



Steps Toward Becoming a Postulant for Ordination to the Priesthood (A Summary)

N.B. National canons and diocesan guidelines give the Bishop oversight of the ordination process. What follows is a description of our customary practice. Nominees should bear in mind that the various steps may be modified on occasion at the Bishop's discretion.

- 1. Individual becomes involved member of a parish in the Episcopal Diocese of New York**
The individual is an active member (a baptized and confirmed adult communicant in good standing) of a parish for a minimum of one year (or longer if required by the priest). During this time the individual comes to know the parish and becomes known by parishioners and the clergy.
- 2. Individual begins discernment with the priest**
The individual and priest begin a focused period of inquiry, service, and exploration of the person's sense of call, lasting several months to a year. *(See the Parish Discernment Handbook for details on the role and responsibilities of the priest.)*
- 3. Parish Discernment Committee is formed**
If the priest has seen the beginning signs of a call to ordained ministry, the priest forms a Parish Discernment Committee to meet with the individual for six months to a year. *(See the Parish Discernment Handbook for details on the role and responsibilities of the Parish Discernment Committee.)*
- 4. Priest writes sponsoring letter to the Bishop**
The priest submits a letter to the bishop nominating the aspirant to postulancy for the priesthood, including a description of the parish discernment by which the aspirant has been identified. *(See the Parish Discernment Handbook, pgs. 20-23 for details on the content and format for the letter.)*
- 5. Priest & Vestry submit canonical form indicating parish support**
If the priest and vestry decide to sponsor the nominee, they sign a Parish Recommendation attesting to this sponsorship and pledging support. The Parish Recommendation form will be sent to the priest after the Bishop has received the sponsoring letter.
- 6. Nominee completes application and essays**
Materials are sent directly to the nominee after the priest's sponsoring letter has been received by the Bishop.

- 7. Nominee completes: (1) background check; (2) psychological evaluation; and (3) physical evaluation**
See the page "About the Physical and Psychological Evaluations" for details.
- 8. Nominee meets with Canon for Ministry.**
Nominee is contacted to schedule appointment.
- 9. Bishop reviews the nominee's file**
The Bishop reviews the file and decides if the nominee should proceed to the preliminary interview stage of Diocesan discernment.
- 10. Nominee completes three preliminary interviews**
If the Bishop decides to continue the discernment with the Diocese, the nominee is invited to schedule separate preliminary interviews with three members of the Commission on Ministry. Following each interview, the interviewer recommends to the Bishop that the nominee continue or not continue with diocesan discernment.
- 11. Bishop reviews the nominee's file**
Following this review, the Bishop decides if the nominee should proceed by attending a discernment conference.
- 12. Nominee attends a Discernment Conference**
At the Bishop's request, the nominee is invited to attend a discernment conference. These conferences are normally scheduled twice a year. At this conference members of the Commission on Ministry decide either to recommend or not to recommend the nominee to the Bishop for postulancy.
- 13. Bishop reviews the file and recommendations and meets with the nominee to discuss the possibility of postulancy**
The Bishop makes a decision about appointing the nominee to postulancy.
- 14. The new postulant begins formation at the Bishop's direction at a seminary approved by the Bishop.** Nominees for the priesthood are strongly advised not to begin theological study before they are granted postulancy because the choice of a seminary to attend must be approved by the Bishop.

N.B. Formation in the Diocese is a full three years regardless to one's academic achievements at the time of postulancy.