

Bishop's Policy for Clergy Ending A Pastoral Relationship with a Congregation

(Updated March 1, 2015)

Appropriate Pastoral Boundaries must be set when a cleric departs a congregation. It is the Bishop's expectation that that once a clergy person leaves a congregation, he or she will bring closure to pastoral relationships with members of that congregation. The health of the congregation is dependent upon how well the transition is managed. Former parishioners should understand from the clergy in a positive and affirming way that it is not appropriate to continue a pastoral relationship.

The Bishop expects that the clergy person will accept no further requests from members and former members of the congregation to provide pastoral services at weddings, funerals, baptisms, or any other occasion of public worship for at least one year. After one year, clergy may accept invitations from the interim or rector, but may not solicit such invitations or accept them from former parishioners.

When a former parishioner reaches out to a departed clergy person for pastoral care or to officiate at a sacramental liturgy, the clergy person is obligated to pastorally redirect the former parishioner to their current interim or rector. At the rector's invitation alone may the former cleric officiate at pastoral services in his or her former congregation.

