

# **PASTORAL TRANSITION**

## **When a pastor or parish director moves on, what is the process for a new placement?**

In the Catholic Church, the pastor and the parish director are assigned to a parish by the local bishop. However, prior to that assignment by the bishop, a process occurs. Part of the process includes seeking counsel and advice from the local lay leadership. Here are the 6 steps and the players in the process of placing a new pastor or parish director in a parish.

### **Step 1. Discernment/Decision**

*Resources: Vicar for Clergy, Priests' Placement Board,  
Dean, Delegate for Human Resources*

The time comes for the pastor or parish director to move on because:

- He/she is at the end of a term of office.
- He/she retires.
- Parishes merge
- He/she experiences burnout
- Other mitigating circumstances arise

### **Step 2. Notification/Approval.**

*Resources: Archbishop, Vicar for Clergy,  
Priests' Placement Board, Dean*

The departing pastor or parish director notifies the following:

- Archbishop
- Vicar for Clergy
- Priests' Placement Board
- District Dean
- (Parish Director only) Archdiocesan Supervisor & supervising priest

### **Step 3. Communication.**

*Resources: Parish Consultant*

- Pastor/parish director informs trustees, council and staff. (Personal contact is preferred.)
- Parishioners are informed through a personal announcement at Sunday liturgy and a parish bulletin article. Follow-up with a general parish mailing can insure contact with the entire membership.
- Close friends are contacted.
- Parish Collaborative Group is informed.

**Step 4. Organizing for the New Placement** *Resources: Priests' Placement Board, Parish Consultant*

- Priests' Placement Office sends the booklet "Pastoral Transitions" to the pastor and council chair.
- Parish ministerial staff takes the lead in preparing a "Parish Profile."
- A Pastoral Transition Team /appropriate person prepares transition materials for the new pastor/parish director. If used, the Parish Council appoints the Pastoral Transition Team.
- The pastor/parish director requests information on open listings from the Priests' Placement Office. He/she prays for guidance and seeks direction in his/her personal journey.
- Archdiocesan Parish Consultant contacts parish to set a leadership consultation date with the Priests' Placement Board.
- The pastor/parish director considers own strengths and limits, gifts and talents at this time in his/her ministry.

**Step 5. Appointment/Retirement** *Resources: Priests' Placement Board, Parish Consultant*

- The Priests' Placement Office gathers data about the parishes and the priests/parish directors. This data is used to prepare a recommendation to the Archbishop about the new assignments. Included in this data are elements such as a consultation with the parish lay leadership, an interview with each of the priests/parish directors seeking a new assignment, Parish Profiles from the parish staff and lay leadership, etc.
- The Archbishop makes the assignments. The Priests' Placement Office communicates these assignments to the priests and parish directors.
- The pastor/parish director says "Good-bye" with clarity and gratitude to the parish.
  - Clarify the terms by which the pastor/parish director will return for weddings, funerals, etc. with the new leader. [Our recommendation is that this should happen rarely, if ever.]
  - Thank staff, friends and all who shared his/her ministry.
- Make final retirement plans if applicable. (*Contact Sr. Kathleen Schweih in Vicar's Office with any related questions or updates on new residence address/phone.*)
- Make introductory visit to staff and council of the new parish placement

**Step 6. Move** *Resources: Archbishop's Office, Parish Consultant*

- The arrival: Say "Hello" to the new parish with openness and enthusiasm.
- Installation: Celebrate shared faith/new beginning.
- An Archdiocesan Parish Consultant schedules the four-to-six month transition review.