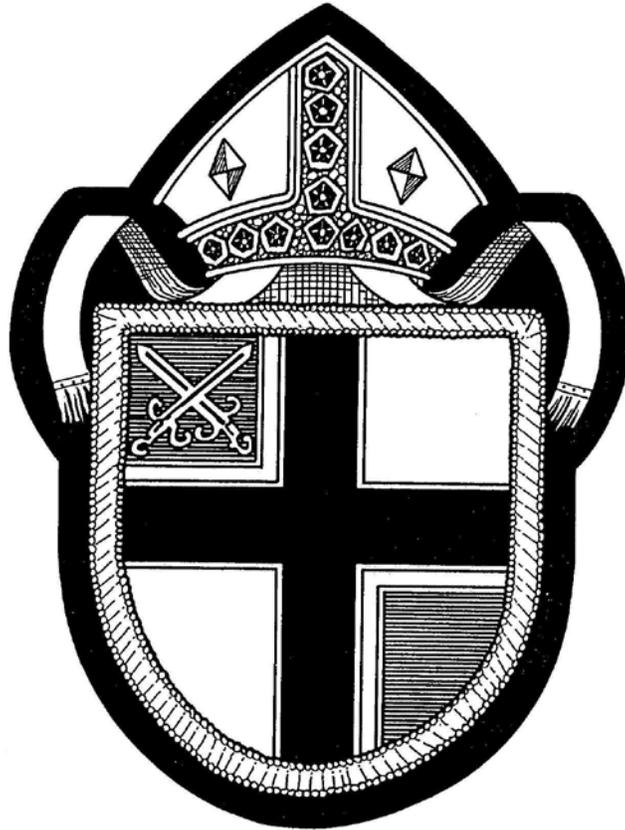


DISCERNMENT PROCESS



Diocese of Central Florida

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AUGUST, 2016

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DISCERNMENT PROCESS - DIOCESE OF CENTRAL FLORIDA

YEAR ONE

- 1) Aspirant(*) consults with Rector about his/her sense of being called to a more intentional ministry, lay or ordained.
- 2) Aspirant attends Conference on Ministry, a day-long event in August/September presented by the Commission on Ministry at which he/she obtains a Nomination & Application Form, and a form Letter of Support to be signed by Rector/Vestry and submitted along with the completed application, for the specific ministry (Priesthood or Diaconate) to which the Aspirant feels called.
N.B: this is a mandatory meeting for those sensing a call to ordained ministry.
- 3) Completed Nomination & Application Form for Ordination [accompanied by the Letter of Support from the Rector/Vestry], submitted to Bishop Brewer at Diocesan Office no later than the second week in October. Nomination Forms for a specific Licensed Lay Ministry may be completed and submitted to the bishop's office at any time.
Training for Licensed Lay Ministries is overseen by the Nominee's Rector/Vicar in cooperation with the Institute for Christian Studies. The Commission on Ministry tracks the training and briefs this at scheduled COM meetings.
- 4) The Letter of Support from the Rector/Vestry which accompanies the Nomination & Application Form for Ordination is only an endorsement of the aspirant's entering into the Discernment Process and **is not** a recommendation for admission as a Postulant.
[Aspirant and Rector, Associate priest or spiritual director complete "The Call to Ministry: a Workbook for Those Discerning a Call into Ordained Ministry"]
- 5) Parish Internship /Work Learning Agreement (see pages 6 and 19-24) designed by Rector/Vicar with Nominee and submitted to diocesan office for Nominee's file.
Note: This Work Learning Agreement should not be confused with the Field Work Assignment as part of ICS or Field Education (or Mentored Ministry) in seminary. It is designed for the aspirant and his/her Rector to work together, insuring that the aspirant experiences the ministries of the parish/mission, and to assist the Parish Discernment Committee, Rector, and Vestry in their early discernment.
- 6) Upon acceptance of the Nomination & Application Form for ordination:
 - a) The Commission on Ministry appoints a COM Rep (Commission on Ministry Representative) to facilitate the setting up of a Parish Discernment Committee (PDC) and to walk alongside the Aspirant throughout the discernment process.
 - i. COM Rep consults with Rector/Vicar prior to selection of PDC . The Rep reviews the Parish Internship /Work Learning Agreement [see #5] with the Rector/Vicar.
 - ii. Rector/Vicar selects PDC members and appoints the chair, prior to first PDC meeting, as soon as convenient but no later than January following the Conference on Ministry.
 - iii. PDC members receive and Orientation packet and are trained by COM Rep at first PDC meeting.

- b) The Commission on Ministry secretary sends an “Authorization and Release” Form to the Aspirant. The signed form is returned for his/her file and the secretary sends a Background Inquiry Release Form and information about the Psychological and Medical testing. Background Check and Medical/Psychological Evaluations are completed.

This may take several months to complete. The expense is borne by the aspirant, sometimes with help from the congregation. It is recommended that an aspirant schedule these evaluations as early in his/her process as possible. Because of the expense of the Psychological and Medical evaluations the aspirant may wish to defer scheduling them until the PDC has completed its work and has recommended that he/she continue in the process.

NOTE: Background checks and Medical/Psychological Evaluations which are over 3 years old must be repeated prior to ordination.

- c) **Priesthood Aspirant** completes a leadership assessment (Flippen 360 Profile™) arranged by office of the Canon for Vocations. Aspirant provides contact information for 4-6 people who know aspirant well and who preferably have worked with aspirant. Aspirant and designated people complete a brief online assessment of aspirant. \$300 Cost is shared by the aspirant and his/her supporting parish at the rector’s discretion.
- 7) If the PDC recommends that the Aspirant continue in the discernment process then the Rector/Vicar and the Vestry send a letter of endorsement in support of the aspirant’s admission as a postulant.
- 8) Aspirants and their spouses are invited by the Bishop to attend BACAM Conference (Bishop’s Advisory Committee for Aspirants to Ministry). The Conference is held in the early spring at Canterbury Retreat and Conference Center. At BACAM, Aspirants are interviewed and evaluated by clergy and lay persons from the Commission on Ministry.
- 9) At the Conclusion of the conference (BACAM) the Commission on Ministry makes a recommendation to the bishop regarding admission of the Aspirant to Postulancy pending the completion of all canonical and diocesan requirements. The Bishop communicates to each BACAM participant, informing him/her of his decision on his/her continuation in the discernment process. The Bishop’s communication will include, when applicable, an invitation to the aspirant’s spouse to participate in a group specifically designed to support spouses of those in the discernment process toward ordination.
- 10) The Bishop notifies the Aspirant of his/her admission as a Postulant for Holy Orders. Postulants (and Candidates) are required to work with a qualified Spiritual Director and to submit Ember Letters to the Bishop throughout the remainder of the process until they are ordained.
- 11) Aspirants to the Priesthood schedule an interview with the Bishop or his Canon for Vocations to consider seminary options. The final determination about entering seminary is made in direct consultation with the Bishop.
- 12) Individual Financial Consultations (Nominees to the Priesthood) with the Canon for Vocations are set by the nominee with the Canon.

- 13) Aspirants to the Diaconate who are approved to pursue ordination to the Diaconate will schedule their training with Archdeacon Kristi Alday, Dean of the Institute for Christian Studies.

YEAR TWO and following:

- Postulants (or Aspirants who will soon be Postulants) begin (or continue) formal academic training, completing requirements as specified by the Canons of the Episcopal Church.
- Postulants will, in the course of the process, make application to the Bishop for admission as a Candidate for Holy Orders, customarily in the second year of training.
- Postulant's Rector /Vicar & Vestry submit Letter in support of admission to Candidacy.
- The Commission on Ministry will make a recommendation to the Bishop, regarding Candidacy.
- The Standing Committee will interview the Postulant and if approved the Postulant will be notified of admission as a Candidate for Holy Orders by a letter from the Bishop.
- When a Candidate makes application to the Bishop to be ordained, his/her rector/vicar and vestry submits a Letter in Support of his/her ordination and the Commission on Ministry makes a recommendation to the Bishop regarding ordination. The Standing Committee will review each Candidate's discernment file and the Candidate will be notified of approval for ordination by a letter from the Bishop.

Sometime during the Discernment Process the following will be required prior to ordination:

- a) Training in Child Sexual Abuse Prevention ("Safeguarding God's Children")
- b) Training in Sexual Exploitation and Harassment Prevention ("Safeguarding God's People")
- c) Training in TEC Canons, specifically Title IV
- d) Anti-Racism Training
- e) A unit of Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) for candidates to the Priesthood
- f) Satisfactory completion of DOE (Deacon Ordination Exam) for diaconal candidate or GOE (General Ordination Exam) or Examination by Canon for Vocations for Priesthood candidates

**N.B. Throughout this document the terms "Aspirant" and "Nominee" may be used interchangeably*

Guidelines for the Rector/Vicar Regarding a Nominee's Call

The parish traditionally calls people to various forms of ministry and is the principal place where assistance is offered in answering the questions: "To what ministry is God calling me? Is this ministry to be exercised as a lay person or is God calling me to the ordained ministry? What training do I need to fulfill this lay or ordained ministry?" The parish is the spiritual and pastoral home of the Aspirant. A primary function of the parish is to help the Aspirant/Nominee appreciate that this is the beginning of a period of exploring and testing that **may or may not** lead to ordination. This cannot be stressed enough. A "no" to the ordained ministry **must** also be understood as a "yes" to the ministry of the laity. The parish and the Nominee are entering into a decision-making process that is both personal and communal. This is a central element of the Anglican and Episcopal tradition. This process is not a training course in ministry for one person, but the education of a whole parish about ministry and faith development.

Some Qualities to look for in Aspirants in the Discernment Process

Spirituality

Does this person have:

- ◆ Clearly articulated personal commitment to Christ
- ◆ Clearly articulated sense of call to leadership in ministry
- ◆ Rule of life that includes regular/daily practices of private study and prayer; regular interaction with Spiritual Director
- ◆ Clearly articulated understanding of their own giftedness

Ministry Experience

Does this person have:

- ◆ Demonstrated leadership gifts and a passion for leading and equipping God's people
- ◆ History of being used by God to lead others to Christ?

For example:

- ◆ Teaching experience: taught Bible Study/Sunday School, etc.
- ◆ Pastoral experience: visitation of sick, bereaved, lapsed, etc.
- ◆ Administrative experience: Vestry, stewardship, etc.
- ◆ Program experience: youth ministry, Sunday School program development

Education

Does this person have:

- ◆ Associate's Degree (minimum requirement for vocational diaconate)
- ◆ Bachelor's Degree (minimum requirement for priesthood)

Maturity

Does this person have:

- ◆ Spiritual and emotional maturity
- ◆ Ability to relate well to people
- ◆ Ability to listen and is able to control need to "have the last word"

The Parish Discernment Committee

After an Aspirant submits his/her Nomination & Application Form for Ordination, the Commission on Ministry appoints a COM Representative to “walk alongside” the Nominee throughout the process of discernment. The COM Representative contacts the Rector/Vicar (either by telephone, email, or in person) to review the PDC process, stressing the importance of the Work Learning Agreement, and to answer any questions that the Rector/Vicar may have. After that consultation, the Rector/Vicar appoints a PDC to work with the Nominee in his/ her Discernment Process.

Some Things to Look for in Selecting PDC Members

- 1) The Parish Discernment Committee should be comprised of 5-7 lay people (It is not appropriate for clergy (deacon or priest) or family member of aspirant, or other Nominees currently in the Discernment Process to be members of a PDC)
- 2) One member of the Committee should ideally be a member of the Vestry
- 3) Should be a communicant in good standing of the Episcopal Church, attending worship regularly and taking part in the activities/programs of the parish
- 4) Has a basic understanding of the faith, with the ability to express that faith and relate their own spiritual journey
- 5) Communication skills/assertiveness and openness with a caring manner
- 6) Work well with the Rector/Vicar
- 7) Should be sensitive and observant
- 8) Should have demonstrated reliability in previous parish work
- 9) Has a basic understanding of the "group process", committed to attend all meetings
- 10) Will abide by a commitment to maintain confidentiality

Parishioners accepting the commitment to serve on a PDC may ask, "What do I have to offer? Who am I to judge?" The simple truth is that we depend on every member's gifts and discernment. The basic qualifications are within each of us in our life experience and in the Christian commitment we offer. This task calls for a willingness to be open, honest, and candid in the context of a caring community; to both support and confront the Nominee. While the principal purpose lies in helping the Nominee clarify a call, the process will result in a mutual journey for all involved.

The Nominee will ask: "Is ordained or lay ministry the form my ministry should take?"

The PDC and ultimately the Vestry and Rector/Vicar will ask:

1. "Does this individual sufficiently understand the ministry of all baptized persons, and appreciate the opportunities for his or her lay ministry?"
2. "Does ordained ministry seem to be the leadership role to which God is calling this person?"
3. "Can we in good faith send this person to become an ordained leader of other congregations?"

In every stage of the discernment process and especially in the early stages, close communication between the PDC Chair and COM representative is advised. With the exception of pastoral care or supplying specific information the Rector/Vicar is not supervising or directing the work of the PDC, but rather the PDC and the Rector/Vicar have a parallel and complementary discernment role. During the course of

their work together, the time may come when it seems proper to the Nominee to decide not to proceed, or the committee may decide not to recommend to the Rector/Vicar and Vestry that the nominee continue in the process leading to ordination. Should the Vestry concur with their recommendation the PDC should be prepared to assist the Nominee in finding a suitable lay ministry.

Should any pastoral or ethical concerns arise in the course of the PDC meetings, the Chair should inform the Rector/Vicar.

The work by the PDC culminates in a final report (form on page 16) arrived at by diligence in the discernment process and ardency in prayer. Members have a sustained and intimate contact with the Nominee and develop a personal bond with him/her. Openness, candor and support are encouraged, but it is also important to balance these qualities with objectivity. It is difficult to say "no" to ordination and "yes" to lay ministry because this sounds to a Nominee like a rejection of his or her perceived gifts. If the Nominee is redirected, the PDC affirms the Nominee's other ministries and its members deal with their feelings about the outcome. It is important to understand that the Rector/Vicar, Vestry or Bishop may choose to accept or to modify the recommendation of the PDC.

- ❖ **The Parish Discernment Committee recommends; the Rector/Vicar, Vestry and Diocese ultimately have the canonical responsibility to decide on behalf of the church whether to affirm the call of the Aspirant or not.**

Parish Internship/Work Learning Agreement for Nominee

After the Nominee has submitted a Nomination Form to enter the Discernment Process, the Rector/Vicar meets with the Nominee to set up a Parish Internship and develop a "Work/Learning Agreement" (Guidelines pp. 19 *ff*). The intent of the Internship is to provide a ministry environment that complements the Nominee's skills and experience. For example, if the Nominee has been involved in youth ministry, the work agreement may highlight ministry to the elderly or nursing home ministry. Some Nominees may not have led in public worship and this is an excellent opportunity to do so under the supervision of the Rector/Vicar. The 6-12 month internship gives the Nominee opportunities to develop his/her skills as a leader under the mentorship of an experienced supervisor.

Procedure for the Parish Discernment Committee

What follows is an outline of each session of a Parish Discernment Committee Process and is designed to assist you in your work with your Nominee. **The Process consists of at least seven meetings over a period of several months.** The PDC may feel the need to meet more than seven times, with or without the aspirant. Each committee will need to decide how many meetings are required. All tasks must, however, be completed in sufficient depth to allow:

1. The PDC to come to the point of being able to make a recommendation to the Rector and Vestry
2. The Rector/Vicar and Vestry to be able to decide whether to endorse the Nominee for Postulancy to the Bishop and Commission on Ministry.

The PDC will need to have a Chair person (appointed by the Rector/Vicar) and a recorder (appointed by the Chair) who will report the committee's recommendation on the "Report of the Parish Discernment Committee" (page 16).

General Suggestions for all meetings:

It is important to open and close your meetings with prayer, always mindful that this is a spiritual quest. You may wish to consider the Prayer Book as a primary resource especially pages 814-841 as well as various scriptures including I Corinthians 12:1ff, Ephesians 4:7, 11-16; Romans 12:1-8; Acts 4:13.

Throughout this process evaluations are most helpful, and we suggest that you use some method of evaluation at the end of each meeting. A simple method is to use newsprint or some other tool and gather information about what was good and what was not so good, or what helped and what hindered.

Although the recorder will gather responses to the questions explored during PDC meetings each member of the PDC will be asked to evaluate not only the Nominee, but also the work of the PDC itself. (For example: "How are we doing as a discernment committee?") Each member might wish to keep personal confidential notes for future reference.

Build a climate that encourages risk taking, trust, vulnerability, sharing, caring and discourages judgment, competition, and advice. Discuss the issue of confidentiality at the first meeting.

Prior to the appointment of a Parish Discernment Committee, there is to be as consultation between COM Representative and Rector/Vicar

In Attendance: COM Representative and Rector/Vicar

The purpose of this initial consultation is for the COM Representative and the Rector/Vicar to review the entire process with a special emphasis on the appointment of the membership of the PDC and the importance of the Work Learning Agreement. The PDC should not be appointed prior to this meeting.

Meeting #1

In Attendance: COM Representative, Rector/Vicar, PDC, Aspirant (and Spouse)

The COM Rep's primary goal at this meeting is to set the tone for the group and to instill a sense of the importance of the work of the PDC and the commitment of its members.

1. Open with prayer by Rector.
2. Rector introduces COM Rep and PDC Chair.
3. Appointment of secretary to keep notes on all PDC meetings
4. All briefly share who they are, their history at the church, etc.
5. Com Rep distributes copies of the "**Orientation Packet for Parish Discernment Committees**" to PDC members, Rector/Vicar, Aspirant and spouse and walks the group through this document, hitting the highlights, to orient them to their task.

This Process consists of at least seven meetings over a period of several months. The PDC may feel the need to meet more than seven times, with or without the aspirant. Each committee will need to decide how many meetings are required. All tasks must, however, be completed in sufficient depth to allow:

- A. The PDC to come to the point of being able to make a recommendation to the Rector and Vestry
- B. The Rector/Vicar and Vestry to be able to decide whether to endorse the Nominee for Postulancy to the Bishop and Commission on Ministry.

The group is encouraged to read the entire Orientation Packet before the next meeting

The role of the PDC: the PDC should be comprised of 5 to 7 members, at least one of whom shall be a member of the Vestry of the congregation. It is the particular function of the PDC to help Nominees identify, discover, and explore the varieties of ministry in the Lord's service. Most of all, the PDC represents the parish family in helping individuals affirm their special gifts of ministry.

It is not a support group *per se* but should attempt to create a caring and questioning environment in which a Nominee can risk testing his or her vocational aspirations. As the PDC facilitates exploration for the individual, it also carries the discernment process into the larger community.

The PDC is asked to enter into a special relationship with the Nominee on behalf of the parish (and especially the Vestry) and the larger church. This requires a commitment of time, energy, sharing of themselves, as well as a commitment to ask difficult and challenging questions of one another. In the course of their work they may enter spiritual depths in their life as a group and individually that will reward and challenge them.

Parishioners accepting the commitment to serve on a PDC may ask, "What do I have to offer? Who am I to judge?" The simple truth is that we depend on every member's gifts and discernment. The basic qualifications are within each of us in our life experience and in the

Christian commitment we offer. This task calls for a willingness to be open, honest, and candid in the context of a caring community; to both support and confront the Nominee. While the principal purpose lies in helping the Nominee clarify a call, the process will result in a mutual journey for all involved.

The Nominee will ask him/herself: "Is ordained or lay ministry the form my ministry should take?"

The PDC and ultimately the Vestry and Rector/Vicar will ask:

- A. "Does this individual sufficiently understand the ministry of all baptized persons, and appreciate the opportunities for his or her lay ministry?"
- B. "Does ordained ministry seem to be the leadership role to which God is calling this person?"
- C. "Can we in good faith send this person to become an ordained leader of other congregations?"
- D. Can I see this person being MY deacon or priest?

Some Qualities to look for in Aspirants in the Discernment Process

Spirituality

Does this person have:

- ◆ Clearly articulated personal commitment to Christ
- ◆ Clearly articulated sense of call to leadership in ministry
- ◆ Rule of life that includes regular/daily practices of private study and prayer; regular interaction with Spiritual Director
- ◆ Clearly articulated understanding of their own giftedness

Ministry Experience

Does this person have:

- ◆ Demonstrated leadership gifts and a passion for leading and equipping God's people
- ◆ History of being used by God to lead others to Christ?

For example:

- ◆ Teaching experience: taught Bible Study/Sunday School, etc.
- ◆ Pastoral experience: visitation of sick, bereaved, lapsed, etc.
- ◆ Administrative experience: Vestry, stewardship, etc.
- ◆ Program experience: youth ministry, Sunday School program development

Education

Does this person have:

- ◆ Associate's Degree (minimum requirement for vocational diaconate)
- ◆ Bachelor's Degree (minimum requirement for priesthood)

Maturity

Does this person have:

- ◆ Spiritual and emotional maturity
- ◆ Ability to relate well to people
- ◆ Ability to listen and is able to control need to "have the last word"

Confidentiality

In the Discernment Process, confidentiality is crucial because we are dealing with very sensitive issues in peoples' lives.

What should be kept confidential?

- ◆ all proceedings of the committee meetings
- ◆ personal spiritual journeys of the members
- ◆ individual evaluations
- ◆ vote tallies

When asked by a member of the congregation, "How are things going with the PDC?" A member might respond: "We are enjoying getting to know one another and working together." If further questions ensue, this may be an appropriate response: "I appreciate your concern, but since our work is confidential, I prefer not to talk about it. I hope you understand."

After the PDC Report has been filed with the Rector/Vicar, Bishop Brewer, COM Rep, Diocesan Office and Chair of Commission on Ministry, it would be wise to shred individual evaluation forms

Information about someone may be public or private. For example: If a parishioner asks how many children the Nominee has, it is OK to say "Two". This is public knowledge. If a parishioner asks if the Nominee has ever suffered from depression, this is private knowledge. If there is any doubt whether an issue is in the private or public domain, then treat the information as confidential.

Under no circumstances should a member of the committee take it upon himself/herself to discuss with the Nominee any problem or observation which has arisen during a meeting where the Nominee is not In Attendance. Such observations are only shared with the Nominee within the committee meeting or by the convener if so directed by the committee as a whole.

Should any pastoral or ethical concerns arise in the course of the PDC meetings, the Chair should inform the Rector/Vicar.

The work by the PDC culminates in a final report arrived at by diligence in the discernment process and ardency in prayer. Members have a sustained and intimate contact with the Nominee and develop a personal bond with him/her. Openness, candor and support are encouraged, but it is also important to balance these qualities with objectivity. It is difficult to say "no" to ordination and "yes" to lay ministry because this sounds to a Nominee like a rejection of his or her perceived gifts. If the Nominee is redirected, the PDC affirms the Nominee's other ministries, and its members deal with their feelings about the outcome. It is important to understand that the Rector/Vicar, Vestry or Bishop may choose to accept or to modify the recommendation of the PDC.

- ❖ The Parish Discernment Committee RECOMMENDS; the Rector/Vicar, Vestry and Diocese ultimately have the canonical responsibility to DECIDE on behalf of the church whether to affirm the call of the Aspirant or not.

6. The COM Rep reads pp. 543 & 544 (examination of deacons) or 531 & 532 (examination of priests) in the Book of Common Prayer; discussion as to what is involved in the Ordination and ministry of a deacon or priest.

7. Time for questions

8. An agreeable meeting place and meeting agenda is set up. Weekly meetings are the norm and faithful attendance is essential. Please allow about 2 hours per meeting.

9. Members of the PDC and the aspirant's spouse are asked to prepare a brief summary of his/her own faith story for sharing at the next meeting.

10. The aspirant is given the following assignment for homework:

Prepare a comprehensive "spiritual resume" which should include: his/her family background, church background, education, job experience, significant (high and low) spiritual experiences, how he/she sees her call to ministry, his/her intended plan for service in his/her church now and after ordination if it occurs, identification of his/her gifts as he/she sees them, and his/her expectations for the future (ICS, seminary, whatever), and information about any relevant medical or psychological issues.

The aspirant is instructed to bring this spiritual resume to the next meeting along with copies for every PDC member.

11. COM Rep, PDC members and the aspirant share phone numbers and email addresses.

12. Conclude with prayer, after which the aspirant is excused from the meeting. The PDC may wish to meet briefly after the Aspirant leaves to discuss any concerns, insights, etc. This brief meeting would not normally include the COM Rep.

13. HOMEWORK TO PREPARE FOR THE NEXT MEETING:

a. Please read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest the Orientation packet.

b. PDC MEMBERS & ASPIRANT'S SPOUSE: Prepare a brief summary of your faith story to share aloud at the next meeting.

c. ASPIRANT: Prepare a comprehensive "spiritual resume" which includes: your family background, church background, education, job experience, significant (high and low) spiritual experiences, how you see your call to ministry, your intended plan for service in your church now and after ordination if it occurs, identification of your gifts as you see them, and your expectations for the future (ICS, seminary, whatever), and information about any relevant medical or psychological issues.

Please bring this spiritual resume to the next meeting with enough copies to give one to each PDC member.

If you want to know more about the Discernment Process, please see the resources at the end of the Orientation document:

Appendix A is an outline of all the *Steps in the Discernment Process toward Ordination*

Appendix B is a glossary of common terms used in the Canons/Ordination Process

Appendix C has suggestions for some things to look for in selecting PDC members

Appendix D outlines the Parish Internship/Work Learning Agreement with the Rector/Vicar that the Aspirant will complete, in addition to meeting with the PDC. The intent of this Internship is to provide a ministry environment that complements the Nominee's skills and experience. For example, if the Nominee has been involved in youth ministry, the work agreement may highlight ministry to the elderly or nursing home ministry. Some Nominees may not have led in public worship and this is an excellent opportunity to do so under the supervision of the Rector/Vicar.

Meeting #2 ***In Attendance: PDC, Aspirant (and Spouse)***

Begin with prayer.

Everyone shares their prepared faith stories, including a summary of his/her spiritual resume by the Aspirant as assigned in Session #1.

Aspirant is asked to briefly summarize how he/she understands the gospel message; if time permits and the committee is so inclined, the aspirant may be asked to demonstrate how he/she might share this message with some or all of the following people:

- 1) a child under 10
- 2) an elderly person near death
- 3) a teenager
- 4) a person of another faith tradition

The aspirant distributes his/her prepared spiritual resume as assigned in Meeting #1. PDC members and aspirant's spouse are asked by PDC leader to read aspirant's spiritual resume carefully in preparation for the next meeting, and note any questions which should be discussed.

Close with prayer. The Aspirant and spouse are excused from the meeting. The PDC may wish to meet briefly after the Aspirant leaves to discuss any concerns, insights, etc.

Meeting #3 ***In Attendance: PDC, Aspirant (and Spouse)***

Begin with prayer.

Ask the spouse how he/she feels about being married to an ordained person.

Suggested questions for spouse:

- How do you feel about the ordination process as described on the process sheet?
- How do you see yourself involved in your spouse's ministry?
- How would YOU identify your spouse's gifts?

Discussion of the aspirant's spiritual resume.

Suggested questions for discussion:

What does the aspirant see as his/her gifts?

How do you view and use the Bible?

Do you have a rule of life for your spiritual growth?

Discuss any issues of concern or need for clarification arising from the aspirant's spiritual resume.

Discuss with the aspirant and spouse their understanding and practice of stewardship as it relates to time, money and talent.

Invite aspirant and spouse to share their marital history and current family issues.

Remind the spouse that he/she will not attend the next PDC meeting.

Close with Prayer. The aspirant and spouse are excused from the meeting.

The PDC may wish to meet briefly after the Aspirant leaves to discuss any concerns, insights, etc.

Meeting #4 *In Attendance: PDC, Aspirant*

Begin with prayer.

The PDC should review with the aspirant the Work Learning Agreement

What is going well?

What is especially challenging?

What questions arise from these ministry experiences?

Are there areas of ministry that have not been explored and how can this be facilitated?

What has been your ministry experience outside the walls of the church?

What have you learned about leadership from your work in the congregation and beyond?

Time permitting the aspirant should be excused and the following questions should be addressed (otherwise these questions should be addressed in a subsequent meeting):

Have we been able to adequately observe the aspirant in ministry? And/or

Have we been able to reflect with the aspirant about their ministry enough to be satisfied of their leadership and servant qualities?

What can we affirm about their ministry in the parish and beyond?

What concerns are we left with about their fitness for ordained ministry?

Close with prayer. Remind aspirant that he/she will not attend the next PDC meeting.

Meeting #5

In Attendance: PDC members only

Begin with prayer.

At this meeting the PDC should take all the time it needs to assess and evaluate the aspirant based on his/her spiritual resume and their previous meetings. Review any of the significant insights or concerns that might have emerged. If there are lingering questions which the PDC feels must be answered, articulate them for the subsequent meeting with the aspirant.

The following questions might be discussed:

Does the aspirant demonstrate a servant's heart?

Does the aspirant demonstrate leadership skills?

Are there subjects the aspirant seems to want to avoid?

Did the aspirant become overwrought over anything? What and why?

Would the aspirant be a good pastor?

Is the aspirant touchy or defensive?

Does the aspirant have any traits which would make him/her an unsuitable ordained representative of the Episcopal Church?

Is there anything of a spiritual nature that might cause you to doubt or affirm his/her suitability for ordination?

Do you discern any ulterior motive (financial issues, self-importance, pride, political agenda, etc.) that the aspirant might have for wanting ordination that he/she has not shared?

Chair distributes Parish Discernment Committee Member's Individual Evaluation form-(see pages 16 & 17 of this document) OR references pages 10-11 of PDC Orientation pack for the PDC members to look over in preparation for filling out those forms for next week's meeting with the aspirant. Members discuss anything about the forms that they do not understand. They should be reminded that it is the PDC's job to offer an opinion as to whether the aspirant should continue in the process of ordination to the priesthood or diaconate, or continue serving the church as a lay minister.

Note: The PDC may make a recommendation which has qualifications, such as: *"recommend the aspirant continue with the ordination process as long as he/she prepares a plan for paying off his/her extensive student loans," or "recommend the aspirant continue with the ordination process only if his/her spouse gets on board with it" or "recommend the aspirant continue with the ordination process only if he/she gets more involved in this church," etc. OR "The PDC does not recommend the aspirant continue with the ordination process because: he/she does not in our opinion have the depth of spiritual commitment....or the theological understanding....or the clear sense of divine call....necessary in someone seeking ordination."*

Remind everyone that the next meeting is very important. It involves meeting with the aspirant for the last time before the final recommendation is made.

Close with Prayer.

Meeting #6 *In Attendance: PDC and Aspirant*

Begin with Prayer.

This meeting offers a time for careful reflections, sharing PDC members' positive observations as well as concerns with the aspirant and giving the aspirant an opportunity to consider and respond to them.

When the Chair believes that all issues have been adequately discussed or time is critical, he/she will excuse the aspirant from the meeting.

PDC members will discuss anything further that they feel must be discussed among themselves, and then they will each fill out an Individual Evaluation (page 10 & 11 of Orientation Packet) and hand it in to the Chair who will prepare a statement of recommendation based upon the forms received from PDC members.

When the Chair has prepared a Report of the Parish Discernment Committee (page 12 of Orientation Packet), a copy of it will be sent by email to each PDC member for a "yes" or "no" vote, with opportunity to make changes if necessary. This should be returned to the Chair within 24 hours of receiving it.

The Chair will put together a final recommendation report and send each PDC member a copy, and make a copy to be given to the aspirant at the final meeting. Each member is asked to bring his/her copy of the final recommendation report to the final meeting.

Note: The PDC may agree to allow the Chair extra time to complete the final recommendation report for the 7th and final meeting mindful that the aspirant is likely to be anxious about this particular part of the process.

Close with Prayer.

Meeting #7 *In Attendance: PDC members and Aspirant*

Begin with Prayer.

The PDC will share its final recommendation with the aspirant. If the Chair wishes to include a brief explanation of it, he/she may do so. If there are concerns on the part of the aspirant these should be taken to heart, though this is not necessarily a time to reconsider the recommendation.

The aspirant is to be encouraged to continue in his/her current ministry, whether or not he/she has received the recommendation hoped for.

Close with Prayer.

The Chair will send copies of the PDC recommendation to the Rector, Bishop Brewer, the COM Rep, COM Secretary at the Diocesan Office, and the Chair of the COM.

Confidential

Parish Discernment Committee Member's Individual Evaluation

Your Name: _____

Nominee's Name: _____

How long have you known this Nominee and in what contexts have you known the nominee?

It is a high calling to serve God and the church in any intentional ministry, either as a Lay Person or in Holy Orders. The Nominee, Vestry and Diocese share in discerning this Call. The following information, giving your thoughts and impressions, will assist in this process. Please answer prayerfully and to the best of your knowledge. Circle your answer. 1 = poor, 3 = adequate, 5 = superior.

- ◆ Can he/she be described as a person “with evident gifts and fitness for ordination” ? 1 2 3 4 5
- ◆ Does this person exhibit demonstrated skills as a leader? 1 2 3 4 5
- ◆ Does this person exhibit emotional maturity? 1 2 3 4 5
- ◆ Does this person have a stable family life? 1 2 3 4 5
- ◆ Does this person have stable relationships? 1 2 3 4 5
- ◆ Does this person have a stable employment history? 1 2 3 4 5
- ◆ Does this person have a regular and mature prayer and worship life? 1 2 3 4 5
- ◆ What experience does this person have in lay ministry and service within the church **and** outside the church?

- ◆ After hearing this person share his/her spiritual journey and desire for a more intentional ministry, briefly state your understanding of this person's spiritual journey and desire.

Report of the Parish Discernment Committee

Re: _____
(Nominee's Name)

To: _____
(Parish Name and Location)

The Parish Discernment Committee recommends as follows:

- Recommend for Lay Ministry** *(please add specific recommendations if possible)*
 - Recommend continuing exploration toward the Vocational Diaconate**
 - Recommend continuing exploration toward the Priesthood**
 - Recommend Other Alternatives at this time** *(please be specific)*
-
-

Please attach a narrative explaining your recommendation using these questions as guidelines (including additional information/impressions as deemed appropriate)

1. What is the Nominee's understanding of the Christian ministry?
2. Describe the current ministries of this person.
3. In what ways do you see/experience the Nominee as one whom is growing in the Christian faith?
4. What further growth is needed, and does this Nominee have the capacity to achieve such growth?
5. Describe this person's emotional health.
6. Describe this person's leadership skills.
7. In what ways does this person envision his/her diaconate/priesthood?

Signed: _____ Date: _____
Chair of the Parish Discernment Committee

Number of Concurrences _____ Number of Dissents _____ Number of Abstentions _____

(If possible please attach comments explaining dissents or abstentions)

Send copies of this Report to: Rector/Vicar, Bishop Brewer, COM Rep, COM secretary at Diocesan Office and Chair of Commission on Ministry.

Parish Internship Program - Guidelines for Supervisors & Nominees

The purpose of the Parish Internship Program is to assist the Nominee in identifying his/her gifts for ministry and to provide the PDC and Vestry with significant insight into the leadership gifts that the Nominee brings. It is also an excellent opportunity to build the collegial relationship between the Nominee and the Supervisor (Rector/Vicar or his/her designee). This 6 - 12 month program is an important and significant step in the Diocesan process especially for those seeking to be ordained. It is recognized that a Nominee cannot do everything suggested in these guidelines in depth in such a brief period of time, so choices need to be made, often based on areas that are relatively untested by the Nominee. The internship should serve to broaden the Nominee's experience in ministry and further test his/her calling.

Work-Learning Agreement for Aspirants to Ordained Ministry –

The Work/Learning Agreement (WLA) is a written contract between the Nominee and the Supervisor (usually the Rector/Vicar or someone he/she designates). The primary purpose of the WLA is to provide a tool for the rector, vestry, and parish discernment committee for discerning an aspirant's call to the ordained ministry. It is very important to keep in mind Bishop Brewer's focus on raising up effective leaders, therefore, it is imperative at the beginning of the process to be able to identify if there are any leadership qualities present.

A copy of the WLA should be sent to the diocesan office for the Aspirant's discernment file early in his/her process and simultaneously to the Aspirant's working with the Parish Discernment Committee. A Work Learning Agreement can be as basic as a list of proposed ministry experiences for the Nominee to explore or, it may follow the suggested format on pages 23-24, adapting the form to suit the goals and objectives established with the supervisor. Work/Learning Agreements are essential in order to have a clear understanding of learning goals and a clear statement of duties to be performed. The value of this agreement cannot be overemphasized.

Work part of the WLA refers to the schedule of meetings and trainings and the time allotted to them
Learning part of the WLA refers to the specific training chosen in relation to an aspirant's vocational objectives. The aspirant should formulate learning goals or objectives with the assistance and consultation of the supervisor. A goal should be stated in a way so that it can be reviewed at the end of the Internship Program to see if there is any measurable way of knowing whether or not the goal has been met. Learning goals can be job related (to learn to teach a sixth grade Sunday School class), or goals can be oriented toward personal growth (to gain poise and confidence in leading public worship), or goals may focus on your relationship with God and his Church (to see a better understanding of God's presence in the healing ministry)

The agreement should be evaluated at the end of the Parish Internship Program by the supervisor and the Aspirant.

For Aspirants to the Diaconate:

For visibility within the parish, if aspirants are not already involved in the worship and outreach ministry then that would be a starting point. Are they passionate about the marginalized in the world and how the Church might reach out to address these needs? Do they participate in the leadership of the parish at present? Do they exhibit a servant's heart? Are they involved in leading groups that require additional training and certification such as (like OSL, Walking the Mourner's Path, etc.)?

For discernment of leadership qualities, aspirants should each be challenged to start a ministry or enlarge an existing ministry. This could be in any area of calling the parish to ministry in the community. Encourage them to determine areas of need such as backpack program within the local schools, Jobs Partnership, community garden etc. Invite them to explore creative ways to fund the outreach programs.

Suggest that the aspirant define how they would use this ministry to make Christ's love known in the world and further illuminate the cares of the world to the Church.

A suggested procedure for developing the Work/Learning Agreement (WLA):

Supervisor should have the Aspirant consider the depiction of the Vocational Diaconate (BCP, 543):

My brother, every Christian is called to follow Jesus Christ, serving God the Father, through the power of the Holy Spirit. God now calls you to a special ministry of servanthood directly under your bishop. In the name of Jesus Christ, you are to serve all people, particularly the poor, the weak, the sick, and the lonely.

As a deacon in the Church, you are to study the Holy Scriptures, to seek nourishment from them, and to model your life upon them. You are to make Christ and his redemptive love known, by your word and example, to those among whom you live, and work, and worship. You are to interpret to the Church the needs, concerns, and hopes of the world. You are to assist the bishop and priests in public worship and in the ministration of God's Word and Sacraments, and you are to carry out other duties assigned to you from time to time. At all times, your life and teaching are to show Christ's people that in serving the helpless they are serving Christ himself.

After considering the BCP description/depiction of the Diaconate, have the aspirant summarize in writing his/her vision of a new ministry or the expansion of an existing ministry to include the following:

- Vision: A brief description of their vision for the ministry - how they see it impacting the spread of the Kingdom.
- Organization/Administration: What steps are necessary to put it in place - possible timeline, resources needed, funding etc?
- Discerning gifts, empowering and equipping others: Have them Identify lay people in the congregation who could be invited to participate in the ministry - get them to grasp the vision and then empower them to help (and eventually lead) the ministry.
- Communications: How will they communicate to the congregation/community about the ministry when they are ready to start it?
- Feedback: An opportunity for parish leadership and the rector to give feedback on how well the person fulfilled each of the above areas.

The supervisor can help with pointing aspirant towards resources to help put the ministry in place, especially where any teaching is concerned, so that the resources are in line with the theology of the rector.

Suggested Checklist (adapt as needed)

- 1) Meet with rector to discern his/her view of the role of the deacon
- 2) Discuss with rector his/her sense of what is needed in the community and how the church might address these needs.
- 3) Meet with community leaders to help identify needs
- 4) Create a "business plan" to develop the ministry
- 5) Build a team to work with the aspirant
- 6) Communicate the plan clearly to the rector and vestry
- 7) Lead small groups within the Church to raise awareness of needs in the world
- 8) Participate in Liturgics 101 for training as deacon
- 9) Clearly articulate the liturgical symbolism of worldly ministry
- 10) Meet with rector on a regular basis to review progress

For Aspirants to the Priesthood

For visibility within the parish, if aspirants are not already involved in the worship ministry as an Lay Eucharistic Minister, then that would be a place to begin. Can they read God's word with understanding as a lector? Maybe even hand in a brief one paragraph understanding of each of the Scriptures they have read? How quickly do they become familiar with what is going on liturgically, do they grasp the flow, how much instruction do they need, how quietly and prayerfully do they enter into this ministry, and do they understand the focus of worship (God not us!)? They should also be certified as Lay Eucharistic Visitors and be put on the schedule to take the sacrament to any shut-ins or hospitalized parishioners. If the parish has an important ministry that requires training and certification (like OSL, Walking the Mourner's Path, etc.), they should be required to do that training and receive the certification.

For discernment on leadership qualities, aspirants should each be challenged to start a ministry or enlarge an existing ministry. This could be in any area of parish life: pastoral (setting up a prayer group if there isn't one, organizing or training LEVs, setting up a prayer shawl ministry, etc.); outreach (backpack program within the local schools, Jobs Partnership, community garden, identify the particular needs of the local community and see what the parish can do to speak to that need); evangelism/newcomers (is there a newcomer incorporation program, what are some on-ramp events that might bring people onto the campus that could be organized); stewardship (do they have any ideas for a fundraiser, or could they lead a stewardship campaign); Christian formation (challenge them to teach an adult Christian formation class on a topic they are interested in, lead a Bible study either for adults or youth, organize a VBS or some other children's Christian formation activity).

A suggested procedure for developing the Work Learning Agreement (WLA):

Supervisor should have the aspirant consider the depiction of the Priesthood (BCP, 531):

My brother, the Church is the family of God, the body of Christ, and the temple of the Holy Spirit. All baptized people are called to make Christ known as Savior and Lord, and to share in the renewing of his world. Now you are called to work as pastor, priest, and teacher, together with your bishop and fellow presbyters, and to take your share in the councils of the Church.

As a priest, it will be your task to proclaim by word and deed the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and to fashion your life in accordance with its precepts. You are to love and serve the people among whom you work, caring alike for young and old, strong and weak, rich and poor. You are to preach, to declare God's forgiveness to penitent sinners, to pronounce God's blessing, to share in the administration of Holy Baptism and in the celebration of the mysteries of Christ's Body and Blood, and to perform the other ministrations entrusted to you.

In all that you do, you are to nourish Christ's people from the riches of his grace, and strengthen them to glorify God in this life and in the life to come.

After considering the BCP description/depiction of the Priesthood, have the aspirant summarize in writing his/her vision of a new ministry or the expansion of an existing ministry to include the following:

- Vision: A brief description of their vision for the ministry - how they see it impacting the spread of the Kingdom.
- Organization/Administration: What steps are necessary to put it in place - possible timeline, etc.
- Discerning gifts, empowering and equipping others: Have them Identify lay people in the congregation who could be invited to participate in the ministry - get them to grasp the vision and then empower them to help (and eventually lead) the ministry.
- Communications: How will they communicate to the congregation/community about the ministry when they are ready to start it?

- Feedback: An opportunity for parish leadership and the rector to give feedback on how well the person fulfilled each of the above areas.

The supervisor could help with pointing them towards resources to help put the ministry in place, especially where any teaching is concerned, so that the resources are in line with the theology of the rector.

Suggested Checklist of tasks for visibility in the parish (adapt as needed)

- 1) Serve in weekly worship as scheduled
- 2) Lead Way of the Cross/ Stations of the Cross and/or Evening Prayer during Lent
- 3) Participate in mid-week and/or “Coffee Hour” Learning/Teaching opportunities
- 4) Become familiar with work of the altar guild, esp. basic setup for Holy Communion
- 5) Become familiar with work of acolytes, especially the role of server in Holy Communion
- 6) Observe a staff meeting and vestry meeting
- 7) Attend ordination services, especially vocational diaconate and others as scheduled
- 8) Participate in Liturgics 101 for training as deacon and celebrant
- 9) Participate in Worship planning group, Stewardship campaign and Outreach events
- 10) Complete staff interviews
- 11) Complete 3 mystery worshipper surveys
- 12) Be trained and deployed as a lector, a chalice bearer, a Lay Eucharistic Visitor and as a Pastoral Visitor to newcomers, hospitalized, shut-ins, bereaved, etc.
- 14) Meet with rector on a regular basis to review progress

**Diocese of Central Florida
Parish Internship Program Form for Work/Learning Agreement**

Name _____ Parish _____

I. Learning Agreement

Goals: 1.

2.

3.

II. Work Agreement

Average Weekly Time

Sunday _____ hours per week
(outline duties and time)

Other than Sunday-Responsibilities _____ hours per week

(outline specific duties & responsibilities)
(indicate when, i.e. "Monday afternoon")

Preparation Time _____ hours per week
(specify for what purpose)

Staff time _____ hours per week
(staff meeting or instruction time for the Nominee)

Supervision _____ hours per week
(indicate when, i.e. Sundays at 1:00 p.m)

Lay Committee Meeting _____ hours per week
(indicate when, i.e. 3rd Monday at 8:00 p.m.)

Travel - to and from parish _____ hours per week

Parish Discernment Committee Meetings _____ hours per week

Specific agreement(s) for the Development of a new ministry or the Enhancement of an existing ministry between Supervisor and the Nominee:

The above agreement will be evaluated at the end of the Program by the supervisor and the Nominee.

Nominee's Signature

Supervisor's Signature

Date: _____

The Supervisor is Responsible for seeing that a Copy of this Agreement is forwarded to the Diocesan Office (to the attention of COM Secretary) for the Commission on Ministry file.

(Note: A Work/Learning Agreement should not total more than 15 hrs per week.

Definitions (common terms used in the canons/ordination process)

Applicant (Nominee) – Aspirant who has submitted a Nomination Form and has begun the Discernment Process.

Aspirant – person who “aspires” to ordained ministry

BACAM – Bishop’s Advisory Committee on Aspirants to Ministry

Candidacy – Period of continued formal academic preparation for ordination including:

- in the diaconal track, supervised field education
- in the priest track, a unit of clinical pastoral education
- in both tracks, the completion of canonically required training in anti-Racism, the canons of the Episcopal Church, child sexual abuse prevention and adult sexual misconduct prevention

Candidate – Candidate for Holy Orders

In order to be made a Candidate a Postulant:

- applies to the bishop for Candidacy
- receives a letter of support from the community of faith to the bishop
- receives a recommendation from the Commission on Ministry attesting to his/her continuing formation
- is interviewed by and receives a positive recommendation from the Standing Committee

COM – Commission on Ministry: A 24 member body (12 lay members; 12 clergy members) appointed by the Bishop and confirmed by the Diocesan Convention in accordance with Diocesan Canon XII.

COM Rep – Member of the Commission on Ministry appointed to walk alongside an aspirant during the discernment process and to serve as a liaison between the aspirant/postulant/candidate and the COM.

Deacon Ordination Examination – An examination Diaconal students must successfully complete

Ember Letters – Postulant/Candidate/Transitional Deacons correspondence with bishop on Ember Days (Book of Common Prayer, page 18)

Field Work/Field Education – An assignment to a congregation (or other ministry setting) other than the sponsoring congregation occurring in Year 1 of the School of Diaconal Training or as part of seminary training.

Flippen 360 Profile™ - a leadership assessment tool for aspirants to Ordination to the Priesthood.

GOEs (General Ordination Examinations) – A four day Examination which candidates for the Priesthood students must satisfactorily complete

ICS – Institute for Christian Studies

Parish Internship Program – A work/learning program within the discernment process designed to give the Rector/Vicar and Discernment Committee a chance to expose the aspirant to various ministries within the life of the congregation.

PDC – Parish Discernment Committee

Postulancy – Period of formal academic preparation for ordination involving continued exploration of and decision about the postulant’s call to ordained ministry; Postulant enters into correspondence with bishop via Ember Day Letters. This correspondence continues until ordination as a vocational deacon or priest.

Postulant – Postulant for Holy Orders

In order to be made a Postulant a Nominee:

- completes a Nomination/Application Form for ordination
- is received into the ordination process
- attends a BACAM conference with his/her spouse
- receives a positive recommendation from the PDC
- receives a letter of support from the community of faith to the bishop
- receives a positive recommendation from psychological and medical evaluations
- is recommended to the bishop for admission as a postulant by the Commission on Ministry

School of Diaconal Training (SDT) - A school within ICS, a two year course of study for those who are already Postulants and who have completed the first two years of ICS.

Standing Committee – The Standing Committee is a 7 member body elected by Diocesan Convention in accordance with Diocesan Canon IX to serve as a Council of Advice to the Bishop. In the discernment process, the Standing Committee certifies that Canonical requirements for ordination have been met, and that there is no sufficient objection on medical, psychological, moral or spiritual grounds to ordination.