

Acceptance Policy for Foreign Priests Seeking Ministry in the Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis

Thank you for your interest in serving in the Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis. Please review the following items which are intended to assist priests incardinated in dioceses outside of the United States in making an application for acceptance to serve for a limited time in the Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis. A priest will not be considered for a pastoral assignment nor will he be granted faculties until all of the following requirements have been met and all the necessary documentation submitted. Please note that satisfying these requirements does not guarantee that a ministerial position in the Archdiocese will be offered. Each request will be evaluated based on the strengths of the application and the needs of this Archdiocese. **A priest-applicant should not make any travel plans until he has received a letter confirming his invitation to serve in the Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis.**

- Due to the complexity of receiving foreign priests and the period of adjustment which normally needs to take place, the Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis generally asks for an initial 30-month commitment of service.
- The Archbishop of Saint Paul and Minneapolis, the Most Reverend John C. Nienstedt, must receive a personal letter from the foreign priest's bishop/superior stating that the applicant is a priest in good standing and that he does not have any legal, sexual, alcohol or chemical problems, now or in the past, and that he has permission to serve in the Archdiocese for a minimum of 30 months.
- The Chancellor for Canonical Affairs of the Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis must receive the completed 'Resume for Pastoral Ministry', two individual photos of the foreign priest, proof of birth, proof of baptism, proof of priestly ordination and photocopies of all pages from the foreign priests' valid passport (including both front and back of the I-94 card if the priest is already in the United States). The priest-applicant must also submit an audio or digital recording of himself delivering a homily in English (minimum ten minutes on the recording).
- The foreign priest must consent to a legal and criminal background check, to be arranged through the Chancellor for Civil Affairs.
- The Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis will pay foreign priests the same salary and benefits as all other diocesan clergy in our Diocese. However, because the Archdiocese accepts foreign priests at their own request, every foreign priest is expected to pay his own travel expenses to and from the Archdiocese.
- To work in this Archdiocese it is necessary for every priest to have a valid driver's license. A priest-applicant should check with the government of his home country about getting an **International Driving Permit (IDP)**. (Do not get an International Driving License, as these are worthless in the United States.) In

addition, it is expected that every priest-applicant will be able to pass the knowledge, skills, and vision tests necessary to receive a Minnesota driver's license within sixty days of arriving in the Archdiocese. The knowledge test may be taken in English, Hmong, Vietnamese, Somali, Spanish, or Russian.

- The Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis is located in the far north-central part of the United States. It is comprised of twelve counties totaling 6, 187 square miles. While many parishes are within the metropolitan area, a significant number of parishes are in rural areas. The Catholic population is approximately 623,000, with an estimated metro-area population of 3,000,000. The weather is warm and humid in the summer and very cold, dry, and snowy in the winter.
- The foreign 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, including, in most cases, by paying all fees and costs connected with maintaining his desired legal status. The Chancellor for Civil Affairs is able to provide assistance in these matters.
- All foreign priests must be able to understand and clearly speak the English language. Applicants for university programs will be expected to pass the TOEFL examination prior to being accepted for their course of study. Upon arriving in this Archdiocese, each foreign priest will be assessed as to his English speaking skills. If there is a need for improvement in his English skills, he will be required to take an English course as determined by the Director of the Office for International Priests.
- Prior to assuming a pastoral or educational 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 foreign priest has completed the required training in maintaining a safe environment and the appropriate use of technology.
- After six to twelve months of service in this Archdiocese, the foreign priest and diocesan officials will evaluate his adaptation to the American culture and determine if there are any problems which must be addressed. With the exception of those cases determined in universal law, permission to remain in the Archdiocese or in an assignment is always *ad nutum episcopi*. An approved plan of incardination will normally be required for the Archdiocese to support a request for permanent residency. Exceptions to this rule will only be considered in cases where there is a compelling reason for seeking permanent resident status *and* the foreign priest's bishop supports the request.
- In most cases a foreign priest will be placed in a parish as a parochial vicar who will assist the pastor in the care of the parish. This will be full-time position and will provide the foreign priest with time to learn American culture and the

policies and procedures of this Archdiocese. Placement as a pastor cannot be guaranteed and is solely at the discretion of the Archbishop of Saint Paul and Minneapolis.

- All foreign priests need to be physically healthy and active; psychologically and spiritually mature; and free from demanding family obligations.
- The foreign 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 foreign priest must be able to work with women, and with women in positions that may involve oversight of the priest's ministry and/or administration.
- No foreign priest serving in the Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis 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 by the Archbishop of Saint Paul and Minneapolis.
- Foreign priests visiting the Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis for a short period of time (less than three months) and who are not seeking an assignment, employment, or education are exempt from this policy but must comply with the Archdiocesan regulations for Visiting Clergy.

Contact information:

The Most Reverend John C. Nienstedt
Archbishop of Saint Paul and Minneapolis
226 Summit Avenue
Saint Paul, MN 55102-2197

Chancellor's Department

Canonical Affairs:

Jennifer Haselberger
226 Summit Avenue
Saint Paul, MN 55102-2197
haselbergerj@archspm.org

Civil Affairs:

Andrew Eisenzimmer
226 Summit Avenue
Saint Paul, MN 55102-2197
eisenzimmer@archspm.org