



1. DEFINITIONS

A **Sabbatical** is a planned continuing formation effort for the personal and ministerial growth of the priest. It may involve participation in a specific sabbatical program or a combination of different elements which fit the particular personal and ministerial needs of the priest (and are of benefit to the diocese). Sabbatical programs vary in length according to the needs of the individual. Maximum time allowed for a sabbatical normally is 3 to 4 months. A lengthier period of time needs to be arranged with the bishop.

A **Leave of Absence** means an indefinite release from official responsibilities as an ordained minister. The amount of financial support and the length is negotiated with the bishop.

Continuing Formation is any planned program of short-term nature (e.g., workshops, seminars, institutes) for the purpose of enhancing the personal and ministerial growth of the priest.

Graduate Studies: Priests are encouraged to express their interest in advanced studies to the continuing formation director who will consult with the priests' council regarding the need for such training for our diocese prior to making recommendation to the bishop and the personnel board. Requests must be made one year in advance so that the details of such planning can be properly completed.

2. PARISH RESPONSIBILITY

A parish subsidy of \$750.00 will be allotted annually for attendance at workshops, training sessions or for the purchase of educational materials during the year. Each year one-third of this amount may be used for self-improvement or self-study. Expenses must be itemized and put on file at the parish. If the amount is not used in a particular year, it may accumulate for three years to a total of \$2,250.00 from the same parish or institution. If the accumulated parish subsidy (of \$2,250.00 after three years) is not used, it doesn't grow any further. Parish budget terminology should refer to this as a priest's "ongoing formation" rather than "continuing education".

When a priest is transferred, his accrued continuing formation subsidy (if any) should be deposited with his new parish or funding institution. When a priest retires, his accrued ongoing formation subsidy is left with the parish of last assignment for his ongoing use as he needs it. Parish subsidies to a priest's "ongoing formation" ceases with his retirement.



3. DIOCESAN RESPONSIBILITY

The diocese will provide financial assistance for the on-going program of continuing formation. Assistance will vary according to the availability of diocesan funds and the number of requests in any one year.

4. THE CLERGY CONTINUING FORMATION DIRECTOR WILL SCREEN APPLICANTS ACCORDING TO THE FOLLOWING GUIDELINES:

- a) Those priests who have not had an opportunity for continuing formation will be given priority consideration.
- b) Priests 50 years of age or older who have not had a continuing formation experience will be encouraged to avail themselves of some continuing formation program.
- c) Those whose ministry or proposed ministry requiring some immediate training or education will be, as far as possible, allowed to undergo the required programs.
- d) See Attachment III and IV for remuneration schedules for the different kinds of sabbaticals.
- e) A priest who is being asked to pursue higher studies (e.g., as a prospective college teacher or someone in canon law or family counseling) is financed by the diocese outside the continuing formation budget.
- f) Travel associated with continuing formation should be assumed by the priest himself. Some of the cost can be negotiated with the continuing formation director.
- g) Each priest is responsible for arranging his own substitute. He may enlist the help of the bishop and the priests' personnel board if necessary. Priests from outside of Montana must be approved by the bishop.
- h) By the end of January, the continuing formation director informs the personnel board and the bishop of his recommendations for upcoming sabbatical. Permission in writing from the bishop completes the approval process for a priest to avail of a sabbatical.



ON-GOING CLERY FORMATION

Diocese of Great Falls-Billings

- i) A sabbatical study leave is given and received with the understanding that the priest does not intend to leave the diocese when the sabbatical time has passed.

Revised April 2010
Revised November 9, 1999
Revised July 1, 1999
Promulgated April 21, 1993
Most Reverend Anthony M. Milone