



The Episcopal Diocese of Pennsylvania

Guidelines for Bishop Gutiérrez's Visitation

Bishop's Customary

My siblings,

I present this customary as a guide to assist with my visitation as a service to our parishes. Please take the time to read it through as it will alleviate anxiety, answer questions, and preempt confusion and rushing on a busy Sunday morning. A Bishop's Customary is of great use in planning an official visitation. It alleviates many questions and facilitates the process. My purpose is that we celebrate together:

- with the authorized liturgical resources of the Episcopal Church,
- reflecting appropriate and approved local practice,
- and honor the reality that it is a service of the Bishop no matter where it is celebrated.

In the wisdom and grace of our tradition, the authorized resources give ample room for all three standards. It is necessary that the guidelines offered in this customary are followed. However, if there are long standing customs or liturgical charisms that are essential; let's discuss these well ahead of the visit.

Furthermore, as you know this is a large diocese with one bishop in a demanding era. There are times when visitations do need to be rescheduled. We know this can be a pastoral complication, however it is only done when it is necessary.

Know you are in my prayers and I am blessed to serve as your bishop.

The Rt. Rev. Daniel G.P. Gutiérrez

XVI Bishop of the Diocese of Pennsylvania

How to Submit Forms & Requests

Please complete the Visitation Worksheet and return it to the Bishop's office. Include all information concerning service times and events scheduled. If there is any need to deviate from these guidelines, contact the Bishop's office as soon as possible.

All requests and forms: Mia Hain — mhain@diopa.org — 215-627-6434 x124

1. Scheduling

Pastoral visitations are scheduled based on the following priorities:

- Length of time since the last pastoral visitation
- Need to schedule Episcopal rites (major anniversaries, building dedications, groundbreakings, etc.)
- Particular pastoral needs of the parish
- Celebration of the patronal feast or other significant parish event

Visitations may be initiated by the rector/vicar or the Bishop's Office. The schedule covers upcoming six-month windows and is normally released in late November and late May.

The visitation is a time for the Bishop:

- to meet with the Vestry to learn about your ministries and to dream together
- offer rites of initiation
 - **Baptism:** any person, properly prepared, who has not been baptized in the name of the Trinity
 - **Confirmation:** any person duly baptized and prepared to claim the promises of baptism, and not previously confirmed in the Episcopal/Anglican, ELCA, Roman Catholic, or Eastern Orthodox traditions
 - **Reception:** any person who was confirmed by a Bishop in any of the above traditions
 - **Reaffirmation:** any person who was previously confirmed in this tradition or received from any of the above traditions and wants to recommit.

Please know that due to the complex scheduling of the Bishop, commitments are not made more than six months in advance. Last-minute changes will be kept to a minimum, but may occasionally occur due to emergencies, illness, or travel delays.

Assisting Bishops

All invitations for an assisting Bishop must come from Bishop Gutiérrez's office. Parish convenience alone is not sufficient reason to schedule an assisting Bishop.

Two Weeks Before the Visit

Expect a call from a Canon to learn more about the life and needs of the congregation.

Please send the following to the Bishop's office:

- Completed Visitation Worksheet with detailed agenda (include liturgical color)
- Service bulletin. A template leaflet will be provided as a guide where you can fill in your preferred music (draft is acceptable — do not make subsequent changes without consulting the Bishop's office)
- Parking instructions for the Bishop
- A letter from each confirmand answering: "Who is Jesus to you?" and "What does confirmation mean to you?"

One Week Before the Visit: The final copy of the service leaflet is due 4 days prior to the visitation

Notifying the Parish

Notify your parish of the Bishop's visit as far in advance as possible. Explain that the offering will go to the Bishop's Discretionary Fund (checks payable to "Diocese of PA").

Registers

Please have the parish register and service register available before the service, and have it filled out ahead of time for the Bishop to sign. *Per Canon III.9.5(c), the Bishop will review registers of services, baptisms, confirmations, marriages, and burials.*

2. The Day of the Visit

Morning Liturgy

Where possible, the Bishop prefers to merge regularly scheduled separate morning liturgies into one service. This creates opportunity for congregational forums, confirmand meetings, and necessary time with your vestry.

Please appoint a person to read the prayers for the candidates and inform the chaplain who is offering that prayer.

Clergy & Chaplain

- If the parish does not have a deacon, one will accompany the Bishop. A chaplain and/or canon may also accompany the Bishop. All parish clergy are invited to vest and participate, please see directions on page 5. Bishops Seat: If there are rites of initiation the Bishop sits at the front of the chancel/choir/altar area with the deacon and chaplain. If the congregation Bishop seat is substantial in size a nice comfortable chair may be placed instead.
- If the front of the chancel/choir/altar area is narrow enough that chaplain and deacon can sit in a choir seat and easily hand things to the Bishop, then other seats are not needed.
- The three chairs should be placed in the middle of the chancel; it may be moved after confirmations for the Eucharist

If there are no rites of initiation then the Bishop will sit in the presiders seat with the chaplain adjacent.

Sponsors

Have sponsors of those being confirmed, received, or baptized gather before the service. A brief preparation on where and when to come forward is necessary. The bishop invites those who are a part of each persons journey to come close, and for confirmation/reception/reaffirmation lay hands on that person. It is wise therefore to consider reserved seating for sponsors and family.

Bishop's Arrival & Schedule

- Please arrange a place where the Bishop, and sometimes the Bishop's staff, can vest for the service that is not in the middle of the morning preparation work.
- A small glass or bottle of water should be placed near the Bishop's liturgical seat
- The Bishop arrives 60 minutes before the service to first meet with the vestry, then confirmands, and then get vested for the liturgy
- The Bishop meets with confirmands for 15–20 minutes prior to the service
- After the liturgy: open forum, Scripture teaching, or a presentation — the Bishop loves parish time

- Coffee hour/reception is included in the Bishop's schedule

Vestry Meeting

The vestry meeting is one of the most important components of the visit. It should not displace formation time with candidates or Sunday morning formation classes. Plan well in advance.

Announcements & Tone

The rector/vicar/priest-in-charge or Senior Warden should make parish announcements — preferably between the final blessing and the processional, and kept brief.

Note: The Bishop prefers not to be referred to as a “guest.” In the Diocese of Pennsylvania, we are a family, and all the churches are the Bishop's home.

The Bishop is open to structuring the post-liturgy conversation around specific ministry opportunities, challenges, or dreams the clergy and vestry wish to share.

3. The Liturgy of the Day

All visitations will be celebrations of the Holy Eucharist. The Bishop will serve as preacher, teacher, celebrant, and officiant for the entire liturgy.

Language

The liturgy should be conducted in the language of the people. Consult the diocesan office if translation is needed. Use one of the liturgies approved by General Convention. BCP Rite II (a template will be provided if needed), prayers A and B are preferred, and approved expansive language is encouraged and blessed.

The Bishop typically offers his own invitation to the table, and uses his own blessing.

We prefer that the Canon chaplain prepare the Bishop's book complete with hymns, collects, and proper preface; however you can assist with this by providing the liturgy in Word format (if that is easy for you). If the office of the Bishop is not preparing his book please be sure that anything he is reading is in:

- 16pt font with at least 1.5 spacing
- Without page turns mid-sentence
- Includes hymns and service music
- Includes Collect of the Day, Collect for the Prayers of the People, and Proper Preface

Baptismal Vows

When there are no baptisms, confirmations, or receptions, the renewal of baptismal vows replaces the Nicene Creed at all services — even Rite I. The Paschal candle should be lit and placed near the font whenever baptism or renewal of vows takes place.

Propers & Lectionary

- The Propers of the Day will be used, even when initiation rites take place
- The Revised Common Lectionary (Episcopal Edition) is the norm in the Diocese
- For non-Sunday visits, the week's Propers are preferred; for Saturday services, the next day's Propers

Liturgical Season Specifics

The liturgical color will be that of the day, with these exceptions:

- White: New ministries, baptisms, anniversary celebrations
- Purple: Advent and Lent

Any departure from the above, even if it is the parish norm, must be discussed and approved before the day of the visitation. Please email the Bishop directly with request and reason.

Please omit the confession or the penitential rite during the season of Easter.

Vestments & Incense

- The Bishop vests in a cope to begin the service, removing it at the reading of the Gospel
- The Bishop vests in a chasuble at the offertory and for the remainder of the service
- If incense is used (not required; discouraged if not your normal practice):
- Bishop censes altar at procession in; Deacon censes the Gospel; Bishop censes altar at offertory

Microphones

If available, the Bishop prefers the lapel type microphone vs ear.

Preaching

- The Bishop may preach from a stand placed at or near the transept or center aisle (he usually has one with him), or he may preach from the pulpit. The chaplain will inform you about the plan when they arrive.
- The Bishop will not do children's sermons, but is glad to spend time with children in other ways.

Eucharistic Prayer and Altar

The Bishop's preference is:

- that there is nothing on the altar except cloth and candles
 - no altar stand or altar book
 - no chalice stack
 - no gospel book
 - following communion the altar should be similarly cleared
- to say the Sursum Corda and Proper Preface to the Eucharistic Prayer
- no preparation for distribution until after the invitation to the table
- Bishop always receives last
- if the normal practice is that there is a gluten-free option, it needs to be consecrated beforehand

There is no concelebration in the Episcopal church, only the bishop wears a chasuble at the altar. The resident senior clergy is invited to the altar with the Bishop but they will not wear a chasuble.

Any other clergy should be in garments and stole appropriate for the congregation, and no person except the bishop should wear a cope.

Chaplain Duties

Most of the time the office of the Bishop will assign a Canon to be the Bishop's chaplain. In the absence of a Canon chaplain, the deacon (or a senior acolyte or assisting lay minister — not a presbyter except in unusual circumstances) assists the Bishop with:

- Holding the prayer book for liturgical gestures
- Holding the crozier staff when the Bishop is not in procession
- Holding miter and crozier if the Bishop reverences the altar
- Assisting with chrism at baptisms
- Holding the crozier as the Bishop blesses the Gospel book and deacon prior to the Gospel reading
- The Bishop holds his crozier during the reading of the Gospel
- Assisting the Bishop in removing the cope at the Gospel procession and putting on the chasuble at the offertory
- Giving the miter and crozier to the Bishop during the blessing

The chaplain should remain calm, have a light heart, and pay close attention to the Bishop trusting that he will help you know what to do.

4. When There Are Baptisms

Baptisms are lifegiving and beautiful and important to both the Bishop and the community of the baptized. If there are special circumstances, contact the Bishop's office before the visit.

Order of Baptismal Liturgy

The presentation of candidates, interrogation, and baptismal covenant will take place at the chancel steps. The procession to the font follows this order:

- Deacon or acolyte bearing the Paschal candle
- The Bishop
- Presbyters, deacons, and assisting clergy
- Baptismal candidates and sponsors
- Parish members, where practicable

The procession returns in the same order. The prayer for the gifts of the Holy Spirit and chrismation takes place before the altar.

Key Notes

- The Bishop's book should include the liturgy for baptism at the above stated font and spacing.
- Newly baptized (or sponsors of infants) carry a baptismal candle lit from the Paschal candle in the procession back
- The Bishop will offer the Prayer of Thanksgiving over Water (p. 306) and prayers following baptism
- The Bishop performs the chrismation or may invite the priest to do so on occasion
- Please have an adequate supply of chrism in a vessel worthy of public liturgical use, for example a small nice dish or egg cup. Oil stocks are for pastoral, not liturgical use, and can easily get knocked over.

5. Confirmation, Reception, and Reaffirmation

Diocesan-wide liturgies for confirmation and reception are scheduled at least three times a year at the Philadelphia Episcopal Cathedral. These services reinforce our identity as a Church beyond the local parish.

At Parish Visitations

- Candidates may come in the most convenient order
- Each candidate holds a card with their name and the rite they are receiving printed on it — please do not use sticker name tags
- Candidates come forward one at a time
- All candidates stand (no kneeling)
- The laying on of hands by the recipients community will be invited at confirmation, reception, and reaffirmation
- The Bishop prefers to stand in front of the chair and will often speak briefly with each confirmand before the laying on of hands

6. Special Services

Any change from these guidelines requires prior permission from the Bishop's office.

Celebration of New Ministry

Scheduled between 90 days and one year after the arrival and or call of a new rector. Contact Mia Hain to begin scheduling. This service is normally held on a Saturday morning with the Bishop as celebrant.

- Invite clergy of the deanery, the search consultant, the Interim Priest, and clergy who served during the interim
- The Bishop is the presider; requests for a different preacher must be made in writing before any invitation is extended
- Readings chosen from BCP p. 560; alternate readings may be requested with theological rationale
- Color: White (contact Bishop's office if the date falls on a feast or commemoration)
- If no parish deacon, the Bishop's office will assign one
- We do not produce an invitation, however we will share the event widely in our media channels.

Ordination to the Diaconate

All deacons (transitional and vocational) are ordained at the annual Diaconal Ordination in June at the Philadelphia Episcopal Cathedral or St. John's Diocesan Center.

Ordination to the Priesthood

The ordinand works with the Canon for Transition's office to select an appropriate time and place, usually the parish of first call. A diocesan master of ceremonies will be provided for services outside the Cathedral.

- The Bishop is the presider and preacher; the Bishop will consider requests for others to preach, but it is his prerogative, and the guest must speak directly with the Canon for Transitions beforehand.
- Readings chosen from BCP pp. 540–541 (Deacons) or p. 528 (Priests)
- Color: Red (contact Bishop's office if the date falls on a feast or commemoration)

- If there is no parish deacon, the Bishop's office will assign one
- The office of Transitions will schedule a rehearsal at least one week beforehand

7. Following the Bishop's Visit

Please do not give the offering to the Bishop during the visit. Count it and send a check to the diocesan office:

Diocese of Pennsylvania

23 East Airy Street, Norristown, PA 19401

Note on check: "Offering from Bishop's Visitation"

Please complete and mail the Official Record of Bishop's Visitation to the diocesan office the week following the visit, listing all confirmations and receptions. If there are none, sign and return the form.

Official Record of Bishop's Visitation

Complete this form and return it to the diocesan office by email or regular mail the week after the visitation. This information becomes part of the permanent diocesan record.

Contact	Phone	Email
Mia Hain	215-627-6434 x124	mhain@diopa.org

Clergy or Sr. Warden: _____

Church: _____ City: _____

Visiting Bishop: _____ Date of Visitation: _____

Candidates Confirmed or Received

Please type the full baptismal name, age, previous ecclesiastical connection (if any), and address of those being baptized (B), confirmed (C) received (R), reaffirmed (F). You may produce an additional sheet with the appropriate columns.

Full Name	M/F	Age	Rite BCRF	Previous Affiliation	Address

Total Confirmed: _____ Total Received: _____ Total Reaffirming: _____ Total Baptized: _____

Signature of Clergy or Senior Warden: _____

Date: _____