

International Priests

International priests are those priests who were trained and ordained for a diocese or religious order outside of the United States, including U.S territories. These priests are an invaluable resource for the Archbishop of the Military Services, USA, as he ministers to the U.S. military members and their families around the world as well as to the Catholic patients in Veterans Affairs medical centers across the United States. St. John Paul II stressed the responsibility of persons who serve in cultures other than their own.

Missionaries, who come from other churches and countries, must immerse themselves in the cultural milieu of those to whom they are sent, moving beyond their own cultural limitations. Hence they must learn the language of the place in which they work, become familiar with the most important expressions of the local culture, and discover its values through direct experience. Only if they have this kind of awareness will they be able to bring people to the knowledge of the hidden mystery... in a credible and fruitful way.¹

International priests who minister in the United States encounter many challenges that are amplified in the military environment. Not only does the priest have to understand the culture of the United States but he also has to learn the military culture, which can only be experienced by being in the military. To learn successfully the military culture, a priest must already have been immersed in parish ministry in the United States and have a very good knowledge of English as it is spoken and written in this country. The United States military and the Department of Veteran Affairs expect that priests are fully prepared to minister successfully to their members and patients. Thus, applicants for military chaplaincy, for VA chaplaincy or for contract positions within the United States must be able to prove that they have fully developed English skills and a complete understanding of the American culture prior to obtaining an endorsement from the Archdiocese for the Military Services.

For purposes of the AMS application, any priest born outside of the United States and who spent the majority of his youth being raised outside of the US, whether or not he went to a seminary in the US and is incardinated in a US diocese, must comply with the application's English test requirements.

In addition to the requirements for all priest applicants noted in other areas of the AMS website international priest applicants must provide all of the following at their own expense:

1. Certified test results from a Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) test center. If you have not taken this test and are unsure how to register for TOEFL, please visit the TOEFL website at <http://www.ets.org/toefl/>. Minimum acceptable scores are as follows:

- Reading Section: 20
- Listening Section: 20
- Speaking Section: 20

¹ Quoted in USCCB Guidelines for Receiving Pastoral Ministers in the United States, Third edition, pg. A-3

- Writing Section: 20
- Total Score: 80

2. Certified test results of an online oral exam proctored by ProFluent+. Cost of this test is \$115.00. Register for the test by first creating an account by clicking on the "Sign Up" button. After you have created an account, click on the "Log In" button. Once you have logged in you can schedule a test at a time convenient to you by clicking on the "Get Credential" button at the following link: <https://www.profluentplus.com>

To be considered for the AMS endorsement you must obtain a minimum score of "Advanced Low" on the ProFluent+ test. Submit a copy of your test certificate that includes the results code.

3. Three years of documented full-time experience at a Catholic parish within the United States. Use a separate sheet of paper to list the name of the parish/parishes, address and phone number where you were assigned, and a detailed explanation of your duties. You should also include the name, current address and phone number of each pastor who oversaw your ministry.

Please know that your application will not be considered until all of the AMS requirements have been met.

[1] Quoted in USCCB Guidelines for Receiving Pastoral Ministers in the United States, Third edition, pg. A-3