

The Route to Priesthood

The Episcopal Diocese

of

Northwest Texas

(the packet)

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The Route to Priesthood

The Three Routes

This introduction is not intended to be a general introduction to either the subject of Holy Orders in the Episcopal Church, nor to the nature of Priesthood. For a more developed introduction to both of these subjects, please consult the Holy Orders Discernment Committee's *Handbook for Ministry*. Instead, this short intro is to give a general overview of the process by which one becomes a priest.

First, of course, one must begin to experience a call. While this sounds rather mystical and mysterious (and for many individuals, it does indeed involve both something beyond and something not fully understood), it may be simply the urgings of the Holy Spirit as experienced through discussions with your Rector, your Warden, your Bishop, or other individuals of faith in your community. But a call toward what? The following describes the priesthood, and the manner of becoming a priest, as the Episcopal Diocese of Northwest Texas currently understands and practices. (However, one cannot stress enough the wonderful conceptual work found concerning many forms of Christian ministry found in the above mentioned *Handbook*, be sure to familiarize yourself with that document before reading further.)

There are no gradations within the priesthood. One priest has the same status, same authority, same ability to vote at Diocesan convention, as any other. However, different priests do fulfill different functions within the church, and because of the differing natures of these roles, and the differing needs of our diocese, there are different ways to prepare for priesthood. Currently, these different manners of preparation are three in number: the seminary route, reading for orders, and local preparation of a person in community. None of these are better or worse than any other, but they prepare for differing expectations of what life after ordination may look like for the individual, and for the community with whom he or she worships. The three routes are really quite specific to the goal they attempt to reach. Therefore, if one begins down one path, and wishes to switch to another, the entire process starts anew.

SEMINARY

The *seminary route* is perhaps the easiest to explain. It is what many of us have in mind when we begin to talk about becoming a priest. After completing the Holy Orders Discernment Committee process, and attendance in the Bishop's Advisory Committee on Aspirants to the Ministry (HODC and BACAM), the individual and her or his community which is considering this route, expect that the individual will leave our diocese for at least 3 years, going away to a graduate school of ministry. This normally means the individual will already be in possession of a Bachelor's

degree, or the equivalent (credit can be given for significant life experience). Currently our diocese does not have the financial resources to assist with the expenses of this manner of preparation, so the individual is responsible for these costs (and make no mistake, this is a costly option -- tuition, room, board, and associated expenses can easily reach over \$100,000 in three years -- but then again there are many sources for financial aid).

At the conclusion of these three years of preparation at a seminary of the Bishop's choosing, the individual will take the General Ordination Examination of the Episcopal Church. When considering deployment (the employment of the individual, and the community which pays the bills), the Diocese of Northwest Texas maintains a type of "right of first refusal", that is, it is our expectation and hope to keep our graduating seminarians in our diocese immediately after graduation. However, to be frank, this is not always possible, and seminary students are informed well in advance of graduation of reasonable courses of action. Most, but certainly not all, of these graduating students are looking at Priesthood not only as a call, but also as a career, that is, they are hoping to be financially compensated for their work on a full time, or nearly full time, basis. After ordination, the canons require that an individual continue to work with an assigned "mentor priest", and continue their education and formation.

READING FOR ORDERS

The second route is *reading for orders*. It has sometimes been described as apprentice priesthood. Just as Abraham Lincoln never attended law school, so too, some individuals are not in a position to move away and attend a graduate school for ministry. Again, it is normally the case that the individuals possess a Bachelor's Degree or the equivalent (again, significant life experience can be credited). Completion of the Education for Ministry course of the University of the South is a real plus, but not required. After completing the HODC and BACAM, these individuals will then participate in a Diocese of Northwest Texas program which will, after a minimum of three years, and perhaps much longer, lead to priesthood. This process involves quarterly seminars, as well as much work done on one's own. The individual, under the direction of a Rector or other strong mentoring figure, is ordained after the successful completion of the reading for orders program, and the General Ordination Examination of the Episcopal Church. Just as the seminary trained are assigned a mentor after ordination, these individuals continue to function under the direction and supervision of their mentor for a number of years after ordination.

Originally this route was conceived as a way of training for supply clergy (those who fill in when the Rector is away on vacation, or otherwise not available) for middle sized congregations. But obviously, the need and opportunities are much greater than merely doing supply work. Because of the ongoing training that is required after ordination, it is important that the individual not be looking for financial compensation immediately after ordination. These "apprentice priests" are real priests, but their

training and formation simply take longer. They continue to learn and develop under the direction of a priest appointed by the Bishop. After a number of years in this phase of their development, the “apprentice” is lifted from the formal oversight of their mentor. At this point, the individual is simply treated as any other priest in our diocese. Although clearly not the normal expectation, it is in theory possible, that someone trained and formed in this fashion could be elected a Rector of a congregation or otherwise assume a full time, stipendiary, position.

Financial compensation is a tricky question for folks in this category. Prior to ordination, it would be inappropriate to recompense these individuals for their work. After ordination they are not normally employed by their congregations. However, with the consent of the Bishop, a congregation may elect to recompense these individuals for some of the work they do, especially if this begins to take longer amounts of time. Most of the folks interested in this route of preparation are going to have full time employment outside of the church, or otherwise have their own resources.

LOCAL PREPARATION IN COMMUNITY

Finally, the third route is local preparation of an individual in community (formerly called canon 9, or even longer ago, canon 11, priesthood). This route was originally envisioned for small, remote, geographically isolated, or ethnically distinct congregations. Today it is used by a number of our smaller congregations. The congregation, in consultation with the Bishop’s office, undergoes a congregational process of discernment (which substitutes for the HODC and BACAM processes), which may result in an individual, or individuals, being selected to fulfill some of the community’s ministry by functioning in the role of ordained person(s). Other parts of the community’s ministry are assumed by the other members of the community. One person may watch over the business life of the congregation, another may teach Christian Ed, another may do the pastoral work, and everyone does the outreach of the community. The priest may not be the preacher.

What’s especially important to notice here is that this is a question of the whole community’s learning to do ministry in new ways. The role and function of a priest within that community may be shared by more than a single individual. Even with two such individuals, however, not everything that a full time, financially compensated, priest does can be expected of persons ordained in this manner. These individuals are not going away to seminary. Neither are they looking for financial compensation. Rather, the community is functioning together in a new way of being church. As part of that new way, one or more individuals may, with training and oversight, be ordained to function as a priest in their community. They are fully and really priests, but their training and expectations are that they will minister to and with, the community that has been trained along with them. After ordination, it is the policy of the bishops in the 7th province of the Episcopal Church (the dioceses of Oklahoma, Kansas, Western, Kansas, New Mexico, Texas, Dallas, Ft. Worth, West Texas, Northwest Texas, West Louisiana, Arkansas, and West Missouri), that priests ordained in such a manner of

preparation do not normally continue to function as priests should they leave the communities with whom they have trained.

Because of the very important role that the training of the local community has along with the training of the individuals involved, it is not possible to put time parameters around this route to priesthood. At the very least, it is going to be a year or two after being identified. On the other hand, after discernment, it is imperative that progress be made so that the whole community gets “on board” with these new ways of being church, of working and ministering in the greater community. As with priests ordained in the other manners of preparation, after ordination these priests continue to work with “mentor priests” for sometime.

Phases of the Routes to Ordination

Are you ready for a more in depth look at the process of becoming a priest? There are 5 distinct phases to the process. The first, we have simply called “**Preliminary Steps**.” The second phase begins when the individual has been made a **Postulant** by the Bishop. The time spent in this phase is called **Postulancy**, and lasts a minimum of 6 months. It is a time of exploration and discernment. The third phase begins when the individual has been made a **Candidate**, which again, is an action by the Bishop. Time in this phase of the process is called **Candidacy**, and also lasts a minimum of 6 months. The fourth phase is when the Candidate has been ordained to the **Transitional Diaconate**. All priests serve a minimum of 6 months as a **deacon**. During this time their education and formation continue. Finally, the 5th and last phase of the process is the time **After Ordination**, that is, after ordination to the priesthood. There are continuing expectations for how one lives as a priest, as well as a number of canons governing how priests relate to their dioceses, their bishops, and their congregations.

Format

The rest of this document is divided into 5 phases, to match the 5 phases of the ordination process, followed by a short glossary of terms, and the text of the national canons. Each phase has a **checklist**, an **explanation** of the steps in the checklist, and then a number of **forms** which must be completed before moving onto the next step.

The **checklist** has a normal time line, a step number, a brief description of the step, an indication whether or not a form is required, and then a list of to whom the form is to be sent. Although, those in local formation begin with step 3L, after that point, everyone has a step all the way through step 38, ordination to the Priesthood. It is important to remember that the steps must be followed in order. Step 1 comes before step 2 and so on.

Following the checklist is a **brief explanation** of each step. These explanations come with the step number, a step title, a number, such as III.6.4(a), which lists the canonical requirement for that particular step, and then a brief explanation of the step.

Following the explanation section, are the **forms** appropriate to that phase of the process. If you are reading this document on a computer, there are hot links between the checklist and each form. If you are not reading on a computer, remember that each form is identified by the step number that requires it.

Each of the 5 phases has its own section of the checklist, with a number of steps appropriate to that phase. In this document, each step is numbered. If a step has a letter following the number, that indicates that only the indicated route (S for seminary, R for Reading for Orders, L for local community formation) needs to complete that step. Most steps do not have a letter which follows the number, which means that all three routes must complete that step. For example, steps one and two are listed as 1SR and 2SR. That means that steps one and two must be completed by those in the seminary route as well as those in the reading for orders route. Step three exists in two forms, 3SR and 3L. This means that those in the seminary and reading for orders routes complete 3SR, and those in local formation complete step 3L. Steps 4,5,6,7,8, and 9 have no further designation, so they must be completed by everyone.

Many of the steps come with a form which must be completed before advancing to the next step. Not every step has a required form. Those that do, have their form clearly indicated.

This all sounds much more complicated than it is in real life. In the following lists of steps, everyone must complete every step, except those in local formation, who, as indicated, do not begin with step 1, but step 3L. After that, everyone has a step 4,5,6, etc. which is appropriate to their route.

Requirements for Beginning

Any member of this church may respond to a perceived call by God in their life, under this canon as long as they are a “**confirmed, adult communicant in good standing.**” These words have specific meanings, defined by the national canons. They are defined as follows:

Confirmed - either by a Bishop of this church, or having been received into membership by a Bishop of this church. If baptized over the age of 16 by a Bishop, that is, as an adult, the chrismation may count as the confirmation.

Adult - at least 16 years of age.

Communicant - have, in the past year, received communion at least 3 times.

Good Standing - have been faithful in worship (unless for good cause prevented), and been faithful in working, praying, and giving for the spread of the Kingdom of God.

Priesthood Preliminary Steps Checklist

Normal Date to Complete	Step #	Description	Form Required	Form goes to:
Fall before 1st year	1SR	Preliminary meeting with Rector/vicar	No	
Fall before 1st year	2SR	Preliminary meeting with Bishop	Yes	Bishop (before meeting)
Fall before 1st year	3SR	Completes a Local Discernment Process	HODC form	Vestry, Bishop, COM
Anytime	3L	Congregation completes Discernment Process		
	4	Nominated by a Community of Faith	Yes	Bishop
	5	Written Request for Admission as a Postulant	Yes	Bishop
	6	Background Check	Yes	Bishop
	7	Medical Exam	See Note below	Bishop
	8	Psychological Exam	See Note below	Bishop
	9	Interview with Bishop, who grants approval to proceed	No	
Spring before 1st year	10SR	Attends the Bishops' Advisory Committee on Aspirants to the Ministry	BACAM application	Bishop, COM
	10L	For informational purposes only	BACAM application	Bishop, COM
Spring before 1st year	11SR	Commission on Ministry Interview and Recommendation	Yes	Bishop
	11L	COM subcommittee Interview	Yes	Bishop
Before Program of Preparation	12	Bishop admits as Postulant	Yes	Individual, COM, Standing Committee, Rector

Note:

Steps 7 and 8 require forms published by the Church Pension Fund, these may be obtained by consulting with the Bishop's office.

Preliminary Steps Explanation

The following are brief explanations of each step. Remember that steps marked S are for the Seminary Route, R for the Reading for Orders Route, L for Local Community Formation Route, SR for both Seminary and Reading Routes. Unlettered steps apply to everyone.

1SR.) Preliminary meeting with Rector/vicar

This is an unofficial meeting. A member of the clergy, either the Rector, Vicar, or some other member known to the person, should consult and give encouragement for the person to continue. While unofficial, this is not casual. The member of the clergy, for example, must be aware that the person intends to consult the Bishop, and must give approval.

2SR.) Preliminary meeting with Bishop

Like the above meeting, this is an informal step. The Bishop's encouragement here is not an official endorsement of the person, but rather a more "get to know you" type of meeting.

3SR.) Completes a Local Discernment Process III.8.3(a)(5)

The Commission on Ministry provides a document to guide this process, called the Holy Orders Discernment Handbook. It provides relevant guidance on this step. Copies are available from the Bishop's Office.

3L.) Congregation completes Discernment Process.

As an alternative to the Holy Orders Discernment Committee's work mentioned above, the Diocese of Northwest Texas provides a congregational discernment process. For details, contact the Bishop's office.

4.) Nominated by a Community of Faith III.8.2(d)(2) III.8.3(a)(7)

Normally done by the Vestry of the parish, or the Bishop's Committee. If the discernment community is other than a parish, the Bishop should be informed in advance. The nomination form includes a number of specific pieces of information.

5.) Written Request for Admission as a Postulant III.8.3(a)(8)

This is an acceptance of nomination, which is on the form provided. It also includes a number of specific pieces of information.

6.) Background Check III.8.2(e)(1)

Background checks are initiated by the Diocesan office (but paid for by the community of faith, or the individual), conducted by an outside firm (currently Oxford Document Search). It includes a check of personal references, past employers, a credit history, as well as a legal search. Results are held in confidence by the Bishop, and in rare instances, a particular fact may be shared with the Chair of the Commission on Ministry.

7.) Medical Exam III.8.2(e)(3)

This is a general exam, done by your physician (at your expense). Results are confidential, held by the Bishop. In rare instances, the Chair of the Commission on Ministry may need to be informed of a particular fact. The Church Pension Fund provides the appropriate forms, which can be obtained from the Bishop's Office.

8.) Psychological Exam III.8.2.(e)(3)

This exam, again at your own expense, is done by a psychiatrist or in Lubbock. Having everyone use the same psychiatrist provides uniformity of response. Results are held in confidence by the Bishop. The Church Pension Fund provides the appropriate forms, which can be obtained from the Bishop's Office, along with information concerning the psychiatrist's office .

9.) Interview with Bishop, who grants approval to proceed III.8.3(b)(2)
III.8.3(c)

This interview must include a review of financial resources which are available to support the individual during Postulancy. Unlike the earlier interview with the Bishop, this is a formal interview.

10SR.) Attends the Bishops' Advisory Committee on Applicants to the Ministry (BACAM).

BACAM is a series of interviews over the course of a weekend, with clergy and laity providing an "outside look" at the individual. Seminary route individuals attend the BACAM usually held in February in

conjunction with the Diocese of Oklahoma. Reading for Orders route individuals attend the local BACAM in May. Results are confidential to the Bishop and the Chair of the Commission on Ministry. For registration details, contact the Chair of the Commission on Ministry.

10L.) Because local community formation has a different discernment process, participation in BACAM does not normally apply to those in the local formation route. For informational purposes only, to prepare for meeting with the subcommittee of the COM, we do ask that the individual fill out the BACAM application.

The Bishop does maintain the prerogative, however, of asking anyone to attend BACAM. For specific details, contact the Bishop.

11SR.) Commission on Ministry Interview and Recommendation III.8.3(d)

The Commission on Ministry is a board of clergy and laity, appointed by the Bishop, who advise him on matters concerning Holy Orders, among other things. He is not bound by their recommendations, but does work very closely with them. Because it is an advisory group, it's reports are made directly to the Bishop. Meetings of the Commission are held quarterly (more or less) in Lubbock.

11L.) Subcommittee of the Commission on Ministry Interview and Recommendation

After the congregation has undergone its discernment process, two (usually) members of the Commission on Ministry meet with the individual, and with the congregation. This takes place in the local congregation. This subcommittee of the Commission on Ministry will attempt to "get the story" of how this congregation got to this point in their life, and how they are living into these new ways of being church. The subcommittee makes its recommendation to the full Commission on Ministry. In most circumstances, this substitutes for the Commission on Ministry Interview mentioned at 11SR. The full Commission on Ministry then forwards the subcommittee's recommendation on to the Bishop.

12.) Bishop admits as Postulant III.8.3(e)

If the Bishop decides the matter should proceed, he will admit the applicant to Postulancy. The individual, Community of Faith, Commission on Ministry, Standing Committee, and Program of Preparation, are notified of the decision. Postulancy, unlike those exploring a call to the diaconate, is a preliminary judgment of the validity of the call to Holy Orders. While not definitive, it does commit the individual and our Diocese to a mutual process of discernment and

expectation. The role of our Diocese begins to shift from one of discernment, to one of conditional advocacy.

General Information Sheet
Step 2SR

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip code _____

Birthdate _____ Number and ages of children _____

Phone (o) _____ (h) _____

fax _____ (m) _____

Email address _____

Employer _____

Type of Work Done _____

Spouse's Name _____

Spouse's Employer _____

Type of Work Done _____

Congregation of which I am a member _____

Date and place of confirmation _____

I have spoken with my Rector/Vicar (or in the absence of a Rector or Vicar, a Priest of this diocese known to me), and she/he has encouraged me to come and see the Bishop _____(yes) _____(no)

Hobbies _____

**Nomination by a Community of Faith
Step 4**

To: The Bishop of Northwest Texas, the Rt. Rev'd. _____:
Date; _____

We, the congregation of _____,
in the town of _____,
nominate _____,
to be admitted to Postulancy for Holy Orders, specifically for Priesthood,
in the Seminary/Reading for Orders/Local Community Formation (circle
one) route. Further, we commit ourselves to ongoing support and
involvement in her/his formation. To that end, we append our signatures
below.

The following signitures must be that of a two-thirds majority of the Vestry/Bishop's
Committee

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Member of the Clergy or other leader
exercising oversight

Please attach additional sheets, if necessary

**Request for Admission to Postulancy
Step 5**

To: The Bishop of Northwest Texas, the Rt. Rev'd. _____:

I hereby request to be admitted by you as a Postulant for the Priesthood.

- 1.) a. My full name is _____
- b. I was born on _____
- c. My marital status is _____
- 2.) I have resided in this diocese since _____
- 3.) I was baptized in _____ Church,
_____ (town), _____ (state), on _____ (date), by
_____ (minister)
- 4.) I was confirmed in _____
Church, _____ (town), _____ (state),
on _____ (date), by the Rt. Rev'd.
_____, Bishop of _____.
- 5.) I (have/have not) previously applied for admission as a Postulant for
Holy Orders (Diaconate or Priesthood). (If you have previously applied,
please elaborate:)

- 6.) My discernment process has included:

7.) Education: Highest Level Attained _____
Degrees Earned, if any _____
Areas of Specialization _____
(official transcripts should be attached)

Signed _____ Date _____
Present _____
Address _____
Phone _____ Work phone _____
Email _____

**Bishop's Approval to Proceed
Step 9**

To: _____
and the Commission on Ministry

After reviewing results of your community of faith's nomination, the results of your medical and psychological exams, and reflecting upon our conversations, having spent time in prayerful contemplation, I am notifying you that it seems good to the Holy Spirit, and to myself, that you should proceed with discernment concerning Holy Orders. The next steps are for you to attend BACAM and interview with the Commission on Ministry. BACAM applications can be obtained from the Chair of the COM, who will also be in touch with you concerning a time and date that you can meet with the Commission, or their sub-committee.

Signed _____
Bishop of Northwest Texas

Date _____

**COM Recommendation
Step 11SR**

To: The Bishop of Northwest Texas, the Rt. Rev'd. _____:

The Commission on Ministry, has met and interviewed

_____.

It is therefore the recommendation of the Commission on Ministry that

Signed _____ Date _____

Chair of the Commission on Ministry

Meeting at _____

Admission to Postulancy
Step 12

To: _____

Date: _____

After having reviewed the materials provided me by your congregational discernment process, as well as the Commission on Ministry's recommendation, I am admitting you to Postulancy. As of this date, you are hereby recorded in the Diocesan Register as a Postulant.

(Signed) _____

Bishop of Northwest Texas

cc. Rector/Vicar
Commission on Ministry
Standing Committee
Seminary Dean/Director of Program of Preparation

Priesthood Postulancy Checklist

Normal Date to Complete	Step #	Description	Form Required	Form goes to:
Fall, 1st year	13S	Program of Preparation	No	
Fall, 1st year	13R	DNWT Formation Process	No	
anytime	13L	Congregational Formation Process	No	
	14	As a Postulant, writes Ember Day letters 4x a year	No	
	15S	Program of Preparation evaluates and reports yearly	See Note	Postulant, COM, Bishop
	15R	Evaluation by DNWT formation program yearly	Yes	Postulant, COM, Bishop
	15L	Evaluation of individual and community by Bishop's office yearly	Yes	Postulant, COM, Bishop
Spring, 2nd year	16	Postulant applies for Candidacy	Yes	Bishop, COM
	17SR	Letter of Continued Support from Community of Faith	Yes	Bishop
	17L	Letter of Continued Support from Community of Faith	Yes	Bishop
Spring, 2nd year	18	COM attests continuing formation	Yes	Bishop
Summer, 2nd year	19	Bishop admits as Candidate	Yes	Postulant, COM, Bishop, Standing Committee, Rector

Note:
Seminaries provide this form.

Postulancy Explanation

13S.) Program of Preparation

III.8.2(d)(2)

III.8.4

Traditionally, this has been understood to require attendance in, and graduation from, a theological seminary of the Episcopal Church. However, the Bishop, in consultation with the Commission on Ministry, may assign alternative formation. For more details, contact the Bishop's office.

13R.) Program of Preparation - DNWT Formation

The Reading for Orders Route does not involve attendance in, nor graduation from, an institution of graduate theological education. There is a formation program administered by DNWT. For details, contact the Bishop's office, or the Chair of the Commission on Ministry.

13L.) Program of Preparation - Community Based Formation

The Program of Preparation for Local Community Formation involves not only the individual, but his or her congregation. Consequently, this program, while adhering to all of the requirements mentioned below, is designed for each specific situation. For details, contact the Bishop's office.

14.) As a Postulant, writes Ember Day letters 4x a year III.8.2(d)(1)

Each Postulant shall write the Bishop four times yearly, on the Ember Days, reflecting on the Postulants "academic experience and personal and spiritual development."

15S.) Program of Preparation evaluates and reports yearly III.8.2(d)(5)

The program of preparation, whether a seminary, or otherwise, shall report on the "academic performance and personal qualifications for ordination."

15R.) Program of Preparation evaluates and reports yearly.

Identical to 15S, but uses a different form.

15L.) Program of Preparation evaluates and reports yearly.

Identical to 15S, but uses a different form.

16.) Postulant applies for Candidacy III.8.5(a)(1)

A formal application for Candidacy from the individual must be filed. The time spent as a Postulant must be at least 6 months. There is a form provided.

17SR.) Letter of Continued Support from Community of Faith III.8.5(a)(2)

If the Community of Faith is a congregation, it must be dated and signed by 2/3 of the Vestry/Bishop's Committee and the Rector/Vicar, or a Presbyter known to the individual.

17L.) Letter of Continued Support from Community of Faith

Identical to 17SR, but uses a different form. These letters of support are important moments of evaluation and "reality checks" for the individual and the community. They are not simply paperwork to be filled out, but give the opportunity to provide feedback on the process of development and formation.

18.) COM attests continuing formation III.8.5(b)

The Commission on Ministry, which monitors the Postulant, and is in regular contact with the Postulant, certifies to the Bishop that the Postulant is making the expected progress.

19.) Bishop admits as Candidate III.8.5(b)

If the Bishop decides in the affirmative, the matter continues forward, and the Postulant is admitted into Candidacy. The Individual, Community of Faith, Program of Preparation, Commission on Ministry, and Standing Committee are so notified. Candidacy marks the end of the provisional status of advocacy. This marks a formal judgment that ordination is more than merely likely.

**Application for Candidacy
Step 16**

To: The Bishop of Northwest Texas, the Rt. Rev'd. _____:

I hereby apply to be admitted by you as a Candidate for the Priesthood. I was admitted to Postulancy on _____ (date). My congregational letter of support is attached.

Signed _____ Date _____
Postulant

**Congregational Letter of Support for Candidacy
Step 17SR**

To: The Bishop of Northwest Texas, the Rt. Rev'd. _____,
and the Commission on Ministry:

We wish to express our continuing support for _____,
a confirmed adult communicant of this parish in good standing, who is
desires to be admitted into Candidacy for Holy Orders, in the
Seminary/Reading for Orders (circle one) route to Priesthood. Our
support consists of our prayers, best wishes, and continued involvement
in her/his program of preparation by:

Signed _____ Date _____

Member of the Clergy or other
leader exercising oversight

The following lines are to be signed by a two-thirds majority of the Vestry/Bishop's
Committee:

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

**Congregational Letter of Support for Candidacy
Step 17L**

To: The Bishop of Northwest Texas, the Rt. Rev'd. _____,
and the Commission on Ministry:

We wish to express our continuing support for _____,
a confirmed adult communicant of this parish in good standing, who is
desires to be admitted into Candidacy for Holy Orders, in the Local
Community Formation route to Priesthood. Our support consists of our
prayers, best wishes, and continued involvement in her/his program of
preparation by:

(use additional sheets of paper if necessary, to describe how the entire
community is being involved in formation.)

Signed _____ Date _____

Member of the Clergy or other
leader exercising oversight

The following lines are to be signed by a two-thirds majority of the Vestry/Bishop's
Committee:

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

**COM Attestation of Continuing Formation
Step 18**

To: The Bishop of Northwest Texas, the Rt. Rev'd. _____
and the Standing Committee of the Diocese of Northwest Texas:

We hereby report that _____,
Postulant for the Priesthood, is ready to be received as a Candidate for
the Priesthood.

Signed _____ Date _____
Chair of the Commission on Ministry

Meeting at _____

**Admission to Candidacy
Step 19**

To: _____

Date: _____

After having reviewed the materials provided me by your program of preparation, as well as the Commission on Ministry's attestation, I am admitting you to Candidacy. As of this date, you are hereby recorded in the Diocesan Register as a Candidate for Holy Orders.

_____ (Signed)

Bishop of Northwest Texas

cc. Rector/Vicar

Commission on Ministry

Standing Committee

Seminary Dean/Director of Program of Preparation

Priesthood Candidacy Checklist

Normal Date to complete	Step	Description	Form Required	Form goes to:
	20	As Candidate continues Ember Day letters and Program of Preparation's Annual Evaluations and Reports	No	
	21	Formation in Program of Preparation must include sexual misconduct awareness, Title IV, antiracism instruction	No	
	22	Formation must include study in specified areas	No	
Fall 3rd Year	23	Candidate applies for Ordination as Deacon	Yes	Bishop, COM, Stand. Com
	24	If Medical and Psychological exam precede ordination by more than 36 months, must be updated	See Note	
	25SR	Letter of Continued Support from Community of Faith	Yes	Bishop, COM, Stand. Com
Anytime	25L	Letter of Continued Support from Community of Faith	Yes	Bishop, COM, Stand. Com
	26S	Certificate from Program of Preparation, Evaluation and Recommendation	See Note	Bishop, COM
	26R	Certificate from Program of Preparation, Evaluation and Recommendation	Yes	Bishop, COM
	26L	Certificate from Program of Preparation, Evaluation and Recommendation	Yes	Bishop, COM
	27	COM certifies to Standing Committee	Yes	Standing Committee
	28	Bishop certifies to Standing Committee	Yes	Standing Committee
	29	Standing Committee certifies	Yes	Bishop
December, 3rd Year	30	Bishop Ordains as Deacon	No	

Note: As in the phase of preliminary steps, these forms are published by the Church Pension Fund, and are available from the Bishop's Office

Note: Form 26S is supplied by the seminary

Candidacy Explanation

- 20.)** As Candidate continues Ember Day letters and Program of Preparations Annual Evaluations and Reports III.8.2(d)(1)
III.8.2(d)(5)

As during Postulancy.

- 21.)** Formation in Program of Preparation must include sexual misconduct awareness, Title IV, antiracism III.8.2(e)(2)

Covered in the Program of Preparation.

- 22.)** Formation must include study in: Holy Scripture, church history and the ecumenical movement, Christian Theology(including Missiology), Christian Ethics, studies in contemporary society, Liturgics and Church music, and Theory and Practice of Ministry III.8.4(e)

Covered in the Program of Preparation.

- 23.)** Candidate applies for Ordination as Deacon III.8.6(d)(1)

The Candidate must formally request ordination. At the time of ordination, the Deacon must be 21 years of age. The time spent as a Candidate must not be less than 6 months from admission as a Candidate. There is a form provided.

- 24.)** If Medical and Psychological exam precede ordination by more than 36 months, must be updated III.8.2(e)(4)

For details, contact the Bishop's Office.

- 25SR.)** Letter of Continued Support from Community of Faith III.8.6(d)(2)

The Community of Faith must state their continued support in a letter dated and signed by a 2/3 majority of the Vestry/Bishop's Committee and Rector/Vicar.

25L.) Letter of Continued Support from Community of Faith

The Community of Faith must state their continued support in a letter dated and signed by a 2/3 majority of the Vestry/Bishop's Committee and a member of the clergy known to the candidate. Much like the above, but the forms are different.

26S.) Certificate from Program of Preparation, Evaluation and Recommendation III.8.6(d)(3)

A certificate from the seminary or other program of preparation, showing the Candidate's scholastic record in the subjects required by the Canons, and giving an evaluation with recommendation as to the candidates other personal qualifications for ordination together with a recommendation regarding ordination to the Diaconate is required.

26R.) Certificate from Program of Preparation, Evaluation and Recommendation

Much like the above, except the certificate does not come from a graduate theological seminary, but from the DNWT Reading for Orders program. A different form is used.

26L.) Certificate from Program of Preparation, Evaluation and Recommendation

As in the above two cases, except the certificate comes from the person(s) appointed by the Bishop to administer the local community formation process. A different form from either 26S or 26R is used.

27.) COM certifies to Standing Committee III.8.6(e)(3)

The Commission on Ministry gives a recommendation regarding ordination to the Diaconate.

28.) Bishop certifies to Standing Committee and provides copies of application and letter in III.8.6(d)(1 and 2) III.8.6(e)(2)

The Bishop certifies to the Standing Committee his desire to proceed.

29.) Standing Committee certifies III.8.6(f)

The Standing Committee certifies that the canonical requirements for ordination to the Diaconate have been met and there is no sufficient objection on medical, psychological, moral, doctrinal, or spiritual grounds and that they recommend ordination.

30.) Bishop Ordains as Deacon

III.8.6(g)

At the time of ordination the Candidate shall subscribe publicly and make, in the presence of the Bishop, the declaration required in Article VIII of the Constitution. Ordination dates and places are set by the Bishop.

**Application for Ordination to the Diaconate
Step 23**

To: The Bishop of Northwest Texas, the Rt. Rev'd. _____
the Standing Committee of the Diocese of Northwest Texas, and the
Commission on Ministry:

I, _____, hereby apply for ordination to
the Diaconate, with the intention of subsequently applying for ordination
to the Priesthood. The date of my birth is _____
(to be ordained deacon, an individual must be at least 21 years of age). I
was admitted to Postulancy on _____(date),
and to Candidacy on _____(date). My
time in Postulancy and in Candidacy was/will be at least 6 months in
length.

Signed _____ Date _____
Candidate

**Congregational Support for Ordination to the Diaconate
Step 25SR**

To: The Bishop of Northwest Texas, the Rt. Rev'd. _____,
the Standing Committee of the Diocese of Northwest Texas, and the
Commission on Ministry:

We wish to express our continuing support for _____,
a confirmed adult communicant of this parish in good standing, who is
desires to be ordained into the Transitional Diaconate. Our support
consists of our prayers, best wishes, and continued involvement in her/his
program of preparation by:

Signed _____ Date _____
Rector/Vicar or other leader
exercising oversight

The following lines are to be signed by a two-thirds majority of the Vestry/Bishop's
Committee: _____

**Congregational Support for Ordination to Transitional Diaconate
Step 25L**

To: The Bishop of Northwest Texas, the Rt. Rev'd. _____,
the Standing Committee of the Diocese of Northwest Texas, and the
Commission on Ministry:

We wish to express our continuing support for _____,
a confirmed adult communicant of this parish in good standing, who is
desires to be ordained to the Transitional Diaconate. Our support
consists of our prayers, best wishes, and continued involvement in her/his
program of preparation by:

(use additional sheets of paper if necessary, to describe how the entire
community is being involved in formation.)

Signed _____ Date _____

Member of the Clergy or other
leader exercising oversight

The following lines are to be signed by a two-thirds majority of the Vestry/Bishop's
Committee:

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

**Annual Evaluation and
Recommendation Regarding Ordination
26R**

To: The Bishop of Northwest Texas, the Rt. Rev'd. _____
and the Commission on Ministry

Re: _____, and their progress in the Diocese of
Northwest Texas Reading for Orders Program.

Further, regarding ordination to the Transitional Diaconate, it is my
recommendation that:

Signed _____ Date _____
Director of the Reading for Orders Program

**COM Certificate and Recommendation
Ordination to the Transitional Diaconate
Step 27**

To: The Bishop of Northwest Texas, the Rt. Rev'd. _____
and the Standing Committee of the Diocese of Northwest Texas:

We hereby report on the fitness and readiness of _____
Candidate for the Priesthood, for ordination to the Diaconate, as follows:

Further, it is our recommendation that:

Signed _____ Date _____
Chair of the Commission on Ministry

**Certificate of Bishop
for Ordination to the Transitional Diaconate
Step 28**

To: The Standing Committee of the Diocese of Northwest Texas:

I hereby certify that _____
was admitted as a Postulant for the Priesthood in the Diocese of
Northwest Texas on _____(date), _____(year); and
was admitted as a Candidate for the Priesthood in the Diocese of
Northwest Texas on _____(date), _____(year).
With your concurrence, it is my intention to ordain him/her to the
Transitional Diaconate

Signed _____ Date _____
Bishop of Northwest Texas

**Testimonial of the Standing Committee
Ordination to the Transitional Diaconate
Step 29**

To the Right Reverend _____, Bishop of
Northwest Texas.

We, the Standing Committee of the Diocese of Northwest Texas, having
been duly convened at _____, do testify that
_____, desiring to be ordained to
the Diaconate and Priesthood under Canon III.8, has presented to us the
certificates as required by the Canons indicating his/her preparedness for
ordination to the Diaconate under Canon III.8; and we certify that all
canonical requirements for ordination to the Diaconate under Canon III.8
have been met; and we find no sufficient objection to ordination.
Therefore, we recommend him/her for ordination. In witness whereof, we
have hereunto set our hands this _____ day of _____,
in the year of our Lord _____.

(Signed)

All those consenting to the adoption of this testimonial shall sign on the following
lines:

Priesthood Transitional Diaconate Checklist

Normal Date	Step #	Description	Form Required	Form goes to
Note	31	Deacon applies to be Ordained Priest	Yes	Bishop, COM
	32	If Medical and Psychological Exam over 36 months before ordination as priest, must be updated	Note	Bishop
	33SR	Letter of Support from Community of Faith`	Yes	Bishop, COM, Standing committee
	33L	Letter of Support from Community of Faith	Yes	Bishop, COM, Standing committee
	34S	Program of Preparation certifies, evaluates, and recommends ordination to Priesthood	Note	Bishop, COM, Standing Committee
	34R	Program of Preparation certifies, evaluates, and recommends ordination to Priesthood.	Yes	Bishop, COM, Standing Committee
	34L	Program of Preparation certifies, evaluates, and recommends ordination to Priesthood	Yes	Bishop, COM, Standing Committee
	35	COM attests successful completion of formation	Yes	Bishop, Standing committee
	36	Bishop Certifies to Standing Committee	Yes	Standing Committee
	37	Standing Committee Certifies	Yes	Bishop
	38	If Deacon has a cure, Bishop may ordain to Priesthood	No	

Note:

These steps occur after the ordination to the Transitional Diaconate, which must be a minimum of 6 months in duration. Exact timing will depend upon circumstances. For details contact either the Bishop or the Chair of the Commission on Ministry.

Note on Medical/Psychological:

As previously mentioned, these forms are published by the Church Pension Fund, and are available from the Bishop's Office.

Note: Form 34S is provided by the seminary

Transitional Diaconate Explanation

31.) Deacon applies to be Ordained Priest III.8.7(b)(1)

A formal application for ordination to the Priesthood must be made. The time spent as a deacon must be at least 6 months, and the Deacon must be at least 24 years of age. There is a form provided.

32.) If Medical and Psychological Exam over 36 months before ordination as priest, must be updated III.8.7(a)(3)

For details, contact the Bishop's Office.

33SR.) Letter of Support from Community of Faith` III.8.7(b)(2)

This is from the Deacon's current Community of Faith. It must be signed by at least 2/3 of the Vestry/Bishop's Committee and the Rector/Vestry.

33L.) Letter of Support from Community of Faith

This step is identical to 33SR, but uses a different form. It must be signed by a Presbyter known to the Deacon, as well as 2/3 of the Vestry/Bishop's Committee.

34S.) Program of Preparation certifies, evaluates, and recommends ordination to Priesthood III.8.7(b)(4)

A certificate from the seminary or other program of preparation showing the Deacon's scholastic record in the subjects required by the Canons, and giving an evaluation with recommendation as to the Deacon's other personal qualifications for ordination to the Priesthood.

34R.) Program of Preparation certifies, evaluates, and recommends ordination to Priesthood.

As above, except a different form is used, which comes from the DNWT formation program.

34L.) Program of Preparation certifies, evaluates, and recommends ordination to Priesthood.

As in 34S and 34R, except a different form is used.

35.) COM attests successful completion of formation III.8.7(b)(5)

The Commission on Ministry attests to the successful completion of the program of formation and recommending the Deacon for ordination to the Priesthood. For those in the Seminary or Reading for Orders routes, it will include a review of the General Ordination Exams taken by the Deacon.

36.) Bishop certifies to Standing Committee III.8.7(b)(3)

Bishop supplies evidence of Postulancy, Candidacy, ordination to Diaconate, along with copies of application, Letter of Support, Program of Preparation's certificates, evaluations, recommendations, and COM's attestations to Standing Committee

37.) Standing Committee certifies III.8.7(c)

The Standing Committee certifies that the canonical requirements for ordination to the Priesthood have been met and there is no sufficient objection on medical, psychological, moral, doctrinal, or spiritual grounds, and that they recommend ordination.

38.) If Deacon has a cure, Bishop may ordain to Priesthood III.8.7(d) and (e)

The Deacon shall subscribe publicly and make, in the presence of the Bishop, the declaration required in Article VIII of the Constitution. No Deacon shall be ordained to the Priesthood until having been appointed to serve in a Parochial Cure within the jurisdiction of this Church, or as a Missionary under the Ecclesiastical Authority of a Diocese, or as an officer of a Missionary Society recognized by the General Convention, or as a Chaplain of the Armed Services of the United States, or as a Chaplain in a recognized hospital or other welfare institution, or as a chaplain or instructor in a school, college, or other seminary, or with other opportunity for the exercise of the office of Priest within the Church judged appropriate by the Bishop.

**Application for Ordination to the Priesthood
Step 31**

To: The Bishop of Northwest Texas, the Rt. Rev'd. _____
and The Standing Committee of the Diocese of Northwest Texas:

I, _____, hereby apply for ordination to
the Priesthood. The date of my birth is _____

Signed _____ Date _____

Transitional Deacon

**Congregational Support for Ordination to the Priesthood
Step 33SR**

To: The Bishop of Northwest Texas, the Rt. Rev'd. _____,
the Standing Committee of the Diocese of Northwest Texas, and the
Commission on Ministry:

We wish to express our continuing support for _____,
a confirmed adult communicant of this parish in good standing, who is
desires to be ordained into the Priesthood. Our support consists of our
prayers, best wishes, and continued involvement in her/his program of
preparation by:

Signed _____ Date _____

Rector/Vicar or other leader exercising oversight

The following lines are to be signed by a two-thirds majority of the Vestry/Bishop's
Committee: _____

**Congregational Support for Ordination to Priesthood
Step 33L**

To: The Bishop of Northwest Texas, the Rt. Rev'd. _____,
the Standing Committee of the Diocese of Northwest Texas, and the
Commission on Ministry:

We wish to express our continuing support for _____,
a confirmed adult communicant of this parish in good standing, who is
desires to be ordained to the Transitional Diaconate. Our support
consists of our prayers, best wishes, and continued involvement in her/his
program of preparation by:

(use additional sheets of paper if necessary, to describe how the entire
community is being involved in formation.)

Signed _____ Date _____

Member of the Clergy or other leader exercising oversight

The following lines are to be signed by a two-thirds majority of the Vestry/Bishop's
Committee:

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

**Annual Evaluation and
Recommendation Regarding Ordination
34R**

To: The Bishop of Northwest Texas, the Rt. Rev'd. _____,
the Standing Committee of the Diocese of Northwest Texas, and the
Commission on Ministry

Re: _____, and their progress in the Diocese of
Northwest Texas Reading for Orders Program.

Further, regarding ordination to the Priesthood, it is my recommendation
that:

Signed _____ Date _____

Director of the Reading for Orders Program

**COM Report that Training is Complete
Step 35**

To: The Bishop of Northwest Texas, the Rt. Rev'd. _____
and The Standing Committee of the Diocese of Northwest Texas:

We hereby attest that the Reverend _____,
has successfully completed his/her program of preparation. And it is our
recommendation regarding ordination to the Priesthood, that:

Signed _____ Date _____
Chair of the Commission on Ministry

**Certificate of the Bishop
for Ordination to the Priesthood
Step 36**

To: The Standing Committee of the Diocese of Northwest Texas:

I hereby certify that _____ has completed the terms of Postulancy and Candidacy; and of service in the Diaconate. With your concurrence, it is my intention to ordain him/her to the Priesthood.

Signed _____ Date _____
Bishop of Northwest Texas

**Testimonial of the Standing Committee
Ordination to the Priesthood
Step 37**

To the Right Reverend , Bishop of _____

We, the Standing Committee of the Diocese of Northwest Texas, having been duly convened at _____, do testify that the Reverend _____, desiring to be ordained to the Priesthood, has presented to us the certificates as required by the Canons indicating her/his preparedness for ordination to the Priesthood have been met; and we certify that all canonical requirements for ordination to the Priesthood have been met, and we find no sufficient objection to ordination. Therefore, we recommend her/him for ordination.

In witness whereof, we have hereunto set our hands this _____ day of _____, in the year of our Lord _____.

(Signed)

All those consenting to the adoption of this testimonial shall sign on the following lines:

After Ordination to the Priesthood

Priests shall engage in Continuing Education III.9.1

The Bishop and Commission shall require and provide for the continuing education of Priests and keep a record of such education.

Newly Ordained Priests shall have mentor Priest for at least one year after ordination. III.9.2

Each newly ordained priest, whether employed or not, shall be assigned a mentor priest by the Bishop in consultation with the Commission on Ministry. The mentor and new priest shall meet regularly for at least a year to provide guidance, information and a sustained dialogue about priestly ministry.

Glossary

This is intended to be a very brief review of terms. For a much fuller listing of Episcopal vocabulary, readers may wish to consult the full text of John Wall's excellent work, *A New Dictionary for Episcopalians*, or one of any number of works which give the meanings for the technical vocabulary of the Episcopal church. Definitions below are from *A New Dictionary* (copyright 1985, Harper and Row, San Francisco), with **elucidations or our own definitions**.

Article VIII of the Constitution **The Constitution of the Episcopal Church states:**

No person shall be ordered Priest or Deacon to minister in this Church until the person shall have been examined by the Bishop and two Priests and shall have exhibited such testimonials and other requisites as the Canons in that case provided may direct. No person

shall be ordained and consecrated Bishop, or ordered Priest or Deacon to minister in this Church, unless at the time, in the presence of the ordaining Bishop or Bishops, the person shall subscribe and make the following declaration: I do believe the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the Word of God, and to contain all things necessary to salvation; and I do solemnly engage to conform to the Doctrine, Discipline, and Worship of the Episcopal Church.

BACAM -- Bishops' Advisory Conference on Applicants to the Ministry **A short conference of those wishing to become Postulants, with interviewers, to help in determining whether discernment should continue. Usually interviewers are not from the individual's congregation.**

Bishop's Committee **Functional equivalent of a Vestry, but for a mission.**

Candidate -- Candidacy A Candidate for Holy Orders is usually in his or her second or third year of formal theological study in a seminary or other educational situation. He or she is appointed a candidate by the bishop of the postulant's diocese, usually upon the recommendation of the diocesan Commission on Ministry and with the consent of the Standing Committee after interviews, physical and psychiatric exams, and recommendations from the aspirant's home parish vestry, from his or her rector, and from the seminary being attended. Candidates have been postulants usually for a year or more before advancing to candidacy. Usually all that stands between a candidate for Holy Orders and ordination is successful completion of a theological education, performing satisfactorily on the General Ordination Exams, and passing a final review by the Commission on Ministry, the Standing Committee, and the bishop.

Canon The national Episcopal Church and each diocese of the church have ecclesiastical laws which set forth the rules and procedures by which the church and its members are to live. These are sometimes referred to merely as the Canons of the church. Copies of canon law are available to anyone. Diocesan canons must conform to the national canons; canons can be changed only by a vote of a diocese or the national church meeting in convention. Canons outline procedures such as the steps required before someone is married or ordained or elected bishop.

Church Pension Fund **A central office which keeps track of who is ordained within the Episcopal church. All clergy should register with the Pension Fund, even if they never expect to be financially compensated for their work. The pension fund is administered by an independent board of directors.**

Commission on Ministry **A group of lay persons and clergy who advise the bishop of a diocese on matters related to the "affirmation and development of the ministry of all baptized persons." This group reports to the bishop, and is, in a sense, part of his or her staff.**

Cure The word cure here comes from the same word which gives us the word care; therefore, the term refers to the people for whose spiritual health a member of the clergy is responsible. This may mean the members of a parish but may mean other groups if the clergy person has a special ministry such as a chaplaincy or other nonparochial job.

Deployment The process by which ordained people are matched with specific congregations. There is a church deployment officer at national church headquarters in New York who works with a computer file of all clergy. This database lists each ordained person's background, preferences, experience, strengths, and other information. Once a parish has prepared a profile of the kind of person it seeks, it can use this database to get a list of clergy who fit its requirements. Many dioceses **(including Northwest Texas)** also have deployment officers who help clergy keep their deployment files (called CDO files) up to date, and assist parishes in clergy searches at a diocesan level.

EFM -- Education for Ministry **An extension program of adult theological education provided by the University of the South. Aimed at a college level of understanding, it does not provide academic credit to a degree, but can often be accepted for Continuing Education Units.**

GOE -- General Ordination Examination **The set of examinations taken at the end of the educational process for those pursuing holy orders. The GOE is administered by a national board of examining chaplains, and graded by readers recruited from across the nation. It is in some ways, the equivalent to the Bar exam, or a state licensing exam.**

HODC -- Holy Orders Discernment Committee **A small group of people, who meet with those considering vocations into holy orders. The HODC is usually comprised of other members of the congregation for the individual considering vocation.**

Postulant One who has reached the stage of postulancy in the process toward holy orders or toward admission into a religious order. Someone seeking Holy Orders first meets with his or her home rector and vestry and, with their positive recommendation, with the bishop of the diocese. If the bishop requests, the person then has a physical examination and a psychological evaluation and meets with the diocesan Commission on Ministry. The COM may ask the person to do a year's internship in a parish setting under the supervision of the rector. At some point, the COM will recommend to the bishop whether or not the person should be named a postulant. With all this advice and counsel in hand, the bishop decides whether or not to name the person a postulant. If the person is so named, he or she then enters a seminary or begins some other appropriate educational process. If all goes well, in a year and half to two years, the postulant will advance in the process and become a candidate for Holy Orders.

Program of Preparation **The ongoing efforts at education and character formation which lead to ordination. Seminary is one example of a program of preparation. There are other means to prepare for ordination.**

Rector Usually the chief sacramental officer and professional ordained person in a parish, who is called by the vestry. Other clergy who work for a parish are on the staff of the rector.

Standing Committee Group of lay and ordained people elected by diocesan convention to serve primarily as a committee of advice and consent to the bishop. For instance, part of the job of the Standing Committee is to meet with those recommended for ordination to the bishop by the diocesan Commission on Ministry. The bishop cannot ordain these people without the consent of the Standing Committee. Another part of the Standing Committee's responsibility is to consent to the consecration of a bishop in another diocese; before someone elected bishop in a diocese can be consecrated, the permission of a majority of diocesan Standing Committees must be secured. The special responsibility of the Standing committee, however, is to stand in readiness in case the diocese is for some reason without a bishop. In that case, the Standing Committee becomes the ecclesiastical authority until a new bishop is consecrated. The Standing Committee must also approve of all sales of church property.

Vestry Group consisting of the rector of a parish and layfolk elected by the congregation at the annual parish meeting to be the legal governing and decision making group in the parish. This group is called the vestry because at one time it customarily met in the vestry of the church. It is the vestry's responsibility to be the final decision making body which hires the rector, approves the parish budget, makes parish policy decisions, and spends the parish's money. Vestry membership usually rotates among members of the congregation. Each vestry has a senior warden, often nominated by the rector, and a junior warden, both elected from among members of the vestry either by the congregation or by the vestry itself. The senior warden is to be the spokesperson of the vestry, while the junior warden is to be responsible for buildings and grounds. Vestries are usually organized into commissions or committees. In the case of a committee system, each vestry member is the chair of a committee of nonvestry members. With a commission system, two or three members of the vestry are members of each commission, along with interested nonvestry members. The difference is that with the commission system the vestry members share in running a small number of groups providing recommendations to the vestry, while with the committee system, the vestry members each have a central area of responsibility. Each parish chooses its own way of structuring its vestry.

Vicar The priest in charge at a mission, a congregation dependent financially on the diocese. The bishop of the diocese is technically rector of all missions, and the one who is resident at a mission as a substitute for the bishop is the bishop's vicar. The words vicar and vicarious both derive from the Latin word vicarius.

CANON 8: Of the Ordination of Priests

Sec. 1. The Bishop, in consultation with the Commission, shall establish procedures to identify and select persons with evident gifts and fitness for ordination to the Priesthood.

Sec. 2. Of General Provisions concerning Postulancy and Candidacy

(a) Postulancy is a time, no less than six months in length, for the exploration of and decision on the Postulant's call to the Priesthood.

(b) Candidacy is a time of formation in preparation for ordination to the Priesthood, established by a formal commitment by the Candidate, the Bishop, the Commission and the congregation or other community of faith. The period of Candidacy shall be no less than six months.

(c) The combined period for Postulancy, Candidacy, and Diaconate under this canon shall be no less than 18 months.

(d) The responsibilities for the formation and preparation of Postulants and Candidates shall include the following:

(1) Each Postulant or Candidate for ordination to the Priesthood shall communicate with the Bishop in person or by letter, four times a year, in the Ember Weeks, reflecting on the individual's academic experience and personal and spiritual development.

(2) The congregation or other community of faith shall nominate appropriate persons for the ordination process, nurture them in their faith, and provide continuing support for such persons through Postulancy, Candidacy, and ordination.

(3) The Bishop and the Commission shall work closely with the Postulant or Candidate to develop and monitor a program of preparation for ordination to the Priesthood in accordance with Canon III.8.4 and to ensure that pastoral guidance is provided throughout the period of preparation.

(4) The Standing Committee shall certify that all canonical requirements for ordination have been met and make a recommendation regarding ordination as prescribed in sections 6 and 7 of this canon.

(5) The seminary or other formation program shall provide for, monitor, and report on the academic performance and personal qualifications of the Candidate or Postulant for ordination. These reports will be made upon request

of the Bishop and Commission, but at least once per year.

(e) Prior to ordination as a deacon under this canon, the following must be accomplished:

- (1) a thorough background check of the applicant,
- (2) sexual misconduct prevention training, training regarding Title IV of these canons, and antiracism training,
- (3) thorough examinations, both medical and psychological, by professionals approved by the Bishop, using the forms prepared by The Church Pension Fund for this purpose, and if desired or necessary, psychiatric referral. These reports shall be kept on file by the Bishop.
- (4) if the medical examination, psychological examination, or background check have taken place more than 36 months prior to ordination as a Deacon under this canon, they must be updated.

Sec. 3. Postulancy

(a) A person nominated for admission as a Postulant for ordination to the Priesthood shall provide to the Bishop the following:

- (1) Full name and date of birth,
- (2) The length of time resident in the Diocese,
- (3) Evidence of Baptism and Confirmation,
- (4) Whether an application or Nomination has been made previously for Postulancy in any diocese,
- (5) A description of the process of discernment by which the nominee has been identified for ordination to the Priesthood,
- (6) The level of education attained and, if any, the degrees earned and areas of specialization, including official transcripts,
- (7) A letter of support by the nominee's congregation or other community of faith, including a statement committing the congregation or other community of faith to involve itself in the nominee's preparation for ordination to the Priesthood. If it be a congregation, the letter shall be signed and dated by a two-thirds majority of the Vestry, and the Member of the Clergy or leader exercising oversight,
- (8) A written request from the nominee for admission to Postulancy.

(b) Before granting admission as a Postulant, the Bishop:

(1) shall determine that the person is a confirmed adult communicant in good standing of a congregation or other community of faith, and

(2) shall confer in person with the nominee,

(3) shall consult with the nominee regarding financial resources which will be available for the support of the Postulant throughout preparation for ordination. During Postulancy and later Candidacy, the Bishop or someone appointed by the Bishop shall review periodically the financial condition and plans of the Postulant.

(c) On the basis of the application and the personal interview, the Bishop shall notify the nominee and the Commission whether the application process may proceed.

(d) If the Bishop approves proceeding, the Commission, or a committee of the Commission, shall meet with the nominee to review the application and prepare an evaluation of the nominee's qualifications to pursue a course of preparation for ordination to the Priesthood. The Commission shall present its evaluation and recommendations to the Bishop.

(e) The Bishop may admit the nominee as a Postulant for ordination to the Priesthood. The Bishop shall record the Postulant's name and date of admission in a Register kept for that purpose. The Bishop shall inform the Postulant, the Member of the Clergy or other leader exercising oversight of the Postulant's congregation or other community of faith, the Commission, the Standing Committee, and the Dean of the seminary the Postulant may be attending or proposes to attend, or the director of Postulant's program of preparation, of the fact and date of such admission.

(f) Any Postulant may be removed as a Postulant at the sole discretion of the Bishop. The Bishop shall give written notice of the removal to the Candidate and the Member of the Clergy or other leader exercising oversight of the Postulant's congregation or other community of faith, the Commission, the Standing Committee, and the Dean of the seminary the Postulant may be attending or the director of the program of preparation.

(g) No Bishop shall consider accepting as a Postulant any person who has been refused admission as a Candidate for ordination to the Priesthood in any other Diocese, or who, having been admitted, has afterwards ceased to be a Candidate,

until receipt of a letter from the Bishop of the Diocese refusing admission, or in which the person has been a Candidate, declaring the cause of refusal or of cessation. If the Bishop decides to proceed the Bishop shall send the letter to the Commission.

Sec. 4. Formation. Postulants shall pursue the program of preparation for ordination to the Priesthood developed by the Bishop and Commission. The program shall include theological training, practical experience, emotional development, and spiritual formation.

(a) If the Postulant has not previously obtained a baccalaureate degree, the Commission, Bishop, and Postulant shall design a program of such additional academic work as may be necessary to prepare the Postulant to undertake a program of theological education.

(b) Prior education and learning from life experience may be considered as part of the formation required for the Priesthood.

(c) Whenever possible, formation for the Priesthood shall take place in community, including other persons in preparation for the Priesthood, a ministry team, or others preparing for ministry.

(d) Formation shall take into account the local culture and each Candidate's background, age, occupation, and ministry.

(e) Subject areas for study during this program of preparation shall include:

- (1) The Holy Scriptures;
- (2) Church History, including the Ecumenical Movement;
- (3) Christian Theology, including Missionary Theology and Missiology;
- (4) Christian Ethics and Moral Theology;
- (5) Studies in contemporary society, including racial and minority groups;
- (6) Liturgics and Church Music; Christian Worship and Music according to the contents and use of the Book of Common Prayer and the Hymnal, and authorized supplemental texts; and
- (7) Theory and practice of ministry.

Sec. 5. Candidacy

(a) A person desiring to be considered as a Candidate for ordination to the Priesthood shall apply to the Bishop. Such application shall include the following:

(1) the Postulant's date of admission to Postulancy, and
(2) letter of support by the Postulant's congregation or other community of faith. If it be a congregation, the letter shall be signed and dated by at least two-thirds of the Vestry and the Member of the Clergy or other leader exercising oversight.

(b) Upon compliance with these requirements, and receipt of a statement from the Commission attesting to the continuing formation of the Postulant, the Bishop may admit the applicant as a Candidate for ordination to the Priesthood. The Bishop shall record the Candidate's name and date of admission in a Register kept for that purpose. The Bishop shall inform the Candidate, the Member of the Clergy or leader exercising oversight of the Candidate's congregation or other community of faith, the Commission, the Standing Committee, and the Dean of the seminary the Candidate may be attending or proposes to attend, or the director of the Candidate's program of preparation, of the fact and date of such admission.

(c) A Candidate must remain in canonical relationship with the Diocese in which admission has been granted until ordination to the Diaconate under this canon, except as provided in Canon III.8.5(d).

(d) For reasons satisfactory to the Bishop, the Candidate may be transferred to another Diocese upon request, provided that the Bishop of the receiving Diocese is willing to accept the Candidate.

(e) Any Candidate may be removed as a Candidate at the sole discretion of the Bishop. The Bishop shall give written notice of the removal to the Candidate and the Member of the Clergy or other leader exercising oversight of the Candidate's congregation or other community of faith, the Commission, the Standing Committee, and the Dean of the seminary the Candidate may be attending or the director of the program of preparation.

(f) If a Bishop has removed the Candidate's name from the list of Candidates, except by transfer, or the Candidate's application for ordination has been rejected, no other Bishop may ordain the person without readmission to Candidacy for a period of at least twelve months.

Sec. 6. Ordination to the Diaconate

(a) A Candidate must first be ordained Deacon before being ordained Priest.

(b) To be ordained Deacon under this canon, a person must be at least twenty-one years of age.

(c) No one shall be ordained Deacon under this canon within six months of admission as a Candidate nor within one year of admission as Postulant.

(d) The Bishop shall obtain in writing:

(1) an application from the Candidate requesting ordination as a Deacon under this canon, including the Candidate's dates of admission to Postulancy and Candidacy;

(2) a letter of support from the Candidate's congregation or other community of faith, signed and dated by at least two-thirds of the Vestry and the Member of the Clergy or other leader exercising oversight;

(3) a certificate from the seminary or other program of preparation, showing the Candidate's scholastic record in the subjects required by the canons, and giving an evaluation with recommendation as to the Candidate's other personal qualifications for ordination together with a recommendation regarding ordination to the Diaconate under this canon.

(e) The Standing Committee shall obtain:

(1) the application for ordination to the Diaconate under this canon specified in Canon III.8.6.(d)(1), including the accompanying letter of support by the Candidate's congregation or other community of faith specified in Canon III.8.6.(d)(2),

(2) certificates from the Bishop who admitted the Candidate to Postulancy and Candidacy, giving the dates of admission, and

(3) a certificate from the Commission giving a recommendation regarding ordination to the Diaconate under this canon.

(f) On the receipt of such certificates, the Standing Committee, a majority of all the members consenting, shall certify that the canonical requirements for ordination to the Diaconate under this canon have been met and there is no sufficient objection on medical, psychological, moral, doctrinal, or spiritual grounds and that they recommend ordination, by a testimonial addressed to the Bishop in the form specified below and signed by the consenting members of the Standing Committee.

To the Right Reverend , Bishop of _____ We, the Standing Committee of ,

having been duly convened at , do testify that A.B., desiring to be ordained to the Diaconate and Priesthood under Canon III.8, has presented to us the certificates as required by the Canons indicating A.B.'s preparedness for ordination to the Diaconate under Canon III.8; and we certify that all canonical requirements for ordination to the Diaconate under Canon III.8 have been met; and we find no sufficient objection to ordination. Therefore, we recommend A. B. for ordination. In witness whereof, we have hereunto set our hands this day of , in the year of our Lord .

(Signed)

(g) The testimonial having been presented to the Bishop, and there being no sufficient objection on medical, psychological, moral, doctrinal, or spiritual grounds, the Bishop may ordain the Candidate to the Diaconate under this canon; and at the time of ordination the Candidate shall subscribe publicly and make, in the presence of the Bishop, the declaration required in Article VIII of the Constitution.

Sec. 7. Ordination to the Priesthood

(a) A person may be ordained Priest:

- (1) after at least six months since ordination as a Deacon under this canon, and
- (2) upon attainment of at least twenty-four years of age, and
- (3) if the medical examination, psychological examination, and background check have taken place or been updated within 36 months prior to ordination as a Priest.

(b) The Bishop shall obtain in writing and provide to the Standing Committee:

- (1) an application from the Deacon requesting ordination as a Priest, including the Deacon's dates of admission to Postulancy and Candidacy and ordination as a Deacon under this canon,
- (2) a letter of support from the Deacon's congregation or other community of faith, signed by at least two-thirds of the Vestry and the Member of the Clergy or other leader exercising oversight,
- (3) evidence of admission to Postulancy and Candidacy, including dates of admission, and ordination to the Diaconate,
- (4) a certificate from the seminary or other program of preparation, showing the Deacon's scholastic record in the subjects required by the canons, and giving

an evaluation with recommendation as to the Deacon's other personal qualifications for ordination together with a recommendation regarding ordination to the Priesthood, and

(5) a statement from the Commission attesting to the successful completion of the program of formation designed during Postulancy under Canon III.8.4, and recommending the Deacon for ordination to the Priesthood.

(c) On the receipt of such certificates, the Standing Committee, a majority of all the members consenting, shall certify that the canonical requirements for ordination to the Priesthood have been met and there is no sufficient objection on medical, psychological, moral, doctrinal, or spiritual grounds and that they recommend ordination, by a testimonial addressed to the Bishop in the form specified below and signed by the consenting members of the Standing Committee.

To the Right Reverend , Bishop of _____ We, the Standing Committee of , having been duly convened at , do testify that A.B., desiring to be ordained to the Priesthood, has presented to us the certificates as required by the Canons indicating A.B.'s preparedness for ordination to the Priesthood have been met; and we certify that all canonical requirements for ordination to the Priesthood have been met, and we find no sufficient objection to ordination. Therefore, we recommend A. B. for ordination. In witness whereof, we have hereunto set our hands this day of , in the year of our Lord .

(Signed)

(d) The testimonial having been presented to the Bishop, and there being no sufficient objection on medical, psychological, moral, doctrinal, or spiritual grounds, the Bishop may ordain the Deacon to the Priesthood; and at the time of ordination the Deacon shall subscribe publicly and make, in the presence of the Bishop, the declaration required in Article VIII of the Constitution.

(e) No Deacon shall be ordained to the Priesthood until having been appointed to serve in a Parochial Cure within the jurisdiction of this Church, or as a Missionary under the Ecclesiastical Authority of a Diocese or as an officer of a Missionary Society recognized by the General Convention, or as a Chaplain of the Armed Services of the United States, or as a Chaplain in a recognized

hospital or other welfare institution, or as a Chaplain or instructor in a school, college, or other seminary, or with other opportunity for the exercise of the office of Priest within the Church judged appropriate by the Bishop.

(f) A person ordained to the Diaconate under Canon III.6 who is subsequently called to the Priesthood shall fulfill the Postulancy and Candidacy requirements set forth in this canon. Upon completion of these requirements, the Deacon may be ordained to the Priesthood.

Postscript: What Else Do You Need?

Now that you've read, skimmed, mastered, or just been impressed, intimidated, or perhaps even numbed by the amount of paperwork, just one final word. There are actually a couple of other documents, to which we have made reference. Just a quick word on them:

- 1.) HODC guide and handbook Step 3SR referred to the Holy Orders Discernment Committee. The guide and handbook lay out how this group is to function and provide background readings as resources.
- 2.) Medical and Psychological Exams. Steps 7 and 8 require that a report on the applicant's health be on file. Because these are subject to change from year to year, their text has not been included in this document. Copies are available from the Pension Fund, the Bishop's office, or the chair of the COM.
- 3.) BACAM application. Likewise subject to yearly change. Copies are available from the Bishop's office, or the chair of the COM.
- 4.) The Short Checklist Although the smaller tables outlining each phase are called checklists, there is another document called the short checklist. It is meant to be just that, a place to keep track of steps, with little or no explanation of the step. The short checklist is a separate computer file. Copies can be had from the Bishop's office or the chair of the COM.