

Origin: Bishop
Status: Guidelines
Distribution: All Parishes
Subject: Bishop's Personnel Commission

Your important task is to assist the Bishop in the process leading to the appointment of a priest for your parish.

It will require a fair commitment of time and needs to be given high priority until the task is complete.

The Task is Threefold:

- 1: To join with other committee members in preparing a parish profile.
- 2: To encourage parish members to invite clergy to ask the Bishop for a parish profile.
- 3: To interview the applicants who have applied and been short-listed.

Note: Since you will be making a decision that will affect the life of your parish do not try to rush the process or to go around the process in order to fill the vacancy and do surround the whole process with prayer.

The Parish Profile:

A profile is a word picture of your parish and the community in which it is situated. It should be honest and thorough. The profile should contain:

- 1: Statistics of parish and congregation (e.g. average Sunday attendance); number of groups; number of services; number of children in church school, etc.; a description of worship patterns and styles as well as the financial statistics for the past few years.
- 2: A general description of the community in which your parish is situated; geography, population, types of industry, including growth expectations.
- 3: Amenities of the community - schools, medical care, cultural and recreational opportunities, ski hills.

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- 4: The profile should also contain answers to the following kinds of questions.
- a) Where have we come in the past ten years?
 - b) What are our strengths and weaknesses now?
 - c) What are our hopes and dreams for the parish?
 - d) What are our hopes and dreams for the parish?
 - e) What is important to us as a parish; what do we want to be known for as a parish?
 - f) What kind of leadership do we need to go where we see God is leading us?
 - g) What demands will our buildings make in the next five years?
- 5: A position description for the clergy person should also be included.

As you proceed with building the profile, seek the input of the congregation, its groups and committees. Share your draft profile with the congregation for final input. Share the finished profile with them too. Take a close hard look at the life of the parish and congregation including the bricks and mortar. Again, do not cut the process short, give it as much time as is necessary.

Interviewing:

The purpose of the interview is to help the priest and parish to discover if the relationship between them is what God wants. Each candidate should be interviewed with the same care as the first and the same consistent process used for all candidates.

Questions can be general but should also arise from your understanding and feeling as to how the candidate responded to your profile or what the response might be if it were absent or not clear. Questions which call for a reasoned answer reveal more about the candidate than simple “yes” or “no” type questions.

Some suggested areas for conversation might be:

- a: Worship: e.g. How do you feel about the use of the B.A.S., the B.C.P? What, for you, should be the main service on Sunday - morning prayer? Eucharist? Why?
- b: Preaching: e.g. Do you enjoy preaching? What is it that makes it enjoyable for you? Describe for us your preaching style. How are the Scriptures used in your preaching? What is your approach to Scripture?
- c: Teaching: You could use the same questions as for preaching, substituting teaching.

- d: Pastoral Care: How do you organize pastoral care? What training do you have re: counseling? Marriage preparation? Care of the dying?
- e: Lay Ministry: What for you is the work of the laity in the Christian enterprise? How will you utilize us in the extension of God's kingdom?
- f: Evangelism: What is your understanding of Evangelism? Who, for you, are the Evangelists of today? What do you see to be the relationship between Evangelism and Service?
- g: Stewardship: What does that word mean for you? How ill you encourage growth in stewardship in this congregation?

It should be agreed beforehand how the interview will proceed. Will one person ask all the questions? Will each ask one or two? In what order? Both the questions to be asked and the style of interview should be decided together beforehand. The same pattern should be used for each candidate.

After you have finished with your questions there should be time for the candidate to ask questions of you.

The interview process could be surrounded with informal meetings, e.g. a tour of the community, a tour of the facility. Perhaps a dinner with committee members or a party with the Church Committee to allow informal feed-back from others.

When you have made a decision as to which candidate you wish, that information is communicated to the Bishop only, and no one else. The Bishop in turn will ask the candidate if he or she will accept the call. If the call is accepted the appointment will be announced to the congregation by letter from the Bishop. Until that letter is read the matter should be kept confidential.

If you wish you can have a second or a third interview with a candidate; as long as it touches on things not already covered. If the candidate is from a distance a conference call; on the telephone will be less expensive than a return trip to meet with you.

The cost of the candidates travel, accommodation, meals, etc. are born by the parish unless otherwise stated by the Bishop.

Above all enjoy your life together as a group of people, enjoy the opportunity to think seriously about your parish and the leadership you need. Do not rush the process, do not attempt to go around the process. If done well the process should provide for you a clergy person who will strengthen the life of your congregation.