

POLICY 3.2.2 Obligations of a Diocese to its Retired Priests

In accordance with canon law and the norms of the Catholic Church in Canada, the Archdiocese of Grouard-McLennan provides for the “necessities of life” for its retired priests. This policy outlines the responsibilities of the Archdiocese and of each priest to ensure that each party is well-informed about their respective responsibilities and obligations to each other.

Can. 281, *1983 Code of Canon Law*, outlines the Church’s requirements for providing to clerics “remuneration which is consistent with their condition, taking into account the nature of their function and the conditions of places and times, and by which they can provide for the necessities of their life...” (§1) and “social assistance which provides for their needs suitably if they suffer from illness, incapacity, or old age.” (§2.)

Can. 538, *1983 Code of Canon Law*, gives the retirement age for parish priests (75 years) and requires a diocesan bishop to provide for suitable support and housing for retired priests (§3.)

Decree No. 31, *Complementary Norms to the 1983 Code of Canon Law* (Appendix A), interprets the above canons and the Archdiocese accepts and abides by these norms, within the context of the financial and social circumstances of the Archdiocese.

1. Retirement Pension Plan of the Archdiocese of Grouard-McLennan

The funded plan of the Archdiocese for retired priests is comprised of: the Canada Pension Plan (CPP); the Canada Old Age Security program (OAS); and, the Robert Lavoie Foundation. It also takes into account such programs as the Alberta Blue Cross Coverage for Seniors program and subsidized housing provided by not-for-profit organizations in the Archdiocese and any similar government programs in place at any time during the application of this policy.

The Robert Lavoie Foundation board members are tasked with administering and verifying the adequacy of the Archdiocese’s retirement and disability funds.

The priests’ pension amounts collected pursuant to Policy 3.2.1 are directly invested in the Robert Lavoie Foundation fund as part of the Archdiocese’s retirement plan.

2. Responsibilities of the Robert Lavoie Foundation

Annually, and not later than June 30 each year, the board members of the Robert Lavoie Foundation, in consultation with the Vicar General and the Finance Administrator, determine the monthly amount of income which will provide suitably and adequately for the needs of retired priests.

- a. Unless otherwise decided by the Archbishop, the monthly amount will be the final amount used in calculations for deciding the direct support retired priests receive from the Robert Lavoie Foundation.
- b. The monthly amount paid to retired priests will be adjusted every September to comply with the amount set by the board members of the Robert Lavoie Foundation each year.

3. Determining needs of a retiring priest

A retiring priest will meet with the Finance Administrator: (i) at least two months after his 74th birthday and no later than six months before he retires from active ministry, or, (ii) as soon as possible after a determination of incapacity to continue in full time ministry. At this meeting, the priest and the Finance Administrator discuss the priest's support and accommodation needs and options.

- a. The priest will bring to the meeting his Notices of Assessment from Canada Revenue Agency for the three most recent tax years and any other relevant information and documents about personal financial assets and resources.
- b. The priest and the Finance Administrator will estimate the monthly payment amounts that the priest can expect to begin receiving from CPP and OAS immediately upon retirement.
- c. The priest and the Finance Administrator will review the options for suitable housing in the Archdiocese and any other location identified by the priest. The priest and the Finance Administrator may together select the housing for the priest or may make separate housing decisions.
 - i. Suitable housing includes: vacant rectories in the Archdiocese, seniors' housing in municipalities in the Archdiocese, and similar accommodations in other parts of Alberta, Canada, or any other location chosen by the priest.
- d. The priest and the Finance Administrator will, together or separately, calculate a monthly payment to the priest by the Robert Lavoie Foundation to ensure he receives the monthly amount determined in accordance with paragraph 2.a, above. This payment will begin in the first month of retirement, on a date agreed to by the priest and the Finance Administrator.
- e. In the event that the priest and the Finance Administrator do not reach a mutual agreement on the monthly amount from the Robert Lavoie Foundation and/or suitable housing upon retirement, each will submit to the Archbishop, in writing, the calculations and reasons for the choices. The Archbishop will make the determination of the monthly payment and/or the housing for the priest.

From time to time, and no more frequently than annually, at the request of at least one of the parties, a retired priest and the Finance Administrator will review whether the priest's housing continues to be suitable or a change is needed. The same requirements of consultation and mutual agreement, in 3.c, above, will apply to any decision about retaining or changing a retired priest's housing.

4. Responsibilities of retired priests

Every retired priest who receives monthly financial support from the Archdiocese will file a personal income tax return with Canada Revenue Agency by the end of the first April following retirement from active ministry and by April 1 of every full year of retirement.

- Each priest will provide a copy of the Notice of Assessment received from CRA for the

preceding tax year to the Finance Administrator no later than thirty days after receipt by the priest or his agent.

Amended by the College of Consultors on 16 February 2011

Amended by the College of Consultors on 08 October 2019