

**Priest Handbook
of the
Diocese of Savannah**



**Most Reverend
Gregory J. Hartmayer, OFM Conv.
Bishop of Savannah**

In the Name of God. Amen.

In order to provide the priests of the Diocese of Savannah guidance on carrying out the mission of Christ and to assist in understanding our roles, rights and responsibilities, I Most Reverend Gregory J. Hartmayer, OFM Conv., do hereby promulgate as particular law for the Diocese of Savannah in accord with the provisions of the Code of Canon Law, the

Priest Handbook of the Diocese of Savannah

and enjoin all priests to dutifully observe these ecclesiastical norms.

These new norms are effective as of the 18th day of January, 2012.

Given from the office of the Bishop, Savannah, Georgia, this 18th day of January, 2012.

+ Gregory J. Hartmayer, OFM Conv.

Most Reverend Gregory J. Hartmayer, OFM Conv.
Bishop of Savannah

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ARTICLE I- FOUNDATIONAL PREMISES

THEOLOGICAL PRINCIPLES

A. The *Spirit of Collaboration* amongst the Christian Faithful

“Through the sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation the faithful are consecrated to be a holy priesthood.”¹ In virtue of this life in Christ given to them, “there exists among all Christian faithful a true equality with regard to dignity and the activity whereby all cooperate in the building up of the Body of Christ in accord with each one’s own condition and function.”² As St. Paul says, “*The body is one and has many members, but all the members, many though they are, are one body; and so it is with Christ.*” (1 Cor 12:12) Because not all the members of the Body of Christ have the same functions (cf. Rom 12:4), we are called to cooperate in a spirit of trust and generosity as collaborators of God’s Kingdom. The common dignity of the clergy and lay faithful, however, require that all act freely, conscientiously, and responsibly, each according to their proper vocation.

B. The *Character of Service* in the life of the Clergy

The Catholic Church recognizes the ministerial participation of the episcopacy and the presbyterate in the ordained priesthood of Christ. The ministerial priesthood of bishops, priests and deacons is exercised at the service of the faithful. “It is directed at the unfolding of the baptismal grace of the Christians. The ministerial priesthood is a *means* by which Christ unceasingly builds up

1 Lumen Gentium

2 Code of Canon Law, c 208

and leads his Church.”³

Clerics must remember always that their ministry is not constituted by or is the product of their own personal abilities.

The sacrament of Holy Orders empowers a character of service for the salvation of souls, and each degree brings with it the spirit of service and self-sacrifice which the Lord himself taught his apostles: *“Whoever wishes to be great among you, will be your servant; whoever wishes to be the first among you, will be the slave of all; for the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve and to give his life as ransom for many.”* (Mk 10:43-45)

C. The Collegial Character of the Clergy

“Clerics are bound by a special obligation to show reverence and obedience to the Supreme Pontiff and to their own ordinary.”⁴ The spirit of collaboration in the presbyterate is not diluted when the common good of the diocese requires that a priest yield personal preferences to the discernible needs of the local Church. The principle of collegiality demands openness and a commitment on the part of each priest to serve the community as a whole. It also envisions open and honest dialogue within the presbyterate and between the priests and the bishop.

“All priests..are bound together by an intimate sacramental brotherhood, but in a special way they form one priestly body in the diocese, to which they are attached under their own bishop.”⁵ The spirit of collegiality in the presbyterate is practiced

3 Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1547

4 Code of Canon Law, c 273

5 Presbyterorum Ordinis, 8

when priests, as collaborators of the bishop, “take upon themselves his duties and solicitude and in their daily toils discharge them.”⁶ Each priest possesses natural gifts and talents, those that are acquired through study and formation and those that are infused by the Holy Spirit. It is the role and function of the diocesan bishop, aware of and responsible for the needs of the entire local Church, to facilitate the best use of individual’s skills, knowledge and abilities in his ministry.

Priests are encouraged to be particularly attentive to and solicitous of the well being of their brother priests. When any priest is in difficulty, fellow priests should pledge themselves to prayer and support in every way.

Newly ordained priests will participate in the Mentoring Program of the diocese for at least 2 years. Such mentoring relationships will assist the newly ordained priest to become more confident and to develop priestly, personal, and pastoral skills.

Awareness of the needs of fellow priests and cultivation of an attitude of true understanding and charity toward each other will be blessings for the entire presbyterate.

- D. Subsidiarity: The *Personal Character* of the Clergy Subsidiarity requires that local communities and leaders exercise their own self responsibility and those larger communities and their leaders help this process. It likewise requires that situations, opportunities, and problems are engaged at the appropriate level without undue recourse to further levels of authority. Subsidiarity fosters greater

6 Lumen Gentium, 28.2

participation in decision-making and problem solving by recognizing the importance of the individual and the local community. Decisions, therefore, are to be made at the most appropriate level.

Priests of the diocese maintain a spirit of fraternal unity with their bishop and, under his care, possess the ordinary power to exercise their function as appointed by the bishop, with all the rights and responsibilities given to the assignment either by Universal or local law.

ARTICLE II – LIFE OF PRIESTS

SECTION 1 – SPIRITUAL LIFE OF THE CLERGY

Bishops, priests and deacons are administrators of the sacred and as such must unite their personal life to the mysteries that Christ administers through them. “The sacrament of Holy Orders communicates a *sacred power* which is none other than that of Christ. The exercise of this authority must therefore be measured against the model of Christ, who by love made himself the least and the servant of all.”⁷ “In leading their lives, clerics are especially bound to pursue holiness because they are consecrated to God by a new title in the reception of orders as dispensers of God’s mysteries in the service of His people.”⁸ Though ministerial work takes up most of the time of clerics, pastoral work ceases to be pastoral when the minister loses touch with the Shepherd from whom all ministry flows.

7 Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1551

8 Code of Canon Law c276.1

A. Solid Spiritual Foundations

1. Spirituality in the Exercise of Ministry

Clerics are “to nourish their spiritual life from the twofold table of Sacred Scripture and the Eucharist.”⁹

- a) Priests are strongly recommended to celebrate Mass daily.
- b) Priests and transitional deacons are normally expected to pray all five parts of the Liturgy of the Hours daily.
- c) Time should be set aside daily for personal meditation and reflection. Spending one hour before the Blessed Sacrament (or in prayer and solitude when a chapel is not available) is a worthy discipline that all clerics should strive to practice.
- d) Priests are encouraged to have a Spiritual Director.

2. Annual Retreat

Priests and deacons in the Diocese of Savannah are required to attend an annual retreat. The Diocese will provide an opportunity whereby this obligation may be fulfilled. Occasionally, however, with the approval of the Ordinary, they might attend a retreat other than those provided by the Diocese. The cost of the retreat is to be met by the parish or office to which a priest or deacon is assigned.

Newly ordained priests, ordained less than 5 years, are required to participate in an annual Retreat/Orientation designed to provide them with a working knowledge of the Diocese and tools for effective leadership at the parish level.

9 Code of Canon Law c276.2:3

B. Clergy Continuous Spiritual Renewal

The Bishop provides various opportunities for the spiritual renewal of the clergy. All priests and deacons are urged to participate as indicated in these opportunities:

- 1) Priests are required and deacons are welcome at the Mass of Holy Oils (Chrism Mass)
- 2) Priests are required to attend the Clergy Conference in the Spring; deacons by invitation
- 3) Priests are welcome at Stefanstag & Labor Day picnic
- 4) Priests are strongly encouraged to attend Ordination Ceremonies; deacons are welcome
- 5) Bishop/Priests Provincial Assembly

C. Prayer and Support Groups

Priests and deacons are encouraged to participate in and become members of prayer and support groups such as Jesu Caritas.

SECTION 2 – ONGOING FORMATION OF THE CLERGY

1. Diocesan Programs for Ongoing Academic Formation

Each diocesan or religious priest serving in a pastoral assignment in the Diocese is encouraged to attend one education workshop annually, in addition to the annual Clergy Conference. The Bishop or his delegate will develop listings of workshops. Approval from the Bishop must be granted if a priest desires to attend a workshop that is not listed. Priests who are members of religious orders, or who are extern to the diocese and in a parish assignment are welcome and encouraged to participate in these workshops / seminars.

\$1,500 is allotted for each priest for continuing education. The parish can appeal to the diocese for financial assistance.

2. Higher Education and Advanced Studies for Priests

A. Diocesan Initiative

The Bishop may request priests to seek further studies in a specific and specialized academic area or other advanced training to meet the needs of the Diocese. Priests are welcome to express their interest in being considered for diocesan assignment to graduate study in a particular field. Such interest should be made known to the Bishop himself.

A priest assigned to graduate studies is to be given direction as to the field to be pursued and the type of work that will be expected of him upon return. In fairness to the priest and to the personnel needs of the Diocese, a specific timeframe for completion of study is to be given.

Tuition, room and board and other related costs (salary and benefits) for those pursuing assigned graduate studies will be assumed by the Diocese.

B. Individual Initiative (Personal Expense)

If a priest wishes to use his allotted time off (i.e., day off and/or vacation) for the pursuit of graduate study, it should be understood that such study should not interfere with the performance of his assigned ministry.

If a priest personally initiates graduate study in a field directly related to pastoral ministry,

the financial assistance available is the annual allotment in the Priest's Compensation Schedule of \$1,500 for continuing education. Effective, July 1, 2012, the funds will come from the Diocese and not the parish. Should a priest pursue graduate study on his own initiative, he should not assume that this study will determine his future diocesan assignments. Approval from the Bishop is needed prior to beginning graduate studies.

SECTION 3 – COMMUNAL LIFE OF PRIESTS

Rectory Life

A. Place of Residence

Pastors and parochial vicars are obliged to reside in “a parish house close to the church.”¹⁰ For that reason, all active priests must live in a residence assigned or approved by the Bishop. Permission for residence outside a parish or institution will not be granted except for an unusual or special circumstance.

As long as it does not hinder the discharge of his pastoral duties, consideration will be given to allowing a priest in a small or isolated parish to live in a neighboring rectory to foster priestly fraternity.¹¹

B. Rectory Expenses

The following costs associated with parish provided housing are the responsibility of the parish, not the individual priest or religious order; heat, electricity, local telephone service, internet and television service, water and sewage, garbage

10 Code of Canon Law, c533.1; 550.1

11 Code of Canon Law, c533.1; 550.1

fees, repairs and maintenance, landscaping and yard maintenance, household cleaners and supplies, pest control, furnishings and appliances and their repair and maintenance.

C. Rectory as a Home

Even though residencies differ, the following guidelines serve as a basis for mutual understanding among the priests in the rectory. Periodically, priests living together in a rectory should discuss these guidelines.

1. Fraternal Living

Priests living together in a rectory should recognize that the rectory does not belong to any one of them individually, but is their common home. Although the pastor is ultimately responsible for the spiritual and temporal welfare of the parish, all priests in the rectory should, in acknowledgement of their unity and fraternity, share in decisions related to their living situation; e.g., provisions for meals, laundry, and normal housekeeping. In the same spirit, parish and liturgical events, days off, retreats and vacations should be scheduled in such a way that priests know well in advance what is expected of them. The gathering of the priests of a rectory for common prayer and spiritual support also is strongly encouraged.

2. Privacy

As the common living space for two or more priests, the rectory should be a place where privacy is respected. Charity, priestly affirmation, and fraternal correction should characterize the relationship between and among the priests living in a rectory. If fraternal conversations cannot bring about a resolution of difficulties among

priests, recourse should be made to the proper authority.

3. Community Life

“Some community of life is highly recommended to clerics; wherever such a practice exists, it is to be preserved to the extent possible.”¹² The sharing of meals is an opportunity for fostering both fraternity and communication. Allowing for flexibility of schedules, special dietary needs, and nutritional concerns, provisions are to be made for meals in each rectory. In rectories where there is more than one priest, priests should avail themselves of the opportunity of communal dining. As in all matters of communal living, priests should meet and make decisions on how to be best provided for in this area of rectory life.

4. Accommodations

It is the responsibility of the pastor to ensure that the living quarters of the rectory are clean and properly furnished. “Clerics are to cultivate a simple style of life and are to avoid whatever has a semblance of vanity.”¹³ While the rectory is to be a comfortable home for the priests, ostentation and the display of wealth are to be strictly avoided in view of honest stewardship and the Church’s call to serve people of every economic level. “More than the rest of Christ’s disciples, they are to put aside all appearance of vanity in their surroundings, They are to arrange their house in such a way that it never appears unapproachable to anyone and that nobody, even the humble, is ever afraid to visit.”¹⁴ Normally,

12 Code of Canon Law, c 280

13 Code of Canon Law, c 282

14 Presbyterorum Ordinis, 17

priests should have private living quarters that include at a minimum a bedroom, bathroom, and a sitting room.

5. Visitors and Guests

Respect for and sensitivity to lay members of the rectory staff should be maintained, but all must realize that the rectory is first the home of the priests which are assigned to live there.

Other than those officially assigned there by the Bishop, permission must be obtained from the Bishop and the pastor for anyone, including the relatives of a priest, to reside in the rectory. Family members and friends of a priest may visit for a short period of time with the permission of the pastor and if all priests living in the rectory agree.

All guests should normally be entertained in the common living areas. This always applies to guests who are not family members. Family members may visit the private quarters of a priest; however, this should never be done without first notifying others who live in the rectory.

It is forbidden for minors (18 years of age and younger) to be in any place other than public areas of the rectory. The presence of minors in other than public areas of the rectory is not to be permitted. The *Diocesan Code of Conduct for Those Working with Minors* provides more detail in this regard. The practice of employing or allowing minors to answer telephones and doors in rectories or parish offices is not permitted.

6. Pets

In a rectory with more than one priest, it is strongly recommended that pets not be permitted unless agreed upon by all the priests living in the rectory. Even in a one-priest rectory, responsible stewardship of any parish property should be respected. Payment for damage to the rectory including, but not limited to furniture, floors or wall covers is the responsibility of the owner of the pet that causes the damage. Pet food, supplies, legal and medical costs are the personal responsibility of the priest who owns the pet. Pet expenses may not be charged to the parish.

7. Smoking

No smoking is allowed in rectories or other parish properties (offices, etc.) All rectories will be non-smoking.

SECTION 5 – BEHAVIOR AND HEALTH OF THE CLERGY

The Diocese of Savannah shows deep concern for the personal health of the clergy and their ability to serve the people of God. A holistic view of personal health includes physical, spiritual, psychological, and emotional well being. In some situations, the Bishop may determine that therapeutic care is needed from professional counselors, psychologists, spiritual directors or physicians.

A. Impaired Clergy

Experience has proven that priests are not immune to the ravages of addictions and psychological disorders or other problems that can impair their ability to minister. In these cases fraternal support regarding recovery and treatment is encouraged

by brother priests and appropriate action leading to recovery and good health will be required. Refusal to cooperate with professionals could result in canonical penalties and temporary or permanent suspension from the clerical state.¹⁵ The priest himself is ultimately accountable for aftercare, but a follow-up care plan must be developed with the Diocese.

B. Alcohol, Chemical and Psychological Dependencies

The Diocesan Medical Insurance and the Supplemental Clergy Welfare Plans provide reasonable coverage for both in-patient and out-patient treatment of dependency illnesses. Proper treatment will vary in detail from case to case. Treatment will depend on such factors as onset and duration, degree of impairment, physical, psychological and social-vocational complications. Determination is best made by a team of professionals as recommended by the Bishop or his delegate.

C. Progress Report

While the care provider and client relationship is to be respected, the Code of Canon Law and civil law place certain expectations upon the Bishop regarding the suitability of clerics for ministry and the care for the people they serve.

Considering these expectations and the common bond in ministry shared by bishops, priests and deacons, those who are asked to receive an evaluation and/or counseling are expected to sign a release permitting the provider to make a confidential report to the Bishop.

15 Code of Canon Law, c 1333-1335

SECTION 6 – CIVIL RESPONSIBILITIES

Priests have the same civil responsibilities as citizens or residents in the United States. It is the policy of the Diocese of Savannah that all clergy will take these responsibilities seriously and attend to them.

A. Income Taxes and Social Security

Clergy are responsible for filing their taxes and fulfilling their tax obligations on their own. Each priest receives a Self-Employment Tax Allowance of 7.65% based on his bi-weekly salary amount.

Diocesan or parish offices may direct a priest to competent tax preparers, but it is always clearly understood that these obligations are those of the priest himself.

It is Diocesan policy that all priests enroll in Social Security and in Medicare at the proper time.

Priests who do not participate in Social Security are not eligible, after retirement, to participate in the Clergy Welfare Fund.

The Diocese will reimburse a priest for Medicare Part B premiums that are deducted from his Social Security payment upon receipt of supporting documentation. All premiums for Part D (Medicare prescription drug coverage) and Plan F (Medicare Supplemental Insurance) will be paid by the Diocese.

B. Important Documents

The Diocese expects each priest to prepare the following (4) documents and submit a copy of each of them to the Chancellor. The submission must include a statement identifying the location (custody) of each of the original documents.

1. **Durable Power of Attorney for Health Care**

This document specifies the priest's instructions concerning his medical treatment and/or life support in the event that he becomes incapacitated or unable to make such decisions himself. Please note that instructions contrary to Church Teachings or commonly accepted Catholic bioethics will not be honored and should not be included.

2. **Durable Power of Attorney for Finances**

This document specifies the priest's instructions concerning administration and management of his material assets and financial affairs in the event that he becomes incapacitated or unable to make such decisions himself.

3. **Last Will and Testament**

This document specifies the priest's wishes for the distribution of his material and financial assets and personal property after his death. Preparation of a Last Will and Testament normally entails the services of an attorney, but other options are available on-line and are acceptable.

4. **Funeral Arrangements**

Each priest is to develop a plan for his funeral which includes appropriate arrangements. Please note that the funeral plans must be in compliance with the Diocesan "*Guidelines for Christian Funerals, Cremation and Burial.*"

C. **Litigations and Legal Proceedings**

A priest is to immediately inform the Chancellor in the event that he has a significant contact with any civil authority requiring the counsel of an attorney. He is to immediately notify the Chancellor if there

is a subpoena for an appearance in court as a litigant or as a witness, even if he has volunteered. He must immediately inform the Chancellor in the event of any charge potentially or actually being filed against him. The diocesan attorney will review each incident.

If a priest has been called for jury duty, if he has committed minor traffic infractions or violations, or is involved in other minor litigations that do not need the services of an attorney, he does not need to report such events to the Chancellor.

All priests who are involved in an automobile accident or significant incident, while carrying out priestly ministry, shall report the incident within 24 hours to the Insurance Risk Manager. If the accident involves the priest's personal vehicle, he should also report it to his personal vehicle insurance carrier in accordance with the carrier's procedures.

D. Civil Actions Unbecoming or Alien to the Clerical State

Priests are “forbidden to assume public offices which entail a participation in the exercise of civil power.”¹⁶ For that reason, priests are not permitted to run for public office or become candidates for any secular position that may infringe upon their vows of obedience and dedication to the Church.

Without permission from the Bishop:

- Priests cannot “become agents for goods belonging to laypersons nor assume secular offices which entail an obligation to render

16 Code of Canon Law, c 285.3

accounts.”¹⁷

- Priests are forbidden “to act as surety, even on behalf of their own goods.”¹⁸
- Priests are likewise to refrain from signing promissory notes whereby they undertake the obligation to pay an amount of money without any determined reason.”¹⁹
- Priests are forbidden from setting up “not for profit” organizations²⁰

E. Priests and Employment outside of Ministry

Without explicit permission from the Bishop, priests are “forbidden personally or through others to conduct business or trade either for their own benefit or that of others.” ²¹

F. Clerical Attire

1. Whenever a priest is functioning as a cleric or attending formal gatherings in the Diocese, he is expected to wear suitable ecclesiastical attire as prescribed by Universal Law. He *may* wear clerical attire when involved in other activities as he deems appropriate.²²
2. Priests belonging to religious communities are to wear the habit of their institute or the clerical attire prescribed for diocesan priests.
3. Permanent Deacons are not to wear ecclesiastical attire except under specific extraordinary circumstances (such as being required by prison regulations for ministry to inmates), and then only with the permission of

17 Code of Canon Law, c 285.4

18 Code of Canon Law, c 285.4

19 Code of Canon Law, c 285.4

20 Code of Canon Law, c 286

21 Code of Canon Law, c 286

22 Code of Canon Law, c 284

- their pastor and the Bishop.
4. Transitional Deacons in a parish assignment are to follow the prescriptions for priest under #1.
 5. Seminarians (those who are not yet transitional deacons) in a parish assignment may not wear ecclesiastical attire except for specific extraordinary circumstances at the direction of the Vocation Director or the Bishop. When at their seminaries, seminarians are to follow the rules and regulations thereof.
 6. Color of Ecclesiastical Attire
 - a. Priests are encouraged to wear black.
 - b. Permanent deacons (if at all), transitional deacons and seminarians are expected to wear black.

SECTION 7 – FOREIGN CLERICS INCARDINATED into the DIOCESE

Clerics from foreign nations are required to comply with the regulations of the United States Department of Homeland Security, Citizen and Immigration Services and the special provisions of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops for priests from certain countries. Failure to comply with any of these requirements will preclude the granting of faculties of the Diocese of Savannah. Foreign clerics are not exempt from Universal Law in regard to ministry and priestly life. Disobedience to Universal or particular law will result in canonical penalties as stipulated therein.

The Diocese of Savannah has a staff person who works with foreign clerics to guide them through the paperwork and process required by the government to move toward permanent residency. The Chancellor can direct a foreign cleric to the correct person.

SECTION 8 – SABBATICALS FOR PRIESTS

A sabbatical is an extended period of time, normally three (3) months, used by a priest for his personal and ministerial renewal while on temporary leave from ministry and with the intent to return to ministry in the Diocese.

Sabbaticals are not the same as leaves of absence for medical reasons, vacation, retreat or assignment for advanced study. A sabbatical lasts for a definite period of time and has a specific re-creative purpose for the renewal and enhancement of ministerial efficacy.

All priests on active assignment may apply for a sabbatical after seven (7) years of service in the Diocese. A priest is eligible to apply and be considered again after ten (10) subsequent years of service. The maximum number of sabbaticals is two (2) for any priest.

A. Application Process

An eligible priest should make a formal written request to the Bishop. This application should be accompanied by a reasonably detailed proposal of the sabbatical program. The proposal will then be presented to the Personnel Committee for review and consideration. The Bishop will inform the applicant of his determination.

B. Remuneration and Benefits

While on sabbatical, the priest will ordinarily receive his monthly salary, health insurance and retirement payments from the parish. For that year he is not entitled to the continuing education allotment. The parish will pay the cost for any replacement needed. All other sabbatical program

expenses (travel, food) are borne by the Diocese.

C. Replacement

For a normal sabbatical, unless it is between assignments, the priest will share with the Diocese responsibility to obtain adequate substitute coverage in his parish. For an extended sabbatical, the Diocese will assume primary responsibility for any necessary replacement.

D. Accountability

Every priest shall submit a report of the programs of formation and renewal that he has taken part in during the past year.

SECTION 9 – RETIREMENT OF PRIESTS

“Once a priest, always a priest!” Even though priests are ordained for a lifetime of service, there are genuine needs and burdens that come with age. The Diocese will consider opportunities for a priest’s productive retirement. When a priest feels he is ready to leave the active ministry, he will draw income from the Clergy Pension Plan, Social Security and his personal savings.

A. Age of Retirement for Priests

A priest is eligible for retirement at age 65. He may request permission to retire at any time between 65 and 75 by sending a letter to the Bishop. At age 75 he must submit his request to retire to the Bishop. Retirement takes effect when the resignation is accepted by the Bishop.

Six (6) months prior to his retirement (age 65-75) a priest must secure the appropriate forms from the Diocesan Human Resources Department. This is essential so that various benefits take effect.

B. Disability

The Clergy Retirement Plan includes a provision for Disability Retirement based on service at the time of disability.

C. Medicare

The Diocese will reimburse a priest for Medicare Part B premiums that are deducted from his Social Security payment upon receipt of supporting documentation. All premiums for Part D (Medicare Prescription Drug Coverage) and Plan F (Medicare Supplemental Insurance) will be paid by the Diocese.

D. Clergy Welfare Fund Exclusion

Priests who do not participate in Social Security are not eligible, after retirement, to participate in the Clergy Welfare Fund.

E. Pension Plan

Priests' retirement is paid from the Clergy Retirement Plan, a Defined Benefit Pension Plan, which will provide a monthly benefit for as long as a priest lives. There is no death benefit payable under the plan.

Even when a priest reaches retirement, he is encouraged to remain active in priestly ministry. A priest may begin drawing pension benefits at age 65 and continue to work for the Diocese, subsequently having his pension recalculated for the additional time worked.

The Clergy Welfare Plan does not include a provision for priests to make contributions. Because of that, a priest should choose to save additional money for his retirement by making

contributions to an Individual Retirement Account, Tax Sheltered Annuity or another personal retirement vehicle.

SECTION 10 – PROTECTION OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

The protection, safety and wellbeing of our children and young people is a top priority. The Diocese expects all Church personnel to maintain high standards of professional, ministerial and moral behavior. It is committed to providing safe environments for children and young people in each parish, school and in other Diocesan entities, and at every Diocesan event in accord with the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' "Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People". The Diocese accomplishes this through a Safe Environment Program of controlled access and education as follows:

- All priests, deacons, seminarians and religious must undergo a criminal background check every five (5) years. The same is required of all full-time and part-time employees and any volunteers whose duties include regular contact with minors.

In addition to the background checks, all of the parties above must:

- Attend a VIRTUS training session entitled "Protecting God's Children for Adults" and register that training at the VIRTUS website (www.VIRTUS.org).
- Read the Diocesan "Code of Conduct for Those Working with Minors" and sign an affidavit agreeing to abide by the Code mandates. The affidavit must be provided to the parish, school

or outreach entity where the ministry will be performed.

Pastors are responsible for implementing and maintaining the Safe Environment Program in their parishes.

Strict compliance with the Safe Environment Program as outlined by the “Diocese of Savannah Policy on Sexual Abuse of Minors” is mandatory: violations will not be tolerated. Allegations of sexual abuse of a minor should immediately be reported to the civil authorities. When such sexual abuse has been committed by a cleric, religious, seminarian, diocesan or parish employee or volunteer it should be reported to the Bishop of Savannah through the Office for the Protection of Children and Young People at (912) 201-4073/4074 or toll-free (888) 357-5330. Reporting can be made at any hour of the day.

Information regarding Safe Environment standards for the Diocese of Savannah, as well as links for the report of suspected abuse can be found at www.diosav.org/childyouthprotection.

ARTICLE III – CLERGY PERSONNEL FILES and ARCHIVES

In accordance with Universal and particular law, the custodial care of the Diocesan archives is entrusted to the Bishop, who delegates this to the Chancellor. The Bishop may appoint others to assist the Chancellor in fulfilling these duties.

Priests’ personnel files are maintained to assist the Bishop in making prudent and informed personnel decisions taking into consideration – among many other factors – each priest’s skills, knowledge, abilities,

talents, capabilities and experience. The Bishop is responsible for seeing that the individual priest's file is properly maintained and is used in keeping with the common good of the Church and the personal good of the priest himself. The Bishop carries out this responsibility assisted by the Chancellor and/or others he may appoint.

ARTICLE IV – COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS

SECTION 1 - RATIONALE

The Diocese is responsible for adequate and just compensation for priests regardless of their assignment, in accordance with the Priests' Compensation Schedule.

Priests of the Diocese do not take a vow of poverty; however, they are called to demonstrate Gospel values in their lives. Priests are responsible for their own financial affairs and security, including making reasonable efforts to provide for their own future and retirement.

The Priests' Compensation Schedule is reviewed annually by the Council of Priests and approved by the Bishop. Copies of the current Priests' Compensation Schedule are available from the Diocesan Human Resources Department.

The parish or Diocesan entity to which the priest is assigned is responsible for the salary, benefit and automobile expenses for the bi-weekly pay period in which his assignment begins.

SECTION 2 – BENEFITS AND REIMBURSEMENTS

A. Food

Priests' meals are provided at parish expense and include meals eaten in the rectory or at a restaurant; however, meals outside the rectory on a priest's days off are the personal responsibility of the priest. A restaurant meal that has a qualified business purpose should be reported under an expense reimbursement plan. This requires a completed reimbursement form stating the specific business purpose for the meal and the meal receipt.

B. Miscellaneous Expenses

Priests' dry cleaning and laundry expenses are paid by the parish.

Clothing, personal long distance calls, alcoholic beverages, tobacco products, all forms of gambling, toiletries and pet food and supplies are the personal responsibility of the priest.

Room and meals do not constitute taxable income for federal income tax purposes. However, these benefits are subject to self-employment taxes, and therefore must be included in earnings from self-employment on form 1040, Schedule SE. Standard values for these benefits are shown in the Remuneration Schedule, which is available from the Diocesan Finance Office.

SECTION 3 – TECHNOLOGY AND CELL PHONES

A. Internet and Computers

Internet services – inclusive of the rectory- and office computers are the responsibility of the parish.

B. Cell Phones

A priest may purchase a cell phone at a cost not to exceed \$150.00 every two (2) fiscal years. A priest is entitled to enroll in any suitable cellular phone service plan not to exceed a monthly cost of \$100.00. These costs are the responsibility of the parish and will be paid upon presentation of the appropriate bill or receipt.

SECTION 4 – AUTOMOBILE EXPENSES

Pastors, Parochial Vicars and Transitional Deacons on assignment who use their own automobile in ministry are reimbursed 100% of automobile expenses, excluding personal use. Business mileage in excess of 1,250 miles in any given month will be reimbursed at .21 cents per mile. Reimbursable automobile expenses include all expenses for use of an automobile, i.e., gas, oil, tires, license plates, insurance, repairs and car washes. Traffic fines are not included. All mileage reimbursement is to be documented as follows: date, origin and destination of travel, Church purpose for travel and number of miles driven. This documentation is required by the IRS so that the reimbursement does not constitute taxable income to the priest.

Newly ordained priests (those ordained less than one (1) year) and transitional deacons, after consultation with the Diocesan Vocation Office, may take out an interest-free loan from the Diocese after Ordination. Application for such a loan shall be made directly through the Diocesan Finance Office.

SECTION 5 – VACATIONS and DAYS OFF

All priests are entitled to one (1) day off a week. The Bishop expects, and strongly encourages, priests to actually take their off day every week only excepting occasions when pastoral or ministerial obligations truly demand otherwise.

Each priest is entitled to a vacation of one month (30 days) with full salary each fiscal year. The vacation benefit is prorated for periods of service of less than a full year. While vacation time can be divided into different periods, it cannot be carried over or accumulated from year to year.

Vacations may be taken at any time during the fiscal year, provided due consideration is given to the pastoral needs of the parish.

Special permission from the Bishop is required for any absence extending beyond one (1) month.

The vacationing priest is responsible for procuring a substitute approved by the Ordinary of the Diocese. The need for substitute coverage will be determined by the pastoral demands of the parish and agreed upon by all priests assigned to it.

Faculties must be obtained for any extern substituting priest from the Chancery Office.

Extern substituting priests must also have a valid approved Clergy Assessment Form on file in the Chancellor's office. Clergy Assessment Forms are available from the Diocesan Office for the Protection of Children and Young People or the Chancellor's office.

Reasonable travel expenses and salary for substituting priests are to be paid by the parish in accordance with the Remuneration Schedule which is available through the Diocesan Finance Office.

SECTION 6 – INSURANCE

A. Medical and Dental Insurance

All active priests are covered under the Diocesan Health and Dental Insurance Plan. The annual cost of the insurance is paid 100% by the parish in monthly payments to the Diocese.

Each priest is personally responsible for deductible and co-pay amounts associated with all medical claims up to \$500 per year. The Diocese provides each priest with a Supplemental Clergy Welfare Plan that pays all medical expenses after the first \$500 each year. The cost of the supplemental insurance is paid in full by the parish. All reimbursement requests need to be sent to the Diocesan Benefits Office.

B. Long Term Disability Insurance

All active priests are covered by the Diocesan Long Term Disability Insurance Plan paid by the parish. The Plan provides monthly income in the event a priest is disabled and unable to perform his ministry.

C. Life Insurance

The Diocese does not offer priests life insurance; however, a burial fund will cover a priest's funeral costs.

A complete description of benefits will be provided by the Diocesan Human Resources Department annually.

