

## **CONTINUING EDUCATION GUIDELINES**

### **for PRIESTS and DEACONS**

In response to the revised Canons of the Episcopal Church, General Convention, 2003, Title III, Canon 7.5, (Life and Work of Deacons) and Canon 9. 1, (Life and Work of Priests), the Continuing Education Subcommittee of the Commission on Ministry was formed to prepare continuing education guidelines specific to the Diocese of Michigan.

It is clear that all ordained persons are to be included in the canonical requirements. The Diocese of Michigan clergy are invited to comply with this National Canon as part of honoring and respecting the vows taken at ordination to “be diligent in the reading and study of the Holy Scriptures, and in seeking the knowledge of such things as may make (clergy) stronger and more able to (be a) minister of Christ.”

**The committee recommends that the Diocese require 12 units of continuing education annually for priests and deacons.** The Bishop may reduce the number of hours or grant an exemption on an individual basis for clergy who are retired and not serving churches.

Note: One unit of continuing education consists of 3 contact hours. Fractions are rounded to the nearest whole number. (Examples: a full day workshop, which includes morning and afternoon sessions, would equal 2 CEUs. Three 1-hr meetings of spiritual direction with a qualified director would equal 1 CEU.)

#### **Areas of study accepted as meeting these guidelines:**

- ❑ **Academic Development:** study equivalent to seminary or theological training in areas such as Scripture, theology, liturgics, church history, ethics/moral theology and related courses taken through an approved seminary, institute, or theological school.
- ❑ **Professional Development:** includes courses and/or workshops in such areas as: practice of ministry, church music, leadership, stewardship, evangelism, and social justice. Study may be done through on-line courses with approval from the Canon to the Ordinary or the Bishop.
- ❑ **Spiritual and Personal Development:** includes individual and group spiritual direction under the leadership of a qualified director; guided retreats; and, conferences or workshops primarily focused on spirituality. This area also includes those courses or workshops that promote well-being and balance in one’s life, such as: creativity, music, fine arts, languages, computers, or other choices of refreshment and enrichment particular to the individual. Personal therapy may also be included but may not

constitute the entire CE requirement. Additionally, while there is latitude for choices in the category the primary criterion need to be that which facilitates meaningful growth in the person.

- ❑ **Fresh Start/Curate's Training Program:** Newly ordained and received clergy may include this year long Diocesan program in their total CEUs.

While the committee suggests 4 CEUs in each category annually, there may be circumstances when the entire 12 CEUs are earned in a single category during one year. In these cases, the committee recommends no contact hours in that category the following year without the bishop's or his/her designee's approval. The goal of continuing education is to help provide balance in a person's life; therefore, we recommend that each person create a long-range plan involving all three categories for their enrichment.

### **Accountability**

Clergy are expected to keep a record of their own continuing education. See the form, "Continuing Education Annual Report," available on the diocesan website ([www.edomi.org](http://www.edomi.org)) under the Resources/Business Resources tab.

Priests, unless exempt by the bishop, will submit an annual report to the Whitaker Institute for placement in the priest's diocesan files.

Deacons will consult with the archdeacon assigned to them for approval of courses considered for continuing education. Each year a report is to be written to the archdeacon to be reviewed with the Bishop. A copy of the form should be sent to the Whitaker Institute for inclusion in the deacon's diocesan file.

The committee strongly urges that parishes seeking new clergy ask every candidate being considered for an interview to submit copies of their continuing education report.

### **How might Continuing Education programs be funded?**

We strongly recommend that clergy talk with their vestries about including a line item in the budget of the congregation to cover half or more of the cost of their professional development. All new or revised Letters of Agreement should require continuing education and a sabbatical (see sabbatical guidelines in the Diocesan personnel manual) along with clearly spelling out the means for funding them. At the time when all congregations honor their responsibility to meet their diocesan apportionment, the recommended goal is for the diocese to fund 1/3 of the cost of this continuing education.