



DIOCESE OF VENICE IN FLORIDA

POLICY FOR SCREENING EXTERN/RELIGIOUS PRIESTS AND DEACONS WHO SEEK ASSIGNMENT OR FACULTIES IN THE DIOCESE OF VENICE

INTRODUCTION

The objective of this policy of the Diocese of Venice is to establish a set of consistent norms in handling requests from deacons and those priests desiring to work in the Diocese of Venice from another Diocese or Religious Community. This policy will set forth the minimum requirements to be accomplished prior to the issuance of faculties or any assignment. The screening of seminarians is set forth in a separate policy.

This general policy reflects a consideration of the norms of the 1983 Code of Canon Law, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' Guidelines on the Assessment of Clergy and Religious for Assignment, and a compilation of the Policies of the Diocese of Venice in Florida.

A. Requirements for Priests Individually Seeking Assignment within a Parish/Agency of the Diocese of Venice.

The following must be submitted to the Chairman of the Priest Personnel Board prior to the grant of faculties and assignment of the religious or extern priest:

- 1. Request Letter and Letter of Release:** The extern/religious priest (hereinafter candidate) must submit 1) his own letter to the Bishop of the Diocese of Venice indicating his reasons for seeking assignment in the Diocese of Venice, the reasons he believes he would be an asset to our Diocese as well as 2) a letter from his own Bishop/Religious Superior evidencing that the priest/deacon is free to seek assignment in another diocese.
- 2. Application:** The candidate who seeks assignment must complete the Priest Record/Application in full and submit same to the Chairman of the Priest Personnel Board, along with a completed Attestation of Good Moral Character, Acknowledgement of Receipt of Code of Pastoral Conduct, Acknowledgement of Receipt of the Policy and Procedural Guidelines Relating to Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults and three clergy references.

3. **Employment Authorization:** The I-9 or other proof that the candidate is authorized or eligible to work in the U.S. is to be completed with the application.
4. **Medical Examination:** The candidate must have completed a medical/physical examination within one year of the beginning date of proposed service. The form issued by the Diocese of Venice must be used and completed by the physician conducting the examination.
5. **Interviews:** The candidate will be required sometime during the application process to attend an interview with the Chairman of the Priest Personnel Board, and in most cases, an additional interview with the Bishop and/or Chancellor.
6. **Criminal Records Check:** The candidate must have completed the Diocese of Venice electronic fingerprinting procedures prior to the final approval for assignment. The candidate must register online by accessing www.dov.sofn.net. The fingerprints are submitted electronically directly to the Florida Department of Law Enforcement and the Federal Bureau of Investigation. The results of fingerprints will be sent directly by the Diocesan Safe Environment Coordinator to the parish, school or other Diocesan entity. Results of the record check are also included in the priest's personnel file at the Chancery.
7. **Ministerial Assessment:** Before a candidate may begin service, he must submit an authorization for release of information. An evaluation of the 3 clergy references will also be undertaken by the Chair of the Priest Personnel Board. Before a priest may be granted faculties or an assignment the Diocese must have received from the priest's Bishop/Major Superior a letter attesting that the priest is of good character and reputation and that there have been no concerns associated with his priestly ministry to date that might disqualify him from service. The Diocesan 7 point form letter is required.
8. **Assignment:** Upon the acceptance of the priest for service to the Diocese of Venice, the Diocesan Bishop will issue a letter of appointment assigning the priest to specific duties and granting him the faculties of the Diocese of Venice.

All Extern/Religious priests as well as deacons, must attend the diocesan Safe Environment Program. A certificate of participation must be kept in the parish office of the church in which they are currently serving. Failure to comply will cause an automatic withdrawal of faculties from the diocese.

B. Requirements for Religious Priests Whose Communities Recommend Them for Assignment to a Parish/Agency of the Diocese of Venice.

The following must be submitted to the **Chancellor's Office** prior to the grant of faculties, approval and assignment of a priest who is nominated by his Superior for assignment in the Diocese of Venice:

1. **Official Nomination of Religious Superior:** The Religious Superior should communicate the nomination of the candidate to the Bishop for the particular assignment.
2. **Application/Priest Record:** The candidate should complete an Application/Priest Record in full and submit same to the Chancellor, along with a completed Attestation of Good Moral Character, Acknowledgement of Receipt of Code of Pastoral Conduct, Acknowledgement of Receipt of the Policy and Procedural Guidelines Relating to Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults and three clergy references.
3. **Employment Authorization:** The I-9 or other proof that the candidate is authorized or eligible to work in the U.S. is to be completed with the application.
4. **Medical Examination:** No medical examination is required unless the priest participates in the Diocesan Health plan.
5. **Criminal Records Check:** The candidate must have completed the Diocese of Venice electronic fingerprinting procedures prior to the final approval for assignment. The candidate must register online by accessing www.dov.sofn.net. The fingerprints are submitted electronically directly to the Florida Department of Law Enforcement and the Federal Bureau of Investigation. The results of fingerprints will be sent directly by the Diocesan Safe Environment Coordinator to the parish, school or other Diocesan entity. Results of the record check are also included in the priest's personnel file at the Chancery.
6. **Ministerial Assessment:** Before a candidate may begin service, he must submit an authorization for release of information. Before a priest may be granted faculties or an assignment the Diocese must have received from the priest's Major Superior a letter attesting that the priest is of good character and reputation and that there have been no concerns associated with his priestly ministry to date that might disqualify him from service. The Diocesan 7 point form letter is required.
7. **Assignment:** Upon the acceptance of the priest for service to the Diocese of Venice, the Diocesan Bishop will issue a letter of appointment assigning the priest to specific duties and granting him the faculties of the Diocese of Venice.

C. Requirements for Priests Not Seeking Assignment but Desiring to Serve Within a Parish/Agency of the Diocese of Venice – *Diocesan Faculties Are Required*

The following must be accomplished and on file with the **Chancellor's Office** of the Diocese of Venice **prior** to the grant of diocesan faculties:

1. **Pastor Request for Faculties for Extern or Religious Priest:** The faculties of the Diocese of Venice are granted only upon the request of a Pastor/Administrator who has agreed to utilize the services of the extern or religious priest for whom he is requesting the faculties. A Request for Faculties form is to be completed and returned to the Chancellor's Office before the screening process begins. Priestly faculties are granted solely for individual parishes.
2. **Priest Record/Application:** Extern or religious priests desiring to service in the Diocese of Venice must complete an Application for Faculties of the Diocese of Venice and submit to the Chancellor, along with a completed Attestation of Good Moral Character, Acknowledgement of Receipt of Code of Pastoral Conduct, Acknowledgement of Receipt of the Policy and Procedural Guidelines Relating to Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults and three clergy references.
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4. **Employment Authorization:** The I-9 or other proof that the candidate is authorized or eligible to work in the U.S. is to be completed with the application.
5. **Interviews:** The extern or religious priest may be required at the discretion of the Bishop to attend an interview before the granting of faculties.
6. **Criminal Records Check:** The candidate must have completed the Diocese of Venice electronic fingerprinting procedures prior to the final approval for assignment. The candidate must register online by accessing www.dov.sofn.net. The fingerprints are submitted electronically directly to the Florida Department of Law Enforcement and the Federal Bureau of Investigation. The results of fingerprints will be sent directly by the Diocesan Safe Environment Coordinator to the parish, school or other Diocesan entity. Results of the record check are also included in the priest's personnel file at the Chancery.
7. **Ministerial Assessment:** Before a priest may begin service, he must submit an authorization for release of information. Before a priest may be granted faculties the Diocese must have received from the priest's Bishop/Major Superior a letter attesting that the priest is of good character and reputation and that there have been no concerns associated with his priestly ministry to date that might disqualify him from service. The Diocesan 7 point form letter is required.

8. **Approval:** The Bishop of the Diocese of Venice must approve the acceptance of the priest for service. Following approval, faculties will be granted by the Diocesan Bishop.

All Extern/Religious priests as well as deacons must attend the diocesan Safe Environment Program. A certificate of participation must be kept in the parish office of the church in which they are currently serving. Failure to comply will cause automatic withdrawal of faculties in the diocese.

D. Requirement for Deacons Desiring Faculties or Assignment in a Parish/Agency of the Diocese of Venice.

The following must be completed and on file in the **Diaconate Office** of the Chancery **prior** to the grant of any faculties or assignment to any deacon:

1. **Request Letter from Pastor:** The faculties of the Diocese or any assignment therein may be granted to a deacon only upon the Request of a Pastor who has agreed to utilize the deacon's services.
2. **Interview:** Upon the submission of the Pastor's request, an interview with the deacon will be scheduled through the diocesan Office of the Diaconate.
3. **Statement of Mission:** The deacon and pastor who intends to utilize the deacon's services are to jointly complete the diocesan Statement of Mission and submit same to the Office of the Diaconate. The Statement of Mission shall be accompanied by a completed Attestation of Good Moral Character.
4. **Employment or Volunteer Application:** The deacon must complete an employment or volunteer application. For those who seek employment, an I-9 must be on file.
5. **Criminal Records Check:** The candidate must have completed the Diocese of Venice electronic fingerprinting procedures prior to the final approval for assignment. The candidate must register online by accessing www.dov.sofn.net. The fingerprints are submitted electronically directly to the Florida Department of Law Enforcement and the Federal Bureau of Investigation. The results of fingerprints will be sent directly by the Diocesan Safe Environment Coordinator to the parish, school or other Diocesan entity. Results of the record check are also included in the priest's personnel file at the Chancery.
6. **Ministerial Reference Letter:** Before a deacon may be granted faculties or an assignment, the Diocese must have received from the deacon's Bishop a letter attesting that the deacon is of good character and reputation and that there have been no known problems associated with his diaconal ministry to date that might disqualify him from service.

7. **Approval:** The Pastor, Diaconate Office and Bishop of the Diocese of Venice must approve the acceptance of the deacon for service. Following approval, faculties and assignment will be granted by the Bishop.