

SUPPORTING FRENCH LANGUAGE SERVICES IN FRANCOPHONE AND BILINGUAL PARISHES IN SASKATCHEWAN

ISSUE: The Conseil pastoral francophone interdiocésain de la Saskatchewan wishes to support French language services in parishes by encouraging French language training opportunities for priests

CURRENT STATUS:

- The Conseil pastoral francophone interdiocésain de la Saskatchewan (CPFIS) recognizes the need to encourage priests to acquire French language skills in order to support francophone and bilingual parishes in Saskatchewan.
- The CPFIS annually budgets an amount of money to support French language training opportunities for priests.
- When requests are received from a diocese, the CPFIS, together with the Bishop and the priest, assess the level and the extent of training needed to make the appropriate choice of courses and programs.
- CPFIS reimburses costs of training, accommodations and travel to a sponsoring parish where the priest is assigned.
- At the completion of the program, additional local supports are discussed with the Bishop and the priest.
- The CPFIS encourages the Bishops to consider assigning the priest who received French language training to a francophone or bilingual parish so as to ensure that the candidate priest can use his newly acquired language skills.

BACKGROUND

- Over the past two years the CPFIS has sponsored three priests in language training programs.
- When the CPFIS financially contributes to French language training for priests, the diocese may rationalize the expenditure made by the CPFIS rather than by the diocese.
- By creating the CPFIS, the Bishops recognize the important contributions of French speaking Canadians to the development of the Catholic Church in Canada.
- The CPFIS has been given the mandate to represent French speaking Catholics of the province, informing the Bishops of their pastoral and liturgical needs and fostering the development of French and bilingual parishes in Saskatchewan.
- The diocese formally recognizes the existence and purpose of francophone and bilingual parishes and makes available the appropriate resources to meet their needs, including supporting the development of language skills of parish priests in order to meet the needs of francophone and bilingual parishes.
- There are a number of training opportunities available at the two provincial universities and intensive French language immersion programs in Quebec. Courses and programs may vary from two to three weeks up to 15 weeks.
- The purpose of the *Language Policy for the Catholic Church in Saskatchewan* and the *Guidelines for the Implementation of the Language Policy for the Catholic Church in Saskatchewan* is to officially recognize the needs and wishes of French speaking parishioners regarding pastoral liturgical services and the development of francophone and bilingual parishes in Saskatchewan.