

International Clergy in Cross Cultural Mission To the Diocese of Saint Cloud

I) Responding to the Call of Global Solidarity

“We are members of a universal Church that transcends national boundaries and calls us to live in solidarity and justice with the peoples of the world.” “One of God’s greatest gifts is the universal character of the Church, blessing and calling us to live in solidarity with our sisters and brothers in faith.”

Called to Global Solidarity, USCCB

The Diocese of Saint Cloud seeks to respond to this vital aspect of our Church in various ways. One important initiative is to invite international clergy, Religious, and laity to accompany us in giving concrete expression to the richness of our global faith community. The presence of these fellow members of the Body of Christ, particularly those sent from Churches of the Global South, is an exceptionally valuable means to establish the bonds of solidarity which enable us to experience and actually engage one another in our journey to God.

As we invite and welcome these missionaries to live and serve among us, we do so primarily from those local Churches and Religious communities with whom we have established a relationship. These missionaries are then representatives of entire faith communities with whom we have bonded and through whom we have been enriched. They become a vital link in building our global ecclesial relationships. In a word: they bring us to a more complete expression of our universal church.

II) Unique Role of the Ordained

Therefore, specifically with regard to those ordained to the priesthood, both Diocesan and Religious, the Diocese of Saint Cloud recognizes the unique role these men enjoy in bringing the richness of their sending communities to us, particularly as they celebrate the Sacred Liturgy and proclaim the Gospel. Each act of ministry represents the universal character of Christ’s presence in the world; however, when celebrated and proclaimed by our international clergy, we also experience the particular inculturated character and expression of faith that effectively bridges the global boundaries that separate us.

III) Process to Welcome International Clergy Effectively

The following are procedures that represent best practices in the Catholic tradition of mission sending/receiving across geographic/cultural boundaries. These are offered to facilitate the immersion process of international clergy to carry out their mission ministry within the Diocese of Saint Cloud effectively. The Covenant Agreement between the Bishop of the Diocese of Saint Cloud and the Bishop/Superior of the missionary priest will address all of the practices outlined in this policy.

A) Missionary Vocation

The sending Diocese/Community shall call forth and send priests who have the ability, understanding, and appreciation of cross cultural mission. This shall be a priority in selecting a priest because, since the time of Saint Paul, the challenge of immersion in a new culture requires both the ability and gifts to do so and a sincere commitment to undergo the process personally.

B) Discernment to Cross Cultural Mission

Therefore, we ask that priest candidates for mission to the Diocese of Saint Cloud be provided with a discernment process to establish their understanding and readiness for mission. We ask that Bishops and Major Religious Superiors be particularly attentive to the motivation of a priest who is willing to serve in mission, and that the priest has clarity about his unique role and responsibility as a representative of his sending Church, community, and culture. Along with the appropriate motivation, care needs to be taken to select priests who have demonstrated personal stability and positive experience in ministry.

C) Cross Cultural Effectiveness as Criteria for Accountability.

The Bishop of Saint Cloud will in turn require accountability of each missionary priest based on his effectiveness in acculturating and a demonstrated commitment to missionary service within the Diocese. One particular challenge to international clergy which can derail their mission focus is the availability and attractiveness of personal financial gain while here in the United States.

D) Additional Basic Expectations

- 1) The process of acculturation requires not only motivation and commitment; it takes time. Therefore, the minimum commitment of mission service shall typically be for three years. Special consideration will be given for short-term immersion experiences, special pastoral or apostolic programs, sabbaticals, and/or graduate studies for other international clergy.
- 2) The sending Bishop/Superior will provide to the Bishop of Saint Cloud a summary of the discernment process in selecting the missionary priest, documentation of the priest's good standing, a resume of his education and previous assignments as well as any relevant personnel information such as physical or emotional health issues.
- 3) If the missionary priest has had previous ministry experience(s) in the United States, he will be asked to consent to a civil background check as required of all pastoral agents working in the Diocese of Saint Cloud. Moreover, his respective Bishop/Major Religious Superior will provide a statement concerning any and all civil charges, and/or procedures, and allegations that may have been made against the priest in his own country.
- 4) Application for the appropriate US Visa will be made as soon as possible after the priest has been selected for assignment.

IV) Getting Started in Mission Ministry in the Saint Cloud Diocese

A) Acculturation Program

- 1) Care and time will be devoted to the initial process of immersion. The missionary priest will come prepared to spend several months in an acculturation program. The length of time and the type of program(s) will be dependent on the personal history and needs of the priest. Elements of this acculturation program will include the following:
 - ◆ Cultural differences, values, predispositions. Special attention will be given to personal relationships, issues of boundaries, the role of laity and women, collaboration with parish staff, safe environment regulations.
 - ◆ Pastoral practices, sacramental ministry/preparation programs, preaching, approaches to religious education, in so far as these ecclesial and parish functions are uniquely tailored to bring forth the faith in central Minnesota.
 - ◆ Language and accent acquisition...as needed and ongoing to assist in effective ministry.
 - ◆ Parish administration, electronic programs, use of technology.
 - ◆ Legal requirements: drivers license, Social Security registration, income tax information.
 - ◆ Guidelines on appropriate and allowable fundraising opportunities (e.g. Mission Appeals for his Diocese/Order) and restrictions in this area.
- 2) The Diocese of Saint Cloud will be responsible for any program costs in the acculturation process.
- 3) The Diocese of Saint Cloud will provide a living allowance during the period of acculturation.
- 4) When the Bishop of Saint Cloud deems the missionary priest ready, he will, in consultation with the Diocesan Priest Personnel Board and the Diocesan Mission Office, assign him to pastoral work and mission ministry.

V) The Covenant between the Bishop of the Diocese of Saint Cloud and the Bishop/Superior of the missionary priest.

A) Conditions and Specific Expectations

- 1) The promise of obedience at ordination shall be fully committed to the Bishop of the Diocese of Saint Cloud (save additional canonical requirements of Religious priests to their legitimate superior).
- 2) Full clerical rights will be conferred on the missionary priest as appearing in the *Handbook: Policies, Guidelines, Resources for the Diocese of Saint Cloud*.
- 3) The missionary priest will agree to and comply with the *Sexual Misconduct Policy, Guidelines for Ethics and Integrity in Ministry*, and *Internal Reporting Guidelines*.

- 4) The missionary priest will receive compensation, vacation time, health insurance, and retreat and continuing education opportunities as outlined in Diocesan Guidelines. For Religious priests all issues of compensation will be governed by the norms of his respective community.
- 5) The missionary priest will meet with the Vicar General of the Diocese of Saint Cloud every six months throughout the duration of his assignment for an assessment of his effectiveness and to discuss particular challenges in his ministry. Religious international priests will have an assessment meeting with their respective superior every six months. In each case, the person to whom the international priest is accountable, e.g., pastor or immediate supervisor, as defined in the covenants, will also participate in these assessment meetings.
- 6) The missionary priest will participate in regularly scheduled, diocesan-sponsored events, programs, meetings, and clergy gatherings.
- 7) The covenant will provide for early termination of the mission assignment to the Diocese of Saint Cloud if this is mutually agreed upon by the Bishops/Superior.

Approved this 4th day of February, 2011

+John F. Kinney
Bishop of Saint Cloud