

DIOCESE OF MARQUETTE
HANDBOOK FOR SEMINARIANS

This **Handbook for Seminarians** has been prepared for all seminarians and candidates for priestly ministry in the Diocese of Marquette.

Men of God...seek after integrity, piety, faith, love, steadfastness and gently spirit. Fight for the good fight of faith. Take firm hold on the everlasting life to which you were called. (I Timothy 6:11-12)

St. Paul's words express the care and hopes of the diocese for all our seminarians. To assist the seminarians in their education and formation for the ordained priesthood, the diocese is pleased to offer this handbook. The diocese hopes it will clarify for all seminarians the diocese's expectations and how the diocese can be helpful to the seminarians and their families during seminary training.

The diocese is grateful to the Diocesan Vocation Office staff who has prepared this handbook and is responsible for its implementation for the good of the seminarians. The prayers of the clergy and the people are with all studying for the priesthood.

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HANDBOOK FOR SEMINARIANS
OF THE
DIOCESE OF MARQUETTE

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INTRODUCTION

This handbook is to be a source text of the various requirements and policies of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Marquette that pertain to those who are interested in, or who are in, seminary studies for the Roman Catholic priesthood. These policies are aimed at providing consistent and equitable procedures for dealing with all the candidates for seminary, and with all the seminarians of the Diocese of Marquette.

The Bishop of the Diocese of Marquette has appointed the Director of Vocations to see to it that these policies are implemented and carried out.

Any questions about the material in this booklet can be directed to:

THE VOCATION OFFICE
P.O. BOX 550
MARQUETTE, MICHIGAN
49855

THE ROLE OF THE DIRECTOR OF VOCATIONS

It is the responsibility of every member of the Church to promote and foster vocations. However, it is one of the primary ministries of the Bishops of the Church to promote and foster vocations to the priesthood and religious life. In the Diocese of Marquette, as in many other dioceses in the United States, the Vocations Office and its Director of Vocations are a direct extension of this special ministry of the Bishop. The Director of Vocations serves as the Bishop's personal representative in this area. His ministry is to see to it that this most important work of the Church is carried out.

The primary responsibility of the Director of Vocations is to develop and promote programs, which may help priests and people alike to be more aware of the need for priests and religious in our diocese. All must work together praying and caring for those men who have sensed or felt God's call within themselves to serve as priests.

It is likewise the duty of the Director of Vocations to help those who feel they have heard the call of Jesus and would like to pursue possible entrance into the seminary. It is the role of the Director of Vocations to help these men discern and clarify the Lord's call in their lives. This is done through vocation counseling, reflective listening, spiritual direction and guidance. In preparing a candidate for entrance into the seminary, the Director of Vocations screens the candidate and, if he is found acceptable for seminary studies, works with the candidate for entrance into a formal seminary program.

The Director of Vocations is also the contact person or liaison between the diocese and seminary, which the seminarians for the diocese attend. In some instances, the Director of Vocations actively participates in formal seminary evaluations and can offer recommendations for change and growth.

Since a seminarian has the sponsorship of the Diocese of Marquette, the Director of Vocations serves as a contact person for the seminarian. Any needs of the seminarian should be directed to the Director of Vocations who is responsible for his pastoral care. As part of this care, the Director of Vocations serves as financial aids officer, academic guidance counselor, and, on occasion, as a spiritual advisor. It is the practice of the Director of Vocations to visit each seminary in the course of the year, to ascertain the progress of each seminarian, and to offer an opportunity for personal contact between the seminarian and the diocese.

QUALITIES OF CANDIDATE FOR THE PRIESTHOOD

To be qualified for the Roman Catholic priesthood, a candidate should possess the following qualities:

FAITH: The candidate must be a man who is knowledgeable about his faith. His prayer life and spiritual life must reflect that he is willing to know, love, and serve the Lord Jesus Christ. He must be active in the Catholic faith, which is evidenced by his regular attendance at Mass and his involvement in home parish activities.

MATURITY: The candidate must have achieved normal emotional, psychological, and intellectual growth. He must also be leading a virtuous and moral life.

WILLINGNESS TO EMBRACE THE LIFESTYLE OF A PRIEST: A candidate must be willing to accept the lifestyle that is required of an ordained priest in the Roman Catholic Church today. Therefore, the candidate must be willing to obey the leaders of the Church and accept all that the Church teaches. There must be a willingness to accept celibacy as a true and noble way of life. It is important to live a celibate lifestyle in an honest and sincere way, not only after ordination, but while preparing for ordination. There must be an understanding that the lifestyle of a priest is one of witness in today's world. To embrace a spirit of poverty or detachment is also recognized as something noble for anyone who seeks to serve God's people.

GOOD HEALTH: Since the preparation for the priesthood and the lifestyle of a priest are very rigorous and demanding, it is essential that the candidate have good health in body, mind, and spirit. Physical handicaps or medical difficulties do not necessarily of themselves exclude a person from priesthood. However, care must be taken that a person who has handicaps or physical difficulties is made aware of the specific demands of the priesthood, and how these demands may affect him should be permitted to pursue the priesthood. Emotional stability is also essential for the priesthood and ministry. Psychological disorders or problems may exclude a candidate from studying for the priesthood.

WILLINGNESS TO LEARN: Good grades are not only a sign of educational ability, but also a sign of how a candidate applies himself to the task of learning. Preparation for ordination will include learning not only about God and the Church, but also about himself and how he will be able to utilize his own special abilities and talents in serving the people of God. Good academic ability is necessary since the National Conference of Catholic Bishops requires that every candidate for the priesthood attain a Masters of Divinity degree, or the equivalent, before ordination to the priesthood.

WILLINGNESS TO SERVE: Service is required of anyone who chooses to follow Jesus Christ. A candidate's activity in his parish or church is a sign of his willingness to embrace a lifestyle of service to God and His people. The candidate must see the priesthood in the context of being a "minister of the ministers." The priesthood then, is about service. It is about helping people grow in Christ and leading them to serve one another following the commands of the Lord Jesus.

These qualifications may be listed in idealistic terms. However, each candidate who approaches the Church seeking the possibility of serving as a priest must have these qualities. The candidate must also be willing to utilize all available aids (the Vocation Office, the Director of Vocations, seminary formation programs, spiritual direction, etc.) to help him grow not only as a candidate for the priesthood, but as a devoted follower of Jesus Christ.

HOW TO BECOME A SEMINARIAN

The desire to become a priest may come at any age. This desire may be influenced by many different persons and sources. It is the role of the Vocation Office and the Director of Vocations to be of service in helping a prospective candidate discern this call from the Lord. Therefore, it is imperative that any prospective candidate be in contact with the Vocation Office of the Diocese of Marquette.

The desire alone to become a priest does not constitute eligibility for priesthood. The Church has always asked that this call of the Lord be tested and found true before a person is eligible for entrance into a formal seminary formation program. In order to receive beneficial results from the discernment and admissions process, the prospective candidate must be willing to share himself, his call, his growth, and his struggles with those who have been given the responsibility of helping in this process.

As a matter of policy, the Diocese of Marquette accepts a person as a candidate for the seminary before any formal application is made. The procedure that is utilized for this acceptance is outlined in the POLICY FOR ADMISSION TO BE ACCEPTED AS A SEMINARIAN FOR THE DIOCESE OF MARQUETTE. Many items that are required by this policy are also required by the seminary formation programs that the diocese utilized in the training of its priests. After formal acceptance as a candidate for the Diocese of Marquette, the applicant, along with the Director of Vocations, begins the process of application to the seminary.

There are several items in the process for admission that may seem to entail a bit more than just a “normal” application procedure. Since good health is essential for a priest to minister well, there is the need for a physical examination to assure the Diocese of Marquette that the candidate is healthy. The cost of the physical examination is the responsibility of the applicant.

Included as part of the application process are the following:

1. Complete and return the Application for Acceptance as a Seminarian for the Diocese of Marquette.
2. A biographical interview with the Director of Vocations.
3. Baptismal and Confirmation certificates are required.
(issued within last six months)
4. Record of applicant’s marriage, divorce, or spouses’ death certification.
(if applicable)
5. High school (and college) transcripts.
6. Names and addresses of five or six people as references.

7. Two black and white photographs (in jacket and tie).
8. Psychological assessment arranged through the Vocations Office.
9. Physical examination.
10. A meeting with the Bishop.

THE PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT AND INTERVIEW

Applicants who wish to become college or theology seminarians for the Diocese of Marquette are asked to undergo a psychological assessment as part of the normal application process. There are three reasons why the Diocese of Marquette requires this. First, the life of a priest is psychologically rigorous and emotionally demanding. The person seeking priesthood must be psychologically and emotionally mature.

Second, the assessment will be helpful for the future. It will point out the areas where the applicant's greatest gifts lie, as well as areas where growth would be helpful, and, in some cases, necessary.

Third, this assessment, is in keeping with the directives that have been given in the Program of Priestly Formation (PPF) that was drawn up by the National Conference of Catholic Bishops of the United States which states that those applying to the seminary for the first time should undergo a through screening process. Personal interviews with the applicant and his parents, home visits, evaluations from pastors and teachers, academic record, and intellectual potential as indicated by standardized tests are all components of an effective admissions program and must be weighed with a judgment as to the applicant's apparent motivation (paragraph 513, PPF). Following the lead of the Second Vatican Council's DECREE ON THE TRAINING OF PRIESTS, seminary administrators (and others concerned with the candidates for priesthood) should consider psychological assessment as part of the admissions procedure, especially for those entering the seminary for the first time (paragraph 517, PPF). However, it is not enough to simply work with a professional psychologist in the admissions process. Drawing on the rich Catholic tradition concerning priesthood, those traits and attitudes which would give hope of a true vocation as well as those characteristics which would seem to indicate that a priestly vocation is not present should be described to the psychologist. This will help all those involved in the admissions process to understand the direction of their inquiry and will assure a judgment at the time of admission, which is balanced and fair to all concerned. The current Code of Canon Law, Canon 1041, paragraph one, also states: "The following are irregular as regards the reception of orders (prevented from receiving sacred orders): a person who labors under some form of insanity or other psychic defect to which, after consultation with experts, he is judged incapable of rightly carrying out the ministry."

The assessment itself will include an evaluation of abilities, interests and personality through the use of standard psychological inventories and a personal interview with a psychologist. A report of the interview and scores of the inventories will be sent to the Director of Vocations and will become part of the applicant's confidential file. When the report is received by the Vocation Office, the Director of Vocations will contact the applicant so that a review and discussion of the report may take place between the Director of Vocations and the applicant.

The psychological assessment takes place in the office of a licensed psychologist of the Diocese's choice, after first contacting the Director of Vocations. The cost of the psychological assessment will be paid by the Diocese of Marquette, and therefore, the final report becomes the property of the Diocese.

Both college and theology seminaries require applicants to complete a psychological assessment as part of their own application process. For this reason, with written permission from the applicant, a copy of the assessment is released by the Director of Vocations to the proper office of the seminary.

ACCEPTANCE AS A CANDIDATE

The final decision to accept an applicant is made by the Bishop and the Director of Vocations after a prayerful and careful consideration of the following:

1. The information gathered from initial and biographical interviews.
2. The physical examination report.
3. The results of the psychological assessment.
4. Recommendations by persons who know the applicant.
5. Review of the applicant's academic record.
6. The comments from the interview with the Bishop.

The Director of vocations will then notify the applicant of the final decision regarding the application process.

In each instance, the Director of Vocations will be honest and frank with the applicant about the process and its outcome. There is no intention to prevent any qualified applicant from pursuing entrance into a seminary or formation program.

PRIVACY POLICY

Any materials that are gathered during the application process or during a candidate's seminary career are kept on file in the Vocation Office. These files are considered the confidential property of the Diocese of Marquette. Access to information in the files is limited to the Bishop, his legal counsel, the Director of Vocations, the Director of the Department of Ministry Personnel Services, and, if necessary, to the Formation Team of the seminary.

If a seminarian disaffiliates himself from the Diocese of Marquette and transfers to another diocese, a copy of the material in his file will be sent to the new diocese.

When a seminarian leaves the seminary of his own accord, is asked to leave by the seminary officials, or disaffiliates himself from the Diocese of Marquette, his file is placed in the archival files of the Vocation Office.

A seminarian of the Diocese of Marquette may visit the Vocation Office to view his personal file. However, the Director of Vocations must be notified beforehand, and the file may not be removed from the Vocation Office.

When a seminarian has been ordained a deacon, the care and maintenance of his file is the responsibility of the Bishop.

SEMINARY ATTENDANCE POLICY

The Diocese of Marquette, through the Director of Vocations, selects certain seminaries for the education of its candidates. In striving to provide the best educational opportunities available for its candidates, the Diocese of Marquette reserves the right to assign individual candidates to certain seminaries.

After an applicant has been accepted for study in a seminary formation program, the candidate and the Director of Vocations examine the individual's academic and formational needs to determine the place where the candidate will apply for seminary studies. Each seminary has its own unique application process.

It is the final decision of the Bishop to assign a place of study. Each student is then obliged to follow the directives of the director of Vocations when that decision has been made.

SEMINARIAN TRANSFER POLICY TRANSFERRING INTO THE DIOCESE OF MARQUETTE

If any applicant or seminarian from another diocese is actively seeking to become a candidate or seminarian for the Diocese of Marquette, the following procedure is to be used:

1. The inquirer is to be referred back to his home diocese, and to comply with Step 2 below.
2. If after discernment with the Director of Vocations of his home diocese the inquirer still desires to apply to the Diocese of Marquette, he should then:
 - a. Be actually referred to the Diocese of Marquette in writing by his home diocese.

- b. Work with the Director of Vocations of the Diocese of Marquette in a discernment process that will indicate why the inquirer wishes to serve in the Diocese of Marquette.
 - c. Begin the process of application to become a candidate of the Diocese of Marquette (page 3).
 3. After the inquirer has been accepted through the process of admission to the diocese, the following must occur before actual acceptance and entrance into the seminary:
 - a. The home diocese has been contacted and informed of the reasons why the inquirer was accepted by the Diocese of Marquette.
 - b. A placement of no less than one year in a pastoral setting has been completed in which the inquirer and his supervisor have drawn up a list of goals and objectives that are to be accomplished for the year. These plans and their implementation are to be shared in writing with the Director of Vocations.
 - c. At the end of the pastoral year, a simple, but formal, evaluation will be conducted to assess the inquirer's abilities and activities.
 4. If during the course of the pastoral year it becomes evident to the Director of Vocations or the appointed supervisor that the inquirer is not a suitable candidate for seminary for this diocese, a meeting between the Director of Vocations, the supervisor and the inquirer will take place to discuss the matter of further growth, counseling or dismissal from the diocese.

TRANSFERRING FROM THE DIOCESE OF MARQUETTE

When a seminarian of the Diocese of Marquette wishes to transfer to another diocese, he should first express his desire in writing to the Director of Vocations of the Diocese of Marquette before he makes contact with the proposed new diocese. His letter should outline his reasons for requesting the transfer.

After the student has met with the Director of Vocations, he is then free to pursue contact with the proposed new diocese. The seminarian should be aware that most dioceses have a set policy for the acceptance of transfer seminarians.

At the direction of the seminarian, the Director of Vocations of the Diocese of Marquette will furnish the new diocese with all necessary information as required. The Director of Vocations will also share with the new diocese his own personal opinions of the transfer seminarian.

Being accepted by another diocese does not free a seminarian from any financial obligations, which he may have incurred while studying for the Diocese of Marquette. Upon ordination, the accepting Diocese must agree to reimburse the Diocese of Marquette for seminary expenses incurred while the newly ordained was a priesthood candidate for the Diocese of Marquette.

DISMISSAL POLICY

At times, the seminary, the Bishop, or the Director of Vocations may discover a just cause for dismissing a seminarian from the seminary. Possible grounds for dismissal shall include, but shall not be limited to:

1. Direct disobedience of the Bishop, Director of Vocations and/or the rector of the seminary.
2. Failure to comply with the directives of the diocese, Vocation Office, or rector of the seminary.
3. Refusal to follow the teachings of the Church.
4. Discovery of falsified information in the application process to the diocese and/or seminary.
5. Questionable behavior such as cheating, destruction of property, alcohol or drug abuse.
6. Involvement in questionable relationships, including illicit and immoral sexual behavior.
7. Discovery of canonical irregularities that would prohibit ordination to priesthood.

When grounds for dismissal have occurred, the seminarian will be notified in writing by the Director of Vocations. Upon receipt of the letter, the student is no longer considered a seminarian for the Diocese of Marquette and loses all privileges and rights of a seminarian. If there are any, he will be asked to take care of his financial obligations to the Diocese of Marquette.

Should a dismissed student choose to pursue a seminary program for another diocese, he should be aware that the new diocese will contact his former diocese to conduct an inquiry into the reasons for his dismissal.

If a student feels that he has been dismissed for unjust reasons, he may present his case, in writing, to the Bishop of the diocese.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE POLICY

When a seminary requests that a seminarian for the Diocese of Marquette take a leave of absence from seminary studies and formation, or the student himself feels a need to take some time to assess and evaluate his progress in a seminary program, the following policy of the Diocese of Marquette is to be observed:

1. There must be an open discussion between the seminarian and the Director of Vocations about the leave of absence.
2. With the Director of Vocations, the following topics will be discussed and the agreement between the Director and the seminarian will be placed in writing. The signatures of both the seminarian and the Director of Vocations will be included and both will receive a copy of this written document:
 - a. Reason for the leave of absence.
 - b. Projected length of the leave.
 - c. Residence during the leave.
 - d. Type of employment during the leave.
 - e. Meeting with Director of Vocations during leave.
 - f. Spiritual direction/guidance during leave.
 - g. Financial obligation to the Diocese.
3. During the leave of absence, the student will be considered a seminarian for the diocese and will be invited to participate in all events and activities as a seminarian.
4. The request to be reinstated in a seminary program, or to terminate one's seminarian status with the Diocese of Marquette is to be made in writing to the Director of Vocations.
5. If it is the seminarian's decision to terminate seminarian status, the seminarian is obliged to fulfill the obligations listed in the financial aids policy.

PARISH PLACEMENT POLICY

There may be a time when a seminarian or candidate should be placed in a parish for a summer or longer. This would provide an opportunity for him to gain knowledge about parish life and his own personal growth. To this end, the Vocation Office will work to provide that experience if it is requested. Parish placements must be arranged through the Vocations Office. The request for parish placement is to be made in writing either by the candidate or seminarian or seminary to the Director of Vocations by mid-April. This is to allow ample time for the Director of Vocations to review the request and make preparations.

Near the end of the placement period evaluation forms will be sent to the seminarian or candidate and the pastor of the parish. Each party will assess the placement experience as well as point out areas for further growth. The pastor and student are to share their reflections with each other and copies of the evaluations are to be shared with the Director of Vocations. The evaluation forms are then placed in the permanent files of the Vocation Office.

Because college seminarians are responsible for their own school tuition, college seminarians are encouraged to spend their summers in gainful employment. With the approval of the Director of Vocations, a college seminarian may serve in a parish/institution for a pastoral assignment.

Although parish placements sometimes include a stipend, a parish placement does not necessarily include financial support from the diocese.

GENERAL FINANCIAL AID INFORMATION

It is the policy of the Diocese of Marquette that no qualified college or theology candidate is turned away from the seminary due to the lack of financial resources.

The whole Church shares the financial responsibility for preparing those who are called to serve the community as priests. Specific responsibility falls upon the following:

1. Student

A student benefits personally from his educational experience and should, as part of the Church, share in funding his seminary education. Students should monitor their spending and lifestyles. Necessities should be carefully considered.

2. Family

If a student is still legally a dependent, the parents remain the primary educators of their child and, as such, share in the responsibility for the expenses of their son's seminary education, in so far as this is possible.

3. Parish

A student's home parish plays a special role in his vocational development. Wherever possible, this role includes helping with his educational and personal expenses.

4. Diocese

A seminary student leaves a local community to serve the larger community, and the diocese. Therefore, the diocese will pay a substantial portion of his educational cost.

There are diocesan policies that govern scholarships, and grants to seminarians who do qualify for financial aid. Basically, financial assistance is granted according to the level of seminary studies achieved by the individual seminarian. Financial assistance offered by the diocese for college students is less than that for theological students.

Following is a listing by academic level of the financial assistance that is offered by the Diocese of Marquette.

COLLEGE SEMINARIANS

The Diocese of Marquette, as a matter of policy, awards all college seminarians with scholarship for room and board. Each college seminarian, however, is responsible for the remaining cost of his education (tuition, books, fees, personal expenses, transportation, etc.).

It is expected that the seminarian would pursue all avenues of financial aid that are available to him. The seminarian is expected to pay for his portion of the costs by any one of the following forms or by a combination of payment forms:

1. Personal and family resources.
2. Scholarships (at the college attended and other sources).
3. Federal or State grants (all students are requested to complete the "Financial Aid Form").
4. Bank or federal loans.
5. The seminarian's home parish.
6. Knights of Columbus grants (see Director of Vocations for information).

It is expected that the seminarian obtain gainful employment during the summer months to assist in covering these costs.

A College seminarian should contact the Director of Vocations if he is unable to meet his financial responsibilities as indicated above.

THEOLOGY SEMINARIANS

In entering the theology level of seminary studies, the seminarian is actually entering graduate school to obtain a Master's degree. It is assumed that once a seminarian has reached this level, his intentions for the ordained priesthood are very serious. Knowing the high cost of graduate level studies, the Diocese of Marquette provides all theology level seminarians with a full scholarship for room, board, and tuition.

Due to the older age of theology students, many times they are no longer covered under their parents' health insurance policy. Therefore, theology seminarians will also be enrolled in the Diocesan Medical and Dental Program at no cost to themselves.

All personal expenses for books, personal items, travel, and entertainment are the responsibility of the theology seminarians. If, for some serious reason, theology seminarians are not able to afford some necessary items for seminary studies, they are to contact the Director of Vocations to apply for grants to help cover these costs. For more information on these grants, please see page 13.

Theology seminarians are expected to acquire gainful employment during the summer months to pay for their personal expenses.

COLLEGE AND THEOLOGY GRANTS

The Diocese of Marquette has a grant fund available to needy seminarians. The grant amount will be determined annually dependent on the availability of funds. The Director of Vocations should be contacted regarding the availability of grants.

A sample of the Grant Application Form is found on page 13.

DIOCESE OF MARQUETTE VOCATION OFFICE
P. O. Box 550
Marquette, MI 49855

GRANT APPLICATION

I, _____, a seminarian for the Diocese of Marquette in my _____ year of study at _____ Seminary, do hereby petition the Roman Catholic Diocese of Marquette for a seminarian grant to assist in meeting personal expenses incurred while studying to the priesthood.

I intend to use this grant for the following purposes(s). (Here please itemize and detail your reasons for requesting this grant):

I understand that it is the Director of Vocations who serves as grant officer for the seminarians for the Diocese of Marquette and has the right to accept or reject grant requests.

(Signature)

(Date)

C.P.E.

During the course of theology level seminary studies, the seminary may either recommend or require a seminarian to undertake a semester or more of Clinical Pastoral Education (C.P.E.). C.P.E. is a very intense and specialized program during which a student learns as much about himself in ministry as he does about ministry itself. The program is very structured and supervised. There are certain times set aside for evaluation and reflection on the progress one is making in the program.

When a seminary recommends or requests C.P.E., the seminarian is to inform the Director of Vocations about this in writing. When exact C.P.E. placements and costs have been established, the seminarian is to inform, in writing, the Director of Vocations about the placement and the costs so that financial arrangements can be made in advance of the actual C.P.E. semester. A copy of the letter of acceptance into a C.P.E. program should also be included in the request.

If no stipend is offered by the C.P.E. placement institution, the candidate may receive a stipend from the diocese with the approval of the Director of Vocations.

ANNUAL DIOCESAN SUMMER RETREAT FOR SEMINARIANS

Each summer, the Office of Vocations sponsors a retreat for seminarians of the diocese. All college and theology seminarians, new and returning candidates, are expected to attend.

If for some reason, a seminarian is unable to attend the retreat, he is responsible to write the Bishop, explaining the reason.