

But Jesus called them to Himself and said to them, "You know that those who are considered rulers over the Gentiles Lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you shall be your servant. And whoever of you desires to be first shall be slave of all. For even as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many."

Mark 10: 42-45

Practical Guidelines for Attached and Secondarily Assigned Clergy

10 February 2020

Dear Faithful,

Saint Ignatius of Antioch, in his letter to the Smyrnaeans, said, "Where the bishop is, there let the people be." In an ideal world, I would be with my flock as we gather. The practical realities of a geographically disbursed church, in addition a limited number of bishops, have led to a model where the presbyter routinely serves a parish in the place of the bishop, who represents Christ in the Divine Services. It is Christ's peace that the priest offers - his offering that we make. Most important, it is, "The Lord, Christ, that you serve." (Col. 3:24).

Therefore, as this liturgical ministry is delegated by me to rectors in my parishes, I will reiterate my admonition that no practice be adopted without a solid precedent in the great tradition of our Holy Church. The priest of Christ, after all, vows before his ordination, "Not to introduce any changes or innovations to the customary Church ceremonial worship services."

In this same Oath of Allegiance to the Holy Priesthood, the presbyter further vows, "To set a good example, in humility and meekness, in order to guide others to good and noble things. Not seeking vain honor and interest, but the Glory of God, the welfare of God's Holy Church and the salvation of my neighbor." Therein lies the way of the Christian pastor - to serve within the holy tradition for the sake of the salvation of those souls entrusted to his care. There is, therefore, a measure of freedom in establishing a typicon in each parish in accordance with the needs, not of the priest himself and his interests, but the salvation of his flock.

It is with this pastoral rubric in mind that I charge my rectors (or priests-in-charge, as it were) to serve the parishes and missions entrusted to them in the fear of God, with all reverence and fear.

To this end, where multiple clergy are assigned or attached to a single parish, there is but one who is placed in the senior position – this priest, alone, will answer for the manner in which he leads and serves his flock. This is a blessing, as Saint Paul tells us, "For the one in authority is God's servant for your good." (Rom. 13:4)

Accordingly, I offer the following guidelines for attached or secondarily assigned clergy in parishes and missions throughout the Diocese of the South. Please abide by these. I ask that any deviation from them be blessed by me directly.



Archbishop Alexander

GUIDELINES FOR ATTACHED AND SECONDARILY ASSIGNED CLERGY

- 1) The diocesan bishop may, at his discretion, assign or attach clergy (priest's and deacons) to parishes and missions according to the need of each community and in some cases, the particular demands of the clergyman himself.
- 2) The rector, or priest-in-charge, is ultimately charged with the pastoral care of the flock, and assigned or attached clergy should employ all deference to the rector or priest-in-charge in pastoral matters.
- 3) Attached or assigned priests may only hear confessions in the parish with the blessing of the bishop and at the invitation of the rector or priest in charge.
- 4) The parish typicon is directed by the rector or priest-in-charge – as noted in the Uniform Parish Bylaws of the Diocese of the South, the priest's primary responsibility is to preach and teach the doctrine of the Holy Orthodox Church, preside over the celebration of the Holy Mysteries and divine services in accordance with the Tradition of the Church, and to ensure that the life of the Parish as a whole is guided and directed toward spiritual and now secular ends. (Article V.)
- 5) The parish priest should strive toward the Diocesan Minimum Parish Guidelines in crafting the liturgical *and* parish calendar in the parish.
- 6) Assigned and attached clergy should work with the rector or priest-in-charge to assure that there are clear expectations surrounding responsibilities within the parish – assigned and attached clergy should, in turn, defer to the rector or priest-in-charge in all matters that are not clearly delegated to him.
- 7) Matters of musical or rubrical discretion shall ultimately be the domain of the rector or priest-in-charge, and assigned or attached clergy should support the rector or priest in charge in fulfilling his vision for services that are conducted decently and in good order.
- 8) When there are matters of conflict or significant difference between the rector or priest-in-charge and assigned or attached clergy, all efforts should be made to resolve these issues internally in a Christian manner. In rare cases, issues of conflict may be presented to the regional Dean for consideration and mediation. In the dean's absence, the Chancellor may be consulted instead.
- 9) It should be acknowledged that, absent moral indiscretions, violations of the Church canons, statutes or guidelines, or negligence in the performance of priestly duties, the bishop will, as a rule, defer to the rector or priest in charge in matters of parish governances.

Signed (Name of Assigned or Attached Clergy) | DATE | PARISH