

*So you're getting a new
parochial vicar...*



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As they say, “You never get a second chance to make a first impression.” That’s no less the case for your new parochial vicar. We’ve heard many stories (both good and bad) of transitions from seminary into a parish.

For the experience to be good for everyone—the new parochial vicar, the parish staff, the parishioners and you, the pastor—it’s important to make some plans before your new parochial vicar arrives. Here are some ideas for welcoming your newly ordained priest.

Before He Arrives...

Preparation makes any transition go smoother. Here are some things to consider before the new parochial vicar’s arrival:

- Prepare a binder with meeting minutes of the parish council, finance council and other commissions for the last three months; bulletins for the last month and the parish calendar of events. Include a copy of the latest parish directory.
- Provide an organizational chart for the parish that shows where the parochial vicar fits within the pastoral team.
- Prepare the office area:
 - o Computer, printer, etc.
 - o E-mail account
 - o Paint the office or provide a paint chart
 - o Name on the door
 - o Parish Web site address
 - o Copies of the current and upcoming bulletins
 - o Binder with staff telephone directory, staff listing noting assignments, duties and contact information
 - o Binder with parish policies
 - Funerals
 - Weddings
 - Parish hall rental, etc.
- Get the necessary keys copied and labeled:
 - o Rectory o Church
 - o Office o School

- Prepare his living quarters:
 - o Thoroughly clean the quarters
 - Paint - Have draperies cleaned
 - Wash windows - Shampoo the carpet
 - o Check to see if the mattress is in good shape; if not, replace it
 - o Have clean linens available
 - o Ensure light bulbs are working
 - o Provide travel-size toiletries
 - o Stock the bathroom with supplies
- Establish a Welcome Committee to welcome him to the parish:
 - o If the pastor will not be available when the parochial vicar arrives, arrange to have someone meet him and welcome him—possibly the parish council president, director of religious education, etc.
- If the pastor isn’t at the parish when the parochial vicar arrives, it would be good for them to meet ahead of time.
 - o Have flowers and a welcome basket in his room.
 - o Schedule an informal dinner ahead of time with key staff members and parishioners. It will be a chance to mix and begin relationships.

Orientation Ideas...

Here are some ideas for topics to discuss during the orientation of your new parochial vicar:

- What expectations do you, the pastor, have of the parochial vicar?
- Discuss the liturgical customs and traditions of the parish.
- How are hospital visits and sick calls handled?
- How are receipts, food and dining out handled?
- How are expenses taken care of in the rectory?
- How is cleaning and laundry handled? Is there someone who comes in to do this?
- How are personal vestments and albs laundered?
- Provide a list of useful telephone numbers:
 - o Funeral Homes o Hospitals
 - o Tax Preparers o Shelters
 - o Social and Community Agencies
- Ensure that introductions are made to staff members and key parishioners.

Welcoming your parochial vicar...



