

## Guidelines for Clerical Sabbatical Leaves

### Definition

A Sabbatical Leave for Clergy in the Diocese of Chicago shall be a period away from responsibilities of the congregation for a time of renewal spiritually, relationally, physically and vocationally to improve the effectiveness of the clergy person's ministry. A normal sabbatical leave is typically three months.

Sabbatical leave is beneficial as much to the congregation as to the clergy person, but the decision of when the sabbatical should be taken must be made in consultation and mutual agreement with the vestry, bishop, and clergy person. In the Diocese of Chicago, standard letters of agreement between clergy and congregations include a provision to accrue two weeks of paid sabbatical leave per year of service in the congregation.

### Recommended Standards

The Diocese of Chicago encourages the use of sabbatical leave whenever possible, and will support the congregation and clergy person during the time of sabbatical leave. The following minimum standards are recommended:

1. The clergy person shall have served for at least five years in the current congregation. Sabbatical leave is available to be taken after five years of service and should be taken after no more than seven years of service in the current congregation. No more than 14 weeks of paid sabbatical leave may be accrued.
2. The clergy person shall waive eligibility for continuing education leave and funds allocated in the budget for the year in which the sabbatical is being taken.
3. The vestry and bishop must consent to the sabbatical leave, agree to continue salary and benefits, with the exception of mileage allowance, and the congregation must agree to provide Sunday supply coverage. During the absence of the clergy person, the wardens assume canonical authority of the congregation. The congregation is encouraged to set aside a minimum of \$250 each year in an interest-bearing account to be added to the normal clergy support budget during the sabbatical leave. These funds may be used to offset the cost of supply clergy.
4. The clergy person shall agree to serve for at least one year in their congregation upon completion of their sabbatical leave.

### Procedures

The clergy person must submit in writing to the bishop or bishop's designee a proposal stating the purpose of their sabbatical leave, the nature of the activity in which the individual will engage, and the desired results that he or she hopes to realize from this leave.

The bishop or designee will review with the clergy person the stated proposal together with personal considerations, i.e. family, congregational relations or diocesan commitments, etc. This review would include a financial statement of expenses to be covered by the congregation during the sabbatical leave. Successful completion of this review constitutes ecclesiastical approval of the sabbatical leave.

**While on Sabbatical**

The Diocese of Chicago, through the Ministries Office, will work closely with the congregation to see that pastoral care and sacramental life of the community is maintained during the sabbatical leave.

**Upon Return from Sabbatical**

Upon completion of the sabbatical, the clergy person will develop a format for sharing with the congregation the observations, realizations and growth produced by the sabbatical leave. This reporting should specifically relate the insights gained to the life and ministry of the clergy person's local and diocesan community.