

POLICY 3.6.2 Vacation, Retreat, and Continuing Education for Priests and Deacons in the Archdiocese of Grouard-McLennan

1) Vacation leave

Each calendar year, all priests in the Archdiocese of Grouard-McLennan are accorded 35 days for vacation. Priests are requested to respect that limit when making their plans, as it exceeds what is provided for in Canon 533, §2 and §3, (i.e. 30 days. The Canon is imprecise in the number of days allowed therefore, the archdiocese has made it more precise by stating 35 days) in order to allow for the extra travel time many of our priests need to travel to and from distant countries. All expenses for this vacation are the responsibility of the cleric himself, unless otherwise stipulated by an agreement signed by the Archbishop.

Priests will receive their usual living allowance for vacation leave, up to 35 days. If a priest requests and is granted additional vacation leave time, in most cases, he will not receive any living allowance for that period. When flights or return travel is delayed for reasons outside of the priest's control, these circumstances will be taken into consideration.

- **Notification of vacation plans**

The cleric is expected to notify the Chancellor of the Archdiocese and his Parish Council(s) at least two months in advance of his intended vacation, by completing and submitting Form 3.6.1.a.

- **Deanery vacation scheduling**

Because, in many instances, the neighbouring clergy in a deanery are called upon to supply for priests who are on vacation, and because the pastoral needs in a deanery call for the presence of a certain number of priests at any given time,

- a) there cannot be more than one priest in a deanery away on vacation, without a replacement, at the same time;
- b) all the priests of a deanery must be present during the Archbishop's Canonical Visitation in any given year;
- c) each dean, before December 1 of each year, will discuss with the priests in his deanery the dates that each priest will be away on vacation or other known absences during the following calendar year, and the provisions for priestly coverage in their parish(es) during those dates; and,
- d) the dean will complete and submit Form 3.6.2.a to the Secretary of the Archbishop as soon after December 1 as possible.

- **Blackout periods**

Given the importance and significance of certain periods in the Church's annual calendar, priests shall not schedule vacations during:

- Lent
- Easter (Holy Week, Triduum and Easter Sunday)
- Advent
- Christmas (December 25)

2) Annual retreat

Each cleric is required to make an annual retreat of three full days per year, excluding travel time, non-cumulative from year to year, in accordance with Canon Law (276, §4).

The Archdiocese offers an annual clergy retreat in the month of September, to which all clerics in the Archdiocese are invited and expected to attend. All parishes served by a resident priest are assessed \$300.00 to cover the costs of room and board plus the remuneration due to the retreat director, whether or not their priest attends the retreat. Special considerations (e.g. ensuite bath) are the responsibility of the cleric who asks for these. The clerics are responsible for their own transportation to and from the retreat.

Any cleric who seeks to attend a retreat outside of this archdiocesan one is wholly responsible for his costs.

3) Continuing education leave

Each incardinated cleric may also take up to three full days per year for continuing education of the sort recommended by Canon Law (279), in a spiritual and religious field of his choosing. With the permission of the Archbishop, this time may be accumulated for a maximum of 4 years (that is, 12 days excluding travel).

The cost of registration, materials and room & board will be provided by the Archdiocese. Travel costs are the responsibility of the cleric himself, unless otherwise stipulated by an agreement signed by the Archbishop.

4) Study leave

A study leave is initiated by the Archbishop who asks a priest or deacon to engage in further study in a field of theology that will have a practical application and benefit to the Archdiocese. In such cases, the Archbishop assigns the cleric to a study leave for a prescribed length of time. All of the expenses of this leave (travel to/from the educational institution, tuition, room and board, and books) are negotiated with the cleric and guaranteed by the Archdiocese.

5) Bereavement and compassionate care leave

In recognition of the challenges faced by priests in responding to unexpected illness and/or death of family members, the Archdiocese has created the following provisions for additional leave. The Archdiocese requests, in turn, that priests respect the intent and purpose of these provisions and, if they so wish, make use of them as soon as possible after receiving notice of the illness or death of a family member. The expectation is that **no more than four months** will pass between the onset of the illness or the death and the use of the leave provision. The final decision of granting or denying the request for bereavement and/or compassionate care leave belongs to the Archbishop of Grouard-McLennan.

- **Death of a parent**

In the event of the death of a parent of a priest, a two-week paid bereavement leave shall be granted to the priest. If air travel is required for his attendance at the funeral, the Archdiocese will reimburse the priest for his flight expenses. The Archdiocese will pay for pastoral assistance in the parishes of the priest during the two-week leave period.

- **Death of a sibling**

In the event of the death of a sibling of a priest, a two-week paid bereavement leave shall be granted to the priest. If air travel is required for his attendance at the funeral, the Archdiocese, at the written

request of the priest, may provide interim funding to cover his travel expenses. This funding shall be repaid to the Archdiocese on a pre-determined term. The Archdiocese will pay for pastoral assistance in the parishes of the priest during the two-week leave period.

- **Illness of a parent or sibling**

During a period of the severe illness of a parent or sibling, a priest, upon written request, may be granted paid compassionate care leave, for a maximum of two weeks. The Archdiocese, at the written request of the priest, may provide a loan to cover his travel expenses. This funding shall be repaid to the Archdiocese on a pre-determined term. The Archdiocese will pay for pastoral assistance in the parishes of the priest for the approved leave period. The determination of the granting of the leave and the length of the leave will be made by the Archbishop or his delegate. Please note that leave during a period of severe illness is not meant to and should not be used to extend vacation leave.

- **Death of a family member, not a parent or sibling**

In the event of the death of a family member, who is not a parent or sibling, a priest may, upon written request, be granted paid bereavement leave for a maximum of six days, and unpaid bereavement leave for an additional eight days. The Archdiocese will pay for pastoral assistance in the parishes of the priest for the approved leave period. The determination of the granting of the leave and the length of the leave will be made by the Archbishop or his delegate.

- **When bereavement leave is combined with vacation or other authorized leave**

As stated above, if the bereavement leave requested by a member of clergy involves the death of a parent or sibling, the Archdiocese undertakes to reimburse related flight costs and to pay for pastoral assistance during the authorized period.

The Archdiocese recognizes that there may be occasions when a member of clergy is on authorized leave when the death occurs or when a member of clergy learns of the death of a parent or sibling and decides to combine bereavement leave with vacation leave. In these circumstances, the policy above will not apply. Rather, the Archbishop will determine the amount to be reimbursed for flight expenses and the amount to be paid for pastoral assistance.

For the purposes of bereavement leave and compassionate care leave, “parent” means the mother or father of the priest requesting the leave.

For the purposes of bereavement leave and compassionate care leave, “sibling” means a child of the parents of the priest requesting leave.

For the purposes of compassionate care leave, “severe illness” means an illness where there is a significant risk of death within six months.

6) Personal sabbatical leave

An incardinated priest of the Archdiocese of Grouard-McLennan may request a personal sabbatical of two full months **after ten years** of ministry in the Archdiocese. See Policy 3.6.5. for a full description and requirements to apply for sabbatical leave.

7) Other leave

Occasionally, other conferences and workshops become available to the clergy of the Archdiocese, such as a Eucharistic Congress or a gathering of the National Federation of Councils of Priests. On these occasions, the Archbishop will determine the number of our clerics, incardinated or unincardinated, who may attend. From those who indicate interest in attending, priority will be given to those who have not attended such an event previously. The costs of registration and room and board will be covered by the Archdiocese. The cleric is responsible for travel and associated costs.

The days of the meeting and travel days will not be considered vacation leave time, which will remain unaffected. Approved participation in a conference or workshop will be treated as a paid leave of absence by the cleric.

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