

**INCARDINATION PROCESS FOR PRIESTS**

The process of incardination is based on canons 265-272 of the 1982 *Code of Canon Law*. Below is an outline of the process followed in the Diocese of Las Cruces.

**A. REQUIREMENTS**

1. The priest must work in the diocese for four years before he will be accepted to begin the process for incardination.
2. Preferably the priest will have been assigned in at least *two parishes* before he begins the process for incardination.
3. After the priest has been in the diocese at least four years, he is to write to the diocesan bishop and state his intention to seek incardination.
4. If a priest writes before he has been in the diocese four years, unless the bishop wishes to make an exception to this procedure, he will respond saying that he is not willing to begin the incardination process at that time. With his letter, the bishop will enclose a copy of this procedure.
5. The priest is to obtain from his own diocesan bishop or religious superior a letter which indicates that his bishop or superior is supportive of the priest's request to begin the process of incardination into the Diocese of Las Cruces, and that he is willing to excardinate the priest should the priest's request be accepted.
6. If the priest's first language is not English, he will be expected to demonstrate linguistic facility in English commensurate to his priestly ministry, especially preaching and conversational skills. The priest will also be expected to demonstrate linguistic facility in Spanish.
7. The diocesan bishop will bring the request to the Priests Personnel Board for consideration who review the case and arrange for an interview.
8. The priest must sign a release for the Diocese of Las Cruces to obtain any and all personnel records from each diocese and/or religious institute in which he has served. The release states that the records will be made available to the Priests Personnel Board.
9. A background check shall be completed in accordance with diocesan policy.

**B. EVALUATIONS AND EXAMINATIONS**

1. The Director of Clergy Personnel will provide the priest with an outline for a detailed personal and ministerial history .This must be completed prior to commencement of the following steps.
2. The Director of Clergy Personnel will arrange that evaluations will be sought from the following persons:
  - a. the appropriate vicar
  - b. the pastors and associate pastors with whom he has served
  - c. other responsible lay persons with whom he has worked or been associated.

3. The Director of Clergy Personnel will arrange for a psychological evaluation. The results will be made available to the diocesan bishop and the Incardination Committee and, if needed, the Priest Personnel Board. The diocese will pay for the psychological evaluation.
4. The priest will undergo a physical examination, the results of which are made accessible to the Incardination Committee and, if needed, the Priest Personnel Board. The diocese will pay for the medical evaluation.
5. The Director of Clergy Personnel will obtain complete personnel files from all dioceses and/or religious institutes with which the priest has been served. All personnel complete files will be made available to the Incardination Committee.
6. If the priest's current background check is more than one year old, a new background check will be completed and paid for by the diocese.

**C. CRITERIA FOR INCARDINATION DECISIONS**

1. The priest will have demonstrated an eagerness to promote the mission of the universal Church, in general, and the values, vision pastoral plan for the Diocese of Las Cruces, in particular.
2. The priest will have demonstrated an ability and a willingness to work collaboratively with the laity, including women religious.
3. The priest will have demonstrated an appreciation of and an ability to serve effectively persons of the various cultures and ethnic groupings of the diocese.
4. The priest will have demonstrated an ability and a willingness to follow all diocesan policy, but especially diocesan policy dealing with the administration of temporal goods.
5. The priest will have demonstrated competency as a parish administrator.
6. The priest will have contributed to the solidarity of the presbyterate of the diocese by attendance at diocesan priests' gathering, the annual priest retreat, vicariate meetings and by appropriate collaboration with other priests of his vicariate.
7. Consideration will be given to the language skills of the priest.
8. The priest will present a plan for provision for his retirement which is realistic to the diocese.

**D. INTERVIEWS**

1. The priest will meet with the Director of Clergy Personnel to discuss his request and review the process of incardination.
2. Once request of the priest has been accepted and all evaluation have been received, the Incardination Committee will interview the priest. The results of the interview will be shared with the Priest Personnel Assignment Board for its consideration. The Priests Personnel Assignment Board will make its recommendations to the diocesan bishop.

**E. FORMAL INCARDINATION**

1. The decree of excardination must be obtained from the priest's bishop in response to his written request to excardinate and to incardinate into the Diocese of Las Cruces. In the case of the religious priest, the documents necessary to incardinate him must be obtained.
2. The priest will be invited to a meeting of the Priest Personnel Assignment Board. At this meeting, the priest will swear and sign the Oath of Fidelity in the presence of the diocesan bishop and a canonical notary (chancellor or vice-chancellor). The diocesan bishop will sign the Decree of Incardination, which is also notarized.
3. On Holy Thursday at the Chrism Mass, the priests incardinated during the previous year are publicly welcomed by the presbyterate of the diocese.