

## **Appendix 1: Policy for International Priests Working in the Diocese of Bismarck**

- 1) Due to the complexity of receiving international priests and the period of adjustment, which normally needs to take place, the Diocese of Bismarck generally requires for five years commitment of service. A formal contract will be entered into between the Bishop of the Diocese of Bismarck and the international priest.
- 2) The Bishop of Bismarck must receive a personal letter from the international priest's bishop/superior stating that the applicant is a priest in good standing, that he does not have any legal, sexual, alcohol or drug issues, now or in the past, and that he has permission to serve in the Diocese of Bismarck for a minimum of five years.
- 3) The Vicar for Clergy, or a priest designated by the Bishop of Bismarck, must receive the completed "Resume for Pastoral Ministry," that includes: (1) A letter of good standing from the bishop, (2) two individual photos of the international priest, (3) documents of birth, baptism, and priestly ordination and (5) photocopies of all pages from the foreign priests' valid passport (including both front and back of the I-94 retrieval card if the priest is already in the United States). The priest-applicant must also submit an audio and video digital recording of himself delivering a homily in English (minimum ten minutes on the recording).
- 4) The international priest must consent to a legal and criminal background check, to be arranged through the Chancellor of the Diocese of Bismarck.
- 5) The Diocese of Bismarck will provide the international priest the salary and benefits according the schedule of the Diocese of Bismarck. Once the international priest is approved to serve in the Diocese of Bismarck, each international priest will receive travel allowance for the first arrival, one round trip after two and half years service and the return trip back to his home after completion of contract.
- 6) To work in Diocese of Bismarck it is necessary for every priest to have a valid driver's license.
- 7) The international priest is responsible for keeping his native passport current at all times. He is also responsible for maintaining legal immigration status in. the United States. The Diocese of Bismarck will pay for the submission of form I-360. The fee for the permanent residency is the responsibility of the priest who wants to apply for it. The Chancery of the Diocese of Bismarck is able to provide assistance in these matters.
- 8) All international priests must be able to understand and clearly speak the English language. Upon arriving in the diocese, each international priest will be assessed as to his English speaking skills. If there is a need for improvement he will be required to take an English course as determined by the Vicar for Clergy.
- 9) Prior to assuming a pastoral assignment, an acculturation program of at least two months will be required. Topics to be addressed will include priestly ministry in the United States, parish administration, and training in local customs and mores. No unsupervised ministry will be permitted until the international priest has completed the required training in maintaining a

safe environment and the appropriate use of technology. Upon the appointment to an office he will be introduced to the community by the respective pastor or vicar forane.

- 10) All international priests need to be physically and emotionally healthy, psychologically and spiritually mature, and free from demanding family obligations.
- 11) The international priest must be able to live and work with people of diverse ethnic, cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds and must also have the ability to work in a collaborative manner. In particular, the international priest must be able to work with women, including women in positions that may involve oversight of the priest's ministry and/or administration.
- 12) No international priest serving in the Diocese of Bismarck is permitted to solicit funds or goods from parishioners, individuals or parish groups, including for charities or charitable causes in his home country or diocese, unless it has been expressly permitted in writing by the Bishop of the Diocese of Bismarck.
- 13) Each international priest must follow the tax requirements of the United States.
- 14) In accordance with diocesan particular law, each international priest is granted four weeks of vacation. If the international priest takes more than the allotted time because of international travel, the international priest is responsible to pay the expenses (mileage and stipend of the covering priest) of the additional time away.
- 15) The Diocese of Bismarck will contribute \$750 annually to the home diocese/congregation of the international priest for retirement.
- 16) The Diocese of Bismarck is a missionary diocese; thus no foreign mission appeal is permitted in the diocese.
- 17) An international priest may be asked to make a contribution to his respective diocese/congregation. It is the responsibility of the international priest to make the contribution. A copy of this agreement between the diocese/congregation and the international priest must be submitted to the Chancery along with the contract agreement.

## **POLICY ON INTERNATIONAL PRIEST VISITORS**

Visiting international priests on a tourist visa (or other non-worker visa) can come into the Diocese of Bismarck to visit family/friends or on his vacation. The following restriction is based on the federal laws enforced by the Department of Homeland Security and Immigration Services. **THE PRIEST MAY ONLY CELEBRATE A PRIVATE MASS OR CONCELEBRATE WITH A PRIEST ASSIGNED TO THE PARISH.** (A Cerebral/Testimonial of Suitability of the visiting priest must be received by the Bishop of the Diocese of Bismarck prior to his visit.) He may not celebrate alone a regularly scheduled Mass that ordinarily would be done by a priest assigned to the parish. Celebrating Mass (or providing pastoral services) for parishioners is considered "work" by Immigration laws and requires that the priest have a worker visa, green card or is a U.S. citizen. Further, such priest-visitors would not have the required criminal clearance and safe environment training that the Diocese of Bismarck requires. Violations of the federal law not only could result in costly fines to the parish but also could jeopardize the diocese's ability to secure worker visas for the international priests being assigned to parishes.