



ARCHDIOCESE OF SAINT PAUL AND MINNEAPOLIS

CLERGY BULLETIN

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THE INCARDINATION/EXCARDINATION OF PERMANENT DEACONS

Reverend and dear Fathers,

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.

At his ordination, by means of the imposition of hands and the prayer of consecration, a permanent deacon is constituted a sacred minister and a member of the hierarchy, and he is incardinated into a particular diocesan church. Therefore, ordination is only conferred in cases where the deacon has clearly expressed in writing his intention to serve the diocesan Church for life. Incardination is a juridical bond that expresses the ministerial dedication of the deacon to a specific diocesan Church."

However, the *Code of Canon Law* does provide a means whereby a permanent deacon incardinated into a diocese may transfer enrollment into another diocese. The following policy has been promulgated to assist with this process when one of the dioceses involved is the Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis.

Given at Saint Paul, Minnesota, this 29th day of January, in the year of Our Lord 2013.
All things to the contrary notwithstanding.

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

Jennifer Haselberger
Chancellor for Canonical Affairs

I. Process for Incardination:

According to canon 269 of the *Code of Canon Law*, a diocesan bishop is not to allow the incardination of a cleric unless the necessity or advantage of his own particular Church demands it. Therefore, the possibility of incardination should not be presumed for permanent deacons. However, the following procedure should be used to determine whether such an incardination is necessary or advantageous. This procedure should not begin until the deacon seeking incardination has provided a minimum of two years of service in the Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis as an extern with a ministerial assignment made by the Archbishop of Saint Paul and Minneapolis.

1. A deacon 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 deacon seeking incardination
 - Explanation for leaving the original diocese of incardination
 - Explanation for seeking incardination into the Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis
 - Some demonstration of his proficiency in English
 - Demonstration that the deacon is able to provide financially for himself and his family without recourse to employment with the Church.
 - Statement of support from the deacon's wife, when applicable
2. Upon receipt of the letter of intent, and if the preliminary requirements are met, the Archbishop will write to the deacon'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 deacon's current status
 - The deacon's ministerial background and experience
 - Any other special considerations pertaining to the application for incardination
 - The deacon'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.
 - A written record of the deacon's academic, spiritual and pastoral formation, to include notation of academic degrees awarded or citations earned.

3. When the necessary information has been assembled, the documentation and the initial letter of petition will be sent to the Incardination Committee¹. The Incardination Committee is to consider carefully the merits of the request, including whether it is a matter of necessity or advantage for the Archdiocese to incardinate the deacon.
4. Once the Archbishop has received the initial recommendation of the Incardination Committee, he will either accept the deacon into the probationary period or deny the deacon's petition for incardination. The deacon's proper ordinary will be informed of either decision. **Acceptance into the probationary period is not a guarantee of future incardination.**
5. A permanent deacon may be accepted into the probationary period with the condition that he complete an additional formation or educational program at the Saint Paul Seminary or through the Diaconal Formation Program. Should the deacon be unable to complete the required program or coursework, incardination would be denied.
6. Prior to incardination, a deacon admitted to the probationary period must complete a minimum of three years of successful service. Ideally, during this time the deacon will have two different parish assignments in which he shall serve in the voluntary capacity as a permanent deacon, under the direction of the pastor of the parish. If the deacon is an employee at a parish or institution, he is not exempt from the requirement of having a voluntary ministerial assignment.
7. The Incardination Committee will consult with the pastor of the parishes to which the deacon is assigned, as well as with at least three lay people familiar with his ministry, prior to making a final recommendation to the Archbishop.
8. 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 deacon, that decision will be communicated to the deacon in writing. Along with the decision, the deacon will be informed as to whether he may continue to exercise ministry in the Archdiocese as an extern deacon.

If the Archbishop decides to proceed with incardination, he will request that the deacon 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 deacon 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. It should also affirm the deacon's intention of fulfilling the obligation of lifelong service.

¹ The Incardination Committee is as specified in the Policy for the Incardination of Priests. The Incardination Committee may choose to consult with the Director of Diaconate and another suitable member of the deacon community when considering the incardination of a deacon.

When the Archbishop has received this second letter of intent, the Archbishop will inform the deacon's proper ordinary and request a decree of excommunication, along with a complete copy of the personnel file of the deacon.

Should a decree of incardination be issued, the Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis does not assume any financial responsibility for the deacon or his family. The deacon should not expect to be paid for his ministry, nor should expect to be given a paid position at a church or institution.

II. Process for Excommunication or Transfer

Since a permanent deacon is ordained for lifelong service in a particular church, the right to excommunicate should not be presumed. However, should issues of employment, retirement, or health require the permanent deacon to relocate to another diocese, the following process should be followed.

1. The deacon will write to the Archbishop of Saint Paul and Minneapolis, informing him of his desire to relocate, and requesting permission for the proposed move.
2. If permission to relocate is secured, the deacon will write to the bishop of the new diocese to inform him of his pending arrival, and inquiring about diocesan protocols for seeking faculties and/or a diaconal assignment. The deacon will not exercise ministry in the new diocese without the permission of the bishop. Deacons should enter this process attentive to the fact that not dioceses have implemented the permanent diaconate, and that some have a sufficient number of deacons and therefore are not able to permit the ministry of externs.
3. Generally, the deacon will be asked to request a letter from the diocese of incardination providing information regarding the new move together with appropriate letters of recommendation and evaluation.
4. If the response of the new diocese is favorable, the deacon may receive a ministerial assignment in the new diocese. After the deacon has served in the new diocese for a time, usually for a minimum of two years, and after suitable evaluations, the deacon may petition the bishop for incardination assuming it is his intent to remain permanently within the diocese.
5. If the bishop expresses willingness to incardinate the deacon, the deacon will write to the Archbishop of Saint Paul and Minneapolis to request a letter of excommunication. The letter of request should include an explanation of the just cause for the request.
6. Even though he has moved from the Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis, the deacon remains incardinated in his diocese of first incardination until the process of excommunication and incardination has been completed. Therefore, until the excommunication process is completed, the deacon is obliged to maintain

communication with the Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis, keeping the Chancery offices apprised of the location of his residence and his ministerial assignment. The deacon is also required to maintain compliance with the Safe Environment requirements of the Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis as well as those of the new diocese.