

# The Anglican Diocese of Ottawa Ordination Discernment Process<sup>1</sup>

## I. Applicant

### 1. On Sensing a Call to Ordained Ministry

- A person meets with his or her parish priest to discuss vocation. This involves several meetings with the priest and a time period of discernment (of at least six months duration), and assumes that the person is a confirmed communicant of that Anglican Church for at least one year prior to consideration as a postulant.
- The priest writes a letter of commendation, outlining knowledge of the individual and the priest's sense of the individual's vocation to ordained ministry.
- The person writes a letter of introduction to the Bishop outlining their history and their sense of call to ordained ministry.

### 2. Interview with the Executive Archdeacon

- The discernment process and postulancy requirements are outlined
- The Executive Archdeacon decides whether to ask the person to continue further with the process, or not. Criteria for the Executive Archdeacon's discernment are explained at the meeting. After meeting, a letter is sent to the individual and the person's priest describing the meeting and outcome.
- If the process is continued,
  - An application form is completed.
  - A police background check is done.
- If the process is not continued, the person is referred to their priest and home congregation for discernment to ministry in the Church other than ordination.

### 3. Parish Discernment

- A committee of four lay persons in the parish, called together by the parish priest, shall meet with the person to discern the person's call and suitability for ordained ministry. (Training for this discernment and materials will be provided by the Episcopal Office.)
- Over a period of time of at least four months, the committee shall meet with the individual and consider:
  - The length of time they have known the person and their association with the person.
  - A description of the role the person has played in the life of the congregation
  - The gifts and characteristics the person possesses which make the person particularly suited for ordained ministry.
  - Any limitations or concerns of which they are aware which might hinder the individual in the exercise of ordained ministry.
  - Whether they would be prepared to accept the person for service as an ordained person in their own parish.

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<sup>1</sup> This outline should be read along side the document "Ordination Prerequisites for the Anglican Church of Canada."

- Any further counsel or advice.
- This committee shall prepare a report in writing which shall be signed by all of them and the person being discerned, and sent to the Bishop. If there is disagreement, it shall be noted in the report.
- 4. Meeting with the Bishop**
  - The person then has an initial meeting with the Bishop, who shall have a copy of the priest's recommendation, the Executive Archdeacon's report, the application and police background check, and the parish discernment report. With the bishop's approval, the person will proceed to meet with the Postulancy Panel.
- 5. Postulancy Panel**
  - The person will, upon recommendation from the Bishop, meet with the Postulancy Panel. Upon approval, the Postulancy Panel, will recommend to the Bishop whether or not the Applicant will proceed to ACPO and whether to recognize the Applicant as an Inquirer.

## **II. Inquirer**

### **1. ACPO**

- At the invitation of the Bishop the Inquirer attends ACPO; ACPO is reviewed by the Bishop and the Executive Archdeacon. If the applicant is approved by ACPO there follows a second interview with the Bishop.
- The Inquirer, having completed the necessary preliminary academic requirements, consults with the Episcopal Office about a theological programme endorsed by the Diocese of Ottawa. A M.Div., or a B.Th. and M.P.Th., is normative.
- Inquirers are responsible for keeping the Executive Archdeacon apprised of their academic and field placement progress, if they are taking courses. This shall be done in writing at the end of each academic year, or by 1 June, whichever date is earlier.

### **2. Postulancy**

- The Inquirer meets again with the Postulancy Panel for approval for Postulancy.
- Upon approval by the Postulancy Panel, the Bishop may approve the Inquirer for Postulancy,

## **III. Postulant**

### **1. Normal Time Period**

- The time period to be a Postulant is normally two years.

### **2. Advisor**

- The postulant is assigned an Advisor by the Postulancy Panel, who will work with the Postulant until ordination. Regular meetings of Postulant and Advisor are an expectation of the Postulancy process

### **3. Spiritual Direction**

- All Postulants are strongly encouraged to be in spiritual direction as part of their formation for ordained ministry.

#### **4. Internships, Summer Placement, and other Training**

- All Postulants are expected to participate in field placements and summer internships as part of their academic and formation process. Reports from their placements are part of the evaluative process.
- **Clinical Pastoral Education** – Postulants may be asked to undertake Clinical Pastoral Education or other programs of training, which are expected of them as requirements for ordination.

#### **5. Communication**

- Postulants are expected to meet with the Postulancy Panel at least once per year, and be in regular communication with the Bishop at least twice per year (by written reports concerning the Postulant's personal, spiritual and intellectual pilgrimage). The Executive Archdeacon will schedule the meetings with the Postulancy Panel.

### **IV. Ordination**

After successful completion of the program of theological education, and upon recommendation of the faculty or training program, and upon completion of all other requirements, the Postulancy Panel may commend to the Bishop ordination to the transitional Diaconate. The Bishop may then ordain the Postulant depending upon identification of an appropriate ministry.

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**ORDINATION PREREQUISITES  
THE ANGLICAN CHURCH OF CANADA**

*(Diocese of Ottawa Refinements Designated “D of O” in Brackets)*

The following are considered to be general prerequisites for any person desiring to be considered for postulancy for the priesthood in the Anglican Church of Canada.

Confirmation, Reception, or status as a Communicant in the Anglican Communion at least three years prior to application for consideration as a postulant.

Regular participation in the life and worship of a parish or recognized worshipping community of the Anglican Church of Canada for at least one year prior to application for consideration as a postulant. (D of O - The minimum period for participation is usually two years.)

Every person desiring to be admitted as a postulant for the priesthood who has satisfied the above prerequisites is expected to consult with his/her immediate pastor, sharing with him/her the basis for such a desire, and to seek the guidance and counsel of the pastor.

If the pastor of a person seeking to be admitted as a postulant for the priesthood is satisfied that the individual is worthy of commendation for consideration as a possible postulant, the pastor will meet with and seek the considered opinion of four lay persons in the parish (normally the Wardens and two other persons) regarding the suitability of the person for further consideration.

If the pastor and the lay persons are satisfied that the individual is a person suitable for consideration as a postulant, they shall send to the Bishop a letter of commendation, giving information in the following areas:

The length of time the individual has been known by the referees, and a description of their association with the individual.

A description of the role the individual has played in the life of the parish or congregation.

The particular gifts and characteristics the individual possesses which make him/her particularly suited for the ordained ministry.

Any limitations or concerns of which they are aware which might hinder the individual in the exercise of ordained ministry.

Whether the referees would be prepared to accept the individual for service as an ordained person in the parish or congregation which the referees attend, given proper preparation for ordained ministry.

Any further advice or counsel the referees wish to share with the Bishop.

The Bishop may, at this point, or at any subsequent time, seek the commendation of another parish to which an applicant may be referred by the Bishop.

An applicant thus commended by a parish or congregation will be interviewed by the Bishop, and if the Bishop considers the applicant to be suitable for further consideration, the applicant is referred to the Diocesan Postulants Committee or Examining Chaplains. (D of O - This first interview is with the Executive Archdeacon.)

The Postulants Committee/Examining Chaplains will take responsibility for administering diocesan requirements for postulancy, such as psychological assessment, further interviews, or gathering of references.

If, in the opinion of the Postulants Committee/Examining Chaplains, the applicant is suitable, he/she is commended to the Bishop for referral to ACPO (Advisory Committee for Postulancy for Ordination).

If the Bishop accepts the commendation of the Postulants Committee/Examining Chaplains, he/she refers the applicant to ACPO. Such referral is normally to be made before an applicant enters theological college. At the very latest, such referral is to be made **no later** than the end of the first academic year.

**(It is the responsibility of the applicant to seek postulancy in sufficient time to make such a referral possible.)**

The Bishop or designated person receives the ACPO assessment and recommendations and meets with the prospective postulant within one month of the ACPO Conference, if possible, and continues to monitor the follow-through of any prescriptive material in the report. The report is also shared with the appropriate theological college or training program.

At the Bishop's discretion, the applicant may be admitted as a postulant. **Admission as a postulant does not imply any guarantee or promise of ordination.**

The usual academic requirements for ordination are a Bachelor's degree plus a degree or diploma program of studies in a theological college recognized by the Anglican Church of Canada.

The Bishop or his/her designate will give counsel and direction regarding appropriate college(s) or training programs and the curriculum to be undertaken.

If an applicant has entered a theological college, it is essential that the applicant seek commendation to his/her Bishop within the first semester of study.

During the process of theological education and spiritual formation, regular communication will be maintained between the theological college and the Bishop regarding the postulant's academic, personal and spiritual life and growth in competency. This may include written reports (authorized by the postulant), visits to the college by the Bishop, and/or conferences involving faculty persons, the Bishop and the postulant.

The Postulants Committee/Examining Chaplains will meet with the postulant at least once per year during the postulancy period, and administer any special diocesan requirements, such as canonical examinations, at appropriate times. (D of O - The Postulancy Assessment Committee will meet with the postulant not less than three times throughout the process.)

The normal period of postulancy is three years, with a minimum period of two years. During this period, the postulant is expected to be in written or personal communication with his/her Bishop at least two times a year regarding his/her personal, spiritual and intellectual pilgrimage.

After successful completion of the prescribed program of theological education, and upon recommendation of the faculty of the theological college or training program, the Postulants Committee/Examining Chaplains may commend the postulant to the Bishop for ordination to the Diaconate if the postulant has satisfied all diocesan requirements and is considered to be an appropriate candidate for ordination.

Upon receiving such commendation, the Bishop may, at his/her discretion, proceed to ordination if there is a designated and specified ministry to which the person is to be appointed.

*The above Guidelines were approved by the House of Bishops of the Anglican Church of Canada on November 4, 1986 and amended in light of revision by the House in May 1998.*

**Diocese of Ottawa  
April 2002 (June 2008)**