

**Report to the 236th Diocesan Convention  
and to Diocesan Council  
from the Sabbatical Fund Committee  
January 12, 2020**

The Sabbatical Fund Committee of our diocese had a busy and productive second year of existence. In 2019 we held nine meetings (by ZOOM — I recommend this approach), a Workshop on Sabbaticals at the Cathedral in February (attended by eight priests and eight lay leaders from congregations) and, as the climax of our year, the first ever Sabbatical Fund Celebration Dinner on November 16 at the Cathedral at which the first recipient of a Diocesan Sabbatical Grant, Fr. Pedro Guzman of San Andres, Camden, was enthusiastically recognized.

Along the way, we created the Application Form for our grants: much shorter and simpler than that for Lily Foundation grants but inspired by that form and the materials used by the Diocese of Massachusetts as well as by our Committee members. We officially clarified that grants are for *priests* to go on sabbatical (deacons have their own process and potential resources). We decided that there would be an *\$8,000 cap* on any individual grant in 2019 for 2020 sabbaticals, based on our available resources. We proposed language for our Diocese to use in the Letters of Agreement for Priests-in-Charge of congregations to make clear that **priests who are in charge of congregations are eligible for sabbaticals** if otherwise qualified in accordance with the Diocesan Sabbatical Policy.

As of January 28, 2019 the Fund (all invested in the Diocesan Investment Trust) totaled \$21,047.62. As of January 7, 2020, the Fund totaled \$28,063.79, of which \$8,000 has been earmarked for a grant to San Andres for Fr. Guzman's sabbatical later this year. *All of our funds come from designated contributions* from individuals and congregations, plus ticket sales for our dinner. There is no money in the Diocesan budget nor are there any diocesan endowment funds for this purpose. We give a very hearty thank you to all those who have donated to the Fund since it was approved by Diocesan Council January 17, 2017 to consider grants for clergy who have never before been on sabbatical. We always welcome new donations, which may be made payable to the Diocese of New Jersey with "Clergy Sabbatical Fund" in the memo and in a cover letter and sent to Diocesan House.

We give thanks to Bishop Stokes for his inspiring presentation at the November 16 Dinner, and in general for his vigor in promoting this Fund, which marks a significant cultural change in our diocese towards more interdependence between congregations and towards more opportunities for priests serving less heavily "resourced" congregations. Historically, sabbaticals for those not receiving Lily Foundation grants have had to be funded by the congregation and the priest in isolation from the rest of our diocese, and as a result longer-tenured rectors of medium to large congregations in the more prosperous communities in our diocese are represented disproportionately among priests who have the spiritual and other benefits of sabbatical. Likewise their congregations have had these renewal experiences, while most congregations have not. So expanding the number of priests and congregations who can experience sabbatical is a *justice issue*, and we embrace framing it that way.

Sixty people attended the Sabbatical Fund Celebration Dinner, a majority of whom were from San Andres to celebrate with Fr. Guzman. The rest of whom represented eight other congregations plus retired priests and spouses plus Bishop and Mrs. Stokes. We thank the entire diocesan and cathedral staffs for their wisdom, enthusiasm and hard work in helping us make this brand new event successful, including Dean John who also spoke at the dinner. The ticket sales and additional contributions made at the dinner went towards the next grant cycle, in 2020 for 2021 sabbaticals. We aim to have another dinner this year in the late fall, before Thanksgiving. All are cordially invited.

Going forward, readers of this report should assume unless and until notified otherwise that our grant calendar in 2020 will be the same as it was in 2019: **Applications for grants for 2021 sabbaticals will be accepted during the month of September 2020. Grants will be awarded by the end of October, 2020. Prospective applicants should assume that the cap of \$8,000 for any individual grant will remain the same for this grant cycle.** We hope to have more applicants this year. All, like San Andres, should plan to fund part of the sabbatical expenses from sources other than this Fund. All of the members of the Committee are available to consult with any priest who is considering a sabbatical and any lay members of a congregation who want to learn about what sabbatical can mean for the priest — and the congregation. *Thoughtful reflection and planning well ahead are vital for a sabbatical.*

I give great thanks to all of the members of this Committee who are joyfully giving their varied talents and perspectives to our mission. Please feel free to contact me or any of them: Ms. Wendy Hallstrom (Church of the Holy Spirit, Lebanon), the Rev. Joanna Hollis (Christ Church, New Brunswick), the Rev. Ophelia Laughlin (Priest-in-Charge, St. Matthew's, Pennington), the Rev. Juan Monge-Santiago (Priest-in-Charge, All Saints', Lakewood) and myself (Retired, Priest Associate, St. Francis, Dunellen, Chair).

Faithfully yours,  
(The Rev. Dr.) Francis A. Hubbard  
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