



**THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE
OF THE CENTRAL GULF COAST**

**MANUAL FOR DISCERNMENT PROCESS
FOR VOCATIONAL MINISTRY**

1.2017

AN INTRODUCTION

Every Christian is called by God The reality of this statement is reflected in the ministry of Jesus Christ and the Baptismal Covenant. The examination at Baptism (BCP 304-305) asks the family and candidate for Baptism, "Will you seek and serve Christ in all persons, loving your neighbor as yourself?" This same truth is reflected in the Catechism (BCP 855) "Who are the ministers of the Church? The Ministers of the Church are lay persons, bishops, priests and deacons." Anyone who begins an intentional discernment process should recognize that God has given every individual gifts for the building up of the Kingdom of God. Discernment is the process of discovering what God is already doing.

Serving as a lay person, a deacon or a priest is an individual's response to this call from God. The Diocese of the Central Gulf Coast supports an individual's response to the call of Christ by providing a process of listening, testing, serving and encouraging as the nominee discerns a particular call to a more developed lay ministry, a call to bridge the gap between church and congregation as an ordained deacon or to serve Christ as an ordained priest. All who begin the discernment process begin by understanding the reality that the most important order in the church is the laity. All who begin accept the reality that the process will result in a direction that serves God with the guidance of the Holy Spirit and not necessarily the individual. Those who submit themselves to the process understand the possibility that their discernment may lead them to a whole new understanding of their call and responsibility to the Kingdom of God.

The process outlined herein is for those who are discerning a call to the priesthood or the vocational diaconate. Discerning a call to a developed lay ministry, the sacred order of deacons or the holy order of priests is one that will most likely bring about significant life changes. This process is to be nurturing, encouraging, challenging and one that reflects the grace and mercy we have received through our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. The Commission on Ministry engages in this work with a nominee under the pastoral direction of the Diocesan Bishop. There are three major steps in a process of discernment: 1.] From the congregation to the Bishop; 2.] From the Bishop to the COM; 3.] From the COM to a decision.

FROM THE CONGREGATION TO THE BISHOP

GENERAL PARAMETERS AND EXPECTATIONS

Some move through the discernment process quickly and others *wander* through. The minimum expectation of any individual is approximately six months at the parish level and another six to twelve months at the Diocesan level. The nominee is discerning his or her personal call to serve Christ as a lay person, a deacon or a priest. Those who begin the discernment process will not all be ordained or attend seminary. The result of one's discernment will not change the call to serve Christ that is stated at Baptism. Many who enter the process will continue to serve God as lay leaders with a more developed ministry and the support of the Diocese.

The process requires commitment, leadership, humility and a willingness to serve. It is a journey between the head and the heart. Enrolling in seminary is never understood as a goal. Some will enter seminary and others will begin to serve Christ as a lay leader or a deacon. The nominee and his or her family (spouse and children) are a part of this process. The nominee's response to a call will impact the life of the family. Questions concerning the potential of relocation, financial issues, conflict and possibly disappointment as the Holy Spirit leads one into and through the "wilderness" are discussed and reflected upon.

The nominee, the sponsoring church, the supporting clergy, the Commission on Ministry (COM) and the Diocesan Bishop, all work as a team in this process to achieve the best vocational response to the call of Christ. The hope of all those involved is to build the Kingdom of God.

If seminary is a requirement in the individual's vocation, most seminaries require completed applications for the fall semester by March 1 of the year enrollment will begin. This date may be important but will not drive the process, discussions, or influence the timeline of a decision.

What to anticipate and prepare for as you begin:

- A nominee should have been an active, involved and confirmed member (Episcopalian) of a parish or mission **in the Diocese for at least two years.**
- Should a nominee be approved for ordination in this process, the nominee should have a Bachelor's Degree from an accredited university or college.
- The nominee should be viewed as a leader by the congregation and not a small group within the congregation.
- The individual must practice proportional giving and respect the authority of the Bishop, the Diocese of the Central Gulf Coast and the Episcopal Church of the USA.
- The nominee should prepare to incur costs of approximately \$1000.00 as the process is undertaken [see **Appendix G**]. These funds are non-refundable as an individual moves through the process or should a nominee withdraw from the process. These funds will be used for costs associated with the process. Psychological testing, a criminal background report, and a medical exam are administered at the direction of the Diocesan Bishop [see **Appendix G**]. When possible, the sponsoring church may provide a portion of these expenses, but this is not an expectation.
- *Relocating to another church is a fact for those discerning a call to ordained ministry.* A nominee should not resign a job until a decision is clear, and with the advice of the Bishop.

STEPS AND REQUIREMENTS FROM CONGREGATION TO THE BISHOP?

1. A meeting to discuss the process is scheduled with the Rector, Vicar or Priest-in-Charge. In the absence of a priest, the Diocesan office will assist the nominee to begin the process with an appointed clergy person.
2. The priest-in-charge, a person appointed by the priest-in-charge, or a parish level discernment committee is formed to begin in-depth discussions with the individual. The meetings between these parties will extend over a minimum of six months and will meet a minimum of twelve hours. The book *Listening Hearts: Discerning Call in Community*, Susan G. Farnham (Morehouse Publishing 1991) is an excellent resource for these meetings. In addition to this resource, an exploration of the questions attached to this document [see *Appendix D*] shall be a part of conversations.
3. Engage a Spiritual Director who functions beyond the sponsoring church.
4. If the priest-in-charge [or designee or parish level discernment committee] and nominee are in mutual agreement, then the nominee should proceed with further discernment. The supporting clergy of the sponsoring parish will request *in writing* an initial meeting with the Diocesan Bishop. Along with this letter, the nominee must submit to the Bishop:
 - a. The formal application into discernment, [*Appendix A*].
 - b. The Spiritual Autobiography and Vision Statement
 - c. A letter from the clergy indicating that the topics in *Appendix D* have been discussed and a commentary on the highlights of those conversations.

THE MEETING WITH THE BISHOP

Pray individually and with your family for understanding. It will be important to include your family in your discernment process. A spouse will be expected to participate in this initial meeting with the Bishop and to be involved in the conversation regarding discernment.

At this meeting, the work of the individual, the conversations between the nominee, clergy and/or parish level discernment committee WILL be discussed and reviewed. The documentation of these conversations will be submitted to the Diocesan Bishop with the letter requesting an appointment. *These documents will be placed in the nominee's discernment file.* This meeting between the Bishop (or appointed representative), supporting clergy, and nominee DOES NOT mean the person will be admitted into the next phase of the discernment process.

After the meeting with the Bishop, the nominee will receive notification from the Bishop, of the Bishop's decision about admittance into the next phase in the process of discernment. If you are encouraged to move forward, you will receive information and forms in order to complete the psychological testing, a medical exam and a criminal background check. Psychological assessments are conducted by a licensed professional approved by the Bishop. The results of such testing is shared with the Commission on Ministry [see *Appendix G*].

FROM THE BISHOP INTO THE DIOCESE AND BACOM

ORIENTATION MEETING: If invited to move along in this discernment process, you will be invited to enter into the process that begins with an orientation meeting with the Diocesan Bishop and the Commission on Ministry [COM]. Held annually in early Spring, this meeting will present the process before you and will last approximately four hours. This is an opportunity for both the nominee and spouse to ask questions and explore expectations. The process is a time of study, assessment, experience and reflection that culminates with an overnight retreat with the COM. This retreat is held in October at Camp Beckwith.

At the orientation meeting you will:

- Meet other nominees.
- There will be time for group discussions and you will be appointed to a shepherd group from the COM. This group will be your primary point of contact during the next phase of discernment.
- Soon after the meeting, you will be assigned a location in which you will be required to perform a twelve-week church internship. *See below for more information.*

CHURCH INTERNSHIP This experience exposes the nominee to the larger church. It requires leaving and letting go. Also, such an experience is meant to broaden and deepen the understanding of the church and models for ministry. Finally, it is meant as a way to deepen the nominee's personal discernment. The nominee will complete a twelve-week internship in a church setting different from the sponsoring church. Spouse and family are encouraged to join the nominee. Details of the internship will be established between the nominee and the priest-in-charge of the church where the internship will be served. In general, the COM expects that the nominee's work will include the following:

- a. Four hours per week in the church or ministry of the church. This includes, but is not limited to time spent in worship and meetings with the priest.
- b. Attendance at Sunday morning services and weekday services [if offered] as agreed.
- c. Attend at least two vestry meetings.
- d. Involvement in the ministry of the church as set by the priest-in-charge and the COM. This might include pastoral visits, teaching a class, attending meetings, or becoming involved in an outreach ministry of the parish. The specific work should be something that will expand and enrich the nominee's understanding of ministry. Thus, it is preferable that the work done be something that the nominee has not previously done in one'sr sponsoring church. The Bishop may allow that some limited roles and duties normally reserved for ordained persons may be taken on and performed by the nominee for the duration of the internship. This may include proclaiming the Gospel and setting the table during Eucharist services. The nominee should not wear a stole or clerical collar of any kind when performing these duties or at any other

time. The nominee may not preside at the Eucharist or give a blessing. Other roles and duties may be assigned to the nominee with the express collaboration and consent of the Chair of COM and/or the Bishop.

e. Regular meetings with the church's clergy (or designee) for reflection and conversation about the experiences of the internship. It will be the *nominee's responsibility* to set and lead the agenda of these meetings.

f. Preparing and presenting to a group within the parish a sermon, meditation, or teaching.

Upon Completion of the internship: The priest-in-charge will fill out a checklist [see *Appendix F*] and write a report to the COM as to his/her perceptions of the nominee's ministry. The following should be addressed:

How do you perceive this person's sense of call to ministry in the church? Regarding ministry, what is this person's passion?

Do you sense a call to a particular ministry in the church?

The nominee is to submit a report to his/her COM shepherds responding to the following:

Describe and discuss the scope of your internship.

What surprised you about this experience?

How did this experience inform your understanding of the church?

What made you uncomfortable and why?

How did this experience inform your own call to ministry?

INDIVIDUAL STUDY

During this phase of your discernment you are expected to select two books from Appendix C, A Resource for Reading, and write a two-page, double spaced reflection on how the ideas of the author conflict, confirm or confuse your own ideas about ministry. You will lead a conversation with your COM shepherds about the book(s) you have chosen. Written reports will be submitted to your shepherds prior to the conversation.

MEETING WITH YOUR COM SHEPHERD[S]

During the discernment process the nominee will meet a minimum of two times with the COM shepherd[s]. The topics and agenda for these meetings will be directed by the nominee.

Discuss your experience in the internship.

Discuss your individual study.

Discuss leadership and ministry using the outline below

DISCERNMENT SESSIONS ON LEADERSHIP AND MINISTRY

SESSION I LISTENING TO GOD

Preparation: Before the session read the book *"Listening Hearts"*

Focus: During this first session, the structure of the meetings is introduced, including its educational and reflective styles. If members of the group do not know each other, this is a good time to do some basic introductions.

Introductions and **Prayer:** A Prayer for Quiet Confidence, BCP pg. 832

Discussion: What is Ministry? What is the ministry of each member of the Discernment Group? What is the current ministry of the nominee[s]? What is Listening? How do you listen for God? How do you know what God wants of you? What are the impediments to listening for God? What conditions help us discern God's call?

Closing Prayer: Prayer of Thomas Merton, Listening Hearts, pg. 145.

SESSION II MINISTRY

Focus: This session answers, in more depth, "What is Ministry?" from Session One.

Opening Silence closing with; Prayer of Vocation in Daily Work, BCP pg. 261

Exercise A: Have the group list priestly leadership skills & responsibilities as they perceive them to be. Compare this list with the "Examination of Priest", BCP pg. 531. The goal of this exercise is to clarify our understanding of what priests are really ordained to do. Repeat this exercise focusing on all of the baptized, and deacons.

Exercise B: Read aloud the Renewal of Baptismal Vows, BCP pages 304-305 Which of these vows are easy for each member of the group to fulfill? Which are harder, if not impossible? When do you succeed in "seeking and serving Christ in all persons?" Where do you (and the Church) fail? Share personal stories. How do you proclaim by word and example the Good News? Which is easier for you, word or example?

Closing Prayer: Prayer for Social Service, BCP pg. 260.

SESSION III LEADERSHIP

Focus: This session focuses on self-awareness and leadership style. There are many leadership styles and there are many settings for ministry. What leadership style matches the leadership needs of a particular ministry setting (e.g. Rector of a corporate-size congregation; a hospital chaplain, etc.)?

EXERCISE A Read together Matthew 5:48 and Philippians 3:7-13.

What is the Holy Life? What does it look like? Who is perfect? What does it mean to “pattern your life (and that of your family) in accordance with the precepts of the Gospel of Jesus Christ?” How is life in the Church a “school for holiness?” Describe someone in your life who is an example of holiness.

How well do you know yourself? Share a time when you were brought up short and an unattractive part of yourself was disclosed to you.

How have you experienced failure in life? Disappointment? Tragedy? How have you been changed from these experiences?

Are you aware of your effect on the people around you? How do you perceive the others in your group? In what ways do they exhibit godliness? To what extent do you buy into the myth that ordination is the ticket to holiness?

How tolerant are you of ambiguity and uncertainty? What is your taste for mystery? In other words, how big is your box for God? How big is your box for your neighbors who differ from you due to race, economic class, health, sexual orientation or gender?

SESSION IV LISTENING

Focus: During this session, the group, including the nominee is wrapping up.

Opening Silence closing with Collect for the Fourth Sunday of Easter, BCP pg.225

The word obedience derives from the Latin word to “hear or listen deeply.” Name/explore some persons in the Bible who are examples of this kind of obedience. Abraham, Sarah, Ruth, Samuel, Jesus, Peter, Paul. In each case, there were some heavy prices to pay for their obedience that preceded whatever reward came to them. Have the members of the group discuss ways obedience has been a part of their life. What challenges and blessings have resulted in such exercises of obedience?

What are the limitations, restrictions, and other realities in the person’s life that must be reckoned with and obeyed? These may take the form of responsibilities and obligations (to marriage, commitments, children, family, self) that must be honored prior to making the sacrifices of the ordained ministry. Ordination never rescues a person from these more fundamental places of faithfulness. How has the nominee displayed commitment in the face of hardship?

Silence closing with Prayer of St. Chrysostom, BCP pg. 126.

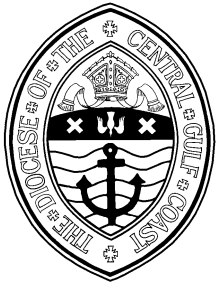
COMMISSION ON MINISTRY RETREAT

GENERAL At the conclusion of the vocational discernment process, the COM will prayerfully consider invitations to the final retreat. An invitation to attend the retreat is not the Commission's final recommendation about the nominee's ministry. However, the invitation may specify the COM's inclination as to which ministry the nominee is being called. The retreat is an overnight gathering held annually in October at Camp Beckwith. During this retreat the nominee continues discernment with the Commission on Ministry.

THE INVITATION The Bishop will extend a formal invitation to the nominee and spouse to the retreat. If invited, the nominee will be asked to submit educational transcripts to the Bishop's office. The invitation will include the date for a meeting with the Bishop afterwards to discuss nominee's leadership as laity, deacon or priest.

WHAT TO EXPECT AT THE RETREAT The retreat begins with introductions and the Holy Eucharist. Following worship, each nominee will meet individually with members of the COM. The retreat is structured to give the nominee plenty of time for reflection and informal conversations. The two-day retreat begins at approximately 11:00 a.m. on a Friday and ends with lunch on Saturday. The cost of the retreat is a Diocesan expense. Before the retreat, the nominee may be mailed questions and/or articles in preparation for the conversations with the COM.

AFTER THE RETREAT After the retreat, you will meet with the Bishop, or Bishop's designee, to discuss the final decisions regarding discernment. *Appendix B* may be helpful to understand jobs which may be available in the Diocese of the Central Gulf Coast.



Episcopal Diocese of the Central Gulf Coast

Confidential Questionnaire - for the **BISHOP ONLY**
(return in envelope marked **CONFIDENTIAL**)

Application for Admittance into Vocational Discernment

C _____

Full Name _____ Telephone # H _____

Present Address _____

Email _____ SSN# _____

Date of Birth _____ Age _____ Place _____

Baptism Date _____ Church and city: _____

Confirmation Date: _____ Church and city _____

by The Right Reverend _____, Bishop of _____

Length of time as a resident in the Diocese of the Central Gulf Coast _____

Length of time as a member of the Episcopal Church: _____

What percent of income have you given to the work of the Church through their parish during the past five years? _____ %

FAMILY

Marital Status: Single _____ Married _____ Divorced _____ Separated _____ Widowed _____

If married, anniversary date _____

Spouses Full Name _____ Spouses Date of Birth _____

If married, what is your spouse's attitude toward your plan to be ordained? _____

Previous Marriages: (Yes) ____ (No) ____ If yes, list the dates of the marriage[s] _____

Children – Name[s] and age[s] _____

Father's Full Name _____

Living? _____ Occupation _____

Maiden Name of Mother _____

Living? _____ Occupation _____

Church membership of parents _____

What is their attitude toward your plan to enter the ministry?

Do you have brothers and sisters? _____ List how many, and ages _____

EDUCATION

High School (where) _____ Yr of graduation _____

College or University (and dates) _____

Major subject(s) _____

Minor subject(s) _____

Year of graduation _____ Degree _____

Approximate grade average _____

List any graduate work done _____

EMPLOYMENT RECORD - Give a brief account of last three employments. Include the following information: (1) name of employer; (2) primary responsibilities; (3) position; and (4) years employed:

Current/Most Recent Employment:

1.

2.

3.

MILITARY SERVICE - (Branch, dates, rate or rank attained, areas of service, reason for leaving.)

Have you ever before applied for admission to vocational discernment in the Diocese of the Central Gulf Coast or in any other diocese? (Yes) _____ (No) _____.

If yes, briefly describe the resulting action:

In which of the following ministries have you served in a parish setting within the past five years?

Lector () Vestry Member () LEM () Outreach Ministry ()

Choir () Cursillo () Teacher () Mission Work ()

Kairos () EFM () Youth Leader ()

Other ()

How have you been involved in servant ministry within the church and the community in which the person lives or works?

Are you interested in some particular **type** of ministry? _____ Comments:

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Do you have funds for 3 years of seminary? _____ Comments:

Do you have any debts? Give general overview of debt:

PERSONAL DATA

Have you ever been arrested? _____ If yes, give details:

What has been your experience or usage of alcohol or other drugs?

Have you ever received psychiatric treatment or psychological counseling? _____ Yes; _____ No. Have you ever been prescribed psychotropic medication? _____ Yes; _____ No. If yes, please give details and dates, and would you be willing to sign a release for those records?

PERSONAL THOUGHTS

What event has affected your life most?

What is your feeling about current social issues and are any of particular concern or interest to you?

Have you ever been involved in controversy with school officials, employers, or other in authority over you?
Comments:

FORM COMPLETED BY: _____

Nominee's signature

Sponsoring Clergy Signature

Church: _____

City: _____

Date: _____

Please include with this form **a recent headshot photograph** of the applicant only and send to:

The Rt. Rev. J. Russell Kendrick – russell@diocgc.org

The Episcopal Diocese of the Central Gulf Coast

201 N. Baylen Street, Pensacola, FL 32502

If mailed, be sure to mark the outside of the envelope **"Confidential"**.

(To be written by the NOMINEE and submitted with application)

SPIRITUAL AUTOBIOGRAPHY Discuss the major influences and events of your life, especially what has led you to your participation in this discernment process. Be sure to include information such as family and personal circumstances and your age at the time of a major event. Use no more than ten typed pages double-spaced

VISION STATEMENT In a brief typed essay of no more than three pages double-spaced, articulate your vision of your future ministry as you discern it to be at this moment. Please address the following questions within this essay:

To what vocational ministry do you feel God is calling you? Describe your understanding of the role and identity of that ministry?

What type of ministry do you contemplate? (*parochial, specialized, full-time, part-time*)

What is the purpose of the church?

If applicable, how does your spouse/partner view your vocational aspirations?

If applicable, what plans have you for your family during your education, training and ministry?

(To be written by the SPONSORING PRIEST on a separate sheet and submitted with application) Briefly describe the grounds upon which the nominee is moved to seek discernment. In your opinion, do you believe that the nominee fully understands the sacrifices of submitting one's self to the church for vocational discernment? Does the nominee understand that by entering the Diocesan discernment there are several possible outcomes (lay ministry, deacon, priest) of this process? What were the highlights of the conversations from the list of topics in Appendix D?

APPENDIX B

A few facts about The Diocese of the Central Gulf Coast

Number of churches = 63 (This includes one community in the prison in Atmore, AL)

Minimum salary (full-time) \$53,746

Additional costs to a parish for full-time clergy support:

 Pension (18% of salary and housing)

 Annual costs of family medical is \$16,848 (January 2016)

Typical costs to a parish for one full-time clergy person is about \$ 90,000.00 annually.

There are 11 parishes that have more than 1 clergy person on staff.

National statistics state that average Sunday worship is 65 people and most congregations have about 155 members. These figures reflect the reality that we are denomination of small congregations.

65% of the current openings will most likely be for part-time clergy leadership.

Duties that are performed by many clergy

 Prepare and print weekly bulletin

 Prepare and print parish newsletter

 Update parish webpage

 Visit sick and shut in

 Work to incorporate visitors

 Teach or facilitate a Bible study

 Prepare a sermon on a weekly basis

 Serve on a Diocesan-level committee or department

 Clean and prepare worship space (includes cleaning bathrooms)

 Respond to phone calls

Typical clergy persons do two weddings per year and five funerals per year

APPENDIX C

A Resource for Reading The following list of books is a suggestion for reading and reflection.

Diana Butler Bass, *Christianity After Religion*

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship; Life Together*

Nora Gallagher, *Practicing Resurrection*

Denise George, *What Pastors Wish Church Members Knew* (

Stanley Hauerwas, *Resident Aliens*

Alan Jones *Sacrifice and Delight*

C. S. Lewis; *Mere Christianity*

Eugene Peterson, *The Pastor: A Memoir*

Barbara Brown Taylor, *An Altar in the World*

Phyllis Tickle, *The Great Emergence*

A.W. Tozer, *The Pursuit of Christ*

Robert Wicks, *Availability: The Spiritual Joy of Helping Others*

N. T. Wright, *Simply Christian*

Dwight Zscheile, *People of the Way*

APPENDIX D These topics are to be used at the parish level in the process of discernment:

- ❑ Nominee's belief in the person of Jesus Christ as Messiah and Son of God.
- ❑ Nominee's belief in the creedal statements contained in the Book of Common Prayer
- ❑ Nominee should be prepared to discuss the testing of his or her personal call and how he or she is prepared to serve the church. How will the nominee address serving a parish that is different from the congregation of origin? How will the nominee prepare for the intellectual, emotional and financial rigors of responding to a call?
- ❑ How does the nominee state "the Gospel" and how has his or her understanding of the Gospel changed over their life? When and how has the theology of the nominee changed?
- ❑ What skills does the nominee have that are associated with service to God?
- ❑ Nominee should be encouraged in the areas of service, teaching and pastoral visits. *These commitments should be documented for the Bishop and COM.*
- ❑ What event has led to the person beginning this process?
- ❑ Does the nominee have events in his or her life experience that will challenge others? Could this life experience be viewed as negative or self-destructive by a congregation?
- ❑ How has the faith of the nominee affected political views held by the individual?
- ❑ The nominee, the rector, or a parish level discernment committee should discuss the differences between a vocation and a job.
- ❑ How will the nominee serve a congregation, what gifts of leadership are currently offered into the life of a parish?
- ❑ What weaknesses of the nominee have been described and how will these weaknesses present challenges to the individual and to those whom he or she serves?
- ❑ How does the nominee live among problems that can't be fixed? When did you live with uncertainty and ambiguity?
- ❑ How does the nominee distinguish between the call to serve as a lay leader, a deacon or a priest?
- ❑ Does the discernment involve some dissatisfaction with current employment, a relationship, a parenting issue or a recent spiritual event?
- ❑ What financial plan does the nominee have to support his or her vocation as a lay leader, a deacon or a priest? Providing medical insurance for family, a retirement plan, access to education for a spouse or children and the reality of relocation to serve are aspects that an individual must anticipate and discuss at all levels of discernment. The Diocesan minimum salary is typically around \$50,000.00 for a full-time ordained clergy person. If an individual is unwilling to relocate, his or her leadership should be developed at the parish level as a lay leader.

APPENDIX E (Terms used in the process)

Aspirant: This title is no longer used or referenced in documents.

Candidate: Is an individual who has completed a specified amount of study and is pursuing ordination. This is a title that is associated with the Canons of the church.

Canon to the Ordinary: An individual on the diocesan staff who is involved in deployment and discernment.

Commission on Ministry [COM] The diocesan commission directed by canon to advise the Diocesan Bishop on matter of vocational discernment.

Deacon: All candidates seeking ordination as priest serve a minimum of six months as a deacon. Some deacons are not seeking ordination to the priesthood. These deacons are vital in the life of a parish and do not receive any form of compensation for their work as a deacon. They are often referred to as a vocational deacon.

Diocesan Bishop: Is the canonically elected Bishop of a Diocese, who is serving as the leader and spiritual head of the Diocese. This title does not reference an Assisting Bishop, or retired Bishop.

Ember Day: These are days within a calendar year that seminarians are expected to write letters to the Bishop. There are typically four of these days in a calendar year.

Lay Leader: This is the first order of the church and most important ministry in all congregations.

Master of Divinity: A degree awarded to a student who has *completed* an undergraduate degree as well as completed studies at an accredited seminary.

Nominee: Is a person who is involved in the discernment process of the Diocese.

Postulant: This title is associated with a nominee who has entered a seminary and has the support of the Commission on Ministry and the Diocesan Bishop.

Retreat: An overnight at Camp Beckwith between the Commission on Ministry and nominees who have been invited by the Bishop to engage in conversation around their calls to lay leadership, the diaconate and order of priest.

Vocational Discernment Process: This document describes the expectations that are asked of those seeking a more defined role among the laity, diaconate or priesthood.

APPENDIX F CHURCH INTERNSHIP CHECKLIST: (to be completed by the internship clergy)

Name of Nominee:

Name of Internship Church and Rector or Designee:

The nominee completed the 12 week internship: (Yes) ____ (No) ____ Comments:

Spouse and other family joined the nominee: (Yes) ____ (No) ____ Comments:

The nominee completed at least four (4) hours per week in the church's ministry. This includes, but is not limited to time spent in worship and meetings with the clergy: (Yes) ____ (No) ____ Comments:

The nominee attended worship services as agreed: (Yes) ____ (No) ____ Comments:

The nominee attended at least two vestry meetings: (Yes) ____ (No) ____ Comments:

The nominee participated in or was included in the following [mark all that apply]:

- pastoral visits
- teaching a class
- attending meetings
- proclaiming the Gospel [This is dependent on the Bishop giving permission for this.]
- setting the table [This is dependent on the Bishop giving permission for this.]
- officiating at weekday services /Daily Office services
- an outreach ministry of the parish If so, please be specific about the ministry/-ies:
- other If so, please be specific about the ministry/ies:

The nominee met regularly with the internship church clergy (or designee) for reflection and conversation about the experiences of the internship: (Yes)____ (No)____ Comments:

The nominee prepared and presented to a group within the church a sermon, meditation, reflection or teaching: (Yes)____ (No)____ Comments:

APPENDIX G INITIAL FEES for NOMINEES (for the Priesthood and Diaconate)

Initial Fees for Nominees to the Priesthood/Diaconate

As part of the Diocesan Vocational Discernment program, each nominee will fulfill the following requirements:

I. BACKGROUND CHECK:

A. The fee will be divided equally into thirds, with one third paid by the Diocesan office; your sponsoring congregation; and you, respectively (amounts owed by your congregation and you, will be billed directly to your priest).

B. Currently, the total fee ranges from \$200 to \$400, depending on the nominee's work history and residency location.

II. PSYCHOLOGICAL EVALUATION:

A. Complete the required mental health evaluation forms from the Church Pension Fund. These currently include:

1. Life History Questionnaire (LHQ). This extensive document prepares both nominee and clinician for a structured interview. To increase evaluative rigor while assuring nominee confidentiality, the completed LHQ **never** resides with the Diocese. It is for the clinician's eyes **only** and is retained in the clinician's file. However, the clinician may include LHQ disclosures as part of a final evaluative report.

2. Behavioral Screen Questionnaire (BSQ). This document asks behaviorally oriented questions and requires disclosure regarding sexual misconduct, domestic problems, criminal activity and professional malfeasance. The completed BSQ goes **both** to the clinician and to the Diocese. As such, it serves dually as a clinical and risk management tool.

3. Authorization and Release Form. This form clarifies confidentiality boundaries while documenting informed consent by the nominee to undergo sensitive evaluation. The form advises the nominee that the clinical report will go directly to the Bishop. While some may find the forms cumbersome, they attempt to model clarity regarding access to information, the Bishop's discretion in sharing it, and its future use and storage.

B. The evaluation will be scheduled with a PhD Clinical Psychologist through the Diocesan office. If the nominee uses psychotropic medications or reveals a history of psychiatric hospitalization, the nominee will also be required an evaluation by a Psychiatrist. The estimated cost of this interview is \$300.

C. The evaluation will include, at least, the following: The Psychologist will review the LHQ and BSQ and review these questionnaires with the nominee as part of the clinical interview. Additionally, the following tests will be administered to the nominee, evaluated, and then reported on by the Psychologist:

1. MMPI-2
2. The Incomplete Sentence Test
3. The 16 PF Test

D. Cost for this testing will be divided equally into thirds, with one third paid by the Diocesan office; your sponsoring congregation; and you, respectively (Amounts owed by your congregation and you, will be billed directly to your priest). Currently the total fee for the Psychological exam/interview is \$650. A Psychiatric exam/interview may also be required, as stated in item B. above, for an additional fee.

III. MEDICAL EVALUATION:

A. Using the Required Medical Exam form provided by the Church Pension Group, the nominee will complete a medical examination.

B. Cost for this exam and evaluation will be the responsibility of the Nominee. Each nominee is responsible for making an appointment with their practitioner; using their personal insurance plan, if covered by an insurance plan, or self-pay.

[Note: an update of all the above items may be required during the Senior Year (at the same cost as the original checks), in order to satisfy Canonical Requirements.]

It is expected that your sponsoring congregation will assist you with costs where needed/appropriate. You are in this process with the support of your congregation; spiritually, in preparation, and financially. As dictated by the Canons of the Episcopal Church, your congregation should be committed to *“pledge to contribute financially to that preparation”*¹.

¹ Constitution & Canons: 2015 General Convention; Title III, Canon 6, sec 2 and Canon 8, sec 2

APPENDIX H DIOCESAN SUPPORT FOR SEMINARIANS: (group medical and life insurance)

DIOCESAN SUPPORT FOR SEMINARIANS

Three Year Tract

The Diocese of the Central Gulf Coast will currently pay **1/3** of the premium of the **lessor** of the **Diocesan group medical insurance plan** or the **Seminary group medical insurance plan***. In the event a Seminarian opts for the plan with a higher premium, the Seminarian will be responsible for paying that difference, in addition to the **1/3 that would be their portion of the premium**. The Diocese will also provide (at no cost) participation in the **Diocesan group life insurance** plan (\$40,000 on the life of the Seminarian).

Although there is not any other regularly budgeted financial support for Seminarians, special appeals for extraordinary financial needs may be made directly to the Bishop.

It is my expectation that your congregation will assist you with costs where needed/appropriate. You are in this process with the support of your congregation; spiritually, in preparation, and financially. As dictated by the Canons of the Episcopal Church, your congregation should be committed to *“pledge to contribute financially to that preparation”*¹.

* Rates vary from year to year. When planning your budget, you will need to contact Dwight Babcock at the Diocesan office - 850/434-7337 - to review these benefits.

¹ Constitution & Canons: 2012 General Convention; Title III, Canon 8, sec 2(a)

THE CANONS OF THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH, TITLE III regarding ordination
generalconvention.org

THE CANONS OF THE DIOCESE OF THE CENTRAL GULF COAST
diocgc.org

*These documents are readily available on various webpages
and can be located through searches of the web.*