

Sabbatical Policy

Revised 10/02

It is the policy of the Diocese of Central Florida to encourage and support Sabbatical leave for clergy and key lay employees who are under the constant pressure of parish and diocesan responsibilities. It is not primarily a vacation or "time off". Nor is it simply recognition or a reward for longevity of service.

A sabbatical is intended to pay dividends for both the person on leave and the congregation or diocese that sends them. Both the person and the sponsoring institution are expected to be involved in advance planning, post sabbatical reflection as well as planning steps to cover the person's job while he/she is on sabbatical.

"A sabbatical gets one off the treadmill and provides an opportunity for renewal of vision and hope. It can be a life and soul changing time - a time when perspective and the Holy Spirit can come together." (**Clergy Renewal**, *The Alban Guide to Sabbatical Planning* an Alban Institute Publication by A. Richard Bullock and Richard J. Bruesehoff)

Eligibility and Accountability

Sabbaticals are not automatic, but rather tied to need and potential professional and personal benefits. Generally sabbatical leave is appropriate for Bishops, clergy and key lay employees who have executive responsibility who are often "on call" in the fulfillment of their responsibilities.

Diocesan staff shall be accountable to the Diocesan Board, which shall consider sabbatical leave upon the recommendation of the Bishop. Parish and mission clergy shall be accountable to the Vestry or Vestry Committee.

Years of Service and Length of Sabbatical

As a standard, seven years of service is expected before granting sabbatical leave. In general, sabbaticals are granted for three to six months. However, readiness for sabbatical leave is more important than years of service in determining when a sabbatical should be considered. Other factors to be considered are length of service, responsibilities and growth opportunities available to the person and sponsor.

Elements of the Sabbatical

No two sabbaticals will be exactly alike, but they will typically include time for study, spiritual discipline and reflection, travel and rest. It is important at least to alter established routines and the person granted leave is not to be available for their normal duties except in extreme circumstances.

Finances

While on sabbatical, full compensation and benefits are to continue. As necessary, compensation for an interim replacement should be borne by the sponsoring body. Cost for the sabbatical itself, including course work, room and board, and travel should be shared by the person and sponsoring body, preferably on a 50/50 basis. The appropriate governing board must approve the specific budget.

The Diocese shall appropriate \$500 each year (in addition to any budgeted funds for regular continuing education) to accumulate each year for each clergy member of the Diocesan Staff and for key lay employees on the Diocesan staff. **It is recommended that parishes budget a like amount each year to be held in escrow for parish clergy and key lay employees.** For mission clergy, the Diocese will set aside \$250 each year with the expectation that the mission congregation will set aside a like amount.

Resources

Sabbaticals are a time of change, growth and risk. In order that the sabbatical be most beneficial both parties should agree as to specific goals, learning objectives and anticipated benefits. The use of consultants and/or mentors is encouraged.