priestly fraternity among those living in the rectory.
- d. It is the duty of the pastor to provide for necessary coverage during the time of a parochial vicar's authorized absence and his own from the parish.
- e. With the Diocesan Bishop's permission, a pastor who lives alone in a rectory may reside in the rectory of another parish, if the pastor of the other parish does not object.
- f. If no hospital chaplain has been appointed by the Diocesan Bishop, it is the duty of the pastor of the territorial parish, in collaboration with the proper Dean, to care for all Catholics in public and private hospitals and other healthcare institutions within the parish boundaries.
- g. The pastor is responsible for the establishment of a parish finance council, which will assist him in the administration of the goods of the parish (can. 537; and 532), as well as a parish council (can. 536).
- h. The pastor must do his best to plan and conduct parish activities with the advice and cooperation of the Parish Council and its committees, utilizing the administrative skills and expertise of those with whom he collaborates, namely, fellow priests, religious, lay employees and parishioners.
- i. Every pastor will be required by the Office of the Chancellor to provide a Mass count twice a year and an annual statistical summary of the parish.

- j. The pastor shall report immediately to the local Dean the hospitalization or serious illness of any of the clergy assigned or residing in the parish, including himself.
- k. The pastor shall not permit any parish activity that could be a source of scandal.
- l. The pastor, or his appointed delegate, must be trained in Parish SOFT or whatever may be the current approved diocesan database in use, and ensure that all parish records are entered accurately and in a timely manner.
- m. In addition to the parish registers required by Canon Law, namely, for baptisms, confirmations, marriages, deaths, etc., the pastor shall also keep the following:
 - 1) A sick call register for recording anointing of the sick.
 - 2) A current list of sick parishioners to whom Communion is brought at regular intervals.
 - 3) Pre-Matrimonial Investigation book.
 - 4) The names (inserted in the baptismal register) of baptized converts received into the Church.
 - 5) Annual reports and budgets.
 - 6) All documents pertaining to the annual corporate meeting of the parish's trustees.
 - 7) All minutes of the parish's Finance Council and Pastoral Council meetings.
 - 8) Records of any cemetery for whose administration the parish is responsible.
 - 9) A permanent file of all official correspondence from the Office of the Bishop to the pastor.
- n. Pastors must take care that the record books are kept properly, completely and up-to-date. These books are to be kept in the parish office in a locked, fire resistant safe. Electronic scanning of older records as well as active records is encouraged. The original records must also be preserved and kept.
- o. Pastors should provide copies of records only to the proper individual or under circumstances that are not prejudicial to the person concerned. Copies of records shall be denied to all other parties except when access to the record in question is permitted or required by civil or ecclesiastical law.
- p. The parish seal is to be used only by the pastor or other authorized persons. When not in use, it shall be kept in the safe with the parish records.
- q. When making significant personnel decisions at the parish, especially in potentially contentious cases, the pastor should always consult first with the Chief Diocesan Human Resources Officer.
- r. Pastors responsible for the overseeing of a parish cemetery should see that the cemetery is well cared for and that the Perpetual Care Fund is properly maintained.
- s. The pastor is encouraged to participate in ecumenical and interreligious affairs and cooperate with the clergy of other Christian communities and leaders of other faiths.

6. Support for First Time Pastors

The Diocese has inaugurated an Executive Coaching program for priests who will serve as first time pastors. Please refer to Chapter Four, Section III, Part C of this manual for a fuller explanation of this program.

C. PAROCHIAL ADMINISTRATORS

1. Parochial administrators are bound by the same duties and possess the same rights as a pastor, but do not have stability of office (can. 540).
2. Priests not incardinated in the Diocese of Bridgeport but who are given charge of the pastoral care of a parish normally hold the title of parochial administrator.
3. When a pastorate becomes vacant or when a duly appointed pastor is unable to function in his ministerial role for an extended period of time, the Diocesan Bishop may appoint a parochial administrator to substitute for him until he is able to return to pastoral ministry or until a new pastor is appointed (can. 539).
4. A pastor may be appointed parochial administrator of a neighboring parish while continuing to serve as pastor of his assigned parish.
5. Parochial administrators shall make no noticeable change in the administration of the parish without first consulting the Diocesan Bishop.
6. At the discretion of the Diocesan Bishop, a first time Parochial Administrator may be assigned a mentor.

D. RECTORS

1. The priest who is given charge of the pastoral care and sacramental care supplied at the Cathedral of Saint Augustine, the Shrine of St. Margaret of Antioch, and the Oratory Church of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, as well as, the priest in charge of the Redemptoris Mater Diocesan Missionary Seminary and the priest in charge of the Guild of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus will hold the title of Rector.
2. A description of the duties and responsibilities of rectors is contained in can. 556-563.

E. PAROCHIAL VICARS

1. Parochial vicars ordinarily are appointed for a period of ministerial service in any assignment for three to five years.
2. A parochial vicar may be assigned part-time to more than one parish or ministry.
3. The specific duties of a parochial vicar shall be determined by the pastor, who shall make an equitable division of the parochial work.
4. When a parochial vicar has been assigned to extra parochial duties by the Diocesan Bishop, the pastor shall give special consideration to this assignment and make the necessary adjustment of duties.
5. Apart from such assignments made by the Diocesan Bishop, a parochial vicar shall not accept extra parochial obligations or positions, either of a civic or religious nature, without prior consultation with his pastor.
6. On days other than his days off or legitimate absences, the parochial vicar is to be available for ministry at his assignment and is not to regard himself as free from any substantial part of parish work.
7. A parochial vicar who would like to request a transfer should, after speaking with his pastor and the proper Dean, request a personal interview with or make a formal request in writing to the Vicar General or the Vicar for Clergy.

8. A pastor who would like to request that an assigned parochial vicar be transferred should, after speaking with the parochial vicar and the proper Dean (if he is not a Dean himself), request a personal interview with or make a formal request in writing to the Vicar General or the Vicar for Clergy.
9. When a parochial vicar is to be transferred to another assignment, he will be given enough time to complete such a move. A proper and public farewell should be planned so that parishioners may have the opportunity to say goodbye to the parochial vicar before his departure from the parish.

F. PRIESTS IN NON-PAROCHIAL ASSIGNMENTS

1. All priests in non-parochial ministry are responsible to the Vicar for Clergy for the performance of their duties even though they minister under the direction of their immediate supervisor(s). Their job description must have the approval of the Diocesan Bishop.
 - a) The term of office given to those in non-parochial ministry is defined in the letter of appointment. An extension of that term may be granted by the Diocesan Bishop.
2. Priests serving in a non-parochial ministry will be assigned by the Diocesan Bishop to live in a rectory or another approved residence within the Diocese. Those who live in a rectory shall, insofar as possible, share the common life of the parish clergy and conform to the established order of the rectory.
3. If a priest serving in a non-parochial assignment is not assigned to ministerial obligations in the parish where he resides, he is strongly encouraged to make himself available to the parish, when possible, on Sundays and Holy Days. He should offer his services to the parish where he resides before contracting with another parish. The Diocese or the institution to which the priest in residence is assigned will make monthly contributions to the parish for his room and board.
4. If a priest serving in a non-parochial assignment is also assigned to ministerial obligations in the parish where he resides, he should not be expected to provide ministerial service on Saturdays; his weekend parish duties will conclude after the Sunday schedule of Masses, unless other arrangements are made with the pastor. Resident priests are expected to share in the Holy Day pastoral schedule at the parish with due regard of their primary assignment. His parish duties should not include funerals, weddings or other ordinary parish activities, except in cases of necessity.
 - a) The parish at which the resident priest resides provides room and board and Mass stipends (when applicable).
5. Priests in non-parochial ministry who receive a salary in excess of the salary schedule of the Diocese will be asked to donate a pre-determined sum to an appropriate diocesan ministry as agreed upon with the Diocesan Bishop.

G. CHAPLAINS

1. Supervision of Chaplains

Local arrangements for supervision and accountability differ according to the nature of the chaplaincy. These provisions are explained below.

2. Ministerial Agreements

- a. All chaplains, with the assistance of the Vicar for Clergy, will be asked to complete an annual ministerial agreement that will describe the duties and responsibilities of the chaplain.
- b. A similar annual ministerial agreement must be completed between the chaplain and the pastor of the parish in which the chaplain resides, outlining the pastoral expectations that the chaplain agrees to observe in serve of the parish.

3. Chaplains in Healthcare Facilities

- a. In the institutions to which they are assigned by the Diocesan Bishop, chaplains have full authority and responsibility to see the observance of the laws of the Church and the prescriptions of the Ordinary concerning the chapel and its liturgical furnishings, official prayers, ceremonies and sacred music.
- b. Chaplains must provide their contact information to their proper Dean and the pastor of the rectory where he resides.
- c. The chaplain shall confer with the supervisor of the institution to determine the time, type, and frequency of religious services.
- d. The chaplain shall confine his activities to those connected with public worship and pastoral care. He shall not take part in the administration and the internal and external affairs of the institution; however, he should be aware of the work of the Ethics Board of the institution and, when appropriate, be involved in the work of the Board.
- e. It is the duty of the chaplain to see that Mass in the chapel is provided on Sundays and Holy Days for those who live there or who by reason of work schedule need to attend those Masses. Collections are not to be taken up at such Masses without the permission of the Vicar General or the Diocesan Bishop.
- f. The chaplain should be prepared to offer pastoral guidance to Catholic patients on healthcare services and end-of-life care in accord with the Church's teachings as stated in *Ethical and Religious Directives for Catholic Health Care Services* issued by the USCCB.
- g. The priest chaplain has the duty to administer the sacraments of Penance and Anointing of the Sick (including Viaticum).
- h. For those who request it, Baptism shall not be administered except in cases of emergency. First Holy Communion may not be administered except in cases of emergency or with the Diocesan Bishop's approval. The priest chaplain may administer the sacrament of Confirmation when there is a danger of death. Except for emergency situations (can. 1079 §1 and §2), chaplains are not authorized to assist at marriages in the healthcare institutions to which they are assigned.
- i. Outside danger of death, the chaplain, in strict compliance with HIPAA privacy rules, shall refer to the proper pastor those patients who wish to be prepared for Baptism, who seek First Holy Communion, Confirmation or sacramental marriage.
- j. If a resident desires the services of his or her own pastor or of some other priest, the chaplain shall consent to make whatever arrangements are necessary.
- k. The chaplain should make every effort to make provision for the pastoral care of non-Catholic residents when freely requested and not otherwise provided. When a non-

Catholic requests a sacrament in danger of death, the chaplain should see that all conditions of can. 844 §4 are fulfilled.

- l. The chaplain will work with the Vicar for Clergy in providing a substitute chaplain for the time of his legitimate absence if he cannot make these arrangements on his own, his respective Dean and pastor should also be informed. A small stipend will be provided to the substitute chaplain.
- m. The chaplain should address any major concerns or ministerial needs to the Vicar for Clergy.
- n. The chaplain will submit all requests for vacation directly to the Vicar of Clergy for approval.
- o. Regarding the annual evaluation of the chaplain's performance:
 - 1) A self-evaluation based on job description and goals set at the beginning of the pastoral year will be prepared by each chaplain.
 - 2) The chaplain and Vicar for Clergy will meet to review this self-evaluation.
 - 3) A formal written evaluation will then be signed off on by the chaplain and the Vicar for Clergy each year.

4. Chaplains in High Schools

Chaplains in high schools are appointed by the Diocesan Bishop to serve the spiritual needs of the students, faculty and staff of the diocesan sponsored Catholic high school to which he is assigned. As such, they are part of the administration of the school where they serve and not members of the faculty. More specifically, the mission of the High School Chaplain is to offer sacramental, catechetical and pastoral ministry to the students, teachers, staff, administrators and parents of the high school community.

Chaplains do not teach any formal courses unless special permission is given by the Diocesan Bishop, however, they should be invited and are encouraged to speak occasionally in the classroom, especially in religion classes.

He is to provide opportunities for all members of the high school community to deepen their understanding and personal commitment to the Lord Jesus in and through active participation in the life of the Church; help foster the total, personal and spiritual growth of each person; raise consciousness and encourage action regarding contemporary moral and social programs; provide spiritual direction and pastoral counseling; and provide opportunities for the students to be prepared for life in today's Church and society.

a. Specific duties

- 1) Caring for the sacramental life of the school community, including daily Mass, providing confessions and plan communal reconciliation services.
- 2) Work with the administration to ensure that the Catholic identity of the school is a priority.
- 3) Promote priestly and religious vocations in collaboration with the Director of Vocations.

- 4) Oversee, in conformity to the established diocesan norms for liturgical ministers, the training of Extraordinary Ministers of the Holy Communion, readers and liturgical musicians for all school liturgical celebrations.
 - 5) Act as a resource for the prayer and devotional life of the school.
 - 6) Organize retreat programs for all members of the community.
 - 7) Collaborate with neighboring parishes and pastors.
 - 8) Promote student participation in the life of their own parish, as well as diocesan programs and events.
 - 9) Be available for emergency situations as part of the school crisis response team.
 - 10) These duties and responsibilities will be listed in a job description developed by the Superintendent of Schools and the Vicar for Clergy in consultation with the current chaplains and approved by the Diocesan Bishop.
- b. Supervision
- 1) A chaplain is accountable to the Vicar for Clergy and supervised on the local level by the high school principal.
 - 2) At each school, the principal will address with the chaplain those matters that specifically have to do with the spiritual life of the school.
 - 3) The principal will speak to the Vicar for Clergy about failures to meet the responsibilities in the job description after a discussion with the chaplain about these issues has not resulted in a change.
 - 4) Priest chaplains will submit a quarterly report to Vicar for Clergy listing where they are celebrating Mass on Sundays.
 - 5) Chaplains are asked to attend regular meetings with the Vicar for Clergy, the Superintendent of Schools and other Episcopal Chaplains of high schools to ensure a common mission and to foster collaboration.
- c. Evaluation Process
- 1) A self-evaluation based on job description and goals set at the beginning of the school year will be prepared by each chaplain.
 - 2) The principal and Vicar for Clergy will review this self-evaluation and then meet with the chaplain.
 - 3) A formal written evaluation will then be signed off on by the chaplain, the principal and the Vicar for Clergy.
- d. Vacation Time
- 1) Chaplains should respect the academic calendar and consult the appropriate administrator before planning their vacation time and annual retreat. Priest chaplains are required to submit their summer itinerary to the Vicar for Clergy by June 1st of each calendar year.
 - 2) The amount of vacation time (which is the same as all priests) is described in Chapter Four, Section IV, Part A.
 - 3) Permission for all vacations can only be granted by the Vicar for Clergy. Absences during the school day should be the exception and should only occur when there is another ministerial necessity or a diocesan commitment.
 - 4) Chaplains whose ministry at their primary assignment is not required during the summer months or other extended periods during the year are required to consult

the Vicar for Clergy and the pastor of the parish in which they reside regarding Ministry at the parish where they reside or other parishes in need.

5. University Chaplains

University chaplains, in collaboration with the head of campus ministry, lead and facilitate the sacramental and liturgical life for Catholic students and assist the spiritual formation of the entire community, including faculty and personnel.

- a. While the Chaplain reports directly to the Director of Campus Ministry and the administration of the university, he works within the expectations and guidelines of his supervisor at the university.
- b. Administrative responsibilities of the university chaplain may vary at each campus.

6. Chaplains for First Responders

First Responder Chaplains, specifically chaplains to police, fire and EMS departments, provide emotional and spiritual support to public servants who request it and are available to assist them as needed on and off duty. Given the nature of this work, these men and women are particularly in need of the kind of support that the chaplain may provide through the administration of the Sacraments, prayer and counseling.

- a. When asked to take on this position by a local department, the priest should direct the administrator of the department to write a letter to the Diocesan Bishop requesting that this priest be appointed to this position.
- b. After reviewing this request, the Diocesan Bishop will formally appoint the chaplain for a term of three years via letter, renewable for additional terms if requested.

H. PRIESTS SERVING OUTSIDE THE DIOCESE

This category applies to all priests incardinated in the Diocese of Bridgeport, who are serving outside the Diocese with the Diocesan Bishop's permission. This would include, but not be limited to, military chaplains, those working for the Holy See, those in missionary service and those working in seminaries, universities or other ecclesiastical institutions.

1. General Norms

- a. A priest wishing to exercise ministry outside the Diocese must make a request in writing to the Diocesan Bishop, including any information that will assist the Diocesan Bishop in his discernment process. Explicit permission for ministry outside the diocese must be given by the Diocesan Bishop.
- b. It is recommended that a priest be ordained a minimum of five years before being sent to serve outside of the Diocese.
- c. Ministry outside the Diocese should generally not exceed five years, at which time the priest is expected to return to the Diocese for a ministerial assignment.

- d. The term of assignment may be renewed for another term; however, priests should not assume new ministries, renew contracts or make new initiatives without first receiving permission from the Diocesan Bishop.
- e. Diocesan remuneration is discontinued for priests serving in an assignment outside of the Diocese, however a small stipend may be provided in some cases.
- f. All benefits, including residence, become the responsibility of the place of ministry, except in exceptional situations. Assurances must be made that contributions to the Diocesan Pension Plan continue while the priest is serving outside the diocese.
- g. At the end of his service outside the Diocese, the priest is expected to return to the Diocese and, unless he has reached retirement age, accept a pastoral assignment by the Diocesan Bishop.

2. Graduate Studies

- a. A priest may be asked to obtain an advanced degree by the Diocesan Bishop for service to the larger diocesan Church.
- b. For full-time students, the diocese will provide the priest with his full salary (less the administrator's increment, if he was receiving one), medical benefits, tuition (and related educational costs), room and board and one round trip fare to cover transportation back to the Diocese at the beginning and end of each academic year.
- c. Educational costs for part-time students who maintain a ministerial assignment in the Diocese will be the responsibility of the priest, unless the Diocesan Bishop has requested the course of study. Exceptions may be made on a case-by-case basis.
- d. Normally, a priest should serve for three years in a ministerial assignment in the diocese before being sent for graduate studies.

3. Secondary Assignments

- a. Secondary assignments may include, but are not limited to, teaching in the seminary, a high school or university, serving as a chaplain to a police or fire department or serving as a spiritual director to an ecclesial movement, a religious community or a fraternal organization.
- b. Any secondary assignment must be assigned to the priest by the Diocesan Bishop.
- c. When a priest who has a full-time assignment also has a secondary assignment from the Diocesan Bishop, the work required from his secondary assignment should not interfere with his ability to fulfill his required duties at his primary assignment.
- d. In select cases, depending upon the nature of the work, additional compensation may be given to the priest for his secondary assignment. Such compensation will be determined on a case-by-case basis, after dialogue between the Diocesan Bishop and the priest.

I. NEWLY ORDAINED PRIESTS

- 1. A priest's first assignment should serve as a positive introduction to priestly life and ministry. The willingness of the pastor to be a caring and attentive role model and the quality of rectory life will therefore be important factors in considering assignments for newly ordained priests.

2. Considering the diverse and varied population to which priests in the Diocese must learn to minister, a first assignment will normally last between three to five years.
3. The newly ordained priest receives his assignment personally from the Diocesan Bishop before his priestly ordination. The effective date of the assignment is the day of ordination, but the actual start date of the assignment will be decided by the Diocesan Bishop and indicated in the newly ordained priest's letter of assignment.
4. All newly ordained priests are required to attend a program of ongoing formation for a period of two years (Chapter Four, Section III, Part B of this manual).
5. The newly ordained are to have a mentor, an experienced priest who will assist him in his transition into priestly ministry.
 - a) The newly ordained will be asked to present to the Diocesan Bishop three names of priests, in order of preference, whom he would like to consider for his mentor. The Diocesan Bishop may select a mentor from that list or assign another.
 - b) He is also asked to schedule faithfully meetings with his mentor, avail himself of the experience and expertise of his mentor, welcome whatever advice his mentor should offer and pray for his mentor.

J. NON-INCARDINATED PRIESTS

1. To provide the best service to the lay faithful of the Diocese, it is necessary that priests from other dioceses and from religious communities be assigned to pastoral ministry by the Diocesan Bishop.
2. Religious priests assigned to their respective houses/ministries in the Diocese (e.g., Fairfield University) are not considered to be part of the category of non-incardinated priests, but nonetheless must request faculties from the Diocesan Bishop.
3. A priest seeking to minister in the Diocese of Bridgeport full-time, part-time, on weekends or on a regular and continuing basis must present a letter of permission and recommendation from his Ordinary or Superior to the Diocesan Bishop. The letter must provide a definite period for which the priest has permission to be absent from and has no obligations to his diocese or religious community.
4. Upon receipt of the letter, a determination will be made regarding the possibility of a ministerial assignment. If the priest is to be considered for ministerial assignment, the Office of Clergy will request more information (e.g., date of ordination, academic background, citizenship status, linguistic and ministerial skills, recent health records, etc.).
5. Before being assigned by the Diocesan Bishop, the priest must:
 - a) Provide a testimonial of suitability from his bishop, eparch (for an Eastern Rite priest) or religious superior.
 - b) Provide proof of a comprehensive background check.
 - c) Proof of VIRTUS training.
 - d) Sign the Executive Summary of the *Safe Environment Handbook*.
 - e) Secure the completion of a pastoral agreement between the Diocesan Bishop of Bridgeport and the priest's canonical superior.
6. All newly arrived priests from outside the Diocese of Bridgeport are expected to return to their home diocese or religious community after serving five years in the Diocese. If a non-incardinated priest would like to remain beyond that time, he should, with the

permission of his own Ordinary or Superior, make a request in writing to the Diocesan Bishop.

7. Acceptance of a priest for ministry in the Diocese of Bridgeport for a limited period does not imply eventual incardination, nor do the years of ministry spent in the diocese apply toward the incardination process as outlined in can. 268 §1.
8. Unless the Diocesan Bishop and a parish decide otherwise in advance as a result of a parish recruitment of a foreign cleric, the Diocese will pay for all processing fees for the initial R-1 Visa. Any subsequent renewal of the R-1 Visa or permanent resident application will be the financial responsibility of the priest himself.
9. No R-1 Visa renewals or green card applications may be initiated by the priest without the permission of the Diocesan Bishop, and only diocesan approved legal counsel may be employed for the immigration process.
10. The parish or institution to which a non-incardinated priest is assigned will not make contributions for him to the diocesan pension plan. However, if the priest is permitted to serve in the Diocese beyond five years, the parish or institution must begin to make contributions to the diocesan pension at the beginning of his sixth year of service. Such contributions do not guarantee a pension payment to the priest upon retirement.

K. PROCESS OF INCARDINATION/EXCARDINATION

1. Incardination

- a. Only priests who have been serving for three consecutive years in the Diocese of Bridgeport may be considered for incardination.
- b. Should a priest wish to become incardinated in the Diocese of Bridgeport, he must, after informing his own Ordinary or Superior, present a written request to the Diocesan Bishop, which should also be accompanied by a written evaluation from his current pastor or supervisor. If the candidate is a pastor, the evaluation should come from his Dean.
- c. After a priest has been approved in writing for consideration to be incardinated into the Diocese, he will be assigned to a new assignment for a term of two years.
- d. At the end of this five year period, a pastoral evaluation will be conducted of his second assignment and a final decision regarding his request for incardination will be made.
- e. A recent physical examination and psychological assessment may be requested of the petitioner.
- f. Any exceptions to the above norms are at the discretion of the Diocesan Bishop.

2. Excardination

- a. A priest requesting excardination from the Diocese of Bridgeport must make a written request to the Diocesan Bishop. No agreements can be formalized without the Diocesan Bishop's permission.
- b. Permission for excardination may be granted provided the Ordinary of the receiving diocese indicates in writing his willingness to incardinate the priest.

L. EXCLAUSTRATED PRIESTS

With the indult of exclaustation from his superior and the invitation of the Diocesan Bishop, a priest may be permitted to serve in the diocese for a period not to exceed three years (can. 686 §1).

M. SUMMER ASSISTANTS

1. Any invitation for summer assistance to a non-incardinated priest ordinarily is generated from the Office of Clergy.
2. Those priests providing summer assistance must provide a letter of permission from his bishop or superior, which indicates that the priest has permission to serve until the end of his summer assignment, at which time he will be expected to return to his diocese, congregation or pastoral assignment.
3. Each visiting priest must also:
 - a) Provide a testimonial of suitability from his bishop, eparch (for an Eastern Rite priest) or religious superior.
 - b) Provide proof of background check.
 - c) Proof of VIRTUS training.
 - d) Sign the Executive Summary of the *Safe Environment Handbook*.
4. Parishes are not expected to pay for travel expenses but are expected to pay for any visa application and preparation fees.
5. Only priests with a valid R-1 Visa or Green Card may be compensated for ministerial services provided to the parish. They will receive remuneration based on years of ordination and according to the same payment schedule used for all priests of the Diocese.
6. Medical insurance through the Diocesan plan is to be provided by the parish during the time the priest is ministering. Dental and automobile insurance may be provided by the parish at the discretion of the pastor or supervisor.
7. For summer assistants who will have the use of a car (either provided by the parish or the priest himself), automobile insurance is to be provided by the parish.
8. No pension contributions are made for summer assistants.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRIESTLY LIFE

I. THE LIFE OF THE PRIEST

A. SPIRITUAL LIFE

Priests called to a vocation of spiritual leadership in the Church must be committed to lifelong human and spiritual growth. Therefore, all priests are expected to establish a consistent personal program of prayer and theological study and will incorporate these activities into their daily and weekly schedule.

Priests will deepen their personal commitment to Jesus Christ and Gospel values through the daily celebration of Mass, the Liturgy of the Hours, spiritual reading, the regular reception of the Sacrament of Penance and spiritual direction. They are also required to participate in diocesan programs intended to assist their spiritual growth and to take an annual retreat.

In a special way, priests are reminded of their ordination promise to pray the Liturgy of the Hours – a promise not subordinate to the promises of obedience and celibacy – and of the great spiritual benefit of this prayer for not only the priest himself but also for those under his pastoral care.

B. FRATERNAL LIFE

It is important for their spiritual and human well-being that priests view themselves as brothers in the ministry. As such, they are encouraged to seek opportunities to support each other, to share meals and times of prayer and to lift each other up, especially in times of struggle.

Unless assigned outside of the Diocese, priests are required to participate in diocesan clergy gatherings, such as the Chrism Mass, Advent and Lenten Days of Recollection, Convocations and Ordinations. If any priest is unable to attend a required function, he is to contact his respective Dean or the Vicar for Clergy in advance of the actual event.

It is the duty of every priest to foster vocations. Priests should exhibit a special concern for those who show an interest in the priesthood, diaconate, and consecrated life, as well as, for those already enrolled in the various formation programs.

Mindful that deacons are ordained for the ministry “of the word, of the altar and of charity”, it is the role of priests, and especially pastors, to provide encouragement, guidance and good example as they collaborate with deacons.

C. LITURGICAL LIFE

1. All priests will use only the approved liturgical books and will prepare for and celebrate the liturgy with due reverence so that it may inspire, foster prayer, involve the faithful in the celebrations of the Christian mysteries and promote their sanctification.
2. All diocesan sacramental norms must be observed without exception unless permission is granted by the Diocesan Bishop regarding a specific norm.

D. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

1. Clerical Dress

In the Diocese of Bridgeport, black clerical dress is the norm for priests when performing priestly service. On other occasions, each priest should exercise good judgment in dress.

2. Financial Affairs

- a. Every priest shall keep his personal finances in good order and separate from any parish or diocesan account. He shall avoid the unnecessary contracting of debts that exceed his personal ability to pay. Any priest who finds himself in serious financial difficulty should inform the Vicar General or the Vicar for Clergy and, when opportune, seek professional financial advice.
- b. Every diocesan priest shall make a last Will and Testament in a form valid under civil law and is required either to send a sealed copy to the Vicar General or the Vicar for Clergy that will be kept in the priest's personnel file or provide the complete contact information for the designated person who has possession of the will. The last Will and Testament will be opened only at the time of the priest's death by either the Diocesan Bishop, the Vicar General, the Vicar for Clergy or the Diocesan Chief Legal Officer.
- c. Priests are encouraged to designate someone with the "power of attorney" and to serve as his health care proxy and provide this information to the Office of Clergy.

3. Avoidance of Scandal

Conscious of their obligation to avoid all places, events, occupations, associations and diversions which are not in keeping with the clerical state, priests shall carefully consider whether their participation in any given activity or presence on any given occasion will be a source of danger to themselves or of unseemly speculation and scandal to others (can. 278 §3).

4. Social Media

- a. Priests who use social media should do so to evangelize, catechize and share the Good News of the Gospel, and they should be careful never to convey messages that could be misconstrued or considered provocative, intentionally divisive, scandalous or overtly politically partisan. When posting on social media in any capacity, clergy should remember that they are "public" persons and, therefore, that their opinions reflect on the

priesthood, the Church and the Diocese. Please refer to the Pastoral Code of Conduct for more specific guidance in this regard.

- b. Priests should contact the Office of Communications before making public statements or being interviewed in the mass media.
- c. Priests should take care to avoid commenting on such topics on social media outlets, including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and every other social media platform. Any opinion shared by a priest could be taken by media outlets as an “official statement” of the Church.
- d. Priests are never permitted to make a public endorsement of any political candidate using any form of mass media.

II. THE RECTORY

Priests are co-workers with the Diocesan Bishop and their brother priests in carrying out the mission of Jesus. This mission must begin with the priests’ relationship in the rectory before it extends itself to the people whom they serve. Although there will always be variables in the living conditions for priests in parishes, mutual charity, priestly affirmation, shared prayer and appropriate fraternal correction should be the hallmarks of the relationship between priests in any rectory.

1. Priests living together in a rectory should recognize that it does not belong to any one of them individually; rather, it is their common home.
2. The Diocesan Bishop has given permission to have a chapel for the Blessed Sacrament to be reserved in each rectory of the Diocese.
3. Meals
 - a) The pastor is responsible for providing a meal plan while taking into consideration the individual dietary needs of all priests living in the rectory.
 - b) The sharing of meals is an opportunity for priests to foster both friendship and communication. Therefore, the priests in a rectory should make every effort to share a common meal at least once per week.
 - c) If the rectory provides a main meal using a cook, caterer or other means:
 - (1) Food staples should be provided in the rectory so that a priest might prepare breakfast and lunch.
 - (2) An allowance of \$250 per month should be made for main meals that are not provided.
 - (3) Priest who eat out on days off, on vacation or when a meal is provided at the rectory may not present receipts for reimbursement.
 - d) If the rectory does not provide a main meal using a cook, caterer or other means:
 - (1) The pastor should provide food staples in the rectory so that a priest might prepare breakfast and lunch.
 - (2) The parish will reimburse the priest for up to \$750 per month for other food expenses.
 - (3) Priest who eat out on days off, on vacation or when a meal is provided at the rectory may not present receipts for reimbursement.
4. The rectory should provide the priest with the following:
 - a) sheets

- b) towels
 - c) cleaning supplies
 - d) paper goods like tissues and paper towels
5. The rectory does not provide (or reimburse for) personal items like toothpaste, shampoo, and the like. Neither will, any priest, be reimbursed for personal healthcare items like C-Pap supplies, electric toothbrushes, Waterpiks, etc.
 6. Laundry/Dry Cleaning
 - a) If there is no one to do the priests' laundry, the pastor should provide supplies that enable the priest to wash his own laundry.
 - b) Personal dry cleaning is the responsibility of the priest and cannot be reimbursed by the parish.
 7. As a norm, priests in a rectory should generally keep each other informed about their presence and absence from the rectory.
 8. A reasonable state of cleanliness should be maintained throughout the entire rectory. If a cleaning staff is utilized at the rectory, it will have access to every room in the rectory on a regularly scheduled basis.
 9. There should be a mutual respect for each priest's privacy. Each priest has a right to a private sleeping quarter. In cases when a parish office is housed in a rectory, provision must be made to respect each priest's right to privacy.
 10. The pastor shall see that the rectory is furnished in a dignified but simple manner.
 11. The pastor has responsibility for all household arrangements. This includes a clear delineation of duties and responsibilities of lay employees who work in the rectory.
 12. There should always be respect for and sensitivity to lay employees who work in the rectory. At the same time, lay employees should not assume the appearance of authority in the rectory.
 13. If possible, the rectory should have an area to receive guests.
 14. Each priest should have access to secretarial service in the exercise of the parish ministry and be provided an office (which may be shared) for counseling, private meetings and parish related work. This office should be distinct from the living quarters.
 15. In accordance with the *Safe Environment Handbook* of the Diocese of Bridgeport, "Clergy should not permit minors, youth or vulnerable adults other than their own family members, to stay overnight nor allow them into a cleric's private accommodations at any time" (*Safe Environment Handbook 2020*, Section II, Part C, #3.9).
 16. The permission of the Diocesan Bishop is required if lay persons are to reside in the rectory for a period that exceeds three consecutive days within the same calendar year.
 17. No priest should leave behind any personal items in a rectory at which he no longer resides. Articles left beyond six months may be disposed of by the parish after informing the transferred priest.
 18. No smoking is permitted in the common areas of any rectory. Smoking is permitted in a priest's private quarters only if the smoke can be completely contained within the priest's own room and if there is no objection from any other priests living in the rectory. Any cleaning costs related to the effects of smoke are the sole responsibility of the priest who smokes, including when being transferred to a new assignment or vacating the rectory permanently.

19. While it is preferred that pets not be housed in rectories, a pet cannot be in a rectory without the agreement of all the priests in residence.
- a) The owner of the pet assumes all responsibility for the care of the pet and is responsible for any related cleaning, including when being transferred to a new assignment or vacating the rectory permanently.
 - b) Ownership of a pet should not be the deciding factor when a priest receives a ministerial assignment.

III. ONGOING FORMATION OF PRIESTS

A. COMMITTEE FOR THE ONGOING FORMATION OF PRIESTS

Recognizing the need to care for the human, spiritual, intellectual and pastoral needs of the priests of the Diocese of Bridgeport, a Committee dedicated to the ongoing formation of priests has been established. The Committee is made up of clergy and competent lay faithful with a variety of professional competencies who will design and implement an ongoing plan to ensure that priests are living healthy and balanced personal lives, are sustained by prayer and spiritual growth, are trained and prepared to preach the Gospel and are equipped to serve the needs of the people under their care.

Each priest of the Diocese is expected to participate in the programs developed by the Committee that are designed to assist him in his ministry and personal wellbeing.

The competency of the Committee includes:

1. **Priest Convocation:** An overnight convocation will take place at least every three years. The committee will propose to the Diocesan Bishop the theme and speakers for each convocation and provide preparatory materials in advance of the actual gathering.
2. **Annual Convocation:** During those years when there is no overnight convocation, there will be a single day convocation which every priest of the Diocese is required to attend.
3. **Week of Theological Study:** This week long opportunity for theological study and pastoral reflection will take place each year. The committee will propose topics to the Diocesan Bishop of theological, spiritual and pastoral interest for his approval.
4. **Advent and Lenten Days of Reflection:** These will address the spiritual life of priests as they enter more deeply into the mysteries of the life of Christ.
5. **Clergy Study Days:** These will address specific questions of pastoral ministry.
6. **Annual Priest's Retreat**

B. FORMATION PROGRAM FOR NEWLY ORDAINED PRIESTS

All newly ordained priests will be required to attend a two year program on ongoing theological and pastoral formation as part of their first ministerial assignment. Attendance at all sessions of this program are mandatory. This will include a mandatory session on financial planning. Pastors are asked to make provision for their associates to attend these sessions, since they are mandatory.

C. EXECUTIVE COACHING PROGRAM FOR NEW PASTORS

The Committee for Ongoing Priestly Formation has developed a mandatory Executive Coaching Program for new pastors, which is designed to help priests prepare for their first pastorate. Each priest who attends the program will engage modules on stewardship, human resources, social media, information technology, faith formation, financial management, ethics, pastoral planning and leadership skills. The course may have an on-line component, as well as instructional meetings at the Catholic Center.

This program will be in addition to the annual meeting already held at the Catholic Center for all new pastors, which introduces the pastors to department heads and provides them with key information about how the Diocese can assist them in their role as pastor.

The Diocesan Bishop may assign priests who are not pastors but will possibly be named as pastor in the near future to this program as he sees fit.

IV. PERIODS OF RENEWAL

A. VACATION/FREE TIME

1. All priests assigned by the Diocesan Bishop are entitled to four weeks of vacation in a calendar year. Vacation days, which should not exceed three weekends, cannot be carried over into the following year.
 - a) All parochial vicars must obtain the permission of their respective pastors before making any arrangements for vacation.
 - b) All pastors must inform their respective Deans of their vacation plans.
 - c) All Deans must inform the Vicar for Clergy of their vacation plans.
2. For those in ministries that have more extensive vacation periods (i. e., schools), any additional time off should be offered to assist parishes in need of help.
3. Each priest will be allowed one overnight each week. For priests in parish ministry, the overnight begins after the first Mass in the morning or after a funeral (if he is needed) and ends the night of the second day. The hour of return is at the discretion of the priest.
4. For priests in non-parochial ministry, the overnight begins on the morning of day one and concludes in the evening of day two. The overnight should take into consideration the calendar of the institution to which he is assigned.
5. Priestly ministry takes precedence over weekly time off (e.g., Holy Days, special parish events, etc.).
6. In the week following January 1 and the week following Easter, the pastor may arrange for double overnights for each parochial vicar. Priests in other assignments, after consulting with the supervisor of the institution to which they are assigned, may arrange similar double overnights if their assignment permits.

B. RETREATS

1. Every priest is required to make a spiritual retreat each year (can. 276 §2.4). He is encouraged to participate in the annual diocesan retreat for priests.

- a) All parochial vicars must obtain the permission of their respective pastors before making any arrangements for their annual retreat.
 - b) All pastors must inform their respective Deans of their retreat plans.
 - c) All Deans must inform the Vicar for Clergy of their retreat plans.
2. Personal retreats should be limited to the period between Sunday evening and Saturday morning.
 3. Retreats should be planned while keeping in mind the needs of the parish or institution to which the priest is assigned.
 4. Upon completion of his retreat, every priest will receive from the parish or institution to which he is assigned a retreat subsidy of up to \$750, if receipts and information about the time and place of the retreat are submitted.

C. WEEK OF THEOLOGICAL STUDY

1. The week of theological study is intended to be an opportunity for spiritual, academic and personal growth. All priests actively engaged in pastoral ministry may spend one week (Monday-Friday) annually for ongoing theological formation. This is in addition to retreat and vacation time.
2. The priest is also entitled to a reimbursement for his studies, travel and accommodations of up to \$500, provided receipts and information related to the study week are submitted to the parish or institution to which he is assigned.
3. A priest is not entitled to this week during a year in which he takes a sabbatical leave.
4. The following conditions are to be observed for the one week period of ongoing formation:
 - a) It may not take place during Lent or during a week when a Holy Day of obligation falls.
 - b) A three month notification must be given to the pastor or supervisor of the institution to which the priest is assigned. A pastor must notify the proper Dean. Permission of the Diocesan Bishop is not required.

D. SABBATICAL PERIOD

1. A three month sabbatical period may be taken during or after the calendar year of the priest's 15th anniversary of priestly ordination. Exceptions to this norm must be approved by the Diocesan Bishop. Every priest is also eligible for an additional three month sabbatical after the completion of his 13th anniversary of ordination.
2. The following conditions are to be observed for the three month sabbatical leave:
 - a) A written request must be made to the Diocesan Bishop one year in advance of the intended sabbatical period. The request should include the dates and location of the desired sabbatical, as well as information on the sponsoring institution, the program of study and goals of the sabbatical period.
 - b) Upon receiving permission from the Diocesan Bishop, the priest must notify his pastor or supervisor. A pastor must notify the proper Dean, who will work with the pastor to find coverage for the parish.

3. During the sabbatical period, the parish or institution to which the priest is assigned will pay his full salary. In addition, it will provide an allowance (\$200/month) to assist with room and board, unless provided at no cost to the priest.
4. Pastors (and other priests who hold administrative positions) will continue to receive the administrative stipend during the sabbatical period.
5. The priest's annual vacation and retreat must be included in the three month sabbatical period.
6. It is assumed that priests who are granted a sabbatical leave will resume the pastoral position they had prior to the beginning of the leave, unless another arrangement has been made with the Diocesan Bishop.

E. DAYS OF RECOLLECTION

Each year the Office of Clergy schedules two Days of Recollection, one during Advent and one during Lent. Each priest serving in a diocesan assignment is required to attend the conferences and is encouraged to remain for the meal.

F. CONVOCATIONS

At least every three years the Office of Clergy organizes a three day Convocation for priests. Attendance is mandatory, and special permission must be given by the Vicar for Clergy to any priest who requests to be excused. The cost of the Convocation is paid by the parish or institution to which the priest is assigned. Retired priests attend the Convocation at no charge.

An annual, one day Convocation will take place during those years when the longer Convocation is not held, which will treat theological, spiritual and pastoral themes. Attendance is also mandatory.

G. LANGUAGE STUDY

Priests are encouraged to expand their linguistic ability for service to the various language groups in the Diocese. Therefore, those priests who desire to study another language (including sign language) and foreign born priests who would like to improve their English, may ask the Diocesan Bishop for time to attend language study. The length of study and the financial arrangement will be determined on a case-by-case basis by the Diocesan Bishop.

V. PRIESTLY COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS

The *Code of Canon Law* states, "With special solicitude, a Diocesan Bishop is to attend to presbyters and listen to them as assistants and counselors. He is to protect their rights and take care that they correctly fulfill the obligations proper to their state and that the means and institutions which they need to foster spiritual and intellectual life are available to them. He also is to take care that provision is made for their decent support and social assistance, according to the norm of law" (can. 384).

A. REMUNERATION

1. Every diocesan priest who receives an assignment from the Diocesan Bishop is entitled to receive the guaranteed monthly remuneration, according to the scale approved by the Diocesan Bishop.
 - a) Given the fact that the scale is incremental based on years of ordination, any increase in salary for a priest moving into the next "step" will take effect at the beginning of the month following his anniversary.
 - b) Other ordinary financial remuneration include:
 - (1) Reimbursement up to \$750 for his annual retreat and \$500 for an annual week of theological study. These reimbursements are to be paid directly to the priest upon completion of these events and with submission of related receipts.
 - (2) An annual Christmas bonus of \$500.
2. Pastors (and other priests who hold administrative positions) are entitled to an additional annual stipend of \$4,000 as part of their salary. This amount is made in twelve (12) monthly installments.
 - a) An "administrative position" is one held by any cleric who is responsible for the preparation and management of a departmental or institutional budget and has the authority to hire and terminate persons employed by that department or institution.
 - (1) If a cleric holds two of these qualifying positions, he is entitled to only one administrator's stipend which should be divided between the budgets for which he is responsible.
3. Those priests who have diocesan responsibilities in addition to full-time parish responsibilities are entitled to a "ministerial stipend" of \$3,000 per year. Examples of this would be: Vicar General (if also serving as a pastor), Minister of Priests, Deans, Episcopal Vicars for various ethnic groups and the like.
4. A priest assigned both to a part-time non-parochial ministry and to assist in weekend ministerial work in the parish where he resides will receive \$400 each month from the parish. This stipend does not apply if the priest has full-time non-parochial ministry outside of the parish where he resides.
5. A priest assigned to non-parochial full-time ministry and does not have ministerial obligations at the parish shall arrange to have \$1,500 paid each month by his ministry to the parish where he resides to cover his room and board.
6. All monetary compensation for religious priests serving in the Diocese is paid directly to their respective Congregations and not to them as individuals.

B. STIPENDS

1. The established amount for an offering in the Diocese of Bridgeport (and the Ecclesiastical Province) for the celebration of Mass is \$10.00. If the donor resides outside the Ecclesiastical Province, the norms of his/her territory would apply.
2. Each priest should be familiar with the norms for offerings given for the celebration of Mass as outlined in the *Code of Canon Law* (can. 945-958).

3. Any priest who celebrates or concelebrates a Mass is permitted to receive an offering to apply the Mass for a specific intention. However, priests are encouraged to celebrate Mass for the intention of the Christian faithful, especially the needy, even if they have not received an offering.
4. The priest is obliged to celebrate Mass for the intention of those who gave an offering, even if the offering received has been lost through no fault of his own.
5. A priest can still receive a stipend directly for Masses he intends to fulfill outside of the Mass schedule of the parish or the institution to which he is assigned (i.e., during his vacation).
6. A priest who celebrates more than one Mass on the same day is to keep the offering for only one Mass, excess offerings for other Masses he celebrated that day should be sent to a charitable organization or used for the purposes prescribed by the Diocesan Bishop (can. 951 §1).
7. No priest is permitted to accept more offerings for Masses to be applied by himself than he can satisfy within a year.
8. The priest may keep the offering for all Masses he celebrates on Christmas.
9. Retired priests and those priests who serve as chaplains in high schools or nursing homes may accept a stipend for the celebration of Mass, in accordance with the norms listed above. Such stipends are not provided by the Office of Clergy but may be provided by the faithful.

C. HONORARIUMS

1. Priests who are invited either regularly or occasionally to celebrate Mass at parishes in the Diocese will receive an honorarium for each Mass offered, according to the following standards:
 - a) Weekday Masses - the honorarium should not exceed \$75 per Mass.
 - b) Masses of obligation (Sundays and Holy Days) - the honorarium should not exceed \$150 per Mass.
2. Priests serving in the Diocese of Bridgeport should be sure to fulfill all their obligations at the parish to which they are assigned or at which they reside before accepting invitations to assist at other parishes.
3. Priests are encouraged to assist poorer parishes that cannot provide the maximum honorarium.

D. GIFTS FOR BAPTISMS, FUNERALS AND WEDDINGS

The faithful often thank a priest who celebrated their family's baptism, funeral or wedding with a monetary gift. Depending on whether it is the priest's name or the parish's on the envelope or check, the gift is either kept by the priest or put into a parish fund for later use as needed. It is never allowed for the parish to provide this gift if the family does not give it. The priest may be given a part of the stipend required by the parish for these celebrations if he has not been given a gift by the family.

E. STUDENT LOANS

1. For those priests who are currently paying off student loans, the Diocese of Bridgeport will make monthly payments toward those loans for up to 75% of the monthly payment until the loan has matured. This assistance is only for student loans and not personal loans related to other non-educational expenses.
2. The Diocese will treat student loan assistance as additional compensation and, therefore, as a taxable event for which the Diocese will provide a Form 1099-Miscellaneous.
3. The following conditions apply for this program:
 - a) All student loans must remain in the priest's name, who is ultimately responsible for the payments through extinction.
 - b) Except in the case of those priests already paying off their loans, all loans should have a maturity date of no less than ten years with an agreed upon fixed/variable interest rate.
4. When possible and cost efficient, loans should be consolidated. The Diocese will provide a loan expert to work with each priest to ensure that he has the most cost efficient loan agreement.
5. Other than in exceptional cases, the Diocese will begin payments for loan assistance on behalf of a priest only upon his ordination to the priesthood.
6. Should a priest who is receiving loan assistance leave active priestly ministry for any reason, be returned to the lay state or be placed on administrative leave, the Diocese will cease providing any loan assistance.
7. The Diocese will not pay retroactively for existing loans, nor will it provide loan assistance to priests who have already paid off their student loans prior to the above effective date.

F. MOVING EXPENSES

When a priest is transferred to a new assignment or assigned to live in another residence by the Diocesan Bishop, or when he receives his first assignment after ordination, he should be reimbursed up to \$1,500 for legitimate moving expenses by the parish or institution to which he has been assigned to minister.

G. AUTOMOBILE INSURANCE

All active and retired priests will obtain their own personal car insurance from a broker or company of their choice.

All policies must maintain a minimum \$100,000/\$300,000 liability limits. This limit will ensure additional liability coverage by Catholic Mutual (the diocesan liability insurance company) if needed, subject to certain additional policy limits.

Any additional automobile(s) owned and insured by a priest shall not be used for pastoral ministry and the insurance for these vehicles is the sole responsibility of the priest.

Personal umbrella policies will be optional based on an individual's choice and payment. If any priest has personal assets that he wishes to protect during an "at fault" accident, this coverage would be highly recommended. It is the responsibility of each priest to obtain such coverage on his own.

The parish and the Office of Clergy should be informed by every priest of any changes to an existing policy or when vehicle ownership status has occurred. Copies of insurance cards should be sent to the Office of Clergy on an annual basis as proof of insurance.

The parish or institution to which the priest is assigned in active ministry will pay the full automobile insurance coverage.

All priests assigned to a diocesan ministry are asked to submit their annual premium invoice to the Office of Clergy for payment.

The Diocese will reimburse all retired priests for their car insurance premium up to a total amount of \$3,000 per year. If the annual car insurance premium for a retired priest is less than \$3,000, he can submit the invoice to the Office of Clergy for processing. If the annual car insurance premium exceeds \$3,000, the priest must submit, along with his invoice, full payment for the difference in cost to the Office of Clergy. The check should be made out to the Diocese of Bridgeport.

Retired priests living outside the Diocese or priests on special assignment outside the diocese may obtain their own automobile insurance coverage. In such cases, to be reimbursable, the coverage must meet the minimum requirements of the basic automobile insurance coverage as written through the Diocesan Plan.

H. MILEAGE REIMBURSEMENT

Priests are not reimbursed for mileage or fuel when using their automobile for pastoral ministry. Exceptions can be made by the Diocesan Bishop. However, mileage incurred due to direct pastoral ministry can be deducted from a priest's personal income tax filing provided that proper documentation is maintained.

I. CELL PHONE

Hospital chaplains who are compensated by the Diocese receive a monthly stipend for the use of a cell phone required for ministry. The Diocese provides cell phones to a very limited number of priests who have diocesan positions and whose ministry requires use of such a phone. In these cases, the Diocese pays for all charges related to Diocesan work.

At the discretion of the pastor, a parish may provide a cellphone for the pastoral ministry needs of its priests, whether it be a phone shared by all the priests assigned to the parish or phones distributed on an individual basis for each assigned priest. Upon the termination of any such assignment, the phone remains the property of the parish.

J. SOCIAL SECURITY

1. Every priest assigned by the Diocesan Bishop is required to contribute to Social Security.
2. Any non-incardinated priest who has opted out of Social Security ordinarily will not be considered for incardination.
3. Given the fact that the Internal Revenue Service considers Catholic priests as self-employed for Social Security purposes, the tax associated with Social Security cannot be withheld from a priest's monthly stipend. Rather, each priest is asked to consult with his tax accountant to ensure that his annual withholdings are sufficient and tax liabilities are being paid properly.

K. HEALTH CARE

1. General Health Care

- a. Every priest is encouraged to undergo a thorough medical examination and dental checkup every year.
- b. Every priest in active ministry will be provided with medical and dental insurance coverage. The parish or institution to which the priest is assigned is responsible for health insurance premiums.
- c. Voluntary vision coverage is offered on an annual basis, but each priest is responsible for the full out-of-pocket cost of the coverage (paid in monthly installments).
- d. The Vicar for Clergy will schedule a mandatory meeting with each priest who has turned 60 years of age to review with him future medical coverage changes, wills, funeral plans, etc., to insure the priest is properly prepared for the future.

2. Medicare for Priests over the age of 65 and in Active Ministry

- a. Every active diocesan priest who has reached the age of 65 must enroll in Medicare Part A and Part B and a supplemental Medicare program with the assistance of the Office of Human Resources. The time frame of the Initial Enrollment Period is seven months, starting three months before the priest turns 65, and ending three months after the month he turns 65.
 - 1) Medicare is the primary coverage for priests in this category.
 - 2) This coverage is paid for by the parish or ministry of the priest.

VI. RETIREMENT

A. AGE OF RETIREMENT

In accord with canon 538 §3, pastors, if they have not done so before, are asked to submit a letter of resignation to the Diocesan Bishop upon reaching 75 years of age. This requirement extends to all priests in active ministry in the Diocese of Bridgeport. Pastors who have reached 71 years of age may submit a letter of resignation to the Diocesan Bishop.

1. Acceptance or deferral of the resignation remains the decision of the Diocesan Bishop.

2. Retirement becomes effective only when accepted by the Diocesan Bishop.
3. For reasons of health, a priest may request to resign with disability before reaching the age of 71. Disability means a medically determinable physical or mental impairment, which, in the judgment of the Diocesan Bishop, is expected to prevent permanently a priest from performing his usual ministerial duties.

All retired priests, regardless of their place of residency, are obligated to comply with the requirements of the *Safe Environment Handbook* of the Diocese of Bridgeport, until the point where public ministry is no longer possible due to physical or mental impairment.

Fraternal care and solicitude demand that when a priest's ministry or well-being become seriously impaired due to age or illness, the Vicar General, the Vicar for Clergy or the proper Dean should be notified.

B. PENSION

The Priest Pension Plan of the Diocese of Bridgeport ("Pension Plan") governs all questions on eligibility for and payments from the Pension Plan. Any defined terms used in the document relating to the Pension Plan are as defined in the Pension Plan.

1. It is not the purpose or intent of the Pension Plan to meet all the needs of a retired priest. Each priest must plan prudently and carefully for his retirement years through such means as Social Security, IRAs, annuities or other savings/investment plans.
2. The mandatory age of retirement is 75, but a priest may also retire without disability at the age of 71 with full pension. The Pension Plan also has rules for retirement for disability status that permit for Pension Plan payments prior to age 75.
3. Retired priests of the Diocese of Bridgeport, who are enrolled in the Priest Retirement Plan and eligible, receive monthly pension payments according to the age table of benefits found in the Pension Plan.
4. Any priest who continues in his current assignment past the age of 75 is not eligible to receive a pension benefit. Pension benefits only begin once a priest has retired as defined in the Pension Plan.
5. A retired priest may be asked by the Diocesan Bishop to fulfill a part-time or fulltime ministry after his retirement, pending the priest's consent. In these cases, he is eligible to receive both his pension benefit and a salary for his assignment.
6. A priest who receives retirement benefits earned while in military chaplaincy service (or other pensionable service performed outside the Diocese for another institution) will be eligible to receive a reduced diocesan pension benefit, as defined in the Pension Plan.
7. Pension contributions for a non-incardinated priest begin during his sixth year of service, once he has received permission from the Diocesan Bishop to serve in the Diocese beyond five years.
8. Non-incardinated priests who have served for 15 consecutive years in a diocesan assignment and who, by means of the parish(es) or institution(s) to which they have been assigned, have also contributed to the Diocesan Pension Plan for those same 15 consecutive years will be eligible to receive a pension.

9. The Diocesan Pension Plan offers a monetary death benefit of \$6,000 to the deceased priest's estate to offset funeral expenses.
10. Priests who leave active ministry before their retirement age (e.g., who are laicized) are not entitled to Pension Plan benefits, regardless of their time spent in active ministry and regardless of the circumstances surrounding the decision to leave ministry.
 - a) When a married priest dies, his surviving spouse will receive either a special benefit of \$2,000/month (if her spouse was eligible for the full pension), or the reduced eligible amount of her husband's pension (in accordance with norm #6 above). This pension benefit will cease upon the surviving spouse's death or remarriage.

C. RESIDENCE

1. All retired priests are encouraged to take up residence at the Catherine Dennis Keefe Queen of the Clergy Residence upon retirement. Applications for residency are provided by the Episcopal Vicar for Senior Priests and should be completed several months before the effective date of retirement. Upon approval of the application, the Diocesan Bishop will assign the retired priest to residency at Queen of Clergy.
2. Any pastor, with the prior approval of the Diocesan Bishop, is free to welcome a retired priest to live with him in the rectory, subject to assignment by the Diocesan Bishop.
3. It is not permitted that a retired priest lives in the rectory of the parish where he last served as pastor, except with the explicit approval of the Diocesan Bishop. Such residence is subject to an annual renewal.
4. All retired priests who reside in a rectory are required to have an annual meeting with the Vicar of Clergy to review his well-being and whether his residency arrangement should be renewed for an additional year.

D. MEDICAL INSURANCE

1. Medicare is the primary coverage for priests who have reached the age of 65 and have fully retired from active ministry or have filed and receive full disability benefits.
2. Retired priests are not eligible for the Diocese of Bridgeport Medical Expense Reimbursement Plan, but the Diocese provides access to a supplemental plan Part B and Part D, which is the prescription drug plan.
3. Retired priests are responsible for Part B premiums, which will be deducted from their Social Security check.
4. The Diocese will provide full coverage for the medical supplemental plan chosen for retired priests.

VII. THE DEATH AND FUNERAL OF A PRIEST

1. Every priest must provide the Office of Clergy with a Funeral Planning Sheet. Every effort will be made to follow the written instructions of the deceased priest, however, it may be necessary to make certain changes to conform with liturgical norms, diocesan custom or particular circumstances (See Appendix F: "Priest's Funeral Planning Sheet").
2. As soon as possible after a priest's death, the Office of the Bishop should be contacted.

3. The Vicar for Clergy will access the written instructions or requests of the deceased priest to assist family members with funeral planning. The day and time of the transferal Mass, if there is one, and the funeral liturgy are to be set only with the approval of the Diocesan Bishop.
4. Because the Catholic faith recognizes a special relationship between the Diocesan Bishop and his presbyterate, it is appropriate that the Diocesan Bishop, when possible, serve as the principal celebrant of the funeral Mass. If no provisions have been made, the homilist and special concelebrants will be determined by the Vicar for Clergy in consultation with family members or the pastor of the parish where the funeral will be celebrated.
5. Priests may be buried in the Priests' Section at any diocesan cemetery, space permitting. The wives of validly married priests may also be buried along with their husbands in the Priests' Section.
6. The cost of the grave or columbarium niche and all associated interment fees are waived for all clergy and religious. In the case when a priest is married, the cost and fees are also waived for his spouse.
7. Costs for memorialization of the grave, crypt or niche is the responsibility of the priest's estate.
8. The Diocesan Pension Plan offers a monetary death benefit of \$6,000 to the deceased priest's estate to offset funeral expenses. The executor of the deceased priest's estate must send a copy of the Certificate of Death, the Fiduciary's Probate Certificate, the IRS letter showing the Tax Identification Number, a W-9 and CT-W4P for the priest's estate, to the Office of Clergy to process the death benefit.

CHAPTER FIVE

SPECIAL SITUATIONS

I. AUTHORIZED LEAVE OF ABSENCE

A. GENERAL NORMS

1. Authorized leave of absence (personal or medical) is defined as absence from one's official assignment in the Diocese of Bridgeport with the approval of the Diocesan Bishop and without loss of good standing or seniority. Requests for such leave, which may be for personal or medical reasons, must be made in writing to the Diocesan Bishop.
2. A leave of absence will be for a specific and agreed upon period that is not to exceed six months.
3. Upon completion of the leave, the priest will be expected to return and receive a ministerial assignment by the Diocesan Bishop.
4. Authorized leaves of absence will be made public, unless, in the Diocesan Bishop's judgment, circumstances dictate otherwise.
5. A priest on authorized leave is expected to remain in regular contact with the Vicar for Clergy.
6. Sabbatical periods are not considered a leave of absence.

B. PERSONAL LEAVE

1. A leave of absence from active ministry for personal reasons may be granted only by the Diocesan Bishop.
2. When a personal leave is granted, the Diocesan Bishop and the priest will sign a written agreement specifying the effective date of the leave, the duration of the leave, what financial support and benefits, if any, the priest will receive from the Diocese, the ministerial functions the priest may or may not perform and any other particular obligations the priest is to observe during the course of the leave.
3. A personal leave can be terminated at the discretion of the Diocesan Bishop.
4. The priest on personal leave is expected to use the allotted time to seek spiritual direction and, if opportune, professional counseling to address the circumstances that moved him to request a personal leave.

C. MEDICAL LEAVE

1. A priest may be granted a leave of absence from active ministry for medical reasons if his physical or psychological health makes such a request necessary.
2. A medical leave will be granted by the Diocesan Bishop only after receiving a recommendation provided by a personal physician, psychiatrist or psychologist.
3. The Diocesan Bishop will determine the ministerial functions the priest may or may not perform during the leave.
 - a) If his assignment is terminated, the Diocese of Bridgeport takes over compensation during a medical leave and will include the priest's full salary and

benefits. If a pastor on medical leave remains as pastor, the parish to which he is assigned provides his full salary and benefits. In either case, he will not receive the administrator's increment if he had been receiving it.

4. While on medical leave, the priest is to maintain regular contact with the Vicar for Clergy or Vicar General.
5. The period of medical leave may be renewed upon request and submission of an updated, written recommendation from a personal physician, psychiatrist or psychologist.

D. PERMANENT DISABILITY

1. A priest is considered permanently disabled if, due to a physical or mental impairment, he is no longer able to perform the material duties of a priest as determined by the Diocesan Bishop.
2. If permanently disabled, a priest will retire with disability and receive a pension according to the schedule of the Diocesan Pension Plan.
3. At the discretion of the Diocesan Bishop, he may also receive a monthly stipend from the Diocese and, if not yet entitled to Medicare, health insurance. The Diocese will provide dental insurance and, if he is able to drive, may provide automobile insurance.

II. UNAUTHORIZED LEAVE OF ABSENCE

A. GENERAL NORMS

1. Outside of the canonical provisions for legitimate absence (can. 533 and 550), a priest is considered on an unauthorized leave of absence when he:
 - a) Leaves his assignment without permission of the Diocesan Bishop.
 - b) Refuses to report to the assignment given to him by the Diocesan Bishop.
 - c) Fails to fulfill the conditions of his authorized leave.
2. Unless determined otherwise by the Diocesan Bishop, a priest on unauthorized leave is not entitled to any remuneration, health insurance or other benefits.
3. In cases where all compensation and benefits are discontinued, the Diocesan Bishop will ensure that the priest is not deprived of whatever is necessary to maintain a fitting and worthy quality of life (can. 1350). The Diocese reserves the right to request the priest's most recently filed income tax return and/or other pertinent data to determine his objective financial need.
4. Priests on unauthorized leave do not enjoy the faculties of the Diocese of Bridgeport.
5. Unauthorized leaves are normally not published in the *Fairfield County Catholic*, but priests of the Diocese will be informed and made aware of any restrictions placed on the priest's ministry. The same restrictions will be made available to the Ordinary of the diocese in which the priest is residing.
6. A priest who returns to active ministry following an unauthorized leave will be expected to participate in a specially designed period of reflection and renewal before being given a diocesan assignment.
7. If, despite repeated attempts to contact the priest, no response is received within six months, the Diocesan Bishop may initiate the process to impose appropriate canonical censures, including suspension of the priest.

8. After five years of unauthorized leave, the Diocesan Bishop may initiate the process envisioned in the *Code of Canon Law* for voluntary laicization or involuntary dismissal from the clerical state.

III. POLICY AND PROCEDURES FOR PRIESTS WHO ARE INCARDINATED, NON-RETIRED AND IN SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES

This policy applies to priests who are incardinated into the Diocese of Bridgeport and find themselves in very specific circumstances. It answers the question, "What do we do in the event that someone cannot or will not exercise priestly ministry?" Therefore, it applies to those who are unable or unwilling to carry out an assignment, with or without fault, temporarily or permanently. Additionally, it speaks to the support such priests will receive and the obligations that they will take on in such circumstances.¹ This policy does not refer to those who have canonically left the clerical state.

Those circumstances are:

- a) Priests on short-term health leave.
- b) Priests who are disabled and unable to exercise part-time priestly ministry.
- c) Priests who are disabled but able to exercise part-time priestly ministry.
- d) Priests on administrative leave or voluntary leave of absence.
- e) Priests who cannot be certified for purposes of Safe Environment.
- f) Priests who refuse an assignment.

A. PRIESTS ON SHORT-TERM HEALTH LEAVE

Example: Father has a serious accident while on vacation. He needs to be in traction in the hospital for three months. He cannot carry out his duties. He is placed on Short-Term Health Leave.

1. **Description:** Short-term health leave occurs when a priest, due to medical or psychological causes, must take time off from his assignment in order to address these same causes (e.g., cancer, serious automobile accident, major surgery, etc.). This will be handled on a case-by-case basis, depending on parish resources and needs. Short-term health leave is distinct from administrative leave, which occurs when the specific actions of a priest prevent him from carrying out his assignment (See Section D).
2. **Duration:** "Short-term" is understood as less than one year. If recovery or convalescence require it, this period can be extended in specific cases at the discretion of the Diocesan Bishop.
3. **Salary and Benefits:** Full salary, insurance and housing or means for housing are provided. It may reasonably come to pass that short-term health leave is carried out in a rehabilitation facility or similar location. In this case, whatever is not covered by insurance and an equitable housing allowance will be the responsibility of the priest.

¹ This document does not refer to the pension policy, which is described elsewhere.

4. **Check-In:** As far as possible, the Vicar for Clergy² will confer monthly with these priests.
5. **Proof of Disability:** Unless it appears needless to do so, it will be the responsibility of the priest to demonstrate that he is unable to carry out any priestly duties, after having consulted physicians or other medical or psychological personnel.

B. PRIESTS WHO ARE DISABLED AND UNABLE TO EXERCISE PART-TIME PRIESTLY MINISTRY

Example: Father has sought out Short-Term Health Leave due to a combination of physical and psychological factors. At the conclusion of his Short-Term Health Leave (or whenever this becomes apparent), he is unable, on the advice of medical professionals, to resume even part-time duties. He moves to disabled status.

1. **Description:** A disabled priest who cannot exercise even part-time ministry is understood to be a priest who is not capable of exercising public priestly ministry in a stable manner, due to mental or physical illness or injury, but who would otherwise be under no ministerial restriction. Such inability to stably exercise even part-time ministry is determined by the Diocesan Bishop in consultation with medical professionals. These priests will be given the opportunity to carry out ministry according to their limited capacity.
2. **Duration:** This depends on the nature of the disability on a case-by-case basis.
3. **Salary and Benefits:** Full salary, insurance and housing or means for housing are provided.
4. **Government Assistance:** Upon reaching the age of eligibility, the priest in this category shall, with the assistance of the Finance Office, apply for Social Security, Medicare Parts A and B and any other federal and/or state benefits for which he may qualify. Additionally, the priest shall apply for any benefits, should they exist due to his medical status.
5. **Check-In:** As far as possible, the Vicar for Clergy will confer quarterly with these priests.
6. **Proof of Disability:** Unless it appears needless to do so, it will be the responsibility of the priest to demonstrate that he is unable to carry out any priestly duties, after having consulted physicians or other medical or psychological personnel.

C. PRIESTS WHO ARE DISABLED BUT ABLE TO EXERCISE PART-TIME PRIESTLY MINISTRY

Example: Father, per the example above, is able to return to parish life, but is unable to carry the full burden, for reasons of his own mental health. He takes up residence and part-time ministry at a local parish. He has a genuine disability, but exercises ministry as far as he is able.

1. **Description:** A disabled priest who can exercise part-time ministry is understood to be a priest who is capable of exercising public priestly ministry to some degree but who

² For all instances which refer to the Vicar for Clergy, another delegate of the Bishop of Bridgeport may be appointed for this function.

cannot fulfill the material duties of a full-time assignment due to mental or physical illness or injury. Such inability to exercise full-time ministry is determined by the Diocesan Bishop in consultation with medical professionals. These priests will be given the opportunity to carry out ministry according to their limited capacity.

2. **Duration:** This depends on the nature of the disability on a case-by-case basis.
3. **Salary and Benefits:** Full salary is split based on work capacity between the Diocese and the parish/institution work of assignment, based on the quantity of work performed.
4. **Government Assistance:** Upon reaching the age of eligibility, the priest in this category shall, with the assistance of the Finance Office, apply for Social Security, Medicare Parts A and B and any other federal and/or state benefits for which he may qualify. Additionally, the priest shall apply for any benefits, should they exist due to his disability.
5. **Check-In:** Priests are to confer quarterly with the Vicar for Clergy.
6. **Proof of Disability:** Unless it appears needless to do so, it will be the responsibility of the priest to demonstrate that he is unable to carry out any priestly duties, after having consulted physicians or other medical or psychological personnel.

D. PRIESTS ON ADMINISTRATIVE LEAVE OR VOLUNTARY LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Example One: Father begins to develop drinking problem. One evening, he gets a DUI after a wedding reception. After some discussion, it appears that an evaluation will be necessary. Fr. Torvald is recommended to do inpatient treatment for three months. Father is placed on administrative leave while he carries out treatment. After six months, Father is uncertain about his future, but requests an additional six months. This is granted, at the reduced salary.

Example Two: Father, rather than wanting to undergo treatment, asks for a voluntary leave in order to pursue his own means of treatment, AA, etc. This is granted for a period of six months, and he is granted a voluntary leave of absence.

1. **Description:** Administrative leave arises when the actions of a priest make it impossible or at least seriously difficult for him to continue in active ministry such that he is directed to step away for a time from active ministry (e.g., active alcoholism, narcotic use, boundary violations, etc.). A voluntary leave of absence arises when the same circumstances exist, but a priest chooses to step away from active priestly ministry for grave reasons not otherwise contained in this policy.
2. **Duration:** Administrative leave and a voluntary leave of absence are understood as six months or less. This period can be extended in specific cases at the discretion of the Diocesan Bishop.
3. **Salary and Benefits for the first six months** (and any extension per D.2): Full salary, insurance and housing or means for housing are provided, if necessary.
4. **Salary and Benefits after six months** (or after the conclusion of a D.2 extension): 40% of full-time salary for years ordained, if necessary. Insurance and housing or means for housing are provided, if necessary.
5. **Counseling:** If appropriate (as determined by the Diocesan Bishop in consultation with the appropriate staff), he shall also be strongly encouraged to engage in structured counseling as coordinated with the Vicar for Clergy.
6. **Check-In:** Priests are to confer monthly with the Vicar for Clergy

E. PRIESTS WHO CANNOT BE CERTIFIED FOR PURPOSES OF SAFE ENVIRONMENT

Example One: Father is on administrative leave as a result of the abuse of narcotics. In the course of his treatment, he explains that he has carried out violations of professional and personal boundaries with adults such that he can in no way be certified for purposes of Safe Environment according to established diocesan policies. None of these violations are with minors or vulnerable adults. At the conclusion of his treatment (and any criminal sentence), he will be assisted in finding employment and, if he so desires it, with seeking voluntary laicization and dispensation from celibacy.

1. **Description:** Priests in this category are understood as those who have acted in such a way that they cannot be certified per the *Safe Environment Policies of the Diocese of Bridgeport* and/or in accord with Article 5 of the *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*.
2. **Duration:** Inability for certification is of indefinite length.
3. **Government Assistance:** If eligible, a priest in this category shall first apply to the federal and/or state government for benefits for which he may qualify, once he has concluded the appropriate civil, criminal, and canonical processes in response to any civil or canonical crime, presuming that he has not been dismissed from the clerical state or received any other perpetual penalty. Upon reaching the age of eligibility, the priest shall, with the assistance of the Finance Office, apply for Social Security, Medicare, Parts A and B and any other federal and/or state benefits for which he may qualify.
4. **Outside Employment:** If it is appropriate and possible, the priest shall make every effort, with the assistance of the Vicar for Clergy, to obtain employment in some other position that is in keeping with the dignity of the clerical state and that will not cause scandal to the Christian Faithful. To the extent that this position provides a stipend or salary, the priest shall be entitled to retain this amount.
5. **Salary and Benefits:** If not provided by outside employment or government assistance: 40% of full-time salary for years ordained, if necessary. Insurance and housing or means for housing are provided, if necessary.
6. **Tax Information:** A priest in this category must provide his most recent income tax return, or such portions of the income tax return to establish his total income on an annual basis and at such other times as may be requested by the Diocesan Finance Office. This information will be used solely to provide the most effective means of assistance to the individual priest. Such information will otherwise remain confidential.
7. **Check-In:** Priests are to confer monthly with the Vicar for Clergy

F. PRIESTS WHO REFUSE AN ASSIGNMENT

Example: Father has completed a six-month leave of absence. It has been established that he is living recovery and that he is living a stable life. He is asked to take an assignment as an assistant in a large parish. Father refuses anything but assignment again as a pastor. He insists that he will not return unless he is a pastor. He is given a warning that the only assignment available to him is the assistant's spot. He refuses the assignment outright.

- a) **Description:** Priests should undertake and fulfill faithfully any function which the Diocesan Bishop entrusts to them in obedience (can. 274 §2). If an individual priest who is otherwise capable absolutely refuses to accept such a function, he shall receive a warning in writing that canonical penalties could be imposed, up to and including, suspension or even dismissal from the clerical state. The priest shall be given 15 days from the date of the written warning either to assume the new assignment, or to offer reasons explaining his refusal. In the latter case, the Diocesan Bishop will judge whether or not the reasons suffice. If appropriate, other sanctions and penalties may apply as well. Priests are reminded that they have the right to seek canonical advice and, in addition, when appropriate, to hierarchical recourse as determined by canons 1732-1739. Resources about canonical counsel can be easily found through contact with former Judicial Vicars of the Diocese.

In addition, if a priest refuses to comply with legitimate requests that are deemed necessary (either by the nature of the particular ministry, civil regulations, Church law or the Diocesan Bishop) for assuming a certain office to which the Diocesan Bishop wishes to appoint him, he is deemed to be unfit for that office by the fact that he refuses to comply. If there is no other office or ministry available for that priest, the Diocesan Bishop will refer the matter to the Council of Deans for review. If the Council is unable to find another suitable and/or available ministry, the Diocesan Bishop may deem the priest incapable of ministry and place him on administrative leave. In the event of persistent non-compliance from the priest, the Diocesan Bishop, after a period determined by him, may consider the priest insubordinate and begin an appropriate canonical process to discipline him.

- b) **Salary, Benefits and Check-In:** Given that the individual, through his refusal to exercise legitimately his priesthood at the service of the Diocese, has placed himself in an interim state (that is, not fulfilling an assignment nor on recognized retirement or leave), he cannot receive diocesan financial support. Health insurance will be provided until it is otherwise available, contingent upon a monthly check-in with the Vicar for Clergy.

Summative Chart

	Duration	Salary - % of Standard	Insurance	Residence or Means	Check-in Frequency	Tax information
Short-term Health Leave	<1 year	100%	Yes	Yes	Vicar to Priest Monthly	Proof of disability
Disabled with no Stable Ministry	Case-by case	100%	Yes	Yes	Vicar to Priest Quarterly	Proof of disability
Disabled with Part-time Ministry	Case-by case	Split, but total of 100%	Yes	Yes	Priest to Vicar Quarterly	Proof of Disability
Administrative or Voluntary Leave	<6 months, Extension Possible	100% for 1 st 6 mos. 40% after	Yes, unless by other employer	Yes	Priest to Vicar Monthly	No
Non-Certification of Safe Environment	Case-by-case	40%, if needed	Yes, unless by other employer	Yes	Priest to Vicar Monthly	Yes
Refusal of Assignment	Duration of refusal	0%	Yes, until otherwise available	No	Monthly	No

IV. CLERICAL MISCONDUCT

A. ABUSE OF MINORS AND VULNERABLE PERSONS

All priests are subject to the Diocese of Bridgeport Policy for the Protection of Children and the Sexual Abuse of Minors by Priests and Deacons (See the *Safe Environment Handbook* of the Diocese of Bridgeport).

B. SUBSTANCE ABUSE/ADDICTION

1. When a priest is suspected of substance abuse or addiction, or when that fact has been determined, he will be asked to meet with the Vicar for Clergy and/or the Diocesan Bishop.
2. Any priest whose use of alcohol or other drugs/chemical substances that interfere with his ability to perform his duties at his assignment, impairs his interpersonal relationships, affects his physical or psychological health or brings discredit to his office will be considered chemically dependent and in need of professional treatment.

3. If professional treatment is deemed necessary, the cost of the care and the priest's full salary will be paid by the Diocese. However, the administrative supplemental payment will not be paid while the priest is on leave.
4. Any priest whose treatment for an addiction requires an absence from his assignment will be placed on medical leave of absence.
5. The goal of any treatment program will be the restoration of the priest's health and dignity and his return to productive and spiritually rewarding ministry. Unless circumstances weigh against it, the priest will return to his same assignment after the completion of treatment.
6. Any priest addicted to alcohol or who suffers from alcohol intolerance will be granted permission from the Diocesan Bishop, upon request, to celebrate Mass using mustum.
7. All priests, in a spirit of fraternal charity, should inform the Vicar for Clergy when they suspect any priest is suffering from substance abuse or addiction of any form.
8. If inappropriate behavior related to substance abuse occurs, such matter may be referred to the Ministerial Advisory Committee.

C. MINISTERIAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

1. Matters involving a priest accused of misconduct involving another adult or misconduct in the exercise of his ministry may be referred to the Ministerial Advisory Committee, which is comprised of clergy and lay individuals.
2. After an internal review of the available information on the matter, the Diocesan Bishop will determine whether an allegation is credible. If an allegation is deemed to be credible, the Diocesan Bishop may convene the Ministerial Advisory Committee to assist him in creating a plan to address the misconduct and impose any conditions regarding assignment of the priest involved.
3. If the Diocesan Bishop determines that the allegation is not credible, he and his delegates will take every step possible to restore the priest's good name.
4. Throughout the process, the Diocesan Bishop will ensure that the accused cleric has access to appropriate support, including but not limited to, civil or canonical legal resources.

Appendices

Appendix A

**THE DIOCESE OF BRIDGEPORT
AUTHORIZATION AND RELEASE FOR THE PROCUREMENT OF AN INVESTIGATIVE REPORT
CLERGY**

I, the undersigned, do hereby authorize the Diocese of Bridgeport, and Catholic Mutual Group, Inc., by and through its independent contractor, **MIND YOUR BUSINESS, INC.** ("MYB"), to procure a report and/or investigative report on me every five (5) years. All positions will include a Criminal Conviction Check, Social Security Number Trace, Financial Credit History and Motor Vehicle Search. The Social Security number, Driver's License and the Date of Birth are required.

I understand that I am entitled to a complete and accurate disclosure of the nature and scope of any investigative report prepared on me upon written request to MYB that is made within a reasonable time after the date hereof.

I further authorize any person, business entity or governmental agency, who may have information relevant to the above, to disclose the same to the Diocese of Bridgeport and Catholic Mutual Group, Inc., by and through MYB, including but not limited to, any courthouse, any public agency, any and all law enforcement agencies and any and all credit bureaus, regardless of whether such person, business entity or governmental agency compiled the information itself or received it from other sources. I hereby release the Diocese of Bridgeport and Catholic Mutual Group, Inc., MYB and any and all persons, business entities and governmental agencies, whether public or private, from any and all liability, claims and/or demands, of whatever kind, to me, my heirs, or others making such claim or demand on my behalf for procuring, providing and/or assisting with the compilation or preparation of the report and/or investigative report hereby authorized.

PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY

PRINTED NAME:

First Middle Last

SIGNATURE: _____ DATE: _____

COMPLETE RESIDENCE ADDRESS:

Street Number/P.O. Box Street Name

City State Zip Code County

SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER: _____ - _____ - _____

DATE OF BIRTH: _____
(MM/DD/YYYY)

DAYTIME TELEPHONE NUMBER: _____

EMAIL: _____

DRIVER'S LICENSE NUMBER: _____ STATE _____

PLEASE LIST ALL ADDITIONAL RESIDENCES THAT YOU HAVE RESIDED IN THE PAST FIVE (5) YEARS:

Street Number/P.O. Box	Street Name	City	State	Zip Code	County
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Street Number/P.O. Box	Street Name	City	State	Zip Code	County
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Street Number/P.O. Box	Street Name	City	State	Zip Code	County
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Street Number/P.O. Box	Street Name	City	State	Zip Code	County
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Street Number/P.O. Box	Street Name	City	State	Zip Code	County
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If you are not from the United States, please provide any additional identification information (National ID Number, Visa Number) that will assist us in completing your criminal background check

[Consumer Rights on background checks under the Fair Credit Reporting Act \(FCRA\)](http://bridgeportdiocese.com/safeenvironments/backgroundchecks)

<http://bridgeportdiocese.com/safeenvironments/backgroundchecks>

Appendix B

Executive Summary for Clergy and Men in Formation

As a **Cleric** or Man in **Formation**, I promise to strictly follow the rules and guidelines in this Code of Conduct. Clerics and Men in Formation who are committed to a celibate lifestyle are called to be an example of celibate chastity in all relationships at all times. I promise to conduct myself transparently and professionally both in person and while using any form of technology.

As a Clergy Member or Man in Formation, I will:

- At all times avoid even the appearance of impropriety in person and while using technology.
- Avoid situations where I am alone with a minor or Vulnerable Adult at church activities.
- Be transparent and avoid the appearance of impropriety when giving and receiving gifts.
- Report any suspected abuse or risk of harm involving a minor or Vulnerable Adult outside of confession, including child pornography, to the Pastor, Administrator, or appropriate supervisor, the police, the D.C.F. Careline and to the Victim Assistance Coordinator of the Diocese of Bridgeport within twelve (12) hours of becoming aware of the information whether the abuse is alleged to have occurred recently or in the past.
- Cooperate fully in any investigation involving abuse of children, youth or in any investigation of Adult-to-Adult misconduct.
- Uphold the standards of the USCCB Charter and the Safe Environment Policies of the Diocese of Bridgeport.

As a Clergy member or Man in Formation, I will not:

- Be under the influence of alcohol at any time while ministering to minors.
- Use, possess, or be under the influence of illegal drugs at any time.
- Strike, spank, shove, shake, push, or slap others.
- Humiliate, ridicule, threaten, or degrade others.
- Touch a minor and/or youth in a sexual or other inappropriate manner.
- Use any discipline that frightens or humiliates minors.
- Use profanity in the presence of minors.
- Visit pornographic websites or participate in interactive websites for the purpose of initiating sexual contacts, live or virtual.

I have read the Safe Environment Handbook and I am aware of the sections of the Handbook which apply to my specific ministry, including but not limited to, The Code of Conduct for Clergy and Men in Formation; Guidelines for Trips, Events and Electronic Communication involving Minors and the sections on Mandatory Reporting. I agree to conduct myself accordingly.

Printed Name: _____

Signature/Date: _____

Appendix C:
Declaration of Consent

In connection with this request, I authorize AIS and/or its subsidiaries, all governmental and private agencies within the European Union, or any member state thereof, Asia Pacific (APAC); Middle East; South America or African regions, to release information they may have related to my criminal record, educational or employment record to the person or company with which this form has been filed, or their agent for that purpose in which this consent was obtained. I authorize this consent to any nation or my home country of residence.

I authorize AIS, an independent agent acting on behalf of my prospective employer, to verify information presented on my online form or in any submitted and/or attached documents. I understand that these documents may include sensitive personal data for the purposes of the UK Data Protection legislation, and the obtaining of documents and/or information which is covered by the European legislation (General Data Protection Regulation — GDPR) and/or by applicable data protection legislation which is relevant in any other country. I also understand and agree that, where my personal history requires background verifications to be carried out in countries where I have worked and/or resided, in respect of my criminality, employment or education or residence, my data may be sent and processed in those relevant countries. I understand and agree the information provided on this form and that contained in attached documents, if required, is true and complete to the best of my knowledge.

My signature below acknowledges the fact that I have read, understand and freely give my unambiguous consent to the handling of my personal information. I agree that AIS may contact the custodian(s) of record either by phone, email or regular mail for the purposes set out above. Furthermore, I hereby release the aforesaid parties or the Company or individuals that release information about me from any liability whatsoever in collecting and disseminating the information obtained. I confirm that I have read and understood AIS Privacy Policy and am aware of my subject rights under GDPR.

The following information may be checked:

Basic criminality: A basic check via the relevant jurisdictional agency containing the details of criminal convictions considered unspent under jurisdictional spent conviction laws.

Educational/Employment confirmation: A request to the University/College or employer claimed in order to verify any/all details as they relate to your educational qualifications or past employment experience.

Applicant Name (please print)

Date (month/day/year)

Applicant Signature

Appendix D



Office of Clergy and Religious

Diocese of Bridgeport

238 Jewett Avenue, Bridgeport, CT 06606

Tel: (203)-416-1453

Please type or print the information clearly and return to sbaldwin@diobpt.org

Request for Letter of Good Standing

Please complete all information below for your letter request. Your letter request should not be more than 3 months in advance and not less than two weeks except for emergent letters such as funeral. Thank you.

- Name of Priest/Deacon: _____
- Type of Event: _____ Celebrant/Concelebrant/Assist (**circle one**)

Please list the name of recipient (s) if this event is a sacrament or funeral:

For weddings: Both the groom and bride's (Maiden name) is required

-
- Date of Event: _____
 - Pastor/or administrator of the church: _____
 - **Email address** of Pastor or Admin : _____
 - Event Location, address and phone #

- Diocese in which the event will take place:

- **Name and title** of Bishop or Vicar of Clergy or Chancellor or to whom the letter should be addressed **including Email address**:

- Address of Diocese where you will serve:

Appendix E:

Profession of Faith and Oath of Fidelity

I, N., Pastor of N., with firm faith believe and profess each and everything that is contained in the Symbol of faith, namely:

I believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible. I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Only Begotten Son of God, born of the Father before all ages. God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father; through him all things were made. For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven, and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and became man. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate, he suffered death and was buried, and rose again on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead and his kingdom will have no end. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets. I believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church. I confess one baptism for the forgiveness of sins and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.

With firm faith, I also believe everything contained in the Word of God, whether written or handed down in Tradition, which the Church, either by a solemn judgment or by the ordinary and universal Magisterium, sets forth to be believed as divinely revealed.

I also firmly accept and hold each and everything definitively proposed by the Church regarding teaching on faith and morals.

Moreover, I adhere with religious submission of will and intellect to the teachings which either the Roman Pontiff or the College of Bishops enunciate when they exercise their authentic Magisterium, even if they do not intend to proclaim these teachings by a definitive act.

Name, Pastor	Date	
--------------	------	--

Most Reverend Frank J. Caggiano Bishop of Bridgeport	Date	
---	------	--

OATH OF FIDELITY

I, N., in assuming the office of Pastor of N., promise that in my words and in my actions I shall always preserve communion with the Catholic Church.

With great care and fidelity, I shall carry out the duties incumbent on me toward the Church, both universal and particular, in which, according to the provisions of the law, I have been called to exercise my service.

In fulfilling the charge entrusted to me in the name of the Church, I shall hold fast to the deposit of faith in its entirety; I shall faithfully hand it on and explain it, and I shall avoid any teachings contrary to it.

I shall foster the common discipline of the entire Church and I shall insist on the observance of all ecclesiastical laws, especially those contained in the *Code of Canon Law*.

With Christian obedience I shall follow what the Bishops, as authentic doctors and teachers of the faith, declare, or what they, as those who govern the Church, establish. I shall also — with due regard for the character and purpose of my institute — faithfully assist the diocesan Bishops, so that the apostolic activity, exercised in the name and by mandate of the Church, may be carried out in communion with the Church.

So help me God, and God's Holy Gospels on which I place my hand.

Name, Pastor	Date	
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Most Reverend Frank J. Caggiano	Date	
Bishop of Bridgeport		

Appendix F:

Priest's Funeral Planning Sheet

Section I: Personal Information:

Full Name: _____
Last First Middle

Section II: Nearest Relatives

1. Full Name: _____ Relationship: _____

Address: _____
Street City State Zip Code

Telephone: (h) _____ Email: _____
(c) _____

2. Full Name: _____ Relationship: _____

Address: _____
Street City State Zip Code

Telephone: (h) _____ Email: _____
(c) _____

Section III: Location of Last Will and Testament

Full Name: _____

Address: _____
Street City State Zip Code

Telephone: (o) _____ Email: _____
(c) _____ Date of Will: _____

It is recommended that a sealed copy of your Last Will and Testament be kept within your personnel file in the Office of Clergy and Religious.

Section IV: Executor of Your Estate

Full Name: _____

Address: _____
Street City State Zip Code

Telephone: (o) _____ Email: _____
(c) _____

Section V: Funeral Arrangements

Who should see that your funeral plans are carried out? _____

A. Funeral Director

Full Name: _____

Address: _____
Street City State Zip Code

Telephone: (o) _____ Email: _____
(c) _____

B. Place of Wake/Vigil Mass and Mass of Christian Burial

The wake/vigil Mass and funeral Mass will be celebrated according to liturgical guidelines. Ordinarily, the proper Dean is the celebrant of the vigil Mass (if there is one) and the Bishop is the celebrant of the Mass of Christian Burial.

i. Wake/Vigil Mass

Location: _____

Address: _____
Street City State Zip Code

Homilist: _____
Contact Information (if outside the Diocese) _____

Readings: _____

Hymns: _____

Special Requests: _____

ii. Mass of Christian Burial

Location: _____

Address: _____
Street City State Zip Code

Homilist: _____
Contact Information (if outside the Diocese) _____

Readings: _____

Hymns: _____

Special Requests: _____

iii. Interment

Location: _____

Address: _____
Street City State Zip Code

Manner of Interment (please check one):

Priests' Section _____ Family/Personal Plot _____
Cremation (with permission) _____ Mausoleum _____ Other _____

Section VI: Death Benefit

The Diocese offers a \$6,000 death benefit to your estate to offset funeral expenses. Your executor should provide the Office of Clergy and Religious with a copy of your certificate of death and the "Court of Probate" letter.

Signature: _____

Date: _____