

MATTERS PERTAINING TO PRIESTS/SEMINARIANS

I. Program for Newly-ordained Priests

- A. The Bishops of the U.S. have emphasized the importance of programs for newly ordained priests. "The first years of priestly ministry make exacting demands on a young priest in his spiritual and emotional maturing, the formation of his pastoral skills, and the practice of theological reflection. Special programs should be created to meet the particular needs confronting priests at this stage of ministry" (The Program of Continuing Education of Priests, USCC, 1972, p. 15).
- B. A program for the newly ordained should help build a greater spirit of mutual support in the diocese. It should give the newly ordained a sense of truly belonging. It should also give those who are mentors a sense of their own personal value and a feeling of affirmation because they have been able to share their own experience of priesthood with another priest.
- C. It is, therefore, strongly recommended that our newly ordained priests join a priests' support group. Existing support groups are encouraged to invite the newly ordained to join them.
- D. It is, further, the policy of this Diocese that newly ordained priests are to have a mentor.
1. The mentor is chosen by the newly ordained in consultation with the bishop.
 2. The mentor is to be a priest other than the one the newly ordained is working with in ministry.
 3. The newly ordained and his mentor are to meet at least four times a year for two years following ordination.
 4. The newly ordained is to be in contact with the Bishop to verify that he and his mentor are meeting.
- E. Since the newly ordained has just completed seminary training, topics for discussion between the newly ordained and his mentor should be more practical and pastoral than philosophical and theological, and they should include: adjusting to rectory life, pastor/associate relationship, stress, managing conflicting situations, prayer and spirituality, preaching, relationships with one's family, working with staff, loneliness, managing one's time, planning, on-going formation needs, diocesan services, approaches to evangelization, material in the Diocesan Policy Book, etc.