

CONTINUING EDUCATION POLICY - DIOCESE OF OWENSBORO

1. The Diocese of Owensboro is committed to the promotion and support of the continuing education of all ordained ministers.
2. Continuing education and formation is "not a luxury, but a necessity for effective priestly ministry." (Program for the Continuing Education of Priests, NCCB, 1972.) Further, "every priest has a right and an obligation to continue his spiritual growth and education. He has a right to strong support from his superiors, peers, and the people he serves. He also has an obligation to his superiors and peers, but, above all, to his people, to continue to grow in grace and in knowledge (PCEP,2)."
3. Human and ministerial growth is a life-long process of intentional change toward maturity. While that perfection to which Jesus calls us will remain essentially incomplete in this life, nevertheless, our responsibility as ministers is to strive for an ever greater personal integration and ministerial competence.
4. Adult learning and growth best take place in an atmosphere of personal responsibility, freedom, and accountability, and these policies and procedures are intended to promote and foster such an atmosphere.
5. Growth, learning, and formation for ministry are "holistic." Programs and opportunities for continuing education and formation should look to the intellectual, emotional (affective), physical, and spiritual needs of the priests.

POLICIES

1. The diocese, through the Director for Continuing Education, will help each priest ascertain his personal and professional growth needs and will encourage and assist each priest to develop a flexible plan for meeting his short- and long-term continuing education and formation needs.
2. The Director of Continuing Education will develop a generalized profile of the continuing and formation needs of the presbyterate. In cooperation with other bodies, he will work to provide the kinds of continuing education and formation experiences that will meet these needs.
3. Continuing education and formation opportunities and experiences for priests will be coordinated with those for other pastoral ministers in the diocese and vice versa when appropriate.

POLICIES - SPECIFIC

1. Each priest is entitled and expected to take up to two weeks a year away from his normal ministerial setting for continuing education and formation.
2. Up to \$1,500.00 per year shall be allotted in the budget of each parish or institution to finance up to two weeks of continuing education and formation. The time and the funds allotted are not cumulative. The year shall be considered the fiscal year. **(July 1, 1998)**
3. In case a parish or institution cannot provide the allotted funds, application should be made to the Director of Continuing Education, and supplementary funds will be made available by the diocese. The Director of Continuing Education will include a certain amount in the office's budget each year for this purpose. These monies will not be cumulative, and the director will render and accounting of this fund each year to the Priests' Council and Committee for Administration. Request must be in by January 1 prior to the fiscal year.
4. The Director of Continuing Education shall make available twice a year a list of selected continuing education and formation opportunities.
5. Once a year there will be held a Clergy Convocation lasting four days. All priests will be expected to attend. The Priests' Council will choose the topic. This will be not only an opportunity for education, but a time of fellowship and prayer. This can be included as one of the weeks of education mentioned above and funds for it taken from the parish allotment.
6. The priest may use his allotted time and funds for available courses of study at nearby institutions of higher learning such as Brescia College, Western Kentucky, Murray State, or Kentucky Wesleyan.
7. The Director of Continuing Education, in cooperation with appropriate diocesan office, will provide resources and facilitators for groups of priests and other ministers who request workshops in specific areas of concentration or other continuing education and formation opportunities.
8. Since continuing education and formation is intended both for the personal growth of the priests and to enhance the quality of ministry, the priest shall annually submit a review of his progress in continuing education and formation. The Director of Continuing Education will provide a format for this report and shall send it to all priests at the time of the other parish reports. The priest shall also keep the parish, especially the parish council or institution, apprised of his participation in continuing education and formation.

RETREATS

Each priest is expected to make an annual retreat of one week, the cost of which is to be born by his parish or institution. The cost of the retreat is not to exceed \$300.00. **(July 1, 1998)**

SPECIALIZED PROGRAMS

Specialized programs shall be offered for the priests. These programs shall be considered part of the general continuing education and formation program and shall be paid for out of allotted funds. These programs may include: entry into priesthood, prepastorate, pre-retirement program, programs for transition in ministry.

EXTENDED STUDY AND SPECIALIZED TRAINING

The diocese regularly has need for priests trained in specialized areas. In selecting and training men for these ministerial positions, both the needs of the Church and the personal inclinations and abilities of the priests should be considered. The bishop will make this decision based on the recommendation of the Priest Personnel Board and in consultation with the Director of Continuing Education for Clergy.

SABBATICALS

Definition:

1. For our purposes, sabbatical is defined as an extended time (four months to a year) away from one's normal assignment for the purpose of personal and professional growth and renewal through an approved program of study, work, prayer, and rest.
2. A sabbatical is not considered leave from ministry, but a time of personal and professional renewal for ministry.
3. A sabbatical is further distinguished from: special studies to meet diocesan needs, extended vacation, therapeutic leave, leave of absence from ministry.
4. A "normal sabbatical" is four months or an academic semester. An "extended sabbatical" is more than an academic semester.

Eligibility:

1. After ten years of ordination and every ten years thereafter, every priest is expected to take a normal sabbatical.
2. The diocese will budget for four normal sabbaticals a year.
3. In promotion and approving sabbatical applications, priority will be given to those priests with seniority. When a choice must be made among applicants or when a sabbatical must be deferred due to the number of applicants or the needs of the diocese, a priest's personal needs as well as his age will be considered.

Process of Application and Approval:

1. The priest shall make application in writing to the Director of Continuing Education for Clergy, who shall immediately inform the bishop and the personnel committee of the application.
2. This initial application for a normal sabbatical shall be made no later than January 1 before the fiscal year during which the sabbatical will be taken. This will allow for budgeting and replacement planning. (To illustrate: those wishing to take a sabbatical during the fiscal year 1997-98 must make application before November 1, 1996.) This does not mean that final planning for the sabbatical must be completed at this time, but only application for the time away.
3. The Director for Continuing Education will assist the applicant in choosing the program most suitable to his personal needs and inclinations.
4. When the applicant has chosen a program and has made concrete plans, he shall consult with the bishop who will give final approval.
5. The priest shall make known to the parish council and pastoral co-workers the diocesan policy on sabbaticals and discuss with them the pastoral and ministerial implications of his proposed sabbatical.
6. After the bishop's approval, the priest finalizes his plans and makes arrangements for covering his pastoral responsibilities with the assistance of the personnel committee and the Director of Continuing Education.
7. Plans should be final, including acceptance into the program of choice, no later than six months, but preferably one year prior to the time of the desired sabbatical.
8. Sabbaticals shall generally be considered during pastoral assignments. A "normal" sabbatical between assignments will be considered on request and the necessary arrangements are to be made between the priest applicant, the bishop, and the personnel committee.

Financing:

1. The Director of Continuing Education shall be responsible for budgeting and administration of funds for "normal sabbaticals."
2. Funding and support for "extended sabbaticals" shall be administered by the bishop from funds at his discretion since he is solely responsible for the approval of extended sabbaticals.
3. The parish to which the priest is assigned shall make the following contribution to the cost of a normal sabbatical: normal benefits and expense of supply priest if required.
4. The diocese shall provide the cost of the program, salary and car allowance.

Extended Sabbaticals:

1. Since a priest on extended sabbatical will presumably not have an official parish assignment, no funding will be available from parish sources.
2. Extended sabbatical are considered exceptions, and application for approval of an extended sabbatical shall be made exclusively to and by the ordinary.
3. Financial arrangements shall be negotiated with the diocese.