

VII. LIFE AND MINISTRY OF THE CLERGY

	JAN 1, 1998	DEC. 31, 2003
1. No. of priests incardinated in diocese-ministry within the diocese	88	88
- No. of religious priests -ministry within diocese	85	86
- Priests incardinated into other diocese who serve within the diocese	9	8
- Priests who were formerly religious priests accepted into the diocese	1	4
- Diocesan priests working/assigned outside the diocese	12	10
- Diocesan priests with a license or doctorate in Theology or Canon Law	6	15
- Diocesan priests with a License or Doctorate in other disciplines	4	4
- Median age of priests	54	57
- Median age of retired priests	72.5	84
- The ratio of priests to faithful	1 to 1863	1 to 2,500
2. No. of Permanent Deacons incardinated in diocese	37	64
- Permanent deacons incardinated into other diocese who minister within the diocese	9	12
- Proportion between celibate ____; married ____; widowed ____.	n/a	C - 3.7%; M- 92.6%; W - 3.7%
- Median age of permanent deacons	64.7	63.3

	JAN 1, 1998	DEC. 31, 2003
3. Total no. of parishes	55	57
- Average no. of faithful per parish	3,019	3,860
- Single parishes & groups of parishes entrusted to a single pastor (c. 526.1)	1	27
- Parishes entrusted to diocesan clergy	46	53
- Parishes entrusted to religious clergy	4	4
- Parishes entrusted to several priests under the moderation of one priest (c. 517.1)	1	1
- Total no. of priests who care "in solidum" for such parishes	2	0
- Parishes without a pastor entrusted to a priest who directs the pastoral care with the help of deacons or non-ordained faithful(c.517.2)	1	0
- Ecclesiastical offices besides parishes which attend to the <i>cura animarum</i>	3	8
- Priests working full-time in offices outside of parochial ministry entrusted with the <i>cura animarum</i>	10	10
- No. of pastors with an appointment <i>ad tempus indefinitum</i> , & those appointed for a set period of time	a) 3 b) 43	3 43
- No. of parochial administrators	5	1

4. Associations of clergy present in the diocese:

There are no associations of priests in the diocese. Interests and concerns of the priests to the Bishop are channeled through the Vicar for Priests, Deans who meet regularly with priests and Priests' Council made up of ex officio, elected and appointed members. Some priests are members of Jesu Caritas.

-The purpose of each and an evaluation of their presence & influence in the diocese.

5. Numerical data concerning Basic Christian Communities There are none.

II.	1998-2003
Number of priests ordained for diocese	9
Diocesan priests who have died or retired	16
Diocesan priests who have left priesthood	
a) without dispensation	0
b) with laicization from the clerical state	0
c) priest who have left & returned to active ministry	0

B. Description

1. The Diocese is currently involved in an "open-listing" process for clergy appointments. Parish openings are published, priests are interviewed by the Clergy Personnel Board and with one another, recommendations are then made to the Bishop on the basis of preference and diocesan needs.

The office of the parish priest remains stable and collaboration remains the goal of all pastoral relationships.

Pastoral/Parish Councils have been in existence in the diocese since 1968; specific guidelines for the councils were issued in 1993 and they seem to be working well depending upon priestly leadership. Most priests see the Pastoral Council as effective instruments in the direction and vision of the local parish.

The diocese has just completed its policy for retired priests. Priests may retire at age 70. At 75 they must resign from administrative office on the parish and diocesan level. Depending upon the health of the retiree, pastoral ministry is recommended to the degree the priest is able. A retired priest may live in a rectory, his own home or apartment, with relatives or in an assisted living facility provided by the diocese. The diocese has a pension and medical benefits program. Considering the number soon to be eligible for retirement and the continued longevity of the clergy, plans are being considered for additional facilities and especially accommodations for nursing care of the totally disabled. Programs are being considered to help clergy of all ages to prepare physically, mentally and spiritually for their retirement years.

Priests are provided with grave space in Catholic cemeteries of the diocese in a spot designated for them, or they may choose burial in a family plot. Opening and closing of the grave is provided free of charge and also provided is memorialization of the grave if necessary. Some priests have elected entombment which is largely at their expense. Only one priest so far has chosen cremation but it followed a Funeral Mass with the body present and was done privately in 1988.

2. The clergy is currently fairly well distributed with a significant number serving city parishes in New Castle County where our parishes are closely situated.

Thus far, we have been blessed with not having to merge parishes or place two under the leadership of one pastor. Consequently the solidarity of the faithful and their proper parish priest remains solid. No parishes as of this time have had to be given to a deacon or non-ordained person for administration.

3. The clergy of the diocese seem to be well adjusted with a good spirit and a firm life of piety founded on the Eucharist. Celibacy and life style are accepted. When problems arise there are people and systems in place to address the needs. When required proper ecclesiastical attire is worn and clergy involvement in political affairs is monitored with regular directives.

Appropriate housing and sustenance for priests is under the direction of special committees which make recommendations to the Bishop at regular intervals. The spirit of poverty and detachment is a constant source of renewal and personal growth.

Generally the attitude of the clergy regarding obedience and the acceptance of assignments is good. When difficulties arise they are addressed by the Bishop.

Presently most priests are accepting to transfers and will respond to needs. Due to our current circumstances, i.e. facing shortage in the local Church, we are reluctant to go elsewhere for ministry.

Presently there are no "Fidei Donum" priests in the diocese but we do have several retired priests from outside the diocese plus several who are on leave from outside the diocese. Care is taken to assure proper credentials for all extern priests who are welcomed into the diocese for pastoral work.

In the period 1998 to 2003, four priests have left active ministry due to credible allegations of clergy sexual abuse. These cases and the pre-1998 cases are all being handled in accord with the Charter and the Essential Norms and being referred properly to the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (see *The Crisis in the Church and the Diocese of Wilmington* in section III).

One priest is presently on a leave of absence. Another priest who had been working in parishes in the Diocese of Venice, FL and the Diocese of Orlando has made a decision to seek voluntary laicization. Neither of these cases involved the sexual abuse of a minor.

4. Continuing Formation of the Clergy

Priests' Retreats - An annual retreat is provided for all diocesan priests. All priests gather for the diocesan retreat once every four years. The Bishop participates in every diocesan retreat. Themes for the past years:

A) Retreats

- | | | |
|----------|------|--|
| Required | 1998 | "Imitate the Mystery You Handle: Searching for an Effective Spirituality for the Diocesan Priests"
Director - Reverend Paul L. Cioffi, S.J. |
| | 1999 | "Companionship with Jesus"
Director - Reverend James R. Conroy, S.J. |
| | 2000 | "God of Mystery and Wonder"
Director - Priests of the Norbertine Community, Daylesford Abbey |
| | 2001 | Retreat cancelled - Director was called away for three weeks before the retreat |
| Required | 2002 | "Absolutely Nothing Works Except Holiness"
Director - Right Reverend Lambert Reilly, O.S.B. |

Days of Reflection and Study Days - In addition to the retreat opportunity, days of reflection and Study Days are sponsored annually. The format consists of day conferences and extended two-day conferences. Themes include:

B) Study Days/Priests' Conferences

- | | | |
|--|------|---|
| | 1998 | "The Challenge of Ministry"
Presenters - James J. Gill, S.J. and Reverend John C. Linman, C.S.U. |
| | 1999 | "Compassionate and Responsible Servants"
Presenters - Reverend John Heagle and Sister Fran Ferder |
| | 2001 | "Priesthood - A Commitment to Spiritual Renewal, Personal Wellness and Presbyteral Vitality"
Presenter - Reverend Stephen Rossetti |
| | 2002 | "The Basic Plan for the Ongoing Formation of Priests: The Call to Holiness"
Presenter - Mr. Michael Morton |
| | 2003 | "For the Sake of God's Children" - Ethical Stands for Priests
Facilitators - Ethical Standards Writing Committee |

C) Days of Reflection

- 1999 Lenten Day - Childs, MD
Presenter - Reverend Dominic J. Maruca, S.J.
- 2000 Lenten Day - Childs, MD
Presenter - Most Reverend Francis Malooly
- 2002 May 2002 - Sprint Day - Childs, MD
Presenter - Msgr. Thomas Beven

D) Sabbatical Programs

The Diocese encourages priests to participate in extended sabbatical programs. Most years one or two priests have participated in the sabbatical program at the North American College in Rome. Opportunities are also available for shorter programs at the Seminary Schools of Theology in the United States. The difficulty of getting suitable coverage when a priest wants a sabbatical means that permission for extended sabbatical must be rethought.

E) Study Weeks

A Study Week is held every four years for the priests of the Diocese. The Study Week is an intensive learning experience designed to update and/or educate the priests concerning a specific issue or area of concern. The week also promotes the common celebration of the Eucharist, common celebration of the Liturgy of the Hours, and fraternity and support for priests.

STUDY WEEK - Attendance is required

- 2000 "Our Experience of God - Beginning the Third Millennium"
Philadelphia, PA
Presenters - Msgr. James P. Lisante; Rev. Donald Senior, CP;
Rev. Martin Pable, OFM; Rev. Stephen M. Fields, SJ; Rev.
Robert Leavitt, SS
- 2003 Will be held February 2-6, 2004, Lancaster, PA

F) Memberships

The National Organization for Continuing Education of Roman Catholic Clergy
The National Federation of Priest Councils

- The committee also provides materials for all priests regarding continuing formation published by the Committee on Priestly Life and Ministry, USCCB