

## **DEPLOYMENT OF CLERGY FROM OUTSIDE THE UNITED STATES**

Deployment of priests who are not United States citizens and who are not ordained in or canonically resident in the Episcopal Church in the United States of America is complicated. Three significant issues need to be addressed: immigration status, canonical residence, and the search process.

### **Addressing Immigration Issues**

In order for a priest to work in the United States, he or she must have a Religious worker's visa. He or she must have a position offered before receiving the visa. R1 visas expire and must be renewed. The application and renewal process for permanent residence takes time and is costly. Immigration and Naturalization Service requirements and processes have become more restrictive since September 11, 2001. Contact the United States Department of State, the consulate or embassy for current and specific information about employment and visas.

### **Addressing Canonical Issues**

Any priest who comes into the Episcopal Church of the United States of America from another church in the Anglican Communion must fulfill all the requirements of our national canons (Title III, Canon 10), including successful completion of the physical, psychological, and psychiatric evaluations. The cost of the psychological assessment alone is approximately \$1000 and is paid by the member of the clergy. There is no guarantee that an applicant will be given canonical residence. The final decision is made by the Bishop of Rhode Island after reviewing the reports.

### **Addressing Search Process Issues**

Positions in the Episcopal Diocese of Rhode Island are not filled by appointment. They are filled by a process of discernment whereby a candidate applies, is interviewed, and is considered among a field of other candidates. In order to participate in that process, candidates are expected to submit a resume and a Church Deployment Office profile and be available to participate in a series of interviews in the parish. Members of parish search committees expect to visit candidates in their home parishes. Often the cost of financing the candidacy of a priest from overseas is too expensive for many of our parishes. No position is filled without the approval of the Bishop of Rhode Island.

I hope this information is useful to you as you consider the possibility of serving in the Episcopal Church in the United States of America and in the Episcopal Diocese of Rhode Island.

Elizabeth Fornal  
Canon for Congregations and Clergy  
Diocese of Rhode Island