

Basic regulations
for priests from abroad
employed in pastoral care
in the Diocese of Münster

General provisions

1. Priests from Asia, Africa, Latin America or Eastern Europe are welcome in the pastoral care work of the Diocese of Münster. They are assigned to a parish priest.

Prerequisites for the assignment

2. A priest from abroad is only invited to take up a longer-term assignment in the pastoral service of the Diocese of Münster provided that:
 - a) he has been released in writing from his duties by his local bishop or the superior of the religious order
 - b) all necessary documents (according to the application checklist) have been provided
 - c) the priest can prove that he has passed all four modules of the B1 examination (usually taken at a Goethe Institute in his home country)

To prepare for their long-term assignment in pastoral care, priests who come from abroad must take part in the German and phonetic courses stipulated by the Diocese of Münster and attain the TELC certificate as proof of their success in the B1+, B2 and B2+ examinations.

Alongside his assignment, the priest from abroad attends the pastoral course, to receive an introduction to western culture and the conventions of the Diocese of Münster, and also the appropriate preventive training course. Having completed the latter course, he submits the signed declaration of undertaking and proof of attendance.

Contract

3. Priests who come from abroad are received into the pastoral ministry of the Diocese of Muenster by the bishop. The *Hauptabteilung (HA) Seelsorge-Personal im Bischöflichen Generalvikariat* (Central Department Pastoral Care Personnel at the Episcopal Vicariate General) is responsible for implementation throughout the diocese.
A contract for the assignment is concluded between the Diocese of Muenster and the diocese or province from which the priest has been seconded. The contract commences when the first German course in the Diocese of Muenster begins and is initially for a period of five years. It can be extended for a further five years following consultation with the bishop or religious superior in the home country, the parish priest and the priest from abroad. The priest's service in the Diocese of Muenster normally ends after ten years. A further extension of his assignment in the Diocese of Muenster is possible after renewed consultation with those involved.

The contract can be terminated prematurely for a given reason. This may be at the wish of the priest from abroad, the bishop or religious superior seconding the priest, or the Diocese of Muenster.

Introduction to the Diocese of Muenster

4. It is the responsibility of the advisor for priests from abroad in the Diocese of Muenster at the Central Department for Pastoral Care Personnel in cooperation with the Borromaeum seminary for priests to provide an introduction to western culture (incl. language acquisition) and the conventions of the Diocese of Muenster as well as further training.

The deployment of priests from abroad within the Diocese of Muenster is the task of the Central Department for Pastoral Care Personnel or the Department for Pastoral Care Personnel in the Diocese of Muenster Oldenburg is carried out in consultation with the personnel conference and the bishop.

Internship

5. After taking the language examination at B2 level, priests from abroad begin an internship in a parish of the diocese. A member of the team of full-time pastoral workers acts as a mentor and deals with all matters associated with a first-time deployment in pastoral care. The internship ends with the final German language course which prepares the priest for the B2+ examination. After taking the B2+ examination the official letter of assignment is sent. If all involved agree, the priest is assigned to the parish in which he did his internship. If the priest does not pass the B2+ examination the first time, he can repeat it. If after three years this certificate has not been attained, the contract is terminated by the Diocese of Muenster.

Holiday – retreats – further training

6. Priests from abroad – as is usually the case for priests – have trust-based working hours. The same rules apply for holiday, retreats and further training. The priest from abroad tells the parish priest in good time which dates he would like to take. If the pastoral needs of the parish allow, the parish priest approves the request:
 - The valid version of the holiday regulations “*Urlaubsregelung für die in der Pfarrseelsorge tätigen Geistlichen*” applies.
 - Every three years – calculated from the beginning of the contract – the priest has the right to return to his home country for a holiday lasting a maximum of six consecutive weeks. The holiday entitlement for the year in question is included this period. Flight expenses for the home leave are reimbursed in full every three years, provided that the appropriate receipts are submitted to the departments for pastoral care personnel Münster / Vechta. Additional travel expenses, e.g. for travelling to or from the airport by car or train are not reimbursed.
 - One week in the year is available for religious retreats. The priest bears the costs of these.
 - Priests who come from abroad are obliged to attend an annual study week for the purpose of exchanging ideas with colleagues, theological affirmation and increasing their knowledge of western cultures and the conventions of the Diocese of Muenster. The priest from abroad bears part of the costs.
 - In addition, priests from abroad can enrol for courses listed in the training programme for those working in pastoral care issued by the Central Department for Pastoral Care Personnel. The diocese bears the costs of these courses.

Health insurance

7. A priest from abroad who is a diocesan priest must register on his own initiative with a statutory health insurance company. It is not possible for him to join a private health insurance scheme.
- When a priest from abroad is a religious priest, the religious order to which he belongs is responsible for taking out health insurance.

Finances

8. The salary of priests who come from abroad is paid according to the regulations for pay and pensions for priests in the North Rhine-Westphalia / Oldenburg section of the Diocese of Münster (*Ordnung der Dienst- und Versorgungsbezüge der Priester im nordrheinwestfälischen bzw. oldenburgischen Teil des Bistums Münster*) or according to the relevant regulations for priests who belong to religious orders. At the age of 38, the priest from abroad is usually appointed as a pastor.
- The religious order is responsible for ensuring that the religious priest is provided with appropriate financial means for a life in the West. Diocesan priests receive these financial provisions directly. This money is primarily for the purpose of covering living costs. In addition, the priests may support their home diocese with a voluntary donation amounting to no more than EUR 400 monthly.

Driving licence

9. Those working for the Diocese of Münster require a car driving licence which is valid in the European Union. The costs for obtaining the licence are to be borne by the priest himself or the religious order. This also applies to the purchase and maintenance of a car. Travel expenses necessary for official duties can be claimed according to the regulations for pastoral workers in the North Rhine-Westphalia / Oldenburg part of the diocese of Münster.

Parish administration

10. If they are suitable, priests who come from abroad may also be charged with the administration of a parish. They will be prepared for this task accordingly.

These basic regulations come into force on 1 June 2018. On the same date, the basic regulations from 1 February 2011 cease to be valid.

Muenster, 24 April 2018

L. S.

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