



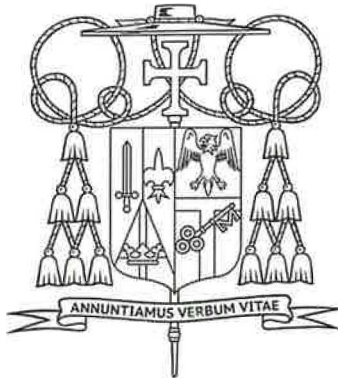
CATHOLIC DIOCESE
OF LEXINGTON

Roman Catholic Diocese of Lexington, KY

PRIEST HANDBOOK

UPDATED: April 14, 2026

JOHN STOWE, OFM, CONV.



BISHOP OF LEXINGTON

General Executory Decree Promulgating the
Priest Handbook
as Administrative Directives for the Lexington Diocese

In virtue of my pastoral office as Bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Lexington in Kentucky, I hereby issue this General Executory Decree (Canon 31) promulgating the **Priest Handbook** as administrative directives of the Catholic Diocese of Lexington, providing a set of standards of behaviors that govern conduct for those who act on behalf of the Church as Church personnel.

The **Priest Handbook** is promulgated by its publication and in electronic format. The provisions of this policy shall become binding on April 25, 2025, for purposes of full compliance within the Catholic Diocese of Lexington, any particular legislation, directives, or instructions to the contrary notwithstanding.

Given at the Chancery, Lexington, Kentucky, this 23rd day of April, 2025.



Most Reverend John Stowe, O.F.M. Conv.
Bishop of Lexington

Douglas E. Culp, Jr.
Chancellor

2025:AD001

PRIEST HANDBOOK

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INTRODUCTION

This Handbook is an introduction to the life and ministry of the priests in the Diocese of Lexington. It has been formulated as a service to these priests. The contents of this handbook complement the provisions of Canon Law, the Code of Conduct, Policies and Procedures for Creating a Safe Environment for Minors and Vulnerable Adults and those sections of the Employee Handbook that apply to priests. The canons and directives of these codes along with the applications in this handbook are designed to help priests live and minister in ways that are orderly, personally fulfilling and generative of life for the Church.

BOOK ONE – LIFE & MINISTRY

SECTION 100 - COUNCILS-BOARDS-COMMITTEES

101- Presbyteral Council (See Constitution and Bylaws of Presbyteral Council).

A. The Presbyteral Council is a practical expression of the union that exists between the Bishop and the members of the presbyterate of the Diocese of Lexington. The Council is a forum for open reflection and fraternal dialogue between the Bishop and his priests and serves as a vehicle for effective collaboration in diocesan planning, policy making and administration. The Bishop consults the Council; the Council advises the Bishop.

1. Priest members on the Council are either elected, appointed or *ex officio*. All members of the Council are voting members.

a. Elected members - Priests elect a priest from their respective deanery to serve as Dean and another as Alternate Dean. After appointment and confirmation by the Bishop, the Dean is a *Vicar Forane*. One of his duties and responsibilities is to represent his deanery on the Council. His term on the Council continues as long as he is the *Vicar Forane*. When the Dean is unable to attend a Council meeting, the Alternate Dean should take his place.

b. Appointed members - The Bishop may appoint other priests to the Council to assure that the diversity and culture of the presbyterate and ministries in the Diocese are represented. The appointed members may serve two (2) consecutive three (3) year terms.

c. *Ex Officio* members - The Vicar General, the Vicar for Priests, the Associate Vicar for Priests, the Vicar for Retired Priests, the Vicar for Ongoing Formation and the Director of Acculturation for International Priests serve on the Council by reason of their position. Their terms on the Council coincide with their positions.

2. Officers of the Council- President, Chairman, Vice Chairman, Secretary

a. The Bishop is the *President* of the Council.

b. *The Chairman, Vice Chairman and Secretary* are elected each year by the members at the September meeting. The oldest Dean conducts the election.

B. Sub-committees of the Presbyteral Council

1. Executive Committee- There shall be a standing committee, "*Executive Committee.*" The committee members, the President and the Chairman, will set the agenda for the Council meetings.

2. Priests' Life Committee- There shall be a standing committee, "*Priests' Life Committee,*" to consider the everyday life of the priest, and the fiscal matters and benefits that pertain to him. The committee members will review those sections of the Priest Handbook that pertain to his life, compensation and benefits. The Chairman of the Council will identify the members of this committee. These members will select a chairman.

3. Priests' Ministry and Mission Committee- There shall be a committee, "*Priests' Ministry and Mission*" to consider how best priests can cooperate in achieving the goals set forth in the Diocesan Pastoral Plan.

4. Ad Hoc Committees- As needed, committees shall be appointed by the Chairman to address particular issues affecting the priests.

C. Membership on the standing sub-committees (Priests' Life and Priests' Ministry and Mission)-

Elected and appointed members of the Council will be appointed by the Chairman of the Council. Ex Officio members may be appointed as consultants. There should be at least four members on each committee.

D. Membership on *ad hoc* committees-

The Chairman should appoint at least one elected, one appointed and one *ex officio* member to the committee. Additional members, either Council or others not on the Council, may be appointed to these committees.

102- Personnel Board

A. The Personnel Board serves as an advisory group to the Bishop regarding priest personnel. The board members make recommendations regarding the assignments of priests, sabbaticals, graduate studies and other priest issues and concerns. Board members offer support and encouragement to the priests of the Diocese and serve as oversight for priests' accountability procedures (Annual Visitation and Priest Review/Parish Supporting Priestly Ministry.)

B. The Personnel Board shall be composed of elected, appointed and *ex officio* priest members.

1. Elected members- The active priests of the Diocese are arranged in three numerically equal groups based on their years of service. Each group will elect one member from their group to serve as their peer representative on the Personnel Board. Each representative may serve two consecutive three year terms.

2. Appointed members- If the Bishop determines that the diversity and culture of the presbyterate and ministries in the Diocese are not represented, he may appoint one or two members for a year's term that is renewable.

3. *Ex Officio* members- The Vicar General, the Vicar for Priests and the Associate Vicar for Priests serve on the Board by reason of the positions they hold. Their term of office coincide with their positions.

C. The Vicar for Priests serves as Chairman of the Personnel Board.

103- Committee for Ongoing Formation of Priests

A. This Committee has been established to develop and execute a comprehensive plan for the ongoing formation of priests. The Committee will plan priests' gatherings for spiritual and educational programs including retreats, convocations, assemblies, prayer and study days and the annual Jubilee celebration.

B. The Vicar for Ongoing Formation of Priests will chair this Committee.

C. Membership on this committee will be selected by the Chairman of the Committee.

104- Priests' Retirement Committee

- A. A Retirement Committee has been established to administer the *Priests' Retirement Plan*.
- B. Six priests of the Diocese serve on this Committee: Vicar for Retired Priests (*ex officio*), two priests appointed by the Bishop and three priests, nominated by the Retirement Committee, approved by the Presbyteral Council and appointed by the Bishop. Each appointed priest-member may serve two consecutive three year terms.
- C. No more than two retired priests, inclusive of the Vicar for Retired Priests, may serve on the Retirement Committee at the same time.

SECTION 200 – POSITIONS OF MINISTRY IN SERVICE TO PRIESTS

201- Catholic Center Staff

- A. The administrative staff at the Catholic Center exists to be of service to the Bishop, the diocese, the parishes, priests and faithful.
- B. The service areas of the Catholic Center consist of Canonical Affairs, Catholic Schools, Pastoral Life, Development, Finance, Vicar General and Human Resources. Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Lexington is also housed at the Catholic Center.
- C. Apart from being available to participate in deanery meetings or parish events, the staff is also available for individual assistance.

202- Vicar General

- A. The Bishop shall appoint a priest as Vicar General, who serves at the direction of the Bishop, while fulfilling the duties incumbent upon his office as found in the Code of Canon Law.
- B. The Vicar General oversees the priest groups (Presbyteral Council, Personnel Board, Ongoing Formation, Acculturation and Ecumenism), the permanent deacon programs, seminarians and vocations and the liaison of Women Religious.
- C. The Vicar General serves as a member of the College of Consultors, and as *ex officio* member of the Presbyteral Council, the Priest Personnel Board, the Deacon Personnel Board and the Diocesan Finance Council.
- D. The term of office is determined by the Bishop.

203- Chancellor

A. The Bishop shall appoint a person to serve as Chancellor. The Chancellor is the principal notary for the Diocese, establishing the authenticity and validity of specified judicial acts and the manner in which they are documented, reserved and safeguarded in the archives. These duties are specified in the Code of Canon Law.

B. In the Diocese of Lexington, the Chancellor serves as...

1. Administrative Officer;
2. *Ex officio* Member of the Diocesan Review Board; and
3. Lead Agent for the Safe Environment Program for the Diocese.

C. The term of office is set by the Bishop.

204- Vicar for Priests

A. The Bishop shall appoint a priest as Vicar for Priests. He assists the Bishop on priest personnel issues. He promotes priests' support groups and gives support and encouragement to the priests. He serves as Chairman of the Priests Personnel Board and meets regularly with the Vicar for Ongoing Formation, the Associate Vicar for Priests and the Director of Acculturation.

B. The Vicar for Priests is an *ex officio* member of the Presbyteral Council and the Priests' Personnel Board, and as a consultant to the Priests' Life Committee.

C. The term of office is determined by the Bishop.

205- Associate Vicar for Priests

A. The Bishop shall appoint a priest as the Associate Vicar for Priests. He will share in the responsibilities and duties of the Vicar for Priests. He will oversee the mentoring programs and the priest's evaluation, "Supporting Priestly Ministry."

B. The Associate Vicar for Priests is an *ex officio* member of the Presbyteral Council and the Priests' Personnel Board.

C. The Associate Vicar should meet regularly with the Vicar for Priests.

D. The term of office is determined by the Bishop.

206- Vicar for Retired Priests

- A. The Bishop shall appoint a priest as the Vicar for Retired Priests, who shall give support and encouragement to the retired priests of the Diocese, be an advocate for their needs, assist priests as they approach retirement and coordinate with the Chancellor the funeral services for a deceased retired priest.
- B. The Vicar for Retired Priests is an *ex officio* member of the Presbyteral Council and the Priests' Retirement Committee.
- C. The term of office is determined by the Bishop.

207- Vicar for Ongoing Formation of Priests

- A. The Bishop shall appoint a priest as the Vicar for Ongoing Formation of Priests. He and his committee shall plan and coordinate priests' retreats, convocations, assemblies, study and prayer days and the Jubilee celebration. The Vicar shall also be resource person for priests as they plan sabbaticals and other formation and academic opportunities, including new priest and new pastor programs. He will consult with the Bishop and Presbyteral Council regarding formation programs. He should meet regularly with the Vicar for Priests and the Director of Acculturation.
- B. The Vicar for Ongoing Formation of Priests is an *ex officio* of the Presbyteral Council and the Committee for Ongoing Formation.
- C. The term of office is determined by the Bishop.

208- Director for Acculturation for International Priests

- A. The Bishop shall appoint a priest as Director of the Acculturation Process for International Priests, who will assist the priests in the areas of accent reduction and culture adjustment. He will assist the priests in adjusting to diocesan and parish life. He will engage actively with the priest in the Mentoring Process. He should meet regularly with the Vicar for Priests and the Vicar for Ongoing Formation.
- B. The Director is an *ex officio* member of the Presbyteral Council.
- C. The term of office is determined by the Bishop.

SECTION 300 – PROGRAMS FOR PRIESTS

301- Orientation Program

A. An Orientation Program is offered to new parish leaders in the Diocese, including newly ordained priests, first-time pastors, priests new to the Diocese, and first-time presbyteral moderators. (First-time Parish Life Directors will also participate in an orientation program.)

B. The program is built on the principle of mutuality and is planned as a model in which there is an integration of content, experience and reflection.

C. The Orientation Program

1. For newly ordained priests and priests, new to the Diocese, the program begins in late June. The priest(s) will meet with the Vicar General for an introduction to the Priest Handbook.

2. From September to December, the new parish leaders, identified above, will attend a series of presentations to be given at the Catholic Center by the various offices who will identify the ministry of each office. The first-time pastors and first-time PLDs will also participate in a meeting at the parish with the Chancellor, a representative of the Finance Office (and the Office of Catholic Schools, if applicable), and the Parish Pastoral Council and Parish Finance Council (and the Parish School Council, if applicable), in order to clarify their respective roles of co-responsibility. The Office of the Vicar General will organize this phase of the orientation.!

3. The final part of the Orientation Program is offered at St. Meinrad Seminary for first time pastors and newly ordained priests. The Vicar for Ongoing Formation will oversee this phase of the program.

302- Acculturation Program for International Priests

A. All international priests called to serve in the Diocese of Lexington for a prolonged ministry shall participate in the Acculturation Program. The Director for Acculturation will structure this program.

B. During the six-month process, the international priest will:

1. be assigned to a priest residence;
2. have no regular assignment which might inhibit his total engagement during this six-month period;
3. be engaged in appropriate accent reduction and acquisition;

4. become accustomed to cultural differences;
5. be introduced to parish and diocesan life;
6. be engaged actively to the Mentoring Process;
7. acquire a Social Security Number;
8. obtain a Driver's License for United States; and
9. be available for supply work at different parishes.

C. Salary and benefits for the international priest (s) while in the Acculturation Process will be covered by the Diocese.

D. At the completion of the program the Bishop may assign the priest to ministry.

303- Mentoring Program

A. The diocesan effort at mentoring hopes to respect the variety of gifts in the presbyterate and supports a mutuality of learning and sharing that gives assistance to those entering new positions of ministry in the Diocese.

B. The Mentoring Program is offered to the international priests, the newly ordained priests, first time pastors, priests new to the diocese, and first time Presbyteral Moderators.

C. The Director of Acculturation will be the mentor for all new international priests.

D. The Associate Vicar for Priests will oversee the Mentoring Program for all other new priest leaders in ministry.

E. The Mentoring Process

1. Newly ordained Priests

a. The new priest should meet with his pastor on a regular basis. In the beginning of his ministry this might be more frequent.

b. The pastor may also serve as mentor for the Parochial Vicar.

c. If the pastor is not the mentor, the Associate Vicar for Priests should assist the Parochial Vicar in selecting one.

d. The meetings between the priest and mentor (other than the pastor) should take minimally every six weeks for three years or as long as the priest serves as a Parochial Vicar.

e. The pastor/mentor should notify the Associate Vicar for Priests that the meetings are taking place.

2. First-time Pastors

a. The Dean of the Deanery to which new pastor is assigned should work together in selecting a mentor. The Dean should notify the Associate Vicar for Priests of their selection.

b. The mentor and new pastor should meet every six weeks for two years. (If the new pastor is ordained less than three years, he may also continue with his first mentor.

c. The mentor should notify the Associate Vicar for Priests that the meetings are taking place.

3. Priests new to the Diocese

a. The mentor of all new international priests serving in the Diocese of Lexington shall be the Director of Acculturation or his delegate. The process will extend by six years. The frequency of the meetings will be determined by the mentor.

b. All other priests, new to the Diocese, may be assigned a mentor by the Associate Vicar for Priests when a mentor would be beneficial. Length and frequency of meetings will be determined by the Associate Vicar for Priests.

4. First time Presbyteral Moderators

a. The Dean of the deanery where the new Presbyteral Moderator is assigned will help him in selecting a mentor. The Moderator and the mentor should meet monthly.

b. The Moderator and the Parish Life Director should meet regularly, at least weekly.

c. The new Parish Life Director should also be assigned a mentor. The Director and mentor should meet monthly.

d. Every six months, the mentor(s), the Moderator and the Parish Life Director should meet. The minutes of these meetings should be sent to the Office of the Vicar General.

e. The mentor(s) should notify the Vicar General that these meetings are taking place.

304- Programs for Ongoing Formation for Priests

All priests ministering in the Diocese of Lexington should continue to improve their quality of life to be personally fulfilling and beneficial to the vitality of the local Church.

A. All priests shall participate in all of the regular programs offered by the Diocese for the education and formation of priests. These include: the annual retreats held in even calendar years, convocations, assemblies, days of prayer and study, and the Jubilee celebration unless excused by the Bishop.

1. The value of these programs lies in the opportunities given to the priest-participants to grow as individuals and as a presbyterate.

2. There is another value, which might even surpass that. Regardless of the topics, these formation/education programs have given the priests time to share their hopes and concerns. They have become times to strengthen our priestly lives and grow into a more unified presbyterate.

B. All priests shall participate in individual programs of formation. These include: private retreats, books, podcasts, lectures, sabbaticals, short-term immersion programs, etc. The Vicar for Ongoing Formation will serve as a resource in this important area.

SECTION 400 - SPECIAL MINISTRIES OF PRIESTS

The section of Canon Law that gives direction to the priest in parish ministry is found in Book II (The People of God, Canons 519-552.) Canon 519 identifies the general responsibilities of the Pastor, "The pastor is the proper shepherd of the parish entrusted to him under the authority of the diocesan bishop in whose ministry of Christ he has been called to share; in accord with the norm of law he carries out for his community the duties of teaching, sanctifying and governing, with the cooperation of other presbyters or deacons and the assistance of lay members of the Christian faithful." In addition, there are these special ministries...

401- Prison Ministry

A. State and Federal Prisons

1. It is the responsibility of the deanery wherein the prison is located to provide for visitation at the prison especially for Mass and the Sacraments. Mass should be offered at least once a month.
2. Priests who serve in prison ministry must receive "credentials" to be admitted into the prison. These need to be worked out through the prison authorities, the warden or the chief chaplain.
3. The deaneries should form ministry teams composed of ordained, religious and lay members (Office of Prison Ministry.)
4. Special consideration should be given for Hispanic Ministry, when needed, and for visitation by the Bishop.
5. Liturgical necessities brought about because of this specialized ministry should be cleared with the Vicar General. If the priest is offered a contract of payment for this ministry, the contract is to be made through the Diocese Office of Finance.

B. Regional and local places of incarceration

1. It is the responsibility of the pastor/parish of the location of the place of incarceration to provide for visitation at the prison especially for Mass and the Sacraments. Mass should be offered at least once a month.
2. All directions given under 401 A above should be followed here.

402- Healthcare Centers Ministry

A. All hospitals, nursing homes and assisted living facilities located within parish boundaries are to be served by that parish. A team of priests, deacons and laity should follow a scheduled routine of sacramental ministry, visitations and support to patients and their families.

B. In Lexington (Fayette County) the hospitals are covered for ministry by the parishes in the city: Baptist Health and Veterans Administration Hospital by Christ the King and Mary Queen (alternate months); University of Kentucky Medical Center by Holy Spirit; U.K. Samaritan by St. Peter and St. Peter Claver (alternate months); Cardinal Hill Rehabilitation Hospital and Eastern State Hospital by St. Paul; and Saint Joseph Hospital East by St. Elizabeth Ann Seton. There is a priest chaplain at St. Joseph Hospital Main.

C. The ministry team from each parish should also visit their own parishioners in the hospitals.

403- Campus Ministry

A. In parishes where a college or university is located, ministry to serve students and faculty should be established.

B. This ministry program would include opportunities for Mass and faith formation.

BOOK TWO – COMPENSATION & BENEFITS

INTRODUCTION

Vatican II in the “Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests,” and echoed in the U.S. Bishops’ letter, “Economic Justice for All,” states that “as the Church is to be an effective preacher of justice, it must appear just in the eyes of the world. This call for justice in the payment of priests represents a change in model, away from the fitting support due to the holder of an office of benefice attached, and to just compensation for ministerial work done on behalf of the Church.”

To this end this section of the Handbook (Book Two) is offered as a summary of financial policies and regulations for priests in the Diocese. It is not intended to replace Diocesan policies nor is it intended to give an extensive presentation of all areas affecting the priest financially. Nor is it intended as a financial guide to the priest.

The priest is advised that nothing in this handbook is offered as individual tax advice. Each priest is encouraged to have a tax advisor. The priest is strongly recommended to consult with an advisor before engaging in any major financial arrangement.

NOTE: Items in Book Two marked with an asterisk (*), are actions done for the priest by the Diocese or the parish location.

SECTION 500A – COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS

501- Ordinary Compensation

- A. The Bishop, in consultation with the Presbyteral Council, will annually determine the standard compensation for the priests of the Diocese of Lexington.
- B. Benefits for retired priests are set by the Priests’ Retirement Plan.
- C. Compensation for active priests include: salary, annual retirement payments, Mass stipends, automobile insurance, health, dental and vision premiums, long term care, ongoing formation and all reimbursements and benefits specified by the Diocese. (See Appendix A-Priests’ Compensation Summary.)
- D. The location where the priest is assigned is responsible for the benefits and compensation. If a priest has multiple assignments, the responsibility for the benefits and compensation is apportioned among the locations being served. There should be written agreements between the priest and the locations regarding the amount that each location will be billed.

*E. The salary portion of the compensation will be taken each month by a 'sweep' from the location(s) account by the Human Resource Information System vendor.

*F. If the location is unable to meet the payment of the priest's salary because of insufficient funds, applications for assistance may be submitted to the Diocesan Finance Officer.

502- Mass Stipends

A. Active priests in the Diocese do not receive a direct Mass stipend for celebrating Mass. Instead, the amount of stipends for a year (365 days x \$5.00 or \$1825) is added to the priest's base salary and becomes part of his compensation packet (See Appendix A).

B. Retired priests may receive a stipend for a Mass offered since the stipend is not a part of their compensation. If the retired priest receives a stipend for more than one Mass on a given day, the binated stipend should be sent to the Chancellor.

*C. The stipend as part of the compensation packet is budgeted as an operating expense.

*D. The Mass intentions book must be kept and documented. Monies given for Mass stipends should be deposited into the parish operating checking account and tracked through account 260 in Quick Books.

503- Stole Fees

A. Any *stole fee* required by the Parish is to be turned in to the Parish. If the amount given for the ministry is more than that required by the parish, the priest may keep the amount over the required amount. The priest to whom the fee is given when no fee is required, may retain that amount.

B. Stole fees, retained by the priest, are considered income by the Internal Revenue Service.

504- Outside Earnings in Church Ministry

*A. Compensation from outside contractual income (e.g. teaching at a local college on a regular basis) should be coordinated through the Vicar General and the Diocesan Finance Officer.

*B. If the priest wants additional withholding for this compensation, signed instructions must be given to the Diocesan Payroll Office.

*C. All other outside income earned should be reported to the priest on a 1099 form from that employer for tax purposes.

SECTION 500B – REIMBURSEMENTS & ALLOWANCES

505- Reimbursement Plan

A. All diocesan entities are to adopt a monthly reimbursement plan.

B. See Appendix A for the amounts of reimbursements and allowances.

C. All purchases should be documented with the original receipt or voucher. The voucher should be given to the appropriate office by the end of the month or at another agreed upon deadline.

1. For cash and credit card purchases, the original detailed receipt which shows the date, items of purchase and amount paid, etc. should be sent to the office of the entity with a brief explanation of business purpose noted.

2. For cash outlays where no receipt is available (tips, tolls, etc.), expenses are documented by indicating, cost, purpose and type of purchase.

D. Failure to request reimbursements within sixty (60) days of purchase negates the responsibility for reimbursement.

506- Ongoing Formation

A. Ordinary

1. The priest may be reimbursed up to the maximum amount set by the Diocese (see Appendix A) for the following: yearly retreat, all diocesan Ongoing Formation for priests, all work-related seminars, books, podcasts, tapes, support group activities (meals, travel and lodging), spiritual direction costs and health club membership.

2. The entity served by the priest may pay directly for the Diocesan programs.

3. For other expenses, the original voucher should be submitted to the appropriate office. Once the voucher has been submitted, payment should be made to the priest within ten (10) days.

4. If a priest serves at multiple entities, apportioned compensation would apply.

B. Extraordinary

1. Each priest of the Diocese may participate in a program of ongoing formation besides those offered by the Diocese. This program should be approved by the Vicar General.

2. The priest may be reimbursed up to the maximum amount set by the Diocese (Appendix A).

3. The entity served by the priest is responsible for the reimbursement.

NOTE: The Diocesan directed allotments for both the ordinary and extraordinary ongoing formation are not cumulative beyond the current fiscal year.

507- Mileage

A. The priest is to be reimbursed for the use of his personal vehicle for parish, diocesan and church business. Priests serving multiple parishes and who do not live in an onsite rectory may not bill mileage to the first parish, but may subsequently bill for mileage between parishes and diocesan/church business, including the trip home. When the priest is assigned to two or more parishes, the mileage will be split between the parishes equitably.

B. The priest should request reimbursement (Appendix C) at the end of each month listing mileage and event.

*C. The entity should reimburse the priest within ten (10) days.

*D. If the entity cannot pay the reimbursement, it can apply for assistance (Mission and Ministry grant) through the Diocese Finance Officer.

E. The percentage rate for the current year is given in Appendix A.

F. When active priests in the diocese substitute at locations, the only reimbursement they receive is for mileage (Appendix C); retired priests will also receive a ministry compensation.

508- Car Insurance

A. All priests of the Diocese, active and retired, and those in full ministry, must have car insurance. Catholic Mutual is the required agency for this insurance. Exceptions requested by retired priests must be approved by the Vicar General in consultation with the Diocesan Plant & Property Manager.

1. For active priests, the premiums for this coverage are paid by the location served by the priest. If he ministers in more than one location, the payment is apportioned.

2. For retired priests, the premiums are a personal responsibility.

*B. If the location needs assistance in paying the premiums it may seek a Mission and Ministry grant through the Diocesan Finance Officer.

C. It is the responsibility of the priest to notify Catholic Mutual of any assignment relocations. Failure to do so will result in late payments and penalties.

509- Food Allowance/Expense

A. Personal Food Allowance - Current practices for personal food allowance include:

1. Adding the monthly amount allowed (See Schedule A for Annual Food Allowance and divide by 12) to the priest's monthly payroll check.

If the food allowance is included on the payroll check, the priest is strongly encouraged to keep all documented receipts to submit to their tax preparer to substantiate the business purposes.

2. Using a prepaid store card or a parish credit card.

If using a prepaid store card or a parish credit card, it is mandatory to turn in all original detailed receipts to the appropriate office monthly. All receipts should indicate the business purpose of the purchase.

3. In general this covers meals the priest enjoys both at his residence and when "eating out."

4. When the priest is eating out "on duty," his meals can be charged to his personal food allowance. "On duty" can be construed in these situations as meaning that he uses his cell phone to make and receive business calls while at meals.

B. Parish Business Food Expenses

1. Meals during an ordinary business appointment (driving to a meeting, going to the mission,) would be part of the priest's personal food allotment.
2. Parish programs, such as OCIA or planning committees, should be considered as business activities. Any meal where business is conducted is a business expense.

C. Diocesan Business Food Expenses

1. The priest's service to the Diocese involving committee meetings and Diocesan events may be accounted for as business expenses.
2. Costs of mileage, meals and lodging may be reimbursed.

510- Residence Allowance

A. Residence allowance includes: the fair market value of the priest's residence, newspaper, basic cable, telephone (cell and land), internet connection, utilities, clerical attire laundry, yard services, home repairs, furniture, appliances, maintenance and general cleaning.

B. Residence allowance does not include personal purchases and comfort items (e.g. personal toiletries, personal entertainment purchases and over the counter medications).

C. Purchases made at parish expense are to be retained by the parish on reassignment of the priest. Personal and parish properties should be clearly identified.

*D. The Parish Finance Council should complete the residence form (Appendix B), setting the fair market value for the residence and designating what part of this value is the priest's responsibility, his sitting room, bedroom and bathroom. Copies of this form should be retained by the priest and the parish.

SECTION 500C - HEALTHCARE

511- Healthcare Responsibilities

Priests are provided with Health Insurance, Long Term Care, Dental, and Vision coverage. Regarding these coverages, the priest and the diocese have the following responsibilities:

A. The priest should:

1. Be familiar with the coverage provisions of each plan;
2. Use participating health care providers;
3. Present health plan membership cards and verify they are plan participants willing to file for payment;
4. File appropriate complaint if the provider is unwilling to accept the insurance provided; and
5. Contact the Diocesan Human Resource Office for intervention and assistance as needed.

*B. The Diocesan Director for Human Resources should:

1. Work with the Presbyteral Council in maintaining a health plan;
2. Administer the health plans;
3. Pay the plans' premiums, which are reimbursed by the entity to which the priest is assigned; and
4. Provide documentation and explanations of the selected health plan(s).

512- Holistic Health

A. Spiritual Care

1. All priests are directed to have a spiritual director.
2. All priests are to be active in a priests' support group.
3. All priests are to make an annual retreat. In even calendar years, the retreat is with all priests. In odd calendar years, priests may make a private retreat.

B. Ongoing Formation - All priests are directed to attend the Diocesan Formation Programs held at various times throughout the year.

C. Exercise - Programs of regular exercise are strongly recommended. Priests can be reimbursed for health club membership fees.

D. Days Off- Each priest, barring emergencies, should take a day (24 hours) with no Mass or pastoral responsibilities each week.

E. Vacation- Each priest may be absent from his assignment for thirty (30) days each year for personal vacation. This vacation time may be contiguous or interrupted. The Chancellor will assist the priest in finding a substitute for the priest on vacation.

513- Psychological/Psychiatric Counseling

A. When the need arises, every effort should be made to seek treatment through a participating (in-network) health care facility.

B. Priests, who personally seek professional counseling, may choose to be responsible for the fees of the therapist or, with the Bishop's determination, may refer the fees to the Diocese.

C. The expense of psychological and psychiatric counseling of a priest, when the counseling is directed by the Diocese, will be paid by the Diocese if the priest's insurance does not cover the expense.

D. If the Diocese becomes financially responsible for the therapy sought, the priest will be asked to sign a release form to allow the Diocese to receive periodic reports.

514- Residency with Counseling

A. If the Bishop directs residency with counseling for a priest, the Diocese will cover the cost of the therapy which will include all fees, room and board and transportation at the beginning and end of the program. The priest will be responsible for all personal expenses during the program.

B. The Diocese will find coverage for the priest's assignment during the time of the counseling. The Bishop, in consultation with the Vicar General and the Vicar for Priests will appoint and arrange salary and benefits.

C. The Bishop, or his delegate, and the directors of the treatment program will develop an after-care program for the priest. The Diocese will cover the cost of the after-care program, including travel costs.

515- Annual Health Check-up & Physical Examination

Each priest shall have an annual check-up and a complete physical examination. Any payment for the physical not covered by the priest's insurance will be paid by the location served by the priest. This refers only to the physical and not to any referral or extraordinary diagnostic procedures that might be recommended.

516- Long Term Care

Priests are covered by a plan to respond to future care needs. The plan premiums are paid by the location served by the priest. It covers both home care and nursing home care. Contact the Diocesan Human Resource office for more detail.

517- Medical Hardship

Any priest who has a financial hardship due to medical expenses not covered by insurance may apply to the Diocese for assistance through the Bishop, or his delegate.

SECTION 500D – OTHER FINANCIAL MATTERS

518- Sabbaticals

A. After seven (7) years of ministry in the Diocese of Lexington, a priest may apply for a sabbatical of three (3) or four (4) months to update himself for his ministry or to prepare for a different ministry in the Diocese.

B. The priest on sabbatical will receive his salary and basic benefits from the location of his assignment.

C. The cost of tuition, fees, room and board, as well as the cost of transportation at the beginning and end of the sabbatical will be paid or reimbursed by the Diocese. If the priest does not have an assignment at the time of the sabbatical, he will receive salary and benefits from the Diocese. Reimbursement should be documented on the Clergy Substitution Invoice. (Appendix C) If the priest participates in any additional programs during the sabbatical leave, he will be responsible personally for the expenses associated with the additional programs.

D. The priest, the Priest Personnel Board and the Office of the Vicar General share the responsibility of a replacement for the priest's assignment. The priest substitute will receive compensation from the Diocese.

E. A priest who has taken a sabbatical leave is eligible to apply for a new sabbatical leave after seven (7) more years of priestly service in the Diocese.

F. Procedure for Applying for a Sabbatical

1. Application for a sabbatical should be made a minimum of one (1) year in advance. This is necessary not only to provide sufficient time for securing a suitable replacement, but also because many sabbatical programs have limits on admission. Priests should apply for sabbatical leave during or at the end of their assignment, rather than at the beginning of their assignment.
2. The Vicar for Ongoing Formation of Priests will serve as a resource for the various available sabbatical programs and welcome additional input concerning such programs.
3. Applications for sabbaticals are made to the Vicar for Priests, who will present the application to the Priest Personnel Board with suggestions for replacement possibilities and financial arrangements. The application should provide detailed information about the proposed program and its relation to the Diocese and the priest's personal needs.
4. In the event of multiple priest applications for sabbatical at the same time, order of receipt, seniority, prior sabbatical leave, and benefits for the applicant and the Diocese will factor into the approval/denial of applications.
5. After the Priest Personnel Board has reviewed and recommended approval of a sabbatical leave application, the application and the Board's recommendation will be forwarded to the Bishop for final approval. The Bishop makes all sabbatical assignments.

519- Short-Term Absence

- A. A priest may apply for a short-term absence from ministry for a formation program or an immersion experience, etc.
- B. The priest will receive the standard salary and benefits from the location he serves.
- C. Cost of tuition, fees, room and board and the cost of transportation at the beginning and end of the program is paid by the Diocese. Extra activities are the responsibility of the priest.
- D. The priest, the Personnel Board and the Office of the Vicar General share the responsibility of finding a pastoral replacement.

E. The parish will pay the first month's substitution salary and benefits. After that, compensation will come from the Diocese.

520- Time Away from Assignment

A. With the permission of the Bishop, a priest may be away from his assignment for up to four (4) weekends in the year for outside ministry or ongoing formation.

B. The priest must find a substitute for the time he is away from his assignment.

521- Newly Ordained Priests and First-Time Pastors

A. Every newly ordained priest and first-time pastor will participate in the orientation programs at the Catholic Center and at St. Meinrad Seminary.

B. All costs connected with these orientation programs (fees, mileage, meals) are paid by the Diocese.

522- Priests on Personal Leave

A. For personal reasons, a priest may request from the Bishop a personal leave from active ministry.

B. Compensation for the priest on leave is determined by the Bishop; it will be paid by the Diocese.

523- Unassignable Priests

A. If a priest is not recommended for assignment or is unassignable, the Bishop, in consultation with the College of Consultors, will determine the priest's support.

B. Support considerations include: salary, room and board, health insurance, dental and vision insurances, mileage, ongoing formation programs, retirement benefits, counseling and sabbaticals. That said, full salary and benefits are typically reserved for priests in an active assignment.

524- Priest Retirement

A. The Priest Retirement Plan regulates financial matters concerning priests' retirement.

B. Medicare Supplement and Part D Premiums are paid by the retired priests.

C. Medicare/ Social Security (See Appendix D).

D. Ongoing Formation- Retired priests are guests of the Diocese for all formation programs. For private retreats, retired priests may apply for reimbursement from the Diocese.

E. Automobile Insurance- Retired priests are responsible for the premiums for their vehicle insurance.

F. Retirement Housing - Retired priests have several options for housing: parish rectories, their own homes, etc. The Diocese owns six houses in Lexington available for retired priests. A retired priest living in one of these six houses is responsible for rent and utilities.

1. To apply to live in one of the Diocese-owned houses, retired priests contact the Vicar for Retired Priests. As a priest begins to think about living arrangements for retirement, he should apply early, as there may be a waiting list. The Bishop, in consultation with the Vicar for Retired Priests, assigns diocesan housing.

2. A priest may live in a rectory in the Diocese during retirement, with the invitation of the pastor. When a pastor change is made, it is presumed that the retired priest will continue to live in the rectory unless recourse is made to the Bishop.

G. Retirement Hardship - Any priest who has a financial hardship may apply for assistance from the Diocese.

525- Funeral Arrangements

A. The priest is responsible for his funeral arrangements. He should prepare these and they should be on file with the Chancellor.

B. The priest or his estate will cover the cost.

C. Calvary Cemetery offers a burial plot and a monument at no cost. The following qualifications and conditions apply:

1. Priest must be in good standing with the Roman Catholic Diocese of Lexington;
2. The burial plot and monument are provided at no cost to the priest;
3. Priests are able to choose their burial plot and monument wording through

pre-planning with Calvary Cemetery management;

4. Priests may be buried in any section in Calvary Cemetery, including the designated Priests' Circle (for "native sons") and the designated Priests' Section;

5. Priests will be responsible for the interment service fee (payable to Calvary Cemetery at the time of burial); and

6. Priest will be responsible for the cost of his vault (via a funeral home) and any other related expenses that may be incurred.

APPENDIX A PRIEST COMPENSATION SUMMARY

<u>Priest Salary -</u>	<u>Fiscal 2025</u>	<u>Fiscal 2026</u>
Base	\$ 31,534.66	\$ 32,323.03
Mass Stipends	<u>1,825.00</u>	<u>\$ 1,825.00</u>
 Salary Total for Order Priests	 \$ 33,359.66	 \$ 34,148.03
 SECA Offset (7.65%) (SECA Offset-Diocesan Priests Only)	 <u>2,552.01</u>	 <u>2,612.32</u>
 Total Diocesan (Lexington or Other) Priest Salary	 35,911.67	 36,760.35
 Check Fee	 96.00	 96.00
Retirement Contribution	6,350.00	6,350.00
Continuing Education	1,800.00	1,800.00
Extraordinary Continuing Education	1,000.00	1,000.00
Housing Allowance	10,000.00	10,000.00
Food Allowance	5,400.00	5,400.00
 <u>Insurances-</u>		
Car (Approximate)	1,700.00	1,800.00
Health	12,780.00	15,863.40
Dental & Vision	1,020.00	-
Long-Term Care (LCT)	<u>1,200.00</u>	<u>1,260.00</u>
(Note: LTC Diocesan priests only)		
 Diocesan Priest Compensation Package	 <u>\$ 77,257.67</u>	 <u>\$ 80,329.75</u>
 Order Priest Compensation Package.	 <u>\$ 73,505.66</u>	 <u>\$ 76,457.43</u>

NOTES:

1. The mileage reimbursement rate for fiscal year 2025-2026 will be 0.70 cents per mile.
2. The SECA offset is an added benefit for the Social Security a Diocesan priest pays for self-employment. A self-employed person pays the entire 15.3% of Social Security and Medicare taxes. An employee typically pays 7.65% and the employer pays the other half.
3. Priest Retirement Contributions will continue to be billed quarterly to each location.
4. Auto insurance is invoiced to the priest at his local address. The compensating parish or entity should pay this invoice directly.

APPENDIX B RESIDENCE ALLOWANCE FORM

LETTER FROM PARISH FINANCE COUNCIL FOR PARISH FILES

Step 1:

In accordance with Diocesan Policy, the 20__ salary for Father _____, Pastor/Parochial Vicar of _____ Parish is \$ _____ [plus reimbursements for business expenses incurred in the exercise of his ministry.] Advances for reimbursements for business expenses must be substantiated within 60 days of payment, and any unused or unsubstantiated advance must be returned to the parish within 120 days of payment.

_____ Parish provides rectory room and board with an estimated fair market value of \$ _____ per month.

Father _____ is required to reside at the rectory and be on call for parish emergencies 24 hours per day. (Estimate fair market value as in the past.)

TO BE DONE BY ALL PRIESTS

Step 2:

- Every priest should estimate his total tax liability for the coming fiscal year (Social Security Tax, Federal Income Tax, Kentucky Income Tax).
- Every priest should fill out a W-4 (Federal Withholding) and a K-4 (State Withholding) and submit both to the Human Resource Office. (Forms can be obtained from the Payroll Office.)

APPENDIX C-1 CLERGY SUBSTITUTION INVOICE

Church _____

Date(s) of Substitution _____

Number of Weekend Masses celebrated by Retired Priests or by Priests who do not receive a stipend amount as part of their base salary

- ____ 1 \$60
- ____ 2 \$85
- ____ 3 \$110
- ____ 4 \$135

Weekday Mass @ \$30 _____ yes _____ no

Weekday Penance Service @ \$35 _____ yes _____ no

Mass Stipend of \$5 per Mass _____ yes _____ no

For all active and retired priests:

Beginning Odometer miles _____ Ending Odometer miles _____

Miles Driven _____ reimbursable at 0.67 cents per mile _____

Total Substitution Invoice Cost _____

Please make check payable to:

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Signature _____

Please submit this Form to the Parish office.

APPENDIX C-2 MILEAGE REPORT

The Catholic Diocese of Lexington

Name: _____ Acct# _____

Date	Destination	Total Miles	Purpose
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

Total Miles _____ x cents per mile 0.67 -Total Mileage Cost _____

Diocesan Credit Card Gas Expenditures:

Date	Source	Cost
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Total Diocesan Credit Card Expenditures \$ _____

Total Mileage Cost _____

Credit Card Gas Expense _____

Total Reimbursement _____

APPENDIX D HEALTHCARE: MEDICARE/ SOCIAL SECURITY

1. Each priest, upon reaching his 64th birth year, should contact the Diocesan Director for Human Resource for information regarding Medicare and Social Security.
2. *Social Security* retirement benefits are available as early as age 62. Full retirement age varies by year of birth.
 - a. For one born between 1943 and 1954, full retirement age is age 66.
 - b. For one born between January 2, 1955, and January 1, 1956, full retirement age is 66 and two months.
 - c. For further detailed information, contact SSA.Gov or Social Security Office, 800-772-1213, or the Human Resource Director.
3. *Medicare* may be selected as one's primary care provider. This does not mean that one has to take Social Security benefits at the same time. See the Director for Human Resource for more detailed information.
4. *Medicare and Insurance options*- Medicare plans are available to anyone eligible for Medicare Part A and Part B.
 - a. Part A covers hospital, skilled nursing and hospice; it comes at no cost.
 - b. Part B covers outpatient care and professional services including doctors' fees. Payment for the premium is taken from Social Security benefits.
 - c. Part D covers prescriptions. Drug plans include Medicare Supplemental and Advantage.
5. *Medicare Supplemental Coverage* is an insurance plan that will help cover up to 100% of eligible Medicare expenses. (Medicare pays up to 80% and the Supplement up to 20% of the expenses.)
6. If a priest takes this coverage, Medicare/Supplemental, he is no longer covered by the Diocesan Health Plan.
7. The priest may see any medical provider who accepts Medicare patients.

BOOK THREE – POLICIES

INTRODUCTION

The Diocese cannot operate without certain guidelines and rules that are mutually beneficial to diocesan operations, to the people served and to all priests and employees. All priests are expected to adhere to the Code of Conduct at all times.

A. Section 28 of the Employee Handbook gives examples of infractions of the Code. The lists are not all inclusive. Infractions of these standards may lead to warnings and penalties.

B. Although priests are not usually regarded as “employees,” some of the sections of the Employee Handbook cited in the Priest Handbook do apply to priests.

SECTION 600 – POLICIES

601- Accountability

The Diocese, as an organization that provides services to the vulnerable, has an obligation to protect the people it serves.

A. Each priest is held accountable to the provisions of the Code of Canon Law, the Diocesan Code of Conduct and the Diocesan Policies and Procedures for Creating a Safe Environment for Minors and Vulnerable Adults.

1. Each active priest shall complete an annual Performance Review with the Dean/Alternate Dean of his respective deanery. During the review, the Dean/Alternate Dean will review and sign the Parish Sacramental Records. Completed reviews should be sent to the Vicar General by June 1st of each year.
2. Each active priest shall engage in the “Supporting Priestly Ministry” review. This review will typically occur in the second, sixth and tenth (when applicable) year of a parish assignment. The Associate Vicar for Priests will oversee this review.
3. All newly ordained priests, all first time pastors, all priests new to the Diocese, and all new presbyteral moderators shall observe the requirements of the Orientation and Mentoring Programs described in Section 300 of this handbook.
4. Each first time pastor shall meet with a representative of the Personnel Board after eighteen (18) months as pastor for an assessment.

B. Adapted from the Employee Handbook

1. Background Check

- a. It is the policy of the Diocese to conduct background checks for all priests before their first assignment.
- b. Every five (5) years, each priest must complete a new background check and a Safe Environment recertification through CMG Connect (www.cdlex.org).

2. Corrective Action

- a. There are times when corrective action has to be taken in order to make priests aware that some aspects of their performance or behavior must be improved.

- 1) It is the Bishop's responsibility, either directly or through a delegate, to work with the priest to assist him in making the necessary improvements.
- 2) It is the pastor's responsibility to work with his parochial vicar to assist him in making the necessary improvements.
- 3) Ultimately, it is each priest's responsibility to resolve any performance or behavior problem so that acceptable performance or behavior can be achieved.

- b. The objective of corrective action is to eliminate the unacceptable performance or behavior, rather than to punish.

- c. The three (3) steps in the corrective action process are:

- 1) Verbal Counseling – the Bishop or his delegate with the priest
- 2) Written Warning – from the Bishop
- 3) Final Warning leading to disciplinary action

- d. The Bishop reserves the right to impose the level of corrective action he believes is appropriate given the facts and circumstances.

e. The Diocese is committed to fair and consistent treatment. A complete and thorough investigation of all serious infractions will be conducted in a prompt, professional manner and will be kept confidential to the extent consistent with a thorough investigation.

f. If a performance or behavioral issue should reoccur within twelve (12) months of the previous corrective action, the next step identified in the previously stated process will be followed.

g. If a priest feels he has been unfairly disciplined by his pastor, he should file a complaint through the established Complaint & Conflict Resolution procedure (Section 8 in the Employee Handbook).

3. Supervision and Conflict

When a deacon or non-cleric is the immediate supervisor of a priest (e.g. Hispanic Ministry Team, St. Joseph Hospital, Lexington Catholic High School) and there is a conflict that cannot be resolved between them, the Bishop or his delegate will respond to the conflict (see Sections 8 and 9 of the Employee Handbook).

4. Personal Business/Outside Employment

a. The Diocese considers a priest's assignment his primary, full time ministry. Any outside activity or ministry must not interfere with the priest's performance of his primary ministerial duties.

b. A priest thinking of taking on a second ministry must receive the approval of the Bishop before any plans are finalized.

5. Employment of Relatives

A relative of a priest who is recommended for hire by that priest must meet the same employment requirements as other persons applying for the same position. The priest should not be placed in position where he will have direct supervision over a relative.

6. Business Ethics

It is the policy of the Diocese that priests not receive gifts, tips or gratuities from a vendor, outside service or contractor that unduly influences or creates the perception of influence.

a. Priests are never permitted to borrow money or personal items from any parishioner, family member of a parishioner, vendor or outside

service provider unless that person/provider is in the business of loaning money (e.g. a bank).

b. Any priest in violation of this policy will be required to undergo refresher training in Business Ethics.

7. Conflicts of Interest

a. Priests should avoid any situation that involves or may involve a conflict between his interests and the interests of the Diocese.

b. If a priest is in a conflict of interest situation, he shall make prompt and full disclosure in writing to the Bishop.

c. Examples of conflicts of interest are presented in Section 51 of the Employee Handbook.

8. Personal Appearance and Clerical Garb

Maintaining a professional appearance is important as priests serve as representatives of the Diocese. When functioning as a priest, the clerical suit is the appropriate attire.

9. Personal Property

The Diocese does not assume responsibility for personal property left on Diocesan premises. Every effort should be made to keep personal property in a secure place.

602- Confidentiality

A. By nature of their position or responsibility, priests may have access to information that is and must be confidential.

1. In matters of Sacramental Reconciliation, priests are bound to absolute confidentiality with the Seal of Confession (see Canon 984).

2. Personnel files of priests are maintained by the Chancellor of the Diocese. Only the Bishop can authorize access to a priest's personnel file by anyone other than the priest himself.

3. The priest may review his file at any time by submitting a written request to the Chancellor.

B. Adapted from the Employee Handbook

1. Other than general information regarding employment (such as dates of employment), private information or personal data about a priest will not be shared with anyone without the prior consent of the priest.
2. The Diocese cooperates with federal, state and local government agencies. Personal information will be provided when such agencies are entitled to that information by law.
3. The Diocese is required by law to maintain certain medical, health and other confidential records for each priest, some of which must be maintained separate from the priest's personnel file. These records will be maintained in a confidential file (c.f. Section 20, number 6, of the Employee Handbook.)

603- Communication

A. The Diocese utilizes various methods to communicate with the priests.

1. The main methods of communication for the Diocese include the diocesan website (www.cdlex.org), the priest portal on the Diocesan website, the monthly News Notes, Cross Roads magazine and direct correspondence.
2. Priests are responsible for reviewing their communications.
3. All priests are assigned a cdlex.org email address. All email communications from the Catholic Center will be sent only to the cdlex.org address.

4. Letters of Commendation and Complaint

- a. When the Bishop receives a letter commending a priest for good service or outstanding performance, the reception of the letter will be acknowledged and a copy sent to the priest.
- b. When the Bishop receives a letter of complaint regarding a priest, the letter will be acknowledged, the matter discussed with the priest and the issue brought to a conclusion.
- c. Only signed letters of commendation or complaint will be considered. Those using the telephone with a commendation or complaint should be encouraged to put their thoughts in written form.

B. Adapted from the Employee Handbook

1. It is the responsibility of all priests to keep the lines of communication with the Diocese open and working. If there is a problem or question regarding communication, the priest should contact his immediate supervisor: for the parochial vicar, this would be his pastor; for all other priests, this would be the Diocesan Communications Office.

2. Use of Diocesan Supplied Technology

Refer to the Employee Handbook, Section 56, numbers 1-17.

3. Use of Social Media

Refer to the Employee Handbook, Section 57, numbers 1-8.

604- Discrimination-Harassment-Retaliation

A. The Diocese prohibits all forms of illegal discrimination and harassment, including but not limited to sexual harassment, which is contrary to state and federal law.

B. The Diocese is committed to a work environment in which all individuals are treated with respect and dignity.

C. Adapted from the Employee Handbook

1. Individuals and Conduct covered:

a. These policies apply to all priests whether related to conduct with volunteers, employees, priests or someone not directly connected with the Diocese.

b. Conduct prohibited by these policies is unacceptable in the workplace, on diocesan, parish or school property and in any work related setting including business trips, business meetings and business related social events.

c. Refer to the Employee Handbook, Section 10, for descriptions and examples of the following: retaliation, sexual harassment, harassment, sexual exploitation and sexual abuse.

D. Reporting and Incident of Discrimination, Harassment or Retaliation

1. The Diocese requires that all perceived incidents of discrimination, harassment or retaliation be addressed, regardless of the alleged offender's identity or position.
2. For a detailed procedure to follow in reporting such conduct, refer to the Employee Handbook, Section 10, number 8.
3. When a priest is involved with the misconduct, the reporting should be made to the Bishop or his delegate and to the Diocesan Director of Human Resource.

605- Terms of Office

- A. For a pastor in the Diocese of Lexington, the term of office is six (6) years. With the Bishop's approval, the assignment may be extended on a year by year basis for an additional six (6) years, up to twelve (12) years in total.
- B. For the newly ordained, the normal term of a first assignment is three (3) years.
- C. Term of office for priests elected or appointed to councils, boards and committees is three (3) years with the possibility of a second successive three (3) year term. After serving two successive terms, the priest may not serve on the respective council, board or committee again for the period of one (1) year.
- D. For specialized ministries, the term of office is determined by the Bishop in accordance with the required need of the particular ministry in question.
- E. For priests appointed to the College of Consultors, the term of office is five (5) years (see Canon 502.1).
- F. A priest may ask for a change of assignment or be asked to change his assignment at any time.

606- Priest's Residence

A. Each priest should have a residence within or near the boundaries of the location he serves.

B. Traditionally, the priest's residence has been a rectory located on or near the parish campus. Some priest's residences are located at a distance from the parish campus. These policies apply to both.

C. As good stewards, it is the primary responsibility of those residing in the residence to promote a good quality of life for all who live there.

1. Priests are expected to keep their residences neat and orderly.
2. There should be adequate communications among the priests regarding responsibilities and the maintenance of the residence.
3. Offices and work areas should be kept separate from living quarters.
4. The priest residence should have a private bedroom, sitting room and bathroom.
5. The consent of all living in the residence is required to have pets.

D. Policies affecting residents other than priests

1. Relatives and friends of the priest may live in the residence with the written permission of the Bishop. Others living in the residence as well as the Parish Finance Council should be consulted.
2. Clergy, seminarians, relatives and friends may visit and stay in the residence. All in the residence should be aware of when the guests will arrive and the length of their stay. Guest rooms should have privacy and adequate facilities.

E. Alternate residences (other than a rectory) must be approved by the Bishop. A parochial vicar must also have the approval of the pastor. The Parish Finance Council needs to be consulted.

607- Placement Procedure

A. The placement of priests is the sole responsibility of the Bishop.

B. The Priest Personnel Board serves as an advisory body to the Bishop in the assignment of priests and other priest personnel issues. The board members meet with the Bishop in prayerful discernment about both the needs of the Diocese and the priests.

C. Open Listing Policy

1. In late Fall of each year, the Vicar for Priests invites any priest of the Diocese who might be interested in a change of assignment to notify him of his intention.

2. The board meets to identify the needs of the Diocese, especially regarding priests.

3. The priests of the Diocese are notified of any pastorates or major administrative positions that will be “open” in the coming fiscal year.

4. A Task Force for Transition is formed in those parishes that have been placed on the open list.

a. Staff members and one member of both the Parish Pastoral Council and the Parish Finance Council should serve on this task force.

b. The goal of the task force is to gather information from the parish regarding the present condition of the parish, as well as, the hopes and desires for the future.

c. The information gathered by the task force is shared with all the priests of the Diocese. Those who are seriously interested may request the most recent financial and statistical reports on the parish from the Vicar General.

5. A priest may nominate himself as a potential candidate. A priest may nominate another priest, but only with that priest’s knowledge. Letters of nomination should be sent to the Bishop or the Vicar for Priests.

6. All assignments are made by the Bishop. They are confidential and made public when the Bishop gives official notice.

608- Priests Coming to the Diocese

- A. Priests from religious communities and priests from other dioceses who are in good standing will be accepted and welcomed as brothers in ministry to the people of the Diocese following the appropriate discussion between the Bishop and the Religious Superior/Bishop of the priest asking to serve in the Diocese. In some cases, the Priest Personnel Board may be consulted.
- B. Priests coming to minister in our Diocese will be expected to follow the Priest Handbook. Policies regarding retirement and sabbaticals do not apply to extern priests.

609- Sabbaticals

- A. After seven (7) years of ministry in the Diocese of Lexington, a priest may apply for a sabbatical of three (3) or four (4) months to update himself for his ministry or to prepare for a different ministry in the Diocese.
- B. The priest on sabbatical will receive his salary and basic benefits from the location of his assignment.
- C. The cost of tuition, fees, room and board, as well as the cost of transportation at the beginning and end of the sabbatical will be paid or reimbursed by the Diocese. If the priest does not have an assignment at the time of the sabbatical, he will receive salary and benefits from the Diocese. Reimbursement should be documented on the Clergy Substitution Invoice. (Appendix C) If the priest participates in any additional programs during the sabbatical leave, he will be responsible personally for the expenses associated with the additional programs.
- D. The priest, the Priest Personnel Board and the Office of the Vicar General share the responsibility of a replacement for the priest's assignment. The priest substitute will receive compensation from the Diocese.
- E. A priest who has taken a sabbatical leave is eligible to apply for a new sabbatical leave after seven (7) more years of priestly service in the Diocese.
- F. Procedure for Applying for a Sabbatical
 - 1. Application for a sabbatical should be made a minimum of one (1) year in advance. This is necessary not only to provide sufficient time for securing a suitable replacement, but also because many sabbatical programs have limits on admission. Priests should apply for sabbatical leave during or at the end of their assignment, rather than at the beginning of their assignment.

2. The Vicar for Ongoing Formation of Priests will serve as a resource for the various available sabbatical programs and welcome additional input concerning such programs.

3. Applications for sabbaticals are made to the Vicar for Priests, who will present the application to the Priest Personnel Board with suggestions for replacement possibilities and financial arrangements. The application should provide detailed information about the proposed program and its relation to the Diocese and the priest's personal needs.

4. In the event of multiple priest applications for sabbatical at the same time, order of receipt, seniority, prior sabbatical leave, and benefits for the applicant and the Diocese will factor into the approval/denial of applications.

5. After the Priest Personnel Board has reviewed and recommended approval of a sabbatical leave application, the application and the Board's recommendation will be forwarded to the Bishop for final approval. The Bishop makes all sabbatical assignments.

610- Short Time Absence

A. For reasons of health, an immersion program, an extended retreat or an education program, a priest may request permission from the Bishop to be away from his assignment for a period of one (1) to three (3) months.

B. The priest will receive his standard salary from his assignment. All costs connected to an approved program will be paid by the Diocese.

C. Responsibility for finding a pastoral replacement during the time of absence is shared by the priest taking the absence, the Priest Personnel Board and the Vicar General.

D. The priest who is substituting will receive compensation for the first month from the parish or ministry. After that, compensation will be the responsibility of the Diocese.

611- Time Away from Assignment

With the permission of the Bishop, a priest may be away from his assignment for up to four (4) weekends in the year for outside ministry or ongoing formation.

612- Vacation/Days Off

A. Vacation – each priest may be absent from his assigned place of ministry for one (1) month (30 days) for personal vacation. These thirty (30) days may be continuous or interrupted.

B. Days Off – barring emergencies, each priest shall take one (1) day (24 hours) off each week with no parish responsibilities.

613- Retirement

A. At the age of sixty (60), the priest shall discuss with the Bishop or the Vicar for Retired Priests his plans as he enters a new phase of ministry. It is the priest's responsibility to schedule this meeting.

B. The standard retirement age for a priest in the Diocese of Lexington is in the year of his seventieth (70th) birthday.

C. In January of the year of his seventieth (70th) birthday, the priest must submit either a letter of resignation or a request to continue his assignment to the Bishop. Given the circumstances of person and place, the Bishop may decide that year and each year thereafter whether to accept or defer the priest's retirement.

D. Retirement benefits are determined and regulated by the Priest Retirement Plan.

E. Retired priests are guests of the Diocese for retreats and ongoing formation programs.

614- Health Maintenance

A. These health policies are applicable to both active and retired priests.

1. All priests are encouraged to have a regular program of exercise, rest, proper diet and other holistic habits that will enable them to live healthy lives and use their gifts productively in service to the Church.

2. Each priest should have a complete physical examination annually.

3. All priests are directed to have a spiritual director and be a member of a priest support group.

4. Smoking is prohibited, except in designated areas, in all Diocesan facilities and in those buildings used for meetings.

B. Adapted from the Employee Handbook

1. Safety and Security

- a. The Diocese seeks to comply with all applicable federal, state and local health and safety regulations and to provide a work environment that is free from recognized hazards.
- b. Section 49 - Safety and Security in the Employee Handbook, with the exception of number 4 – Workers' Compensation, is applicable to priests.

2. Substance Abuse Policy

The Diocese is committed to a safe work environment and to fostering the well-being and health of priests. This commitment is jeopardized when any priest illegally uses narcotics, controlled substances or alcohol when ministering; comes to work under their influence; or possesses, distributes or sells the in the workplace.

This policy does not prohibit the legal serving or consumption of alcoholic beverages at approved and sponsored events or when at leisure in the rectory.

- a. The priest must not perform his ministry after having ingested narcotics or controlled substances or while under the influence of alcohol or any substance that impairs his ability to perform his ministry properly and safely.
- b. A priest must not perform his ministry while taking either prescribed or over-the-counter medications that adversely affect his ministry.
- c. A priest taking a medication prescribed by his physician must carry the medication in the container labeled by a licensed pharmacist or must carry the notifications page of the prescribed medication.
- d. The taking of any medication that causes drowsiness or that may affect job safety or performance must be made known to the priest's supervisor to determine whether the priest should minister while taking the medication.
- e. A priest who violates any aspect of the substance abuse policy is subject to disciplinary action.

615- Health Treatment

A. Addictive behaviors and personal problems stemming from mental or emotional disorders are regarded as symptoms of treatable illnesses.

1. The Bishop, or his delegate, will intervene on an individual basis with a program of care designed to treat the symptoms and the causes of the illness that will enable the priest to recover and maintain his health and well-being.
2. The Diocese, dedicated to protecting all members of society from harm, will operate within the law in response to alleged criminal behavior and will provide pastoral care for the priest and for those adversely affected by the priest's actions.
3. Priests who seek professional counseling should sign a release form with their therapist so that the Bishop, or his delegate, receives periodic reports.
4. After treatment of addiction, the priest must enter an after-care program:
 - a. Progress reports from the treatment director shall be made to the Bishop, or his delegate;
 - b. If a relapse occurs during the healing process, the priest must demonstrate a serious commitment to and cooperation with the after-care plan.

B. Adapted from the Employee Handbook

1. Testing

The Diocese reserves the right to request that a priest submit to testing when, based on observed behavior or other indicators, there is reason to believe there is the presence of drug or alcohol abuse.

a. Priests who test positive or who refuse to submit to a test will be afforded the opportunity to use a counseling service.

1) Where the Diocese has knowledge of a drug or alcohol problem, monitoring will be required.

2) Every effort will be made to ensure confidentiality insofar as it does not impede good management practices.

b. Assistance may be in the form of counseling, therapy or immersion.

- c. Referral to a counseling service may not always be segregated from disciplinary action.
- d. Rehabilitative efforts will require periodic management assessments of the priest's progress.
- e. A priest who has a work-related injury that results in medical treatment must submit to a post-incident drug screen.

616- Management of Church Affairs

A. Considerations from Canon Law (273-289)

1. Priests should exercise careful and prudent administration of the temporal goods of the Church.
2. Priests should conform their administration of the goods for Church to the policies and guidelines set forth by the Diocese.
3. Priests should collaborate with and seek advice from prudent and knowledgeable members of the institutions entrusted to their care.
4. Priests should identify the assets of the parish/institution and limit their use to the purpose intended.
5. The priest's personal possessions and expenses should be clearly identified and kept separate from parish goods and expenses.
6. Canon 282 calls the priest to a simple lifestyle:
 - a. Priests should be prudent and exercise diligence in all their personal finances, avoiding lavishness and excess;
 - b. Priests should share their temporal goods with the poor.

B. Priests and Legal Affairs

1. Priests are personally responsible for their own debts.
2. Priests shall file the proper federal, state and local taxes.

617- Priests not recommended for Assignment (Unassignable)

- A. When a priest is not assigned to priestly ministry because of physical/psychological reasons or a lack of cooperation with the Diocese, the Bishop, or his delegate, will give the priest concerned clear and straightforward feedback about the reasons for the denial of assignment.
- B. The Bishop, or his delegate, will suggest specific steps to address the problem.
- C. The Bishop, or his delegate, will meet periodically with the priest to assess potential for future assignment.
- D. During the time of non-assignment, compensation will be determined by the Bishop in consultation with the College of Consultors.

618- Personal Leave

- A. A priest of the Diocese who is considering a leave of absence from ministry must consult with the Bishop.
- B. After consultation, the Bishop may grant a personal leave for up to one (1) year.
- C. A personal leave may be extended by the Bishop for a second (2nd) year following a retreat of two (2) to five (5) days by the priest making the request.
- D. An extension beyond a second (2nd) year may be granted by the Bishop.
- E. Compensation during a personal leave will be determined by the Bishop based on the priest's needs and circumstances.

619- Funeral Arrangements for Priests Removed from Ministry without Laicization

- A. The priest's personal funeral directions will be followed to the extent possible.
- B. The pastor of the parish in which the Liturgy of Christian Burial has been requested should be in dialogue with the Bishop, or his delegate, prior to making final arrangements for the funeral.
- C. The Liturgy of Christian Burial may not be held in any parish in which the deceased had been assigned or in which he was in residence during the years of priestly ministry in the Diocese.

D. It is permissible for the deceased to be vested in Mass Vestments as long as there were no restrictions prohibiting the priest from the private celebration of the Eucharist.

E. There should not be a public visitation of the body prior to the Liturgy of Christian Burial. A private viewing for the immediate family is encouraged.

F. As to the time, location and date of the Liturgy of Christian Burial, the obituary should read, "Services and burial will be held at the convenience of the family."

G. The title, "Reverend" or "Father," is not to be used in the obituary. It may appear on the headstone in the cemetery.

H. Priests and deacons of the Diocese will be notified of the funeral and encouraged to attend.