

Diocese Of Killaloe – Sabbatical Policy

A Sabbatical is an important aspect of a priest's ministry and should be viewed as a normal feature of diocesan life. It is diocesan policy to facilitate priests who wish to avail of sabbatical leave.

1. What is a Sabbatical?

- i. An extended period of time away from normal duties for the purpose of renewal and enrichment.
- ii. A period of constructive growth and study in a formal programme which will enable the priest to become more effective in his ministry by enhancing his skills, knowledge, ability and spiritual development.
- iii. Theological, Pastoral, Spiritual and Personal Development courses and programmes
- iv. A part of ongoing formation

2. A sabbatical is not

- i. Sick leave
- ii. A rehabilitation period
- iii. A holiday
- iv. Further Studies as requested by the diocese in preparation for a specific ministry
- v. An ongoing Formation Programme for all or a section of the priests of the diocese
- vi. A Retreat (although a Retreat may constitute a part of a sabbatical programme)

3. Supply / Replacement arrangements during a Sabbatical

It should be understood that the absence of a priest on Sabbatical might involve some curtailment of services. The responsibility of providing cover lies with the Pastoral Area in consultation with the Diocesan Appointments Advisory Group along with the bishop. The facilitation of a sabbatical implies the willingness of priests to work together to meet the needs of the Pastoral Area.

4. Sabbatical Co-ordinator

The Bishop will appoint a sabbatical co-ordinator. Their role will be to assist the bishop and the individual priest in facilitating their sabbatical programme.

5. Duration / Eligibility

A sabbatical can vary in duration from three months to one calendar year. All priests who have served ten years or more continuously in the diocese have the option of applying for a Sabbatical of up to one year. Priests who have served between five and ten years in the diocese have the option of a shorter Sabbatical period.

A priest is free to seek a Sabbatical during his current appointment. He may also choose to seek a Sabbatical between appointments. The availability of a Sabbatical will be dependent upon the numbers applying at any given time.

6. Granting of Sabbatical

The topic of Sabbaticals will form part of the Bishop's discussions with the Diocesan Appointments Advisory Group. They will highlight priests celebrating significant milestones of ordination (10th, 20th, 25th, 30th, 40th, 50th anniversaries) in the coming calendar year. The Bishop in his annual review meetings with each priest will insatiate a conversation with those priests who are eligible to be considered for sabbatical leave.

Outside the proscribed dates as outlined above any priest can apply to the bishop to be granted sabbatical leave. All applications for a sabbatical must be submitted on or before 31st January of the year in question.

Applications must contain:

- the preferred option of sabbatical course(s)
- the duration of time
- an outline of the course(s)
- the perceived benefit to future or ongoing ministry of the priest and the diocese.

7. Application Procedure

All sabbatical leave will require the approval of the bishop. It is our recommendation that the bishop nominate a named individual who will coordinate sabbatical policy. This person will be asked to provide information on what is available to priests as regards sabbatical courses. All applications for a sabbatical must be submitted on or before 31st January of the year in question. Applications must contain the preferred option of sabbatical course/s and the duration of same which should include a proposal for the course outlining the perceived benefit the course will be to the future ministry of the priest and the diocese. Priests may apply directly to the bishop for a sabbatical.

8. Funding For a sabbatical during an appointment

- a. The priest will receive his monthly salary from the Remuneration A/C of the place of his appointment.
- b. The cost of the sabbatical i.e. course fees, accommodation and return flight to be covered as follows:
 - i. One Third to be paid by the priest
 - ii. Two Thirds to be paid by the diocese

There will be a limit on the cost to the diocese of any sabbatical. The overall cost of the sabbatical will take into account any income arising from the sabbatical placement.

- c. The cost of providing part-time / full-time cover for the priest on sabbatical will be paid by his Pastoral Area. This should only arise if it is necessary. Pastoral Areas ought to be encouraged to construct their work schedule in a manner which allows one priest member of the Pastoral Area to be free to avail of a sabbatical. This also facilitates holiday arrangements.
- d. The priest's medical insurance cover must be such as to ensure adequate medical cover and medical care. Payment of medical insurance will be paid as normal – one half by the priest and one half by the parish. Any additional insurance cover where or if necessary will be discussed with the priest and the co-ordinator of the Sabbatical Policy.

9. Sabbatical between appointments

- a. The priest will receive his monthly salary from the Remuneration Fund
- b. The cost of the sabbatical i.e. course fees, accommodation & return flight be covered as in B above
- c. The priest's Medical Insurance cover or necessary foreign medical cover to be shared equally between priest and diocese.

Review

This sabbatical policy is to be reviewed after three years.

Agreed by the Council of Priests on July 8th, 2020

Reviewed and amended by Council of Priests 7th November 2023