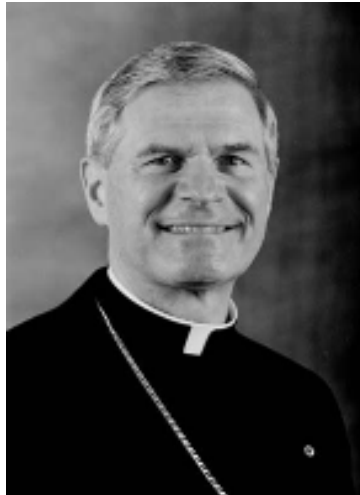


**Archdiocese of Anchorage  
Ministry Clearance Policy – “Vetting”  
For Visiting Clergy, Religious and Laity**



Dear Friends,

As Archbishop, I take my role as chief teacher and shepherd very seriously. For this reason, I am sending you this policy which outlines the special requirements you must follow prior to inviting any person from outside the Archdiocese of Anchorage as a prospective ministry provider, speaker, or presenter. This assures the people of our Archdiocese that those who speak or serve publicly do so by ensuring a safe environment and in a manner consistent with the teachings of our Church. Thank you for cooperating in this process.

Sincerely yours in Christ and Mary,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "+ Roger L. Schwietz".

†Roger L. Schwietz, OMI

Archbishop of Anchorage

***Prior to confirming temporary faculties for a Priest or Deacon or approving a speaker or presenter from outside the Archdiocese of Anchorage, to either speak or serve in any capacity in a parish, faith community, lay organization, or school event within the Archdiocese of Anchorage, written permission is required.***

## **Section 1:**

### **The Issuance of Temporary Faculties for Visiting Clergy.**

#### **Our Purpose**

The Archdiocese of Anchorage welcomes the vocation and ministry of priests, religious and deacons. Because the Archdiocese is committed to standards assuring suitability of priestly minister, the Archdiocese seeks the understanding and cooperation of all Priests, Religious, Deacons, Parish Administrators and staff, in the details and implementation of this policy.

Each year there are a growing number of priests coming into the Archdiocese from around the world. They come for many reasons and our parishes and missions rely on the generosity of priests who come here to assist. Some come during vacation while others come to visit family and friends and are willing to help as well.

However they come, whether through personal contacts or referrals from family or friends, it is imperative that we take our collective responsibility for the oversight of our parishes seriously and are diligent in obtaining what is required for any clergy who is requested or asks to exercise ministry in any of our parishes or other institutions. All of us are responsible for verifying that ordained ministers and religious are worthy of the trust of the People of God.

#### **Our Policy:**

Guidelines approved by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People, Articles 12 and 13 and our Archdiocesan policies require that we take the utmost care in screening for services to our Archdiocese. Thus we require a detailed Testimonial of Suitability from the visiting priest, religious or deacon's Ordinary/Major Superior affirming that not only are they in good standing in their diocese/religious community, but that it also includes date and purpose of visit, date and place of ordination, date and program of their most recent completion of safe environment training (approximately within three years) and the date and origin of a background check confirming suitability (approximately within five years).

The Testimonial of Suitability must be submitted with a cover letter from the sponsoring minister detailing the visiting Priest/Religious/Deacon's purpose of visit and to whom and where they are ministering.

**Appendix A "Testimonial of Suitability for Clergy Form" can be used in place of a "Letter of Suitability" from one's Superior or Bishop.**

## **Section 2**

### **Ministry Approval For Speakers and Presenters**

#### **Our Purpose**

##### ***To Assure Quality Pastoral Care***

The goal of this process is twofold: (1) to ensure fidelity to Church teaching and (2) to ensure that required safe environment procedures are followed as stated in the Archdiocese Code of Conduct Policy and the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People, for all those engaged in ministry, Articles 12 and 13.

#### **Our Policy**

##### ***Requirements:***

- The Pastor or Event Coordinator must submit the "**Ministry Clearance Request Form**" (appendix B), also available from the Office of the Vice Chancellor or from the Archdiocese of Anchorage website to initiate the clearance process. Completed forms should include detailed information about the prospective speaker, type of ministry, topic of presentation, and purpose of the proposed event. This ministry clearance process is confidential.

(Clergy who are only seeking temporary faculties in order to administer the sacraments while in the Archdiocese of Anchorage, and who will not be separately engaging in speaking or presenting, need only to follow the above stated policy, Section 1, "The Issuance of Temporary Faculties for Visiting Priests.")

- A testimonial of suitability from the presenter's Pastor/Bishop/Superior is required and when there may be unsupervised contact with minors and/or vulnerable adults, a background check (completed within approximately five years) and safe environment training (completed within approximately three years) is required.

(Please keep in mind that the clearance process needs to be completed before the arrival of the requested Clergy or Minister and the publication of public notices regarding the event. The average background check is completed in 5 days, yet it could take as long as 21 days if international reports are needed.)

##### **The Approval Process:**

Following review of this information, and approval from the Pastor of any event requesting use of parish facilities, a letter of final approval will be sent to the organization or parish making the request.

Please ensure that all requested information is included with special attention given to safe environment requirements. The absence of this information will delay the completion of this process and final approval.

**Policy reminders:**

- Those events where the presenter or speaker may have unsupervised contact with children and/or vulnerable adults, it is required that the speaker or minister, have submitted by the diocese or province from which they reside, the date and program used of their Safe Environment Training (completed approximately within the last 3 years) **and** date of background check (completed approximately within the last 5 years) with confirmation of background check suitability (copies of the training certificates or background check will suffice).
- Please note that it is the responsibility of the sponsoring parish or institution to obtain an updated background check and/or Safe Environment Training if needed. (Ministers may register and complete the Archdiocese of Anchorage online training if no other is available).
- Please allow two to four weeks to complete this process.
- A letter of confirmation will be sent to the sponsoring parish/individual or organization.
- To qualify for use of Archdiocesan or parish facilities, bulletin announcements and advertisements including the Catholic Anchor, this policy must be followed.
- This process must be completed each time an individual comes to the Archdiocese, yet safe environment records may not need to be repeated if they remain current based on the required time period.
- If the vetting policy is not followed, the cleric's superior will be informed immediately and the cleric involved is to cease any ministry immediately and may be required to leave the Archdiocese.

For more information and/or forms please contact:

**Archdiocese of Anchorage**  
**Mrs. Eileen Kramer**  
**Office of the Vice Chancellor**  
**225 Cordova Street**  
**Anchorage, AK 99501**  
**Phone: (907) 297-7722**  
**Fax: (907) 279-3885**  
**Email: [ekramer@caa-ak.org](mailto:ekramer@caa-ak.org)**

## **Summary of Ministry Clearance – Vetting Policy**

### **For The Issuance of Temporary Faculties for Visiting Priests:**

- A testimonial of Suitability from their Ordinary/Superior with purpose and dates needing faculties which should also include:
- Date and type of safe environment training from Diocese of origin or the document
- Date and place of most recent background check from Diocese of origin or the document
- Date and place of ordination
- Cover letter from sponsoring Pastor/Parish/Individual including dates, places and purpose of visit

### **For Ministry Clearance for Presenters and/or Speakers (including Clergy):**

- A ministry clearance request form for visiting clergy, religious and laity
- Testimonial of Suitability of Letter of Good Standing from Pastor/Bishop/Superior which includes:
- Date and type of safe environment training from Diocese of origin or the document itself– when applicable
- Date and place of most recent background check from Diocese of origin or the document Itself - when applicable

### **Who needs to have ministry clearance – be vetted?**

- Any clergy/religious/deacon who does not already enjoy faculties from within the Archdiocese of Anchorage, Diocese of Juneau and/or Fairbanks
- Any speaker/presenter living and/or ministering outside of the Archdiocese of Anchorage who is presenting at a parish or on Archdiocesan property or the presentation will be advertised in announcements, bulletin of parish or Archdiocesan website.

### **When is Archdiocese of Anchorage safe environment requirements necessary?**

- When any clergy/religious/deacon seeks to receive faculties or presents who do not already enjoy faculties from within the Archdiocese of Anchorage, Diocese of Juneau and/or Fairbanks
- When the event and content is for the participation of families, children and/or vulnerable adults and there may be unsupervised contact with minors or vulnerable adults, especially if break-out sessions are scheduled.

### **Please Note:**

**The Office of the Vice-Chancellor, in coordination with the Office of Safe Environment, holds the discretion to require any safe environment procedures to be put in place when determined necessary to ensure the safety and protection of minors and vulnerable adults and compliance to the Archdiocesan Code of Conduct and the USCCB's Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People.**

**Contact the Office of Safe Environment – 297-7736 for any questions.**

***Archdiocese of Anchorage  
Testimonial of Suitability  
For Clergy and Ministry Providers***

Rev. Tom Brundage, JCL  
c/o Eileen Kramer  
Vice-Chancellor  
225 Cordova Street  
Anchorage, AK 99501

Dear Father Brundage,

\_\_\_\_\_ (name) is seeking to exercise temporary clerical ministry and/or being considered as a ministry event presenter in the Archdiocese of Anchorage. The event title is: \_\_\_\_\_, and will be held \_\_\_\_\_ (date).

I have carefully reviewed our personnel records and have consulted with persons who have ministered with her/him within the context of \_\_\_\_\_ (Diocese, Province, Parish). Based on these inquiries, I testify that to the best of my knowledge and ability, \_\_\_\_\_ is a person of good moral character and reputation and is qualified to serve in an effective and suitable manner in your Archdiocese.

I am able to make each of the statements listed below which I have initialed. (please attach explanatory note for any item not initialed):

\_\_\_\_\_ She/he is a member in good standing of our parish/diocese/ province/organization.

\_\_\_\_\_ She/he has never behaved in such a way as to indicate that they might deal with minors or vulnerable adults in an inappropriate manner.

\_\_\_\_\_ She/he has no emotional, moral, or physical condition, which might adversely affect their ability to minister, such as untreated substance abuse or untreated mental health issues.

\_\_\_\_\_ The date and program of their last Safe Environment Training  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Program title: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ The date of their last background check was \_\_\_\_\_ and no criminal charges have ever been brought against him/her and no criminal record is known or has been discovered through this background check.

\_\_\_\_\_ Where applicable, date and place of ordination: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Title



Office of the Archbishop

# Archdiocese of Anchorage

225 Cordova Street • Anchorage, Alaska 99501-2409  
907/297-7755 • fax: 907/279-3885

## **MINISTRY CLEARANCE REQUEST FOR VISITING CLERGY, RELIGIOUS AND LAITY**

Please submit all requests to:  
Archdiocese of Anchorage  
Attn: Office of Vice Chancellor  
225 Cordova Street Anchorage, AK 99501  
(907) 297-7722 Fax (907) 279-3885

### **Part I**

#### **Personal Information (Clergy/Religious/Presenter)**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Diocese of Residence/Religious Congregation/Province: \_\_\_\_\_

Title or Description of Ministry Position: \_\_\_\_\_

Bishop, Pastor, Superior or Provincial: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: \_\_\_\_\_

Description of the type of ministry that they will be engaged in while in the  
Archdiocese of Anchorage: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

#### **Event Information**

Title and Topic: \_\_\_\_\_

Date(s): \_\_\_\_\_ Location(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Will minors and/or vulnerable adults be present? \_\_\_\_\_ yes \_\_\_\_\_ no

If yes, then describe the context of their participation: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Host Contact Information (Requester)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Title/Occupation: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_  
Parish/Organization: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
Pastor/Chaplain: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Please Note: If this individual has been previously vetted for the same type of presentation, please indicate when previously vetted and questions #1-3 do not need to be completed.**

1. What are this person's qualifications to minister or present to the people of the Archdiocese of Anchorage and what led you to consider inviting them?
2. What is the purpose of the event and what formation needs do you hope they will provide?
3. Please include a brief biography or any websites which display a biography of minister or printed publications.

Along with the above request, please attach the completed "Testimony of Suitability for Clergy or Ministry Providers" form (Appendix A) **OR** a letter from the individual's Provincial or Bishop who is able to provide a statement to suitability.

\*Please ensure that this individual's safe environment training date, program name, background check date and confirmation that no criminal charges have been discovered, are included on the form **OR** in the letter. If the training or a background check has not been done, it is the responsibility of the hosting parish/organization to ensure it is completed and confirm its suitability. A copy of a background investigation for Clergy will be kept in the Office of Safe Environment's Chancery office.