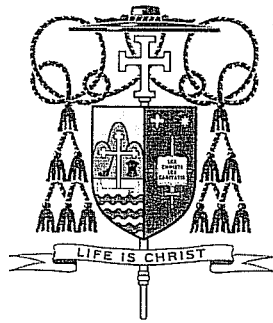


JEROME EDWARD

By the Grace of God and



the Favor of the Apostolic See

BISHOP OF LA CROSSE

**DECREE**  
**PROMULGATING NORMS FOR THE COMPENSATION OF THE CLERGY**  
**IN THE DIOCESE OF LA CROSSE**

1. Having received a positive recommendation from the Presbyteral Council at its March 5, 2009 meeting, the approved continued increase of 10% to base salary each year over the next four years will continue per the attached schedule.
2. Having received the positive recommendations of the Presbyteral Council and the Diocesan Finance Council, with this decree, therefore, I publish the revised norms to govern the compensation of the clergy in the Diocese of La Crosse. For ease of reference, the norms which remain unchanged are included in this decree. These norms are to be promulgated by being published in the June 2009 *Chancery Bulletin Supplement*. They are to take effect on July 1, 2009 and are to be incorporated into the budgets of Diocesan institutions for the fiscal year July 1, 2009 – June 30, 2010.
3. **BASE SALARY.** Effective July 1, 2009, the base salary for priests is one thousand three hundred one dollars (\$1,301) per month. This reflects a 10% increase from last year's base salary. Increases per month each year at the anniversary of ordination are also reflected in the 10% increase to base salary from the previous year. The base salary is paid from the funds of the parish(es) or institution(s) served by the priest. The schedule, effective through June 30, 2013, is attached at the end of this decree. If the national economy is such that the annual 10% raise would impose too great of a financial burden to our parishes and institutions, in consultation the raise will be adjusted or frozen for a given year.
4. **SOCIAL SECURITY ALLOWANCE.** In addition to the base salary, each priest is to receive a Social Security allowance equivalent to one half of the total self-employment or Social Security tax for which he is responsible. This amount shall be divided in the same proportion as his base salary among the parishes or institutions a priest serves if he is assigned to more than one. The amount of this allowance must be included in the total wages, tips and other compensation reported on the Form W-2 Wage and Tax Statement (boxes 1 and 17).
5. **MASS OFFERINGS.** The suggested amount of the Mass offering, as determined by the Bishops of the Milwaukee Province (cf. canon 952, §1), is ten dollars (\$10). A priest may retain for himself one Mass offering per day on which he offers Mass, except on Christmas when he may

trinate and retain the three Mass offerings (cf. canon 951, §1). The offering given for a second or third Mass on a particular day is to be forwarded to the St. Joseph's Priest Fund. Pastors and parochial administrators are reminded of their strict obligation to celebrate the Mass for the people entrusted to their care, without an offering, on each Sunday and holy day of obligation. Pastors who serve more than one parish are obliged to offer only one Mass for all the people entrusted to their care on those days (cf. canon 534, §§1-3). All priests are reminded that the discipline of the Universal Church strongly recommends the daily celebration of the Mass as "the act of Christ and the Church in which priests fulfill their principal function." (Cf. canon 904.)

6. Mass offerings are to be kept in a separate account called the Mass Offering Account. Any interest realized on the monies in the account is to be placed in the Fund for Works of Charity. Offerings for Masses which cannot be celebrated within the time of one year are to be forwarded to the Diocesan Mission Office so that the Masses will be offered by priests in the Diocese or in the missions who lack Mass offerings (cf. canons 953 and 956). If a priest does not receive \$300.00 per month in stipends, he may receive the difference from the parish (or institution) funds. In such instances, Masses will be celebrated for the intentions of the parish or institution. All stipends received are to be considered as taxable income.

7. **OFFERINGS FOR OTHER SACRAMENTS AND SACRED RITES.** All offerings given on the occasion of the celebration of the other sacraments or sacred rites apart from Mass offerings are to be kept in the Fund for Works of Charity in the parish in which the sacrament or sacred rite is celebrated. Monies in this fund are to be used in the assistance of needy persons—for example, food, clothing, lodging or transportation for those temporarily in need; tuition assistance for children attending Catholic elementary and secondary schools; etc. Excess monies in the Fund for Works of Charity are to be transmitted at the end of each calendar year to the St. Joseph's Priest Fund.

8. The Fund for Works of Charity, because of its exclusive purpose, is to be kept in a separate bank account and may not be commingled with other parish funds or with the Mass Offering Account.

9. The suggested amount of offering is governed by the limits set by the Bishops of the Milwaukee Province (cf. canon 1264, 2°). At present the suggested amount of offering at various sacred occasions is: at the time of baptism, ten dollars (\$10); at the time of marriage, seventy-five dollars (\$75); at the time of Christian burial, fifty dollars (\$50). The faithful are never to be coerced into giving offerings at such occasions. When an individual offers voluntarily a sum larger than the suggested offering, the priest or deacon lawfully may accept the offering. The priest or deacon may judge whether the intention of the donor is to give the amount beyond the suggested offering to the priest or deacon himself, or to the parish's Fund for Works of Charity.

10. **TRANSPORTATION AND OTHER PROFESSIONAL BUSINESS EXPENSES.** The allowance for transportation and other professional business expenses is four hundred dollars (\$400) per month or four thousand eight hundred dollars (\$4,800) per year. Documented business mileage is to be reimbursed according to the standard mileage rate as determined by the Internal Revenue Service (55.0 cents per mile as of January 1, 2009). Professional business expenses are those recognized by the Internal Revenue Service. They include items such as professional books or periodicals, seminars and clerical clothing or vesture. If the allowance is greater than the amount reimbursed for documented business mileage and professional business expenses, the remainder may be repaid to the parish or institution; otherwise it, as well as the reimbursed amount, must be reported as taxable income. If the documented business mileage exceeds that covered by the

standard transportation allowance (727 miles per month or 8,727 miles per year in 2009), the excess mileage may be reimbursed according to the standard mileage rate.

**11. ROOM AND BOARD.** Room and board are to be provided by the parish(es) or institution(s) to which the priest is assigned. The norm for food allowance is the following:

For priest with housekeeper.....	\$450 per month
For priest with day cook.....	\$425 per month
For priest with no housekeeper.....	\$350 per month
For priest who eats out daily.....	\$25 per day

The priest who eats out daily and must travel to take his meals is to compute the mileage into the amount of his professional travel.

**12. HEALTH AND ACCIDENT INSURANCE.** Health and accident insurance is provided for each priest through the Diocese by the parish(es) or institution(s) to which he is assigned. The Diocesan Finance Office negotiates with providers for the cost of this insurance and the monthly premium is billed directly to the responsible parish(es) and institution(s).

**13. DISABILITY AND RETIREMENT.** The St. Joseph's Priest Fund, Inc., gives a monthly benefit to eligible priests incardinated in the Diocese of La Crosse who are retired or disabled. Each parish or institution in the Diocese which has the services of a priest contributes to the St. Joseph's Priest Fund in an amount determined by the Board of Directors of the St. Joseph's Priest Fund. La Crosse Diocesan priests working outside the Diocese of La Crosse must make this contribution themselves if it is not made in their behalf by the parishes or institutions which they are serving. The amount of the monthly benefit for eligible priests is determined by the Board of Directors of the St. Joseph's Priest Fund.

**14.** For a priest who is not incardinated in the Diocese of La Crosse or who is a member of an institute of the consecrated life or a society of the apostolic life, an amount equivalent to the assessment for the St. Joseph's Priest Fund is to be transmitted to the retirement or pension fund of the priest's own diocese or institute. The priest is responsible for transmitting the amount of the assessment. The priest will be reminded of this semiannually by a letter from the Executive Secretary of the St. Joseph's Priest Fund.

**15. CONTINUING EDUCATION.** The costs of schooling, travel, salary and benefits for La Crosse Diocesan priests assigned to graduate studies are paid by the Priestly Formation Fund of the Diocese of La Crosse. The costs of schooling, salary and benefits for La Crosse Diocesan priests on sabbatical with the permission of the Diocesan Bishop are paid by the Priestly Formation Fund. The costs of short-term seminars and workshops related to priestly ministry are to be paid by the individual priest. A priest incardinated in the Diocese of La Crosse may apply to the Office of the Vicar for Clergy for reimbursement for the costs associated with such seminars or workshops from the Priestly Formation Fund at a rate of up to six hundred dollars (\$600) annually. A priest not incardinated in the Diocese of La Crosse may apply for such reimbursement from the priestly formation fund of his own diocese or institute. Where such funding is not available, he may seek such reimbursement from the parish(es) or institution(s) he serves.

**16.** The costs of Diocesan conferences are paid automatically by the priest's individual continuing

education account up to one hundred twenty-five dollars (\$125) per year. All priests engaged in active ministry in the Diocese of La Crosse are expected to participate each year in Priest Unity Days and in the Fall Clergy Conference. Costs associated with these conferences beyond the amount allowed are to be paid by the individual priest. Retired priests are welcome and are encouraged to attend these events, but they are excused from paying the registration fee.

**17. ANNUAL RETREAT.** Each priest is to make a spiritual retreat every year. The costs incurred in making his annual retreat are to be paid by the individual priest.

**18. SUBSTITUTE OR HELP-OUT MINISTRY.** The remuneration for weekend help-out is thirty-five dollars (\$35) per Mass, not including the Mass offering. Remuneration for weekday help-out is ten dollars (\$10) per Mass, not including the Mass offering. Travel reimbursement is also to be provided according to the IRS standard mileage rate (55.0 cents per mile as of January 1, 2009).

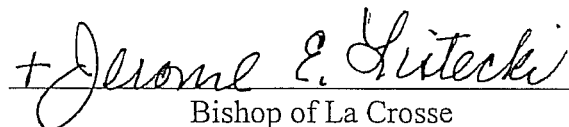
**19.** A priest or deacon who receives an offering for administering a sacrament other than the Eucharist or for celebrating another sacred rite in a parish to which he is not assigned, is to give to the pastor the offering that he receives on that occasion for the parish's Fund for Works of Charity. The pastor may permit the priest or deacon to retain this offering for himself.

**20. ASSIGNMENT TO MORE THAN ONE PARISH OR INSTITUTION.** The compensation of a priest who is assigned to more than one parish or institution is to be provided by all the parishes or institutions to which the priest is assigned. These parishes or institutions are to decide together how to divide the compensation among themselves and to notify the Diocesan Bishop of their decision.

**21. PERMANENT DEACONS.** The compensation of permanent deacons is governed by the *Code of Canon Law* (cf. canon 281, §3) and by other Diocesan norms. It is determined annually in the "Agreement on Ministry" approved by the Director of the Office of Ministries and Social Concerns.

Given at La Crosse this twelfth day of June in the year of Our Lord 2009.

SEAL

  
Bishop of La Crosse

  
Chancellor