

Most Reverend David Laurin Ricken, D.D., J.C.L.



By the Grace of God and the Authority of the Apostolic See
Bishop of Green Bay

DECREE

In light of the fraternal charity of the Diocesan Bishop for the priests of the diocese, it is fitting that a process be established to assist the priests in their transition to senior priest status when age and health make the administration of parishes or other ministry difficult.

In this light, we have developed the following *Policy for Entering Senior Priest Status*. The drafts of this policy have been shared with the Presbyteral Council and modified in light of their comments.

Therefore, having heard the Presbyteral Council, in accord with canon 8, §2, I hereby establish and promulgate as particular law for the Diocese of Green Bay the following *Policy for Entering Senior Priest Status*, effective November 1, 2012.

Given at the Chancery on September 19, 2012.

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Most Reverend David L. Ricken, D.D., J.C.L.
Bishop of Green Bay

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John P. Daerfler', written over a horizontal line.

Chancellor

Policy for Entering Senior Priest Status

Diocese of Green Bay

Approved by Presbyteral Council, August 2, 2012

The priests of the Diocese of Green Bay give faithful service over the course of their priesthood. When age and health makes the administration of parishes or even the public celebration of sacraments difficult, the role of the priest is able to change. Senior Priest Status begins when a priest's resignation from office is accepted and the priest no longer has an active assignment.

Canon Law (538 §3) states:

“When a pastor has completed his seventy-fifth year of age he is asked to submit his resignation from office to the diocesan bishop, who, after considering all the circumstances of person and place, is to decide whether to accept or defer the resignation. . .”

In order to assist the priest and the Bishop to make this a successful transition, the following steps are asked:

1. When the priest reaches the age of 68, he will meet with the Bishop and/or Vicar for Ministers to begin a conversation regarding the coming years. This discussion will include topics regarding the priest's health, his financial readiness for his later years, and his desire in how to continue his priestly ministry. The priest may request an assignment such as Parochial Vicar, part-time ministry, Administrator of a small parish, or a similar option. An annual meeting of this nature would continue until the time of the priest's resignation from active ministry. Priests are asked to prepare to be ready financially by age seventy in case he no longer receives a full salary due to the acceptance of his resignation.
2. The priest, given good health and a desire for continued active ministry, may continue to serve until the age of 75 or until the Bishop accepts his letter of resignation.
3. Priests may seek permission from the Bishop to enter Senior Priest Status when they are age 70 or older. This would be done through discussion with the Bishop and/or Vicar for Ministers in addition to a formal letter to the Bishop requesting this permission. In general, parish assignment changes would take place on July 1 of each year.
4. If his resignation from office is accepted by the Bishop, the priest would be granted the status of Senior Priest. While his health allows, the Senior Priest may serve as an assigned Sacramental Minister in a parish or parishes, or he may serve sacramentally as priest help out where needed on a regular or occasional basis.
5. By the time of his 75th birthday, the priest will have submitted his letter of resignation to the Bishop. If both the Bishop and the priest agree, the priest may continue active service in his present assignment or in another assignment until the time at which the Bishop accepts the letter of resignation and makes it effective.