



## Policy for International Priests in the Diocese of Erie

### **Tourist visa/non-worker Visa:**

When an international priest on a tourist visa or other non-worker visa, enters into the Diocese of Erie to visit family/friends or is on vacation, the following restrictions apply, as based on the federal laws enforced by the Department of Homeland Security and Immigration Services, the Internal Revenue Service and diocesan Policy for the Protection of Children.

The Priest may only celebrate a private mass or concelebrate with a priest assigned to the parish. He may not celebrate alone a regularly scheduled Mass that ordinarily would be done by a priest assigned to the parish.

Celebrating Mass, or providing pastoral services for parishioners of any kind, is considered “work” by Immigration laws and requires that the ordained cleric have a worker visa, green card or is a US citizen. Furthermore, such clerics would not have the required criminal clearance and required safe environment training and documentation of the Diocese of Erie.

(NOTE: Violations of the federal law could result in costly fines and jeopardize the diocese’s ability to secure worker visas for international priests in the future.)

### **Religious Worker Visa:**

International priests coming to work in the Diocese would be required to:

- Submit among other required documents a letter from proper Ordinary indicating the priest’s current status, background, character and reputation. Any confirmed record or history of an untreated problem with substance abuse, violations of celibacy, sexual impropriety, physical abuse. Ordinary must certify that he is unaware of anything in the priest’s background which would render him unsuitable to work with minors.
- Interview with the Bishop. Interview to include among other questions: Have you committed a crime against children?
- If possible undergo a background check from country of origin.
- Complete an application (one time)
- Complete the Statement of Intent for Compliance (when policy is revised)
- Complete the Mandated Reporter Compliance Document (yearly)
- Complete the Diocesan Safe Environment online training (every five years)
- Obtain a clearance from the Office for the Protection of Children and Youth (one time)

To align with visa extension after 30 months:

- PA State Police Criminal History Record
- PA Child Abuse History Certification
- FBI Fingerprinting

*Approved by the Diocesan Review Board  
September 4, 2019  
Erie, Pennsylvania*