



## THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF NEW YORK

### **ABOUT THE PHYSICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL EVALUATIONS**

The Canons of the Episcopal Church require that each nominee for Holy Orders be possessed of the physical and psychological health necessary to serve and thrive as an ordained person. In the Diocese of New York, a thorough medical and psychological screening is conducted at the nominee's expense, at the beginning of the discernment process. For a person to proceed in the discernment process, it is necessary that the examining psychologist testifies that there are no contradictions to continuing in discernment for ordination. It is beneficial to both the nominee and the Diocese that we establish very early in the discernment whether or not a person is in good mental health and has the emotional resources to thrive in the ordained ministry.

The forms used for the evaluation have been prepared specially for this purpose by the Church Pension Fund. A brief explanation of this part of the discernment process follows:

#### **Medical Examination**

The physical examination will be conducted by the internist of the nominee's choice.

#### **Behavior Screening Questionnaire**

Each of these questions is to be answered in full and the document is to be witnessed.

#### **Life History Questionnaire**

This is a resource document for self-examination and assessment which is completed at home, before the psychological testing, then given to the test administrator at the time of the testing appointment. The questionnaire asks for detailed information regarding social history; the questions are those asked during a standard interview to help assess broad psychological patterns.

#### **Psychological Testing and Evaluation**

The psychological evaluation consists of several standardized tests, with the possibility of additional tests as may be recommended by the psychologists. After completing the evaluation, the psychologist sends a report to the Bishop.

#### **Psychiatric Evaluation**

The Bishop may then request that the nominee undergo a psychiatric evaluation, which may happen immediately or at a later time in the discernment process. The examining psychiatrist writes a report to the Bishop attesting to the nominee's psychological and emotional suitability for the ordained ministry.

**Authorization to Release Information**

Before the psychological testing, each nominee signs a standard consent form that protects the confidentiality of the clinicians involved, and the nominee's confidentiality insofar as that is appropriate to a vocational assessment process. The evaluating psychologist is not an employee of The Episcopal Church and the psychologist's office and records are separate from any church offices or church record-keeping location. The diocesan psychiatrist, the Bishop and the Canon for Ministry DO NOT see test materials. They are stored confidentially, and then destroyed after a period by the evaluating psychologist who follows the professional guidelines set forth by the American Psychological Association. The only test materials reviewed by the Bishop are the Behavior Screening Questionnaire and the psychologist's and psychiatrist's reports. The test materials, raw data, or reports cannot be released to the nominee or to any other party during the discernment process or at any other time. Because this is a vocational assessment process to enter the leadership of a religious institution, the Authorization to Release Information would not be subject to the legal process. By the person's voluntary entry into the discernment process, a nominee agrees to accept the guidelines stated in the consent form.

**Fees**

The psychological testing, scoring and evaluation fees total \$2,000, which is payable in full to Kenwood Psychological Services by check or by credit/debit card prior to scheduling your appointment to take your exams. The fee for the psychiatric interview is from \$300 to \$350, payable directly to the psychiatrist at the time of the interview appointment. It is appropriate for nominees to ask their sponsoring parish to assist with these expenses, either with an outright grant or a loan. Diocesan funds are not available for this purpose.