



The Episcopal Diocese of New York

Information Regarding the Sponsor's Letter to the Bishop Nominating an Aspirant for Postulancy for Ordination to the Priesthood

In nominating a person for Postulancy to the priesthood, the priest sends a letter to:

The Rt. Rev. Matthew F. Heyd, Bishop of New York

Email: bpheyd@diocesenyny.org.

Copies of the letter are also sent to the Rev. Canon Tanya Wallace (twallace@diocesenyny.org), and Mr. Alito Orsini (aorsini@diocesenyny.org).

The letter should address fully each of the categories listed in this document, giving any additional pertinent information. The Bishop expects that its contents will be kept confidential and not shared directly with the nominee.

While the Commission on Ministry recognizes that there are times when a priest may feel obligated to nominate a parishioner about whom they have major doubts, it strongly urges that those doubts be spelled out clearly, either in the letter itself, or less formally with the Chair of the Commission on Ministry or with the Canon for Ministry. Even for a “probably qualified” person, any questions, reservations, or doubts should be raised at the beginning so that they may be resolved as early as possible.

Please submit with your letter a report from the Parish Discernment Committee describing the membership of the discernment committee and the way it organized its work. Their report should include such information as the number and frequency of meetings, and a description of the content of the program used.

Priest's letter recommending an aspirant for the priesthood

At the beginning of your letter, please indicate that this is a recommendation for the priesthood and include the following information:

NAME

ADDRESS

PHONE NUMBER(S)

EMAIL ADDRESS(S)

In the letter, please address the following categories:

1. Background Information

Describe the nominee's involvement in the life of the parish, community, and Church. How long have you known them? How long have they been a member of the parish? Do you know them well? What activities have they been involved in and for how long? How would the parishioners describe their ministry in the parish or community? What is your sense of their level of commitment and faithfulness? Please give examples.

2. Spirituality

Give your impressions of the nominee's spirituality with specific reference to their prayer life, worship, reception of the sacraments? Discuss their knowledge of Scripture and the Church. Do you have confidence in the nominee's articulation of their own faith? Is that articulation enthusiastic, coherent, and compelling? Does faith ground and center their work in and out of the Church? Does it direct their sense of social responsibility? Please be as descriptive as possible. Do their co-workers know that they are a Christian? What image, story, or passage of scripture do they use to describe their sense of call to ministry? What is your impression of their spiritual health?

3. Leadership

What is your perception of the nominee's leadership style? Be as expansive as possible. In what ways have they exercised leadership in the sponsoring parish? What responsibilities have they assumed? Are they respected and relied upon by others? What problems have they confronted in their involvement in parish activities and how were they resolved? Have they initiated ministry and in what ways?

4. Pastoral Abilities

What is the nominee's pastoral style and how have you seen it demonstrated? Do they exercise a pastoral ministry now? What is your perception of their sensitivity to pastoral issues in people's lives? For example, how do they respond to pain and joy and complexity in others' lives? Is the nominee able to claim their strengths? What is your sense of their ability to recognize their own fears and conflicts? How do these impede or facilitate their sensitivity or responses to other people and to situations of conflict?

5. Gifts and Strengths

What special strengths and talents has the nominee demonstrated which you believe would enhance their ministry? In what area do you see them ministering as a priest?

6. Growth and Discipline

In what personal, spiritual, or intellectual areas does the nominee need further growth or discipline? Do they agree? What is or has been their major area of struggle? How is it resolving?

7. Character and Mental Health

What are your impressions of the nominee's character and mental health? What is your sense of their level of maturity and judgment, intelligence, warmth, humor, and ability to make long-term commitments? What is your sense of the balance in their life? For example, how well do they balance their work or profession with parish and church involvement, family and social life, interests, and hobbies?

8. Motivation for Ministry

What do you believe has led the nominee to pursue ordination? Please offer your reflections on how the nominee will function as part of a college of presbyters, within a diocesan structure, and the larger church. What are their thoughts and attitudes about the vows required at ordination?

A sponsor is encouraged to supplement the above categories with any additional information about the nominee they believe would be helpful.