



## **Steps Toward Becoming a Postulant for Ordination to the Vocational Diaconate (A Summary)**

**N.B. Episcopal Church 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. Together they explore whether or not the individual has shown the gifts and talents needed to serve as a deacon in the Church. *(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 diaconate, including a description of the parish discernment by which the aspirant has been identified for recommendation to the Bishop for ordination to the diaconate. *(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 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 rector after the Bishop has received the sponsoring letter.

- 6. Nominee meets with the Bishop.**  
Nominee makes an appointment to meet with the Bishop.
- 7. Nominee completes application and essays.**  
Materials are sent directly to the nominee after the priest's sponsoring letter has been received by the Bishop.
- 8. Nominee completes: (1) background check; (2) psychological evaluation; and (3) physical evaluation.**  
See the page "About the Physical and Psychological Evaluations" for details.
- 9. Nominee meets with Canon for Lay & Clergy Formation.**  
Nominee is contacted to schedule appointment.
- 10. Bishop reviews the nominee's file.**  
The Bishop reviews the file and decides whether the nominee should proceed to the preliminary interview stage of Diocesan discernment.
- 11. 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.
- 12. Bishop reviews the nominee's file.**  
Following this review, the Bishop decides if the nominee should proceed by being invited to a discernment conference.
- 13. Nominee attends a Discernment Conference.**  
At the Bishop's request, the nominee is invited to attend a discernment conference. Usually one conference is held annually in the spring. At this conference members of the Commission on Ministry decide either to recommend or not to recommend the nominee to the Bishop for postulancy.
- 14. Bishop reviews the nominee's 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.
- 15. A new postulant begins the Diaconal Formation Program, including enrolling in an Education for Ministry (EfM) group.**  
Postulants for the diaconate complete a three year course of formation and study designed to provide academic preparation, theological reflection, and practical training in the ministry of the deacon.

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