

Reasons why Interim Clergy are not allowed to be considered for the Rector Position at that parish.....submitted by Bishop Iker.

INTERIM CLERGY

When there is a vacancy in any parish of the Diocese, the Bishop will assist the vestry in engaging the services of interim clergy, to serve until such time as a new rector is called. An interim priest-in-charge will serve with the understanding that he is not eligible for consideration as the new rector.

This policy has been in the Diocesan Customary since the days of Bishop C. Avery Mason in the Diocese of Dallas, who served from 1946 until 1970, and Bishop A. Donald Davies retained it in his Diocesan Customary when he became the first Bishop of the new Diocese of Fort Worth in 1982, as did Bishop Pope when he became Bishop in 1985, as I have for the past 25 years. Though most vestry members never participate in the search for a new rector, these bishops have participated in hundreds of these search processes over the years, and it is their combined wisdom, based on experience, that this is a good and necessary provision that everyone must understand at the beginning of the search process. Here are a few of the reasons for it:

First, it becomes very divisive if the interim priest declares that he wants to become the new rector. Immediately it divides the vestry and the parish membership into two opposing camps: those who want him to be elected and those who want to search for better candidates. If the interim is actively campaigning to become the new rector, it will become increasingly divisive over time.

Second, it is not fair for possible outside candidates in the search process to have to compete with an interim for the position. The outside candidates get the benefit of a weekend interview, while the interim has the benefit of being there every day of the week and using his friends in the parish to promote his candidacy.

Third, vestry supporters of the interim priest tend to undermine and discredit outside candidates in the search process in the hopes of advancing their man to the position of the new rector.

Fourth, it becomes a big problem for the interim, his family, and his supporters if at the end of a thorough search process, he is not chosen. It results in a sense of failure, rejection, and anger.