

Priest Associate/Hispanic Missioner
St. Paul's Episcopal Church/Iglesia Episcopal de San Pablo
Paterson, New Jersey

I. Position Background

A commitment to developing ministry with and among our Hispanic/Latino brothers and sisters is at the heart of this priest associate position. While that commitment is centered on the mission in and around St. Paul's, Paterson, it has been a collaborative ministry of many companion congregations in partnership with one another. Most but not all of those congregations are located in the region northwest of St. Paul's (District 10 of the Episcopal Diocese of Newark) and include Lutheran as well as Episcopal companions. Beginning in 2002, St. Paul's planted seeds for a cross-cultural, bilingual ministry at St. Paul's. While the congregation was already multiethnic in its composition, the process of becoming a bilingual congregation, intentionally including our Hispanic/Latino/a brothers and sisters, was a huge identify shift. With the prayerful and financial help of our companions over the past five (5) years, St. Paul's has cultivated these seeds for new ministry for a new community – *La Nueva Comunidad en San Pablo*. The results are impressive and documented in a two-year 2004-2006 report which can be obtained upon request.

While there are many turning points, a very symbolic one was the call to Rev. Edgar Gutierrez-Duarte, our first full-time Priest Associate/Hispanic Missioner, in July 2003. Edgar's presence helped confirm the spiritual hunger that is right around us in our neighborhood, if only we can break down the cultural and language barriers that get in the way. While we realized that we could do a lot more than we thought we could, e.g., by hanging our sign out front and plunging into worship with the help of the natural base of Hispanic/Latino/a leadership in our own parish community, we also saw the strategic and symbolic significance of calling an indigenous and native-speaking Priest Associate to nurture this ministry over time. Obviously, such a person needed to be a "match" in other respects, notably in terms of a commitment to being a catalyst – but by no means the only catalyst – for cultivating the new seeds of our ministry with our Hispanic/Latino/a brothers and sisters.

But to say all of this is to miss one very important distinction that we have had from the beginning: The position is neither a cultural straight-jacket to which any would-be Hispanic/Latino priest would be assigned nor is the work segregated to Spanish speaking peoples. To the contrary, the model of ministry that we have discerned neither confines the Priest Associate to ministry among our Spanish-only speaking members, nor even just to St. Paul's Church. The Priest Associate works collaboratively with the Rector of St. Paul's and other parish leaders to nurture our bilingual ministry while at the same time cultivating the multiethnic mission of the congregation in other respects. In addition, s/he facilitates the engagement of our companion congregations, along with the Rector and other key leaders, *La Nueva Comunidad en San Pablo* – which names both the new multicultural, bilingual community that we have become AND the companionship with other congregations that makes it possible.

II. Position Overview

At the base congregation, the full-time Priest Associate/Hispanic Missioner shares equally in the priestly responsibilities as seems appropriate and desirable to the supervising clergy concerned (the Rector of St. Paul's). This means that the sacramental, preaching, teaching, pastoral, and programmatic responsibilities are not segregated to one or another priest but that responsibilities would

fit with prior commitments of time and availability. This also means, for example, that the Priest Associate ideally preaches and celebrates on a regular basis at the English services just as s/he does at the Spanish service – and vice-versa as the language ability of other clergy permits.

Along with the Rector of the base congregation, the full-time Priest Associate is charged with cultivating and organizing leaders to carry out the articulated goals and objectives for Hispanic Ministry development. With the Rector, other clergy and lay leaders, the Priest Associate shares in the pastoral ministry to those in need but, in addition, would bear special responsibility for pastoral ministry and outreach into the Hispanic/Latino/a community, especially where language is a barrier in the pastoral relationship.

Finally, as part of the shared mission with our companions, the Priest Associate maintains a limited visitation schedule, making at least one annual Sunday morning visit to each partner congregation that wishes to and makes arrangements for it. As these visits have been structured so far, they need to allow the Priest Associate to return for the Spanish service in the afternoon (currently at 1:30 p.m.) at the base community. It is important to add that, once a year companion congregations are invited to share in a bilingual celebration of our ministry, typically and symbolically on the Sunday of Columbus Day weekend – *El Dia de la Raza*. The Priest Associate also agrees to make him/herself available for consultation to companions with respect to opportunities for engagement in the base community and/or in the companion congregations, as schedules allow.

III. Qualifications & Requirements

A. Certification of ordination in the Episcopal/Anglican Church and, in the case of a Transitional Deacon, evidence that ordination as an Episcopal/Anglican Priest is both desired and expected in the eyes of the ordaining Bishop and Standing Committee.

B. Evidence of a grounded and growing Faith in Jesus the Christ, nurtured through regular prayer, scriptural study, and self-reflection. In particular we seek a person who observes their own Sabbath time and respects the Sabbath time of others.

C. Evidence of a call to serve ALL God's People as a priest in the Church. Specifically, this means the capacity and desire to serve as an instrument for the unifying power of the Spirit and the presence of Christ in the midst of an inclusive community of all sorts and conditions of people. That community includes but is not limited to diversity in terms of class, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and theological understanding. This position presumes a particular love for and commitment to serving the base congregation's immediate urban neighbors, most especially the Hispanic and Latino/a people.

D. Evidence of a particular passion for reaching out and sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ as we have experienced it in our community of faith with the various people in our immediate environment who are NOT already members of a Faith community.

E. Evidence of leadership skill including the ability to articulate vision, motivate others to serve, and the capacity to identify and equip leaders in the various ministries to which they are called – and a particular interest in developing and organizing a ministry of intentional evangelism, reaching out rather than simply responding to those who come to our church doors.

F. Demonstrated ability in planning, organizing and leading specialized ministries, including but not limited to the ability to facilitate small group ministry, multicultural Bible Study, and other groups as they may evolve and grow.

G. Evidence of an understanding of ministries of social transformation and the various parts that people can and need to play in the collective change process, including organizers, key leaders and direct participants.

H. Demonstrated ability to work in an urban, inner city, all-inclusive congregation, including prior ministry experience working in a multiethnic, inner city environment.

I. Clear commitment to the vision and mission of the Church as it is expressed by the Bishop and Council of the Diocese of Newark as well as the Rector, Wardens, and Vestry of the base congregation.

J. Demonstrated ability and desire to work collaboratively with lay leaders, clergy and other staff, for the sake of the ministry and mission that we share.

K. Evidence of strong communication skills, both oral and written, in both English and Spanish, including basic computer skills. Particular evidence of effective preaching, teaching and pastoral communication. This specifically includes the ability to build trust and provide pastoral leadership and counsel in both public and private settings.

L. Evidence of training or anticipated training in the prevention of child sexual abuse and sexual harassment (*i.e.*, training need not be obtained prior to the issuance of a call, but must be completed within a reasonable time before the start of the new ministry). Successful completion of a background check administered by the Diocese of Newark is also required.

M. Oral and Written Fluency in the Spanish and English languages, sufficient to preach, teach and write with comprehension and clarity.

IV. Specific Responsibilities in the Base Congregation

A. Worship Leadership: Share liturgical responsibilities, as is appropriate for the Order of Ministry in which one is serving (*e.g.*, if the Priest Associate is called out of seminary as a Transitional Deacon), and taking into account the unique designations made at St. Paul's, (*e.g.*, that lay leaders read the Gospel where possible, in English and Spanish). This particularly includes assisting the Rector in the planning and development of worship services, most especially the 1:30 p.m. Santa Eucaristia. This includes weekly and quarterly liturgical planning with the Rector and the Music Director.

B. Diaconal Roles: If the Priest Associate begins as a transitional Deacon, then s/he is expected from time to time to assume the appropriate liturgical roles of a Deacon until such time as s/he is ordained priest. Specifically, this means serving – or at least overseeing those who serve – in the traditional diaconal roles. It also means serving as the Liturgical Coordinator, organizing and preparing participants for worship – or finding participants, as the case may be.

C. Preaching & Teaching: Preach and/or Teach on a regular basis (*e.g.*, at least once per month at 8:00 a.m. and 10:30 a.m., at least twice per month at 1:30 p.m.) as determined in consultation with the Rector. This includes preaching in English and Spanish, at all 3 Sunday services and any others as

determined by the Rector in consultation with the Priest Associate. In terms of teaching, it also includes the shepherding and cultivation of teachers and lay leaders in the congregation.

D. Evangelism: Work with the Rector and the Newcomers and Hispanic Ministry Teams, to develop a strategy for reaching out to the people in our immediate environment who are NOT already active members of a faith community. This also means working with the Rector to equip and empower members of the congregation to go out to our neighbors to share the Good News of what God is doing in our community.

E. Hispanic and Newcomer Ministry Teams: In consultation with the Rector of the base congregation, serve as a shepherd for the Hispanic Ministry team and the Newcomer Team and its outreach to the Hispanic/Latino community.

F. Children & Youth Ministry: While this area of ministry is coordinated primarily by the Director of Children & Youth Ministries (DCYM) or the equivalent, the Priest Associate shares with the Rector of the base congregation an ongoing commitment to support and participate in those ministries as is appropriate and desirable among the parties concerned. The Priest Associate is expected to coordinate and assist in these ministries especially where direct contact with Spanish-only speaking adults and where priestly presence is desirable. This includes but is not necessarily limited to any After School ministry and the summer Vacation Bible School ministry.

G. Pastoral Offices: As part of any necessary liturgical and pastoral formation, the Priest Associate in the base congregation may observe and assist as is appropriate in the pastoral care, planning, counseling and officiating at pastoral offices, including but not limited to baptisms, weddings, funerals and blessings. Thereafter, the Priest Associate may share with the Rector the pastoral and liturgical responsibilities of such Offices as is deemed desirable and pastorally appropriate by the Rector and the Priest Associate.

H. Pastoral Care & Counsel: The Priest Associate will share in making pastoral visits in the base congregation, offering pastoral counsel, and in participating in a pastoral “on-call” system with the Rector as is appropriate. The Priest Associate may be given particular oversight of the ministries of pastoral care including but not limited to oversight of the prayer chain, the healing ministry, and the lay Eucharistic ministry. Additional responsibility may include assisting the Rector in the development of Baptismal and Marriage preparation groups.

I. Communications: Assist in the development of bilingual communications, specifically by nurturing and cultivating the translation work done by key leaders in the congregation in both written and oral communications. Specifically, this means helping to nurture a cadre of people who serve as bilingual greeters, lay readers and intercessors, interpreters, and writers.

J. Ministry in the Diocese: The Priest Associate is not required but strongly encouraged to participate in Diocesan-level ministry groups and bodies as is appropriate and desirable in their view and in the view of his/her supervising Rector. This especially might include but is not limited to serving on the Hispanic Ministry Task Force, offering workshops at the Creative Congregations event, and otherwise sharing one’s gifts. Participation and involvement at the annual Convention of the Diocese of Newark, as a clerical member of the Diocese with voice and vote, is expected.

K. New Seeds of Ministry: The Priest Associate is not only encouraged but also expected to develop her/his own sense of the new seeds for ministry – both within the base congregation and with

our partner congregations – and to cultivate such seeds. Possible examples that come from previous experience include a preaching class in Spanish, a monthly pride ministry and outreach service, first communion classes, among others.

IV. Specific Responsibilities with Partner Congregations

As mentioned above, the Priest Associate is committed to making one annual parish visit on a Sunday morning to partner congregations, defined as those congregations who share in this ministry with their time, talent and treasure. These visits are scheduled according to these guidelines: (1) the Priest Associate can do no more than one per month so as to maintain sufficient pastoral connection to the base congregation; (2) the Priest Associate needs to return from any in time for the regular Spanish liturgy in the base congregation which is presently at 1:30 p.m. (3) Visits are scheduled on a first come, first serve basis by speaking directly with the Priest Associate. The Priest Associate/Hispanic Missioner would also play an integral part in the shared bilingual liturgies such as the annual bilingual confirmation liturgy and the celebration of shared ministry. Finally, the Priest Associate (along with other staff from the base congregation) offers consultation with respect to opportunities for mission engagement in the base community and/or in their home congregations, as schedules allow.

V. Covenant for Shared Ministry

The Priest Associate is expected to build and maintain a covenant with the supervising Rector of the base congregation, including but not limited to the material outlined in this position description. That covenant shall include specific agreements as to availability, time, compensation and benefits, as well as goals and objectives for the ministry of the Priest Associate and her/his shared ministry with the Rector, the congregation of St. Paul's. While the overall duration of this covenant is subject to the discernment of both the supervising Rector and the Priest Associate/Hispanic Missioner, a specific minimum time frame of three years is most desirable for accomplishing the specific goals that the Rector and Associate identify.

VI. Reflection and Review of Ministry

The supervising Rector of the base congregation and the Priest Associate consult weekly as regards the ongoing work of ministry and other issues of priestly formation and long-range concern. An annual mutual ministry review will take place between the Rector and the Priest Associate.