

Return of Former Rectors

The following guideline is provided so that there is an understanding of the role of the incumbent who is leaving a parish. The time of leaving is often a difficult one for both the incumbent and the parish. Pastoral relations are understandably warm and personal and incumbents may have developed friendships in the parish. To assist both the incumbent and the parish work through this transition, this guideline is provided. The guideline relates to clergy who are retiring from a parish or accepting a new appointment elsewhere.

There are several key components to the process of leaving a parish covered in this guideline. One is where the worship home will be after the incumbent has resigned from the parish (as in the case of retirement); another covers the role of the incumbent who is leaving with regards to the selection process and another covers requests for taking services at the parish after the incumbent has left.

Worship home: To help the parish and the incumbent, move on from the worship style of the incumbent and the relationship with the parish, the incumbent will find a new home parish to worship in and not attend or be involved with the previous parish for a period of not less than two years, unless written permission is received from the bishop.

Selection Committee: When an incumbent has written the Bishop of Huron to indicate he/she is leaving the parish it is understood that the incumbent will not be involved in the process, either formally or informally, to find a new incumbent. As one can appreciate, by the former incumbent not being involved, the wardens and selection committee can carry out their roles with due diligence as they work towards recommending to the bishop a new incumbent.

During the interim: before the new Rector arrives, the former priest may return for weddings, funerals, etc., if requested and with the concurrence of the acting priest-in-charge and/or the Territorial Archdeacon or bishop. It is understood, of course, that pastoral needs in the new parish will take precedence.

After the new Rector arrives: former clergy and others may be invited back when requested, but such invitations must always be directly from the Rector. It would be appropriate to have the Rector officiate and the outside clergy to assist in the service at the direction of the Rector. Under no circumstances should such ministry be done without the knowledge and invitation of the Rector, whether in the church or elsewhere in the parish. It is entirely inappropriate for parishioners to request the ministry of a former Rector/curate in place of the present one. By his/her induction vows, the current Rector has the responsibility and the right to be in charge of all the church's ministrations within his/her parish.

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undoubtedly retain friendships in the parish. The obligation then is always for a former Rector to be absolutely loyal to and supportive of the successor's ministry and to help parishioners to form warm and personal relationships with the new Rector. In any return to the parish for informal visits, it is an appropriate courtesy to let the new Rector know of one's presence.

