

*Office of Pastoral Ministries*  
*Diocese of Manchester*

**PASTORAL ASSOCIATE CERTIFICATION POLICY**

**DIOCESE OF MANCHESTER, NEW HAMPSHIRE**  
EFFECTIVE January 1, 1995

**I PASTORAL MINISTRY IN THE CHURCH**

God's love, incarnate in Christ, continues to enter and transform the world through the Church, the living Body of Christ. It is the Church that carries on the mission of Jesus, proclaiming the Kingdom of God in our midst and witnessing to the power of his death and resurrection until he comes.

By sacramental initiation, every Catholic is called to share in the mission of Christ and the Church, each in a particular way and always in union with the community of the Church.

Pastoral ministry is one of the ways in which Catholics are called to carry forward the mission of the Church. This ministry makes present the shepherding care of the Lord for all his people. By sacramental ordination, bishops, together with the priests and deacons who assist them, have overall responsibility for ministry to the Church and the world. They do not carry out this work alone, but call forth others who in association with them minister in pastoral roles appropriate to their gifts and experience -- such as teaching, counseling, paraliturgical services, and the coordination of the activities of the Church.

Those who participate in this pastoral ministry do so only in and for the Church. They do not serve in their own name or by their own authority; rather, it can be said that the Church ministers through them. And it is through the Church that the Spirit guides them and leads them in prayer and in service to others.

To assist in the pastoral care of a parish, the Bishop of Manchester has established the role of pastoral associate. The pastors of local communities may call any baptized persons to such positions, but always on the basis of their strong faith, their deep love of the Church, their competence as teachers of the Catholic tradition, and their witness of an authentic Christian life.

## II. PROCESS FOR THE CERTIFICATION OF A PASTORAL ASSOCIATE

### A. REQUIREMENTS FOR CERTIFICATION

- I. Any person who desires to serve as a pastoral associate, and who by formation and/or education would seem qualified for this role, may apply for certification. The individual is ready to bring to the parish competence and compassion which may find expression in a wide range of services both pastoral and professional. The candidate must be a person of strong faith, witness to the Good News of Jesus Christ, blessed with a deep love of the People of God and the Catholic Church, knowledgeable of church teachings and committed to its mission.
2. Qualities of a pastoral associate include:
  - a. Faith Commitment
    - Possesses a deep faith in the Lord.
    - Gives evidence of a Catholic way of life inspired by the Gospel.
    - Participates actively and regularly in the worship and sacramental life of the Church.
    - Shows obvious love for the People of God and commitment to the Church's teachings.
  - b. Personality
    - Has a healthy self-image.
    - Possesses leadership ability.
    - Is a collaborative team worker.
    - Takes initiative.
    - Has a flexible and open attitude.
    - Manifests hospitality.
    - Relates well.
    - Possesses a sense of humor.
    - Is compassionate and pastoral.
  - c. Ministerial and Spiritual Formation
    - Has the education, training and experience requisite for the ministerial needs of the parish.
    - Demonstrates organizational and administrative skills.
    - Is committed to ongoing professional education and spiritual formation such as spiritual direction, annual retreat and other ongoing formation opportunities.

### 3. Education and Experience

The candidate should have the level of education and/or experience considered necessary for effectiveness in the general and specific aspects of the ministry.

#### a. Minimum entry level for provisional certification:

- An appropriate Bachelors Degree, and
- At least five years experience in ministry or other type of work making use of similar qualifications, and
- Enrolled in or having the intention of pursuing, within three years, studies toward a Masters Degree in theology, pastoral ministry or a related field

OR

- An appropriate combination of the above to be judged in each individual situation by the Director of the Pastoral Ministry Office and the Certification Committee.

#### NOTE

Provisional certification may be granted to a person studying for an advanced degree or already engaged in a form of pastoral ministry and participating in pastoral ministry formation. The Pastoral Ministry Office and the candidate will agree to a specific plan to achieve full certification.

#### b. Entry level for full certification:

##### 1) Ordinarily:

- A Masters Degree in theological studies, pastoral ministry or a related field
- Three years experience in ministry or other type of work making use of similar qualifications

##### 2) Extraordinarily:

- A Bachelors Degree in an appropriate field, and
- Ten to fifteen years experience in ministry or other type of work making use of similar qualifications, and
- Proven competency in the required areas of ministry.

OR

- An appropriate combination of the above to be judged in each individual situation, by the Director of the Pastoral Ministry Office and the Certification Board.

## B APPLICATION

1. A candidate for certification is required to complete and submit the following materials to the Pastoral Ministry Office, PO Box 310, Manchester, NH 03105-0310:
  - a. Certification Application Form
  - b. Minimum of three letters of reference (one personal; one from each of his/her work supervisor of the last five years; and one of the candidate's choice)
2. Upon receipt of the appropriate forms, the Office of Pastoral Ministry will schedule an interview with the candidate.

## C THE INTERVIEW

Before a candidate is certified by the Diocese of Manchester as a pastoral associate, he/she will be interviewed by the Director of the Pastoral Ministry Office and the Certification Committee. The interview will include a review of the following areas:

1. The faith commitment of the candidate.
2. The candidate's academic competence from the perspective of formation in Catholic doctrine as well as exposure to the human sciences that relate to pastoral ministry.
3. The professional background, training, and practical experience of the applicant.

## D. DECISION ON CERTIFICATION

Upon consultation with the Certification Committee, the Director of the Pastoral Ministry Office will make the decision as to whether or not a candidate is eligible for certification.

Certification is granted for a period of five years. A pastoral associate is responsible for contacting the Pastoral Ministry Office for certification renewal.

## E CONTINUING EDUCATION/FORMATION

A person certified as a pastoral associate is required to participate in continuing formation programs as provided by the Diocese and parish, and as necessary for an individual's areas of responsibility. Fifteen hours of professional development per year is recommended as an acceptable minimum.

Such topics may include, but are not limited to:

- Worship and spirituality
- Scripture
- Doctrine
- Parish outreach/evangelization
- Adult enrichment
- Family life
- Peace and justice
- Organization and administration
- Youth ministry
- Religious education

## F PASTORAL ASSOCIATE FILE

- I A certification file will be established in the Office of Pastoral Ministry for each pastoral associate who is granted full or provisional certification.
- 2 In keeping with the **GUIDELINES FOR PASTORAL ASSOCIATES** concerning formation, each pastoral associate will be asked to submit yearly updated information regarding courses taken, workshops attended, and related experience.

APPLICATION FOR CERTIFICATION OF PASTORAL ASSOCIATE  
DIOCESE OF MANCHESTER, NH

NAME \_\_\_\_\_  
(title) (first) (middle) (last)

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_  
(number and street)

\_\_\_\_\_ (city) (state) (zip)

DAY PHONE \_\_\_\_\_ EVENING PHONE \_\_\_\_\_

E-MAIL \_\_\_\_\_

TYPE OF CERTIFICATION REQUESTED: \_\_\_\_\_ FULL \_\_\_\_\_ PROVISIONAL

EDUCATION

List your educational history and send us transcripts of your college and graduate school records.

High School \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Year of Graduation \_\_\_\_\_

College \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Degree/Major \_\_\_\_\_

Year Granted \_\_\_\_\_ Years In Progress \_\_\_\_\_

Graduate School \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Degree/Major \_\_\_\_\_

Years Attended \_\_\_\_\_ Year Graduated \_\_\_\_\_

Other Institution \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Degree/Certificate \_\_\_\_\_

Year Received \_\_\_\_\_



**REFERENCES**

Minimum of three letters of reference:

Please ask (at least) three people to write letters of recommendation regarding your qualifications for certification as a pastoral associate.

(2 professional; 1 personal)

**PERSONAL STATEMENTS**

Give a brief statement of your philosophy of Ministry. (Use other side if necessary.)

State what you believe is the role of a Pastoral Associate.

**INTERVIEW AVAILABILITY**

Indicate when you would be available for an interview.

Days \_\_\_\_\_

Times \_\_\_\_\_

## THE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT RECORD

Pastoral Associates are asked to participate yearly in programs related to the ministry in order to maintain Diocesan Certification.

The following guidelines are designed to assist you in preparation of a Professional Development Record for presentation to the Diocesan Pastoral Ministry Office at the time of certification or annual updating of certification as found on our diocesan website.

1. Academic Development includes:
  - courses, workshops, seminars
  - consultation
  - reading (books, journals, etc.)
  - courses taught, enrollment
  - course revisions, methods, units, lectures
  - new courses, workshops, programs, seminars
  
2. Professional Development includes:
  - memberships
  - meetings
  - research
  - conferences, workshops, seminars
  - consultation
  - reading (books, journals, etc.)
  
3. Parish/Deanery/Diocesan Service and Responsibilities:
  - committees
  - administrative duties
  - in-service instruction
  - counseling
  - orientation programs
  - teaching
  
4. Community Activities include:
  - committees (state, town, neighborhood)
  - contributions of time and service
  - organization memberships
  
5. Personal Development and Enrichment includes:
  - reading
  - travel
  - activities
  - writing
  - general education