

SUPPORT FOR THE NEWLY ORDAINED

RATIONALE -

The Diocese of Spokane, by issuing the call to ordination, accepts the responsibility to provide support for those whom it calls to Holy Orders. Aware of the wide range of expectations which its ordained priests face and of the unique adjustment demanded by the transition of the newly-ordained from seminary life to daily ministry, the Church of Spokane recognizes its responsibility to enable its ordained priests to grow personally and to develop their talents and skills. This commitment includes an obligation to learn the skills and potential of the newly-ordained, so that his initial ministry is not frustrated by unrealistic expectations from his Bishop and brother priests.

The newly-ordained priest, accustomed to the patterned life of a theologate, experiences an instant change of life-style, separated from friends and common life which provided a supportive framework for his seminary formation. He meets new people, lives and works with a small group, and is confronted with a breadth of attitudes which often do not match his own vision of Church. In this culture shock the management of time itself becomes a major issue: a life structured around hours of prayer and study gives way to days full of responsibilities and demands which arise spontaneously from human need. This change easily produces stress and pressures which need to be recognized and admitted, understood and handled in an atmosphere of support, lest the challenges which confront the newly-ordained become frustrations by reason of his having to achieve adjustment on his own.

The needs of the Church, both of its people and its ministers, call for a program of planned support for its newly-ordained priests. The following program will be effective for two years and then be evaluated by the Presbyteral Assembly.

PROGRAM –

I. Placement

- A. Placement of the newly-ordained should be in a parish where there are
 1. a variety of ministries and activities and
 2. a staff who work together cooperatively
 3. under the leadership of a pastor who has the educational training and skills (i.e., the experience and ability) necessary for personal supervision.
- B. In addition to the Bishop and the Priests' Personnel Board, participation is needed by
 1. The Director of Seminarians, who brings his knowledge of the newly-ordained progress during formation.
 2. The Supervising Pastor, who contributes his insights into and experience with parish, and
 3. The newly-ordained, who provides information on his own strengths and skills.

II. Procedure

- A. In cooperation with the Director of Seminarians and the pastor of the parish, the Board will recommend an assignment to the Bishop for his approval.
- B. The Director of Seminarians will meet with the newly-ordained prior to assignment the newly-ordained with diocesan faculties, benefits and responsibilities.
- C. The Supervising Pastor and the newly-ordained will meet before the assignment and work out an initial Memorandum of Expectations.
- D. The Director of Seminarians will continue contact with the newly-ordained and the Pastor after the appointment has been made.
- E. At the completion of the term of the appointment, another appointment is made to the same parish or to another assignment.

III. Continuing Support

A. For Personal Growth:

- 1. Newly-ordained priests will meet at least bimonthly for reflection and assistance in work and growth:
 - a. with supervising pastor and/or staff members;
 - b. with Director of Seminarians.
 - c. with one another
- 2. The Director of Seminarians will be responsible
 - A. to introduce newly-ordained to resources of diocese and city e.g., Catholic Charities, Tribunal Office of Parish Services, Neighborhood, Community Mental Health, Hospitals, and
 - b. to identify for newly-ordained trained and respected spiritual directors.
- 3. The newly-ordained will be expected to attend the Continuing Education of the Diocese and the Priests' Retreats as opportunities to get to know the priests of the Diocese and to share in discussion of priests' ministry and its problems.
- 4. Pastors and Associates of the local area are strongly encouraged to invite the newly-ordained to social events (dinner, sports, movies, etc.) to help their entrance into the presbyterate.
- 5. The Diocesan Responsible for Jesus Caritas endeavor to identify groups able to accept the newly-ordained.

B. In Accountability:

- 1. A study and evaluation will be made every six months by the Director of Seminarians, the Supervising Pastor and the newly-ordained, in which

- a. each will prepare a summary to be shared and discussed, and
 - b. a concluding statement on growth and future directions for growth.
2. An annual progress report on growth will be made to the Bishop/Personnel Board.
3. The Director of Seminarians and the Supervising Pastor will communicate at least bimonthly to discuss progress, and ways and means of improving support for the newly-ordained.