

Resolution #7: Sabbatical Leave Policy for Clergy

FAQ

Q. Why is this important?

A. The Task Force was appointed because there is not a consistent policy in the diocese for sabbatical leave for all clergy, resulting in inequity for clergy who serve in positions other than parish rectors or associates (and even among these the benefit varies). And there is no source for funding sabbaticals for interim rectors.

Q: What does the resolution seek to accomplish?

A: The resolution asks Executive Council to establish a diocesan policy for clergy sabbatical leave, and within that policy to account for the various kinds of clergy employment which may qualify in different ways for the benefit of sabbatical leave. Currently, there is no diocesan policy, and sabbatical is typically negotiated in a letter of agreement for rectors and (some) full time associates at the congregational level. In addition to developing a standard policy, the resolution asks Executive Council to introduce a line item into the Diocesan budget to provide funding to support sabbatical leave for intentional interim clergy.

Q. Is the Executive Council prepared to implement the Task Force recommendations?

A. Yes, at their meeting of August 18, Executive Council discussed the recommendations and responded positively, as did the Bishop and Chancellor. They are willing to develop a policy for review at the 2021 DioCal Convention. The Task Force has provided ample models and examples as resources, but leaves it up to Executive Council to develop the policy and determine the nature and source of funding for interim clergy sabbatical.

Q. Why do we need to add a line item to the Diocesan budget?

A. Interim clergy typically serve one- to two-year terms. Their salary and benefits are paid for by the congregations they serve, but the duration of their terms falls short of the standard number of years associated with qualification for sabbatical (typically four or five years of continuous service in a congregation). Since intentional interim are fulfilling a diocesan function, and since they often serve multiple terms serially, accumulating many years of continuous service but without the benefit of a sabbatical, the resolution proposes that this particular benefit be provided for out of diocesan funds.

Q. What about the funding? Is it the task force's intention that the assessment formula be revised upward to add additional funding for sabbatical leave?

A. No, the existing formula (determined by the Executive Council, Chancellor and Finance officer) should remain the same; the budget can be adjusted to fund a new line item for a Sabbatical Leave fund.