

TO SCHEDULE A BISHOP VISITATION

The Bishop is the spiritual and temporal leader of the congregation. As such, the Bishop is not a guest. The Bishop is an extension of the pastoral leadership for the congregation. Whatever the occasion for the visit, the Bishop is there to strengthen the ministry of the local congregation.

The Bishop's visitation ought not to be "unusual" no matter how infrequent. The central act of every visitation is the preaching of God's Word and the joint celebration of the Holy Eucharist with the clergy and people of the parish. All other aspects of the visitation are auxiliary and must never be allowed to overshadow this central purpose. Although confirmations, receptions, and reaffirmations will continue to take place during visitations, these rites are not the principal reasons for the Bishop's Pastoral Visitation. The availability of persons for confirmation or reception need not play any part in the scheduling of the visitation.

The scheduling of visitations may be initiated by the Rector or Vicar of the parish or worshipping community or by the Bishop's Office. As a general rule, a parish will not receive a second regular pastoral visitation until all other parishes have been visited.

Visitations will be scheduled in such a way as to balance the following priorities:

- Length of time since the last pastoral visitation.
- Need to schedule episcopal rites: major parish anniversaries, dedications of new buildings, groundbreaking, etc. Please note: It may be necessary to schedule these on days other than Sunday.
- Celebration of the feast of title or other significant event in the life of the parish.
- Celebration of a New Ministry.
- Particular pastoral needs of the parish.

To facilitate planning, the visitation schedule is created to cover the upcoming six months, and is normally available in late November and late May. You may request upcoming dates, but normally final commitments will not be made more than six months in advance. Even with great care given to the visitation schedule, there will still be some need for flexibility. There will be parish emergencies, personal illness, travel delays, and a host of other things that may require last minute rescheduling. When it is necessary or requested to schedule another bishop to assist, all such invitations will come from the Bishop's Office.