



The Diocese of Virginia Policy on Resigning Priests

When you were ordained Priest, you heard the Bishop say that in all that you do, you are to nourish Christ's people from the riches of his grace, and strengthen them to glorify God in this life and in the life to come. The intentional way in which you depart is your last significant opportunity to nourish Christ's people who have been in your care and to strengthen them to glorify God in the next season of the congregation's life.

To facilitate this act of nourishment and preparation of God's people, the following are the expectations in the Diocese of Virginia:

- It is expected that the resigning priest will worship at another Episcopal church, or a different congregation of their choice.
- The very presence of the resigning priest may inhibit the natural transfer of leadership. In order to facilitate the transfer of leadership, the resigning priest is discouraged from presiding at the sacramental rites of the church, particularly the Sunday Eucharist, baptisms, weddings and funerals.
- For those resigning priests who remain geographically proximate to their former cures, it is not appropriate to exercise pastoral visits and hospital care that are in the normal purview of the incumbent.
- Pastoral matters which may suddenly arise that may be an exception to this norm will be at the invitation of the incumbent, senior warden or junior warden after consultation with one of the bishops.
- Best practices indicate that the congregation is able to move forward with their life when the spouse of the resigning priest also lives into these expectations.
- It is never appropriate for the resigning priest to discuss any parish business with any present vestry member or other lay leader. It is always appropriate to answer the incumbent clergy's questions about any historical parish business that is relevant to a present decision.
- It is never appropriate to engage in evaluative conversations about one's successor. If you have concerns about pastoral care or emotional safety of any person in your former cure, you should communicate those concerns directly to one of the bishops or the canon to the ordinary.

These norms and expectations are not exhaustive and are a matter of God's grace, with the intention of willing all that is good, both for the Church and for the ministry of the resigning priest. No rules, norms or expectations can replace natural discretion and a commitment to the future mission of the church you were once privileged to lead.

