



DIOCESE OF EAST ANGLIA

**Diocesan Policy on  
WELCOMING PRIESTS FROM OVERSEAS,  
OR FROM ELSEWHERE IN THE UNITED KINGDOM  
FOR ANY PERIOD OF MINISTRY,  
INCLUDING WITH A VIEW TO EVENTUAL INCARDINATION**

1. The Diocese of East Anglia is warmly open to the possibility, under the right circumstances and after careful discernment, of priests from elsewhere in the United Kingdom or from overseas coming to work in partnership with the incardinated priests of the diocese and religious priests working in the diocese, either for a short period (several weeks or months), for a fixed but extended period (one or more years), or for a longer time, perhaps even with eventual incardination in mind. Full consideration must always be given, however, to the pastoral needs of the countries from which such priests come.
2. Any period of ministry, however short or long, will be possible only with the full and positive support of a priest's Bishop, Abbot, Provincial or equivalent, and when the necessary documents have been exchanged.

This process includes above all a **Testimonial of Suitability for Ministry** which will be sent directly from the Bishop of East Anglia to the priest's Bishop or equivalent superior to sign, and any Child Protection procedures mandatory throughout England and Wales. The Testimonial of Suitability for Ministry confirms that the priest is in good standing, and that there are no concerns, allegations or criminal convictions (e.g. relating to any misconduct with children or vulnerable adults).

**In the case of a Diocesan Priest**, permission must be given by the priest's Bishop for a specified and temporary period of ministry in East Anglia. This can then be reviewed and renewed as agreed.

**In the case of a Religious Priest**, permission should be given by the priest's Abbot, Provincial or equivalent for a period of no more than 12 months from the date of issue. It can be reviewed and renewed at the end of each 12 month period.

3. It needs to be recognised that difficulties may be encountered in gaining entry visas to the United Kingdom for priests from some countries, even when the full support of the Bishop of East Anglia has been communicated to the relevant authorities.
4. Any priest will be accepted at first only on a provisional basis (usually for three months with no commitment on either side for extension) and will usually minister as an assistant priest under the direction of the local Parish Priest (unless he comes 'on supply' or for further studies).
5. Any priest working in the diocese must be sufficiently fluent in spoken English to be able to be easily understood as he celebrates the sacraments, preaches and teaches, and gives spiritual counsel. Priests from overseas who come to minister for an extended period may be required to attend further classes in English to ensure the maximum fruitfulness of their ministry.
6. For any extended ministry in the diocese, he must be able to drive a car.
7. A placement in the diocese can be ended at any time by either the Bishop of East Anglia or by the priest's Bishop or equivalent Superior, although always after full discussion with the other, and with the priest himself. If the Bishop of East Anglia decides to end such a placement, he will inform the priest's Bishop or equivalent superior of the reasons, and the Diocese of East Anglia will seek to facilitate the return of the priest to his home country.

*Please turn over*

8. Any priest from outside the diocese will receive only what financial and other support, holiday entitlement, etc any other assistant priest in the particular parish receives, unless a prior agreement has been made with the Diocese or parish for an alternative arrangement. The Diocese of East Anglia and most of its parishes have very limited financial resources, which may well be stretched by making welcome an extra priest. All personal expenses, including personal phone bills, will be paid by the visiting priest. Any expenses essential to coming to East Anglia for which the priest hopes to claim must be agreed in writing before any such costs are incurred. Adequate accommodation will be provided (this does not include accommodation for friends and relatives). Although there is help in a few presbyteries, most priests in East Anglia look after themselves, doing their own cooking, washing, ironing and cleaning: priests should come to East Anglia expecting, ready and willing to do the same.
9. Any priest working in the diocese is welcomed on the basis that he comes simply to offer a time of ministry to the Diocese, rather than for any financial gain either for himself or for others. He may not engage in fundraising for projects of any kind, nor should he expect any extra financial support from the diocese for his family, etc. Taking up or arranging collections in the parish, approaching other bodies, funding organisations or individuals for any kind of fund-raising, or setting up donor address lists for later contact, is strictly prohibited.
10. Priests from overseas giving several years of service to the diocese can expect to be able to return to their home country for a holiday during their time in East Anglia; whether or not such travel can be subsidised in some way from parish funds will be open to discussion with the Parish Priest and Parish Finance Committee, but the norm should be that such costs will be covered from the annual income provided from the parish. Although it may be thought that each Parish and Diocese in the United Kingdom is relatively wealthy, financial constraints often make it very difficult to cover costs.
11. Any priest working in the Diocese is required to exercise their ministry in keeping with established diocesan policies and customs in East Anglia, with the *Diocesan Pastoral Plan* (2004), and with the normative Child Protection Procedures of the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales.
12. Any priest seeking to spend more than two weeks in ministry in the Diocese will be required to sign himself and have signed by his Bishop or equivalent Superior the formal declaration accepting these conditions, given at the end of this document.
13. All of the conditions above are in no way designed to deter priests offering their service to the diocese. For the priest's own sake, we think it right to make clear from the beginning the way that we work.
14. Any priest accepted for a time of ministry in the Diocese of East Anglia will be warmly welcome into the diocesan family and *presbyterium*. His Bishop, Abbot or Provincial will be welcome to visit the diocese.

### **Diocesan Policy on Incardination**

15. Priests seeking to come to East Anglia with a view to possible eventual **incardination** need to be aware that incardination will not be considered for at least three years after arrival in the diocese, and on the recommendation of the Diocesan Personnel Board. No commitment to incardination will be made, although the Bishop will meet with the priest each year to monitor the situation.
16. All priests seeking eventual incardination need to be aware of the provisions of canons 267 - 269 of the *Code of Canon Law*.

**This copy of the policy is for information only.**

**Priests need to obtain an original copy from the Bishop's Office in East Anglia after initial discussion about the possibility of a time of ministry.**

The original copy includes declarations which will need to be signed  
by both the priest offering a time of ministry,  
and by his Bishop, Abbot or Provincial.