



EPISCOPAL DIOCESE of Rhode Island

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. They must have a position offered before they will receive the visa. R1 visas expire and must be renewed. The application and renewal process for permanent residence takes time and is costly (ranging from \$8,000 to \$20,000). 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 \$1,500 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 candidates apply, interview, and compete with a field of other candidates. In order to participate in that process, candidates are expected to submit a resume, a portfolio completed for the Office of Transition Ministry (OTM) and a letter of interest and they need to be available to participate in a series of interviews in the church. Members of search committees sometimes expect to visit candidates in their home parishes and candidates normally visit the church for a couple of days. The cost of financing the candidacy of a priest from overseas is often too expensive for many of our congregations. 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. If you have additional questions, please contact me at: Dena@episcopalri.org.

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