

## **POLICY 3.6.1     Pastoral Help When a Parish Priest is Absent from his Parish**

The Archdiocese of Grouard-McLennan has established its policies on vacation and other leave for priests in accordance with the Code of Canon Law and the relevant legislation of the Government of Alberta (cf. Policy 3.6.2). The Archdiocese requests that every parish priest ensure that the pastoral needs of his parish(es) will be provided for in his absence. This policy describes the requirements, suggestions and recommendations that parish priests and parishes are to follow when arranging for pastoral assistance in the absence of the parish priest.

### **A. The parish priest's responsibilities**

#### **1. Notification of absence to parish(es) and to the Archdiocese**

In the Archdiocese, the parish priest has an essential role and his absence affects himself, his parish(es) and the Archdiocese. Therefore, **for absences of more than four (4) days or absences from Sunday Mass celebrations, except where the absence is at the request or invitation of the Archbishop of Grouard-McLennan**, the parish priest is to complete a Form 3.6.1.a (see below for guidelines on filling in the form.) The parish priest will submit the completed form to the Vicar General of the Archdiocese **at least two months in advance of the absence (or as much in advance as possible.)**

#### **2. Arrangements for pastoral coverage and assistance**

The parish priest must arrange for two types of pastoral coverage during his absence: general coverage (for emergency situations, funerals, etc.) and weekend coverage (for Sunday Masses). These arrangements must be indicated on Form 3.6.1.a, in as much detail as possible.

#### **3. Arrangements for coverage and assistance for vacation leave**

The parish priests of the Archdiocese are accorded 35 days of vacation each calendar year. Many priests take all these days consecutively which means that parishes are without their parish priest for four or five Sundays in a row. To minimize the disruption to parishes and quasi-parishes, **parish priests must ensure that the pastoral assistance arrangements they make do not require changes to the regular Sunday Mass times for their parish(es).** Parish priests are to consult with the Vicar General if there are any concerns about leaving the Mass schedule unaffected during an absence. The parish priest will submit the completed form to the Vicar General of the Archdiocese at least two months in advance of his absence.

Parish priests with responsibility for missions are to consult with the Vicar General before making any changes to the usual schedule for Sunday Masses in these communities.

When the parish priest has completed the Form 3.6.1.a, he must discuss his arrangements for pastoral coverage with the PPC Chairperson in his parish(es). The PPC Chairperson in each

parish will sign the completed Form 3.6.1.a, indicating that he/she has reviewed the arrangements. The parish priest will submit the Form 3.6.1.a once all required signatures have been obtained.

In addition to pastoral coverage, the parish priest must also arrange for someone to check the exterior and interior condition of his residence during his absence. The checks must be performed **at least every four days** while the parish priest is away. This is to ensure that all the terms and conditions of the residential property insurance policy are met, in the event that damage occurs while the priest is away. A record schedule is required. See form 3.6.1.c.

#### **4. Notification to Chancery upon return to parish**

The parish priest will notify the Vicar General or the Secretary to the Archbishop of his return to his parish, within three days of making his return. The notification may be made by email or by phone call.

##### **B. The parish's responsibilities**

The parish is expected to provide its pastor's customary living allowance during the time of his absence, up to 35 days per year for vacation leave, as well as for any other approved leave time.

The parish is also responsible for paying the expenses related to pastoral help provided by other clergy during its parish priest's absence. **Please note, the parish is not to pay the visiting clergy directly.** Rather, pursuant to policy 3.5.1, the visiting cleric submits his request for payment to the Finance Department of the Archdiocese. The Finance-Department pays the cleric and then invoices the parish for the amount.

The details of a parish priest's absence and coverage during his absence are to be announced in the parish bulletin. This must include both scheduled services and cases of emergency.

##### **C. The Archdiocese's responsibilities**

All priests who provide pastoral help are required to submit a completed Form 3.6.1.b to the Finance Department of the Archdiocese. The Archdiocese will pay the visiting priest and will then invoice the parish.

In circumstances where an absent parish priest has not provided a Form 3.6.1.a, and the Archdiocese receives Form 3.6.1.b (Claims for Ministerial Services Rendered), those claims will be paid but the parish will not be invoiced for the amount. Rather, the amount will be garnered from the next payroll cheque of the absent priest.

##### **D. When a priest is absent beyond 35 days**

Any travel includes risks that, if they occur, can make it necessary for the affected priest to extend his absence beyond the authorized 35 days (cf. Policy 3.6.2).

##### **1. The parish priest's responsibilities**

The parish priest is responsible for notifying the Vicar General or the Finance Administrator **immediately** upon learning he will not return to the Archdiocese as scheduled. Where possible, the parish priest is responsible for notifying his parish of his extended absence.

The parish priest will take all reasonable steps to return to the Archdiocese as soon as possible. The parish priest will not receive the living allowance for clergy for his absence beyond 35 days.

## **2. The parish's responsibilities**

The parish is responsible for following any instructions issued by the Archbishop, Vicar General, and/or Finance Administrator during the extended absence of its parish priest. During this absence, the parish **must seek authorization** from the Vicar General and/or the Finance Administrator for any pastoral or financial decisions or actions that would normally be taken by the parish priest.

The parish is responsible for paying for any pastoral assistance received during the extended absence of the parish priest.

## **3. The Archdiocese's responsibilities**

The Archdiocese is responsible for arranging pastoral assistance in the extended absence of the parish priest as explained at the beginning of Section D.

Accepted by the College of Consultors on 2 March 2009  
Amended by the College of Consultors on 18 Sept 2009  
Amended by the College of Consultors on 16 Feb 2011  
Amended by the College of Consultors on 13 Nov 2012  
Amended by the College of Consultors on 11 March 2015  
Amended by the College of Consultors on 25 Oct 2016  
Amended by the College of Consultors on 12 June 2018  
Amended by the College of Consultors on 26 March 2019  
Reviewed by the Curia on 19 February 2026  
Amended by the College of Consultors on 9 June 2026

**Notification of a Planned Absence by a Priest**

(Please submit to the Chancellor for absences of four days or more)

**Part 1. General Information**

|                                   |                                                                                                                                        |                      |  |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------|--|
| Priest's Name                     |                                                                                                                                        |                      |  |
| Deanery                           |                                                                                                                                        | Total # of Days Away |  |
| Date of Departure                 |                                                                                                                                        | Date of Return       |  |
| Reason for Absence                | <input type="checkbox"/> Vacation <input type="checkbox"/> Retreat <input type="checkbox"/> Illness <input type="checkbox"/> Education |                      |  |
|                                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Other:                                                                                                        |                      |  |
| <b>Parishes of Responsibility</b> |                                                                                                                                        |                      |  |
| Parish 1                          |                                                                                                                                        | Parish 2             |  |
| Parish 3                          |                                                                                                                                        | Parish 4             |  |

**Part 2. Acknowledgment of Responsibilities to Parishes**

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |          |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|
| <i>Please read and write your initials next to each statement.</i>                                                                                                                                                                             | Initials |
| If I am absent and have not submitted a Form 3.6.1.a in advance to the Chancellor, payment for any pastoral assistance charged to my parish(es) will be garnered from my next payroll cheque.                                                  |          |
| I am responsible for ensuring that people in my parish(es) are informed of my absence and know who to contact for pastoral assistance.                                                                                                         |          |
| I have to arrange for physical checks of the church and rectory in my parish(es) every four (4) days during my absence. Name: _____                                                                                                            |          |
| If possible, shut off main water of the rectory.                                                                                                                                                                                               |          |
| Unplug unnecessary electrical appliances (TV, toaster, coffee maker)                                                                                                                                                                           |          |
| I will discuss the arrangements described in this form with the parish pastoral council or the parish finance council as much in advance of my absence as possible and get the chairperson's signature on this form (from all of my parishes). |          |

**Part 3. Pastoral Arrangements**

|                                                |     |                                                                                           |     |
|------------------------------------------------|-----|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| <b>Sunday Mass</b>                             |     |                                                                                           |     |
| <b>Parish 1</b>                                |     |                                                                                           |     |
| Sunday Masses will be celebrated in my absence |     | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes ( <i>provide details below</i> ) <input type="checkbox"/> No |     |
| Mass dates                                     | (1) | Mass times                                                                                | (1) |
|                                                | (2) |                                                                                           | (2) |
|                                                | (3) |                                                                                           | (3) |
|                                                | (4) |                                                                                           | (4) |
|                                                | (5) |                                                                                           | (5) |
| Celebrant(s)                                   |     | Fee estimate                                                                              |     |
| <b>Parish 2</b>                                |     |                                                                                           |     |

|                                                                                                                                          |     |              |     |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|--------------|-----|
| Sunday Masses will be celebrated in my absence <input type="checkbox"/> Yes ( <i>provide details below</i> ) <input type="checkbox"/> No |     |              |     |
| Mass dates                                                                                                                               | (1) | Mass times   | (1) |
|                                                                                                                                          | (2) |              | (2) |
|                                                                                                                                          | (3) |              | (3) |
|                                                                                                                                          | (4) |              | (4) |
|                                                                                                                                          | (5) |              | (5) |
| Celebrant(s)                                                                                                                             |     | Fee estimate |     |
| <b>Parish 3</b>                                                                                                                          |     |              |     |
| Sunday Masses will be celebrated in my absence <input type="checkbox"/> Yes ( <i>provide details below</i> ) <input type="checkbox"/> No |     |              |     |
| Mass dates                                                                                                                               | (1) | Mass times   | (1) |
|                                                                                                                                          | (2) |              | (2) |
|                                                                                                                                          | (3) |              | (3) |
|                                                                                                                                          | (4) |              | (4) |
|                                                                                                                                          | (5) |              | (5) |
| Celebrant(s)                                                                                                                             |     | Fee estimate |     |
| <b>Parish 4</b>                                                                                                                          |     |              |     |
| Sunday Masses will be celebrated in my absence <input type="checkbox"/> Yes ( <i>provide details below</i> ) <input type="checkbox"/> No |     |              |     |
| Mass dates                                                                                                                               | (1) | Mass times   | (1) |
|                                                                                                                                          | (2) |              | (2) |
|                                                                                                                                          | (3) |              | (3) |
|                                                                                                                                          | (4) |              | (4) |
|                                                                                                                                          | (5) |              | (5) |
| Celebrant(s)                                                                                                                             |     | Fee estimate |     |
| NOTES                                                                                                                                    |     |              |     |
| <b><u>Emergency/other coverage (funerals, anointing of the sick, etc.)</u></b>                                                           |     |              |     |
| I have arranged for the following pastoral coverage by [name of priest or deacon] in my absence                                          |     |              |     |
| Parish 1                                                                                                                                 |     | Parish 2     |     |
| Parish 3                                                                                                                                 |     | Parish 4     |     |
| NOTES                                                                                                                                    |     |              |     |

**Signatures:**

Priest: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

PPC/PFC Chair (Parish 1): \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

PPC/PFC Chair (Parish 2): \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

PPC/PFC Chair (Parish 3): \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

PPC/PFC Chair (Parish 4): \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Approved:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

(signature of ORDINARY or VICAR GENERAL)

Rev. February 2021

Rev. June 2026

**Claim for Ministerial Services Rendered**

Name of Priest or Deacon: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Parish receiving service: \_\_\_\_\_

| Date | Service | Mileage | Remarks |
|------|---------|---------|---------|
|      |         |         |         |
|      |         |         |         |
|      |         |         |         |
|      |         |         |         |
|      |         |         |         |
|      |         |         |         |
|      |         |         |         |
|      |         |         |         |
|      |         |         |         |
|      |         |         |         |

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Parish Priest or PPC/PFC Chair of parish receiving service\_\_\_\_\_  
Date\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Cleric providing service\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**\* The Cleric providing service submits this form to the Finance Administrator at the Chancery office for each parish and each month (if service is provided over different months) or upon completion of the Pastoral Service. Please send by fax (780.532.9706), e-mail ([finance.agm@outlook.com](mailto:finance.agm@outlook.com)) or mail (10301 102 St, Grande Prairie AB T8V2W2).**

\* If no Form 3.6.1.a has been submitted to the Chancellor by the absent priest, any payment for pastoral assistance during that absence will be garnered from the priest's next payroll cheque.

\* Please do not submit this form directly to the parish. Should the parish mistakenly receive this form, please forward it immediately to the Chancery office.

January 2016

**List of Physical Checks to be made by Parishioner in the Parish Priest's  
Absence**

(all items to be checked every 4 days during absence of parish priest required by insurance)

| <b>Item to be checked</b>                                 | <b>Date &amp; Time item checked</b> | <b>Initial of Parishioner checking</b> | <b>If Action was required, who was contacted</b> |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Check 1</b>                                            |                                     |                                        |                                                  |
| Water (sump pump, toilets, sinks, washer, hot water tank) |                                     |                                        |                                                  |
| Heating System                                            |                                     |                                        |                                                  |
| Doors (closed & locked)                                   |                                     |                                        |                                                  |
| Windows (closed & locked)                                 |                                     |                                        |                                                  |
| <b>Check 2</b>                                            |                                     |                                        |                                                  |
| Water (sump pump, toilets, sinks, washer, hot water tank) |                                     |                                        |                                                  |
| Heating System                                            |                                     |                                        |                                                  |
| Doors (Closed and Locked)                                 |                                     |                                        |                                                  |
| Windows (closed & locked)                                 |                                     |                                        |                                                  |
| <b>Check 3</b>                                            |                                     |                                        |                                                  |
| Water (sump pump, toilets, sinks, washer, hot water tank) |                                     |                                        |                                                  |
| Heating System                                            |                                     |                                        |                                                  |
| Doors (closed & locked)                                   |                                     |                                        |                                                  |
| Windows (closed & locked)                                 |                                     |                                        |                                                  |
| <b>Check 4</b>                                            |                                     |                                        |                                                  |
| Water (sump pump, toilets, sinks, washer, hot water tank) |                                     |                                        |                                                  |

|                           |  |  |  |
|---------------------------|--|--|--|
| Heating System            |  |  |  |
| Doors (closed & locked)   |  |  |  |
| Windows (closed & locked) |  |  |  |

|                                                           |  |  |  |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|--|--|--|
| <b>Check 5</b>                                            |  |  |  |
| Water (sump pump, toilets, sinks, washer, hot water tank) |  |  |  |
| Heating System                                            |  |  |  |
| Doors (closed & locked)                                   |  |  |  |
| Windows (closed & locked)                                 |  |  |  |
| <b>Check 6</b>                                            |  |  |  |
| Water (sump pump, toilets, sinks, washer, hot water tank) |  |  |  |
| Heating System                                            |  |  |  |
| Doors (Closed and Locked)                                 |  |  |  |
| Windows (closed & locked)                                 |  |  |  |
| <b>Check 7</b>                                            |  |  |  |
| Water (sump pump, toilets, sinks, washer, hot water tank) |  |  |  |
| Heating System                                            |  |  |  |
| Doors (closed & locked)                                   |  |  |  |
| Windows (closed & locked)                                 |  |  |  |
| <b>Check 8</b>                                            |  |  |  |
| Water (sump pump, toilets, sinks, washer, hot water tank) |  |  |  |
| Heating System                                            |  |  |  |



|                                                           |  |  |  |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|--|--|--|
| Doors (closed & locked)                                   |  |  |  |
| Windows (closed & locked)                                 |  |  |  |
| <b>Check 9</b>                                            |  |  |  |
| Water (sump pump, toilets, sinks, washer, hot water tank) |  |  |  |
| Heating System                                            |  |  |  |
| Doors (closed & locked)                                   |  |  |  |
| Windows (closed & locked)                                 |  |  |  |
|                                                           |  |  |  |

## Schedule of Fees

*(see Policy 3.5.1 Parish Responsibilities for Collecting and Paying Fees for Pastoral Services)*

| Service                                                   | Fee                    |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|------------------------|
| Sunday Mass                                               | \$35                   |
| Weekday Mass                                              | \$15                   |
| Marriage                                                  | \$100 (Suggested only) |
| Funeral                                                   | \$200 (Suggested only) |
| Penitential Service                                       | \$35 (Home deanery)    |
|                                                           | \$50 (Other deanery)   |
| Mileage – AGM clergy                                      | \$0.20 per km          |
| Mileage – clergy from outside AGM                         | \$0.42 per km          |
| Fee for entire 35 days (for priest from outside AGM only) | \$1000                 |