



ARCHDIOCESE OF SAINT PAUL AND MINNEAPOLIS
CLERGY BULLETIN

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POLICY FOR THE INCARDINATION OF PRIESTS

Reverend and dear Fathers and Deacons,

Among my responsibilities as Archbishop of Saint Paul and Minneapolis is ensuring the proper distribution and sharing of priests and deacons. At times, this duty includes assisting priests in exercising their right to petition their proper ordinary for incardination or excardination.

To facilitate the exercise of this right, I hereby promulgate the attached policy and declare that is particular law for the Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis, effective immediately. This policy replaces the policy promulgated in 1992 by my predecessor, the Most Reverend John R. Roach, and its revision, promulgated on May 10, 2010.

Given at Saint Paul, Minnesota, this 6th day of July, in the year of Our Lord 2012. All things to the contrary notwithstanding.

The Most Reverend John C. Nienstedt
Archbishop of Saint Paul and Minneapolis

Jennifer Haselberger
Chancellor for Canonical Affairs

ARCHDIOCESE OF SAINT PAUL AND MINNEAPOLIS

Policy for the Incardination of Priests

I. Introduction:

Incardination specifies the relationship of clerics to the Church and the service which they render in it and refers to the attachment of the priest or deacon to a diocesan Church headed by the diocesan bishop. Theologically it underscores the close, permanent association of bishops, presbyters and deacons in the Church's ordained ministry and hierarchical structure.

A cleric becomes incardinated into a particular Church through reception of the diaconate. However, the *Code of Canon Law* does provide a means whereby a priest or deacon incardinated into a diocese or institute of consecrated life may transfer enrollment into another diocese. The following policy has been promulgated to assist with this process when the diocese of the proposed transfer is the Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis.

II. Process:

1). A priest who wishes to be incardinated into the Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis should initiate the process by making a written request to the Archbishop.

The letter of intent should include:

- Biographical information about the priest seeking incardination
- Explanation for leaving diocese or religious order
- Explanation for seeking incardination into the Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis
- Some demonstration of his proficiency in English

2). Upon receipt of the letter of intent, and if the preliminary requirements are met, the Archbishop will write to the priest's proper Ordinary, asking if he would consent to the proposed incardination, and asking for his remarks. Specifically, the Archbishop will request that the Ordinary indicate:

- The priest's current status
- The priest's ministerial background and experience
- Any other special considerations pertaining to the application for incardination
- The priest's character and reputation, including but not limited to any record or history of problems with substance abuse, celibacy or other sexual improprieties – including but not limited to the sexual abuse of minors – physical, mental or emotional abuse,

and/or financial improprieties. Should any such records or history be reported, the Ordinary must submit a comprehensive report of the issue and its disposition or resolution.

3). When the necessary information has been assembled, the documentation and the initial letter of petition will be sent to the Incardination Committee.

4). Once the Archbishop has received the initial recommendation of the Incardination Committee, he will either accept the candidate into the probationary period or deny the candidate's petition for incardination. The candidate's proper ordinary will be informed of either decision.

Acceptance into the probationary period is not a guarantee of future incardination.

5). Once admitted to the probationary period, a candidate will be assigned to a parish or institution in accord with the recommendation of the Incardination Committee, and after consultation with the Comprehensive Assignment Board. Prior to beginning this assignment, the candidate must complete the essential requirements of the safe environment program of the Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis, including signing a release for a comprehensive background check.

6). Prior to incardination, candidates admitted to the probationary period must complete a minimum of three years of successful service. Ideally, during this time a candidate will have two different parish assignments in which he shall serve either as a parochial vicar or as a parochial administrator. Candidates in the probationary period will not be assigned as pastor.

7). The Archbishop of Saint Paul and Minneapolis will make the final decision regarding incardination. Prior to making the final decision, the Archbishop will receive a final recommendation from the Incardination Committee.

If the decision is made not to incardinate a candidate, that decision will be communicated to the candidate in writing. Along with the decision, the candidate will be informed as to whether he may continue to exercise ministry in the Archdiocese as an extern priest.

If the Archbishop decides to proceed with incardination, he will request that the priest declare, in writing, his desire to be incardinated into the Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis. This second letter of intent should include a reaffirmation by the priest that there is nothing in his background which would limit or disqualify him from exercising ministry or holding a pastoral office, and that he has not engaged in any type of misconduct or inappropriate activity that could justifiably give rise to public scandal.

When the Archbishop has received this second letter of intent, the Archbishop will inform the priest's proper ordinary and request a decree of excardination.

8). Newly incardinated priests will be welcomed into the presbyterate through the liturgical Rite of Incardination, to be celebrated by the Archbishop or his delegate at an appropriate time and place, for example, at the Presbyteral Assembly. Once incardinated into the Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis, the newly incardinated priest shares in all the benefits and responsibilities of the priests of the Archdiocese.

III. Preliminary Qualifications:

1). To be admitted as a candidate for incardination into the Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis, a priest should be:

- In good standing in his diocese or religious order
- Able to fulfill a particular need or ministerial position within the Archdiocese.
- Of able mind and body

The Incardination Committee will also make an initial inquiry concerning the candidate's financial position and the feasibility of his being invested in the Archdiocesan pension plan, with due consideration to issues of equity and justice vis-à-vis the presbyterate.

The Archbishop may accept candidates who do not fulfill these requirements at his discretion.

Ideally, a candidate will have spent at least one year in ministry in the Archdiocese prior to submitting a petition for admission into the incardination process.

At the request of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples, communicated to all bishops through the Apostolic Nuncio on May 29, 2012, and to avoid the impoverishment of the missionary churches, the Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis ordinarily will not consider requests for incardination made by priests from mission territories.

2). At the time he requests incardination, a priest must make a statement regarding his character and fitness for ministry. False statements, material misrepresentation of facts, or fraudulent concealment of facts or circumstances shall be grounds for revocation of incardination.

IV. Incardination Committee:

1). The Incardination Committee consists of the following individuals, who serve either *ex officio* or by appointment of the Archbishop:

- The Vicar General, who will serve as Chairperson of the Committee
- The Director of the Office of Priestly Life and Ministry

- Two experienced priests selected by the Archbishop, preferably, one of whom was incardinated after ordination.

The Incardination Committee is free to consult with other individuals and/or Archdiocesan departments as is deemed necessary.

2). The Incardination Committee is mandated by the Archbishop to interview candidates for incardination, to oversee a candidate's ministry during the probationary period, and to make a recommendation to the Archbishop regarding the proposed incardination.

3). The initial interviews with a candidate should include discussion of the following areas:

- The rationale for the petition
- Any issues or concerns identified in the documentation
- Preferred areas of ministry or special expertise
- Previous experiences in ministry
- Particular needs within the Archdiocese

Other topics may be introduced for discussion, including issues of orthodoxy, respect and obedience to the ordinary, and observance of liturgical norms.

4). Following the initial interview, the Incardination Committee will make a preliminary recommendation to the Archbishop as to whether the priest should be admitted into the incardination process. Whenever possible, this recommendation will be made within four months of the date of the candidate's original letter of petition.

5). During the probationary period, the Incardination Committee will conduct a written evaluation of the candidate at the conclusion of each assignment. If the candidate was serving as a parochial vicar, the pastor or administrator of the parish or institution where the priest was assigned will be involved in the evaluation. If the candidate is a parochial administrator, the dean will be asked to provide an evaluation. The candidate and pastor (or dean) will each be asked to provide names and addresses of three lay persons who have observed the candidate in his ministry. These six persons will be provided with an evaluation form to send to the Incardination Committee for review. These various evaluations will be considered by the Committee when it makes its final recommendation to the Archbishop.

The Director of the Office of Priestly Life and Ministry will also meet annually with the candidate.

6). The Incardination Committee will meet again with the candidate prior to making a final recommendation to the Archbishop regarding the proposed incardination. At the conclusion of the probationary period, and prior to making this final recommendation, the Committee may wish to request copies of the candidate's personnel files from any diocese in which he has served. The Committee may also request that the candidate has a

psychological and/or medical evaluation. The candidate will be required to submit letters of reference from two Archdiocesan priests who have been in a position to observe the candidate's ministry in this Archdiocese.

V. Benefits during the Probationary Period:

1). During the probationary period, a candidate must have health insurance which is valid in the Archdiocese. If the candidate's insurance is received through his home diocese or religious community, the equivalent cost will be paid to the home diocese or community by the parish or institution at which the candidate is assigned.

2). If the candidate does not have health insurance elsewhere, he will be enrolled into the Employees Plan for the Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis, and the parish or institution to which he is assigned will cover the premium.

3). During the probationary period, the parish or institution to which the candidate is assigned will make contributions to the candidate's existing pension plan at the rate established in the Summary Plan Description of the Priests Pension Plan. A candidate does not accrue benefits in the Priests Pension Plan of the Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis until he is incardinated, although the probationary period may be considered when calculating years of service.

4). During the probationary period, a candidate is eligible to vote for his representative on the Presbyteral Council, but is not normally able to stand for election.

5). During the probationary period, a candidate may be absent from the parish or institution to which he is assigned for up to one month per year.