

# A GUIDE FOR DISCERNMENT

## The Ordination to the Vocational Diaconate



114 West Roosevelt Street • Phoenix Arizona 85003-1406  
602.254-0976 or 800.420-1500 [Arizona only]  
Fax: 602.495-6603 • Website: [www.azdiocese.org](http://www.azdiocese.org)

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# The Ordination of a Deacon

## The Examination

*My brother/sister*, 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.

From The Book of Common Prayer  
Page 543

## Servanthood - A Service Ministry

The modern Diaconate should serve to enable and encourage those in varied occupations and life situations to develop special ministries of service; e.g. helping and befriending the powerless who are in need, counseling the troubled, caring for the needs of the elderly and disabled, etc. Such service, enlightened and informed by the Spirit, is a *diakonia* of love and rises above the level of mere social service.

From The Diaconate – A Full and Equal Order  
By James Monroe Barnett

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## A Pastoral Letter from the Commission On Ministry

Dear Friends in Christ:

As part of the Bishop's charge to oversee "the life and work of the Church" (BCP, 521), the Bishop is "to ordain...deacons" (BCP, 517) who are "to serve all people, particularly the poor, weak, the sick, and the lonely" (BCP, 543). The *Commission on Ministry* (COM) exists to serve the Bishop's ministry and, among other duties, to help the Bishop raise up those with a Godly call to ordained ministry. Charged with the Spirit of mission, the COM hopes to encourage and nurture diaconal vocations so that the Church's clergy, full of the Holy Spirit, can "empower the saints for the work of ministry." (Ephesians 4:12)

Listening to God's call and the discernment of a diaconal vocation always takes place within the context of community. Deacons are called as "one who serves" within Christian congregations and therefore the community must recognize not only an authentic voice that resonates with a Godly call, but also a person who has the possibility of having a gift for leading others into service as defined in "The Baptismal Covenant." This process always involves some vulnerability for the Aspirants (the one discerning the call) because it involves sharing the deepest things in their lives — who they are at the core of their being, and who they believe God is calling them to be. Moreover, the possibility of being judged by others on these levels is the source of great anxiety for some. With this in mind, the COM hopes to work with a compassionate heart and a tenderly steady hand to help guide Aspirants through a discernment process so that, regardless of outcome, one will feel held in love, and affirmed as a brother or sister in Christ who is being called into some form of deeper service in the Lord's name.

It is the purpose of this document to lay out the discernment process for ordination to the Diaconate so that Aspirants, clergy, their congregations, the COM, the Standing Committee, and Bishop can have a clear understanding of the way forward. Clarity and transparency in the process sets everyone free to listen to the mystery of God and to each other in a healthy way.

The COM is aware of the weighty nature of this undertaking and we enter into it with humility of heart, knowing that "it is by God's mercy that we are engaged in this ministry." (II Corinthians 4:1) We encourage feedback from all in the process so that we may ever improve upon the art of creating structures that catch the wind of the Spirit. For "we have this treasure in earthen vessels, so that it may be made clear that this extraordinary power belongs to God and does not come from us." (II Corinthians 4:7)

May God Bless You,

*The Commission On Ministry*

September 2005

## A Note on Process and Terms

The Bishop and the *Commission on Ministry* (COM) have outlined the following steps in the hope of bringing clarity, transparency, and encouragement to those involved in the discernment process. The steps outline the process from beginning to end for a lay Episcopalian who feels called to a vocation as a deacon. Since the Bishop is the one who ordains some parts of the process may be modified at the bishop's discretion.

The steps in the ordination process have their own ecclesiastical terminology.

1. **NOMINATION:** A confirmed adult communicant in good standing is nominated for ordination to the Diaconate by the person's congregation or other community of faith.
2. **POSTULANCY:** Postulancy is the time between nomination and candidacy, and includes a process of exploration and decision on the Postulant's call to the Diaconate.
3. **CANDIDACY:** A time, no less than one year in length, of formation in preparation for ordination to Diaconate, established by a formal commitment by the Candidate, the Bishop, the Commission, and the congregation or other community of faith.

The period of Postulancy and Candidacy must be at least 18 months but may vary in accordance to an individual's formation needs.

# **A Theological Statement on Ordained Ministry and Discernment For The Diocese of Arizona**

## **Introduction**

The whole Church is responsible for raising up ordained leaders of the highest quality with the particular gifts necessary for leading faith communities into the future. Both the individual and the community are simultaneously participating in a process of discernment and affirmation. To that end, the Bishop and other representatives of the Church strive to exercise prayerful spiritual discernment and pastoral sensitivity with those who believe they might be called to ordained ministry.

Any person considering applying for ordination and any clergy person participating in an applicant's discernment should be aware of the following national canon.

*No person shall be denied access to the discernment process for any ministry, lay or ordained, in this Church because of race, color, ethnic origin, national origin, sex, marital status, sexual orientation, disabilities or age, except as otherwise provided by these canons. No right to licensing, ordination or election is hereby established. Title III, Canon 1, Section 2.*

## **Theology of Ministry**

Through Holy Baptism the people of God are filled with the Holy Spirit and given the opportunity to share in the ministry of Jesus Christ. Through Baptism, we are called to servant ministry and to give our lives in service to others. In Baptism, we are joined to others who share this vocation, and as members of the Body of Christ, we are servants to one another and to the world. Therefore, everyone baptized into the body of Christ is a minister of the Gospel.

The ordained deacon is “called to the ministry of service.....to serve the Lord, the church and the world.....the deacon is thrust into a position of leadership.....as a leader who serves” (from the Servant Church by John E. Booty). The vocation of the deacon is not advancement for those who have done “every other” lay ministry. The catechism states:

*The ministry of a deacon is to represent Christ and his Church, particularly as a servant of those in need; and to assist bishops and priests in the proclamation of the Gospel and the administration of the sacraments. (BCP, p. 856)*

During the examination for the ordination of a deacon, the bishop says:

*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. (BCP, p. 543)*

While all baptized members of the Church are ministers who care, teach, and support one another, deacons are especially called to proclaim the Gospel, and to be ready to help and serve those in need. Therefore, the process of discernment is intended to facilitate identifying those whom God is calling to this particular ministry.

Scripturally, our model for the deacon is rooted in texts such as these:

*Shared leadership* – Numbers 11:16-17, 24-45a. Deacons work as part of a leadership team with the bishop, priests, other deacons and lay leaders.

*Call of Jeremiah* – Jeremiah 1:4-10. It is God who works and speaks through the one whom God calls.

*The Great Commission of Service* – Act 6:1-6. Deacons continue the tradition of Stephen and six others to “wait at tables” as an outward sign of service. The same “*service* Christ put on his ministry and of *servant* on those who minister. He is the embodiment of the first principle of this ministry: *sent to serve.*” (from The Diaconate by James Barnett)

*Variety of Gifts* – Ephesians 4:1-7, 11-13. The Diaconate is a specific ministry, part of the whole body, but no higher or lower than any other.

*The Bridge Builder* – Matthew 25:31-46. The role of the deacon is to bridge the world to the church and the church to the world. To be the radical voice of those living on the margins who are thirsty, who are strangers, who are naked, who are sick and who are imprisoned. To be *transforming agents in the world!*

## **On Discernment**

The discernment process is multifaceted. First, it includes an individual’s assessment of his/her own gifts and potential call. But other individuals who know the person will participate in the discernment process by providing a safe, intimate environment in which one’s gifts, vulnerabilities, suitability and readiness for ordained ministry can be discussed openly. The community, both at the parish level and at the diocesan level, assists the individual by discerning and evaluating his/her gifts and call. The community should be proactive in identifying those they believe might be called to ordained ministry. As the process moves forward, the community’s role becomes increasingly evaluative.

Scripturally, our model for discernment is shaped by texts such as these:

*Moses’ Call* – Exodus 4:10-17. Understanding a call to leadership begins with an honest self-discernment of gifts, vulnerabilities and prayer with God.

*Samuel’s Call* – Samuel 3:1 - 4:1a. Leaders assist in discerning God’s call.

*Elizabeth and Mary* – Luke 1:39-45. Others, including friends and family also assist in affirming one’s call.

*Matthias’ Call* – Acts 1:21-26. The Community establishes criteria for selection and is guided by prayer and the Holy Spirit.

## **Step 1 - If You Feel Called, Be in Touch with Your Priest/Rector**

If you feel that God may be calling you to a diaconal vocation, or if you have been encouraged by the leadership of your parish, the first step is to be in touch with a priest where you can share your story. It is the priest's job to listen for the Spirit and to advise the person who is exploring the idea of a vocation to the diaconate. If the priest believes that there is the possibility of an authentic call, and that the time is right to explore that call, the priest should move the Aspirant to Step 2 by setting up a parish discernment committee.

If the Aspirant has not already done so, it is recommended that the Aspirant seek a qualified spiritual director. If you need some guidance in finding a spiritual director, please contact:

- The Venerable Veronica Ritson at *Trinity Cathedral* (602.254-7126 x312)  
For those living in the greater Phoenix metropolitan area and Northern Arizona
- Jeanette Renouf at *St. Philip's In the Hills* (520.299-6421)  
For those living south of Phoenix, Tucson and Southern Arizona

The priest provides support and feedback and also discerns for him/herself whether the person is called. In accepting this responsibility, the rector may discern that the individual is not called to diaconate. Pastoral guidance and possible re-direction in the discernment process may occur at this point. As difficult as it is to say, and hear, that one is not called to the diaconate, it is almost always easier to have this conversation earlier rather than later.

It is important to note that according to the Canons of the Episcopal Church, in order for a person to enter the ordination process, he or she must be a communicant in good standing in a parish or affiliate ministry of the Diocese of Arizona for at least one year before beginning the ordination process. Any Aspirant who has been refused entry into the ordination process in other dioceses will not be eligible until receipt of a letter from the Bishop of the Diocese refusing admission declaring the cause of refusal.

## **Step 2 – Discernment at the Parish Level**

Either before or after the Holy Orders Information Day, the priest should appoint a Parish Discernment Committee of three to four mature Christians to discuss the call with the Aspirant.

The primary tasks of the Parish Discernment Committee are to help discern God's call, to refine the individual's ability to articulate the reason he/she believes he/she is called to the diaconate, and to be a support for the Aspirant whether or not the ordination process continues. It is important to remember that this committee does not function as a gatekeeper to pass final judgment on the Aspirant's sense of call, nor is it an advocacy group whose mission is to get the Aspirant ordained.

The Parish Discernment Committee should meet at minimum three or four times. The following "Selected Questions for Rectors and Parish Discernment Committees" has been provided to give some guidance. However, it should be noted that the touchstone for discernment should be the diaconal examination found inside the front cover of this booklet or in the Book of Common Prayer on page 543. If the Aspirant is to make official application for Postulancy with the Bishop, he or she will have to comment on how the diaconal examination resonates with the spirit of his or her sense of calling.

At the conclusion of its discernment the Parish Discernment Committee will make a recommendation to the Rector about the individual's call to diaconal ministry. The report is advisory only. The authority to

forward an Aspirant into the ordination process rests fully with the Rector. If the Aspirant submits a Nomination application to the Bishop, a copy of the recommendation of the Parish Discernment Committee for (#2 page 2) will accompany the Vestry “affirmation” form (#2 page 1).

## **Selected Questions for Rectors and Parish Discernment Committees**

**(Not all questions must be answered.)**

1. It is recommended that the Aspirant, Rector, and Parish Discernment Committee use the diaconal examination as the baseline, foundation, and touchstone for discernment. All parties should be able to answer the question, how does this charge resonate with the Aspirant's sense of call?
2. Do you know the Aspirant well enough to make a decision or do you need more time? Are you well enough acquainted with the Aspirant's experience in the Episcopal Church? Have you observed the person in a variety of situations?
3. Does the Aspirant have a sense of the Holy present in his/her life? How does he/she listen and attend to the presence of God? What do you know about the person's life of prayer? What are the person's spiritual resources?
4. How do you feel about the Aspirant? What emotional responses do you have when you meet and talk with this person?
5. How is the Aspirant viewed by others in the congregation?
6. Why is the Aspirant seeking ordination?
7. How does the Aspirant understand ministry; the differences between the functions between the laity, deacons, priests, and bishops?
8. Does the Aspirant have an open, honest, giving and receiving way with other people? Does he/she listen? Take initiative?
9. Does the Aspirant have a sense of clear boundaries? Is he/she able to talk about situations in which he/she had to decide: "What is my business?" and "What is not my business?"
10. Is the Aspirant eager to learn and excited about new ideas? Is he/she able to reflect, ponder, and be challenged?
11. Does the Aspirant have a balance of interests in his/her life, or is there a single focus on the church?
12. When the Aspirant has been in trouble, how did he/she seek help?
13. How does the Aspirant relate to persons in authority? How does this person relate to conflict?
14. Does the Aspirant take time to exercise, eat, and rest appropriately?
15. Does the Aspirant have a sense of the world beyond his/her particular location? Is there a sense of connectedness with the wider community, the diocese and the world?
16. Is the Aspirant aware of the financial demands of a seminary or "formation" education?
17. Is the congregation prepared to make the Financial Pledge required by canon?
18. Are you aware of anything that would significantly enhance or impede the Aspirant in his/her ministry?

[See Appendix for more detail of "Parish Discernment" processes]

### **Step 3 - Attend Holy Orders Information Day**

In order to officially move forward into the ordination process, an Aspirant must attend the *Holy Orders Information Day*, preferably with his or her priest. The purpose of this day is to orient Aspirants and their clergy to the ordination process and to help them discern if this might be their calling. The hope is to clarify the differences between lay, diaconal, and priestly ministry, and to explore the nature of discernment in the ordination process.

The *Holy Orders Information Day* is held each fall in September. Watch for details from the Diocesan Office.

### **Step 4 – Discernment, Nomination, Application of General Information**

If the sponsoring priest and the Aspirant feel that there is sufficient ground to continue in the discernment process, and that Nomination is viable:

- The Aspirant completes the “Declaration of Intent” (form #1) and submits it to COM *immediately* following the “Holy Orders Information Day.”
- The Nomination is made, through the use of the “Nomination of Aspirant” (form #2), which includes the “Parish Discernment Committee” report, a pledge of financial support and signed by two-thirds of the Vestry or comparable body, and by the sponsoring priest.
- The Aspirant accepts the Nomination by signing the bottom of the “Nomination of Aspirant” (form #2).

NOTE: Form 2, along with forms 3 and 4 which are mentioned in the next step, must be completed and submitted by the deadlines established by COM.

### **Step 5 – Health Related Process**

The following actions must occur:

- The Nominee should send a copy of the “Waiver of Confidentiality and Permission to Share Information” form (#3). The Nominee should keep two copies, one for the medical doctor and one for the psychologist.
- The Nominee must have a medical exam by his or her physician. The doctor must complete the Medical Examination Form in the back of the book. A summary of the results are to be sent to the Bishop. The Nominee must bring a “Waiver of Confidentiality and Permission to Share Information” form (#3) to the doctor.
- A psychological exam must be completed by a professional named by the Diocese. The fee for the examination should be paid by the Nominee to the Diocese; when possible, it is advisable for parishes to help defray the cost. It is important to note that the Diocese is the client and the Diocese receives the written feedback. The Nominee must bring a “Waiver of Confidentiality and Permission to Share Information” (Form 3) to the interview with the psychologist.

- The Nominee must complete the “HIPAA Compliant Authorization for Release Medical, Psychological/Psychiatric Records” (Form 4) and send it to the Bishop.
- A background check will be completed for the Nominee; this is generated through the Diocesan Office. There is a fee, of \$700.00, and the monies should be paid to the Episcopal Diocese of Arizona. Again, the supporting parish is encouraged to help to defray this cost, if possible.

## **Step 6 – Application of Detail Information**

The Nominee continues the application process with the “Application for Postulancy/Detailed Information” with form #5. This form includes the following information in accordance to the Canons plus additional information as requested by the *Commission on Ministry*:

- 1) Full Name and date of birth
- 2) Length of time, resident in the Diocese
- 3) Evidence of Baptism and Confirmation
- 4) Whether an application has been made previously for Postulancy or the person has been nominated in any other Diocese.
- 5) A description of the process of discernment by which the Nominee has been identified for ordination to the Diaconate.
- 6) The level of education attained and, if any, the degrees earned, and areas of specialization, together with copies of official transcripts.

## **Step 7 – Diaconal Guides**

Upon completion of Step 4, each Nominee will be contacted by the Archdeacon or an assigned Deacon to help the Nominee through the continued application and interview processes.

## **Step 8 – Nominee Meets the COM**

The COM will notify the Nominee of the day and time of the interview. The COM will review the written application prior to meeting with the Nominee.

At the end of the day of interviews, the Bishop will join the COM to continue the process of communal discernment and recommend whether or not the Nominee is to continue in the diaconal process as a Postulant. The final decision is also based upon the results of the background check and the psychological examination which only the Bishop reviews. The result is followed up by an official letter from the COM about the decision.

If the Nominee is named a Postulant, his or her name and the date of admission are recorded in the Diocesan Register. The Bishop then informs the Postulant, the Postulant’s rector (or faith community) exercising oversight, the COM, and the Standing Committee.

If the Nominee is *not* named a Postulant, the Archdeacon or COM representative will be in touch with the Nominee and the clergy (or faith community) exercising oversight. NOTE: There is a two (2) year waiting period before applying again.

## **Step 9 – Postulancy: Transforming One’s Voice**

If the COM recommends, with the Bishop’s approval, that the Nominee be named a Postulant, the Postulant will participate in a Postulancy program entitled *Transforming One’s Voice*. The program’s description is:

The definition of one’s ministry is important. As a continuance of discernment yet under the umbrella of Postulancy, four (4) intensive months is spent by the Postulant to refine and strengthen their “voice” for presenting and defining their ministry to the world and to the church. The Postulant is assigned to a Deacon mentor. During the fourth month the Postulant presents their ministry to Deacon and *Commission on Ministry* representatives. Following the presentations these representatives make an official recommendation to the Bishop concerning the Postulant’s progression to Candidacy.

From The Deacon Formation Academy – Curriculum Definitions  
by the Office of the Archdeacon

## **Step 10 – Candidacy**

At the completion of *Transforming One’s Voice*, the COM representative(s) and Deacon mentor(s) make the recommendation to the Bishop concerning the Postulant’s progression to Candidacy. The recommendation is based upon the results of the ministry presentation. The Bishop, along with the Standing Committee, must also obtain in writing:

- An application from the Postulant requesting Candidacy with Form #6.
- A letter of financial and preparation support from the sponsoring congregation (or other faith community) signed and dated by two-thirds of the Vestry and the member of Clergy exercising oversight with Form #7.
- A report outlining the review results of the ministry presentation.

Before admittance to Candidacy the Postulant will meet with the Standing Committee. If the Bishop admits the Postulant as a Candidate, the Bishop records the Candidate's name and date of admission in the Diocesan Register. The Bishop then informs the Candidate, the member of Clergy exercising oversight of the congregation (or other faith community), the COM, and the Standing Committee.

The Candidate then enters the Deacon Formation Academy. This 16-month curriculum is in compliance with the Canon’s areas of study, and there is a Formation Fee of \$1,500.00

## **Step 11 – Ordination**

The Standing Committee of the Diocese must certify that all canonical requirements have been met and make a recommendation. To do so the Standing Committee must obtain:

- The application for ordination with Form #8
- Accompanying letter of support from the congregation or other faith community with Form #9.
- A certificate from the Bishop giving dates of admission to Postulancy and Candidacy.
- A letter from the COM giving a recommendation regarding ordination.

The Standing Committee, with majority of members consenting, must certify that all canonical requirements have been met and there is no sufficient objection on medical, psychological, moral, doctrinal or spiritual grounds. The Standing Committee will then recommend ordination using the form specified in canons. This testimonial is presented to Bishop, and there being no sufficient objection on medical, psychological, moral, doctrinal or spiritual grounds, the Bishop may ordain the Candidate a Deacon.

## **Step 12 – Post-Ordination**

During a two year period following ordination there is required ongoing formation, along with being mentored for one year.

# Appendix A

## Suggestions for Discernment Support Committees<sup>1</sup>

*How does a “discernment support” group function? Following are some guidelines. The group is also encouraged to prayerfully engage the Spirit in the course of meetings and their content.*

- Never forget that you are first and foremost gathered in prayer.
- Allow for silence between questions, answers and other sharing.
- Remember that all that is shared within the group remains within the group alone.

### **Prior to each meeting**

Set aside time to prepare for the meeting  
Strive diligently to make sure all can attend  
Set aside 2 to 3 hours for each meeting  
Bring your calendars to each meeting for scheduling the next meeting

### **Prayerfully prepare for each meeting (specific suggestions for the first meeting will be given below)**

All should review the assigned materials pertinent to each meeting  
The aspirant should be prepared at each meeting to present his/her spiritual journey as it is at that specific time  
Group members should prayerfully reflect upon questions, concerns and observations that may be important for the aspirant and the group to jointly consider.

### **At the meeting**

The chair/convener should arrive early enough to insure that the room is arranged as necessary (a single circle of comfortable chairs is preferred)  
When all have arrived, a member of the group should lead the group in prayer leaving some silent time (3-5 minutes) for all to settle into the prayerful discerning space. This “liturgist” responsibility should be shared among the group and the aspirant with the designation of the responsibility noted in advance (allowing preparation) either by a rota or agreement in a previous meeting.  
A “scribe” should be assigned to take notes at each meeting so as to create a record of  
The aspirant’s responses to the suggested questions with examples which will aid in the preparation of the written report.

Unless there is other business, the aspirant should present his/her spiritual journey including spiritual issues, questions, observations, etc. which have arisen since the last meeting

Group raises questions  
Which help focus and clarify  
Which do not give advice  
Which may be imaginative or intuitive  
What are not confrontational

---

<sup>1</sup> Developed by Grace-St. Paul’s Episcopal Church, Tucson, AZ

Group may want to read a book together, view relevant films or portions of films, or television programs. Members should feel free to bring up issues related in the media or found in other sources. (See bibliography included with these materials.)

The group dynamic is attended to  
A comfortable, prayerful pace is maintained  
Space is given for all to speak  
Comments about group dynamic may be made

**Approximately 15 minutes before closing**

Group and aspirant should engage in reflection upon the meeting – has it been helpful? Are there questions, issues or actions that need to be undertaken before the next meeting?

Schedule the next meeting (usually about one month apart unless there is a diocesan deadline to be met or to de-brief a scheduled diocesan meeting)

**Closing prayer**

\* \* \* \* \*

**The First Meetings**

**All that is listed above applies with the following additions**

Each member introduces him/herself by giving a short spiritual autobiography framed within the question of each person’s own discernment. This may include how they come to be at this particular parish at this time and how they think they may have been called to be a member of this particular group. This usually takes at least an hour.

The aspirant takes at least an hour to present his/her spiritual autobiography in detail starting in childhood, particularly as it leads to the perceived call to ordained ministry. If this is not finished at the first meeting, it should be continued in second meeting. All subsequent meetings will build upon this journey story.

After the aspirant concludes his/her spiritual autobiography (usually during the second meeting), the group should read together the baptismal covenant and the rites of ordination of deacons, priests, and bishops. Discussion and reflection upon them and in relation to the aspirant’s journey should be a major component of this and the next several meetings.

## Some Items on Which the Aspirant and Discernment Group Together Will Want to Ponder and Pray

1. Can this person listen empathetically?
2. Has this person found a place in the life of the community?
3. How self-secure does this person seem?
4. Does s/he connect well with others in the parish?
5. Is the aspirant flexible? Is the aspirant compassionate?
6. Is this person Christ centered?
7. How has s/he handled her/his life story?
8. Where does s/he see their ministry going?
9. What seems diaconal/presbyterial about his or her current ministry?
10. Does the aspirant see himself or herself as a “servant” or as “pastor”?
11. Does his/her need for love or desire for approval exercise an undue influence in this person’s life?
12. Is there a passion for justice and peace issues? What is being done by this person to bring these issues to the attention of the parish and community?
13. How well does the aspirant perceive the dynamics of this parish?
14. Is s/he aware that formation will be a transformative experience? How does s/he respond to that likelihood?
15. Does s/he dream about a particular ministry?
16. Does s/he articulate and understand how a spouse or partner might be affected by formation/ordination? How family/children might be affected?
17. Does the aspirant recognize his/her gifts?
18. Does s/he recognize gifts in others?
19. Does s/he have the capacity to encourage others?
20. How does the aspirant relate to authority? Can s/he work under authority?
21. Is s/he able to take risks?

23. Is s/he able to be both compassionate and challenging?

24. Are you excited about this aspirant?

**As members of a discerning community, please remember:**

**What you hear** includes not only what is said and how it is said, but also what is not said in response to specific questions or situations.

**What you see** is body language and another non-verbal communication.

**What you feel** is that complex mosaic of emotional and spiritual reactions you will experience during your discernment meetings and in reflection afterwards.

## Discernment Tools – Bibliography

### **COM Standard Reference On Discernment**

Farnham, Suzanne G., *et al.* *Listening Hearts: Discerning Call in Community* (Morehouse, rev. ed., 1999) ISBN: 0819215635

Palmer, Parker. *Let Your Life Speak*. (Jossey-Bass, 1999). ISBN: 0787947350

### **Discernment**

Edwards, Lloyd. *Discerning Your Spiritual Gifts* (Cowley, 1988). ISBN 0936384654.

Farnham, Suzanne G., *et al.* *Grounded in God: Listening Hearts Discernment for Group Deliberations*. (Morehouse, 1996). ISBN 0819216739.

Hardy, Lee. *Fabric of this World: Inquiries into Calling, Career Choice, and the Design of Human Work*. (Eerdmans, 1990). ISBN 08002802982.

### **Priesthood of the Baptized**

Countryman, L. William. *Living on the Border of the Holy: Renewing the Priesthood of All* (Morehouse, 1999). ISBN 0819217735.

Diehl, William. *The Monday Connection: On Being an Authentic Christian in a Weekday World* (Harper, 1993). ISBN 0060618604.

Dozier, Verna. *The Dream of God: A Call to Return* (Cowley, 1991). ISBN 1561010464.

Schuurman, Douglas J. *Vocation: Discerning Our Callings in Life*. (Wm. B. Eerdmans). ISBN: 0802801374

Westerhoff, Caroline. *Calling: A Song for the Baptized*. (Church Publishing, 2005.) ISBN. 1596280093.

## **Vocational Priesthood**

Brown, Rosalind and Cocksworth, Christopher.  
*On Being a Priest Today.*  
(Cowley, 2004). ISBN: 1853114545

Snow, John. *The Impossible Vocation: Ministry  
in the Mean Time* (Cowley, 1988).  
ISBN 0936384581.

## **Vocational Diaconate**

Barnett, James M. *The Diaconate: A Full and  
Equal Order.* (Trinity, 1995.) ISBN  
1563380935.

Booty, John. *Servant Church: Diaconal  
Ministry and the Episcopal Church*  
(Morehouse, 1982). ISBN 0819213160.

Brown, Rosalind. *Being a Deacon Today: Exploring a  
Distinctive Ministry in the Church and in the World.*  
(Morehouse, 2005,) ISBN 0819222011

Platter, Ormonde. *Many Servants: An  
Introduction to Deacons.* (Cowley, rev.  
ed., 2004). ISBN 156101270X.

## **General Studies**

### ***New Church's Teaching Series. (Cowley Publications):***

- Vol. 1 - Griffiss, James. *Anglican Vision*
- Vol. 2 - Ferlo, Roger. *Opening the Bible*
- Vol. 3 - Johnston, Michael. *Engaging the Word*
- Vol. 4 - Guenther, Margaret. *Practice of Prayer*
- Vol. 5 - Thompsett, Frederica Harris. *Living with History*
- Vol. 6 - Lyman, Rebecca. *Early Christian Traditions*
- Vol. 7 - Lee, Jeffrey. *Opening the Prayer Book*
- Vol. 8 - McIntosh, Mark. *Mysteries of Faith*
- Vol. 9 - Holmgren, Stephen. *Ethics After Easter*
- Vol. 10 - Lewis, Harold. *Christian Social Witness*
- Vol. 11 - Presler, Titus. *Horizons of Mission*
- Vol. 12 - Weil, Louis. *Theology of Worship*

# The Deacon Formation Academy

The Academy facilitates a structured learning mechanism for a cohort of Episcopal laity in preparation to become Vocational Deacons.

- Students are selected through a process, which is defined by the COM and Church Canons, and enters as a Postulant. Postulancy is a stage of “Transforming One’s Voice” (DFA005) which refines their definition of their ministry and servant leadership. Then the next stage is Candidacy.
- The lecture structure is held one weekend a month; that is all day Saturday and half-day on Sunday. The faculty consists of laity and clergy within the Episcopal Church and other ecumenical denominations.
- The budget structure for the Academy is a line item under the Diocesan Budget as “Arizona Formation Project.” It is funded by appropriations from the Diocese and a \$1,500.00 “formation fee” from the students. Expenses include books, study materials, retreats, etc.

The contents of the curriculum prepare the Candidate(s) for basic competence in:

- Holy Scriptures
- Theology, Church History/Tradition
- Understanding the Diaconate
- Human Awareness/Understanding (Leadership and Care of Self/Others)
- Spiritual Development/Discipline (Prayer Life)
- Practical Training/Experience (Liturgy)

Subject	Description	Hours	When
Postulancy:			
DFA005	<i>Transforming One’s Voice</i> and Servant Leadership	20+	Mar-Jun
Candidacy:			
DFA100	Orientation: Formation Community Building/Academic Curriculum Preparation	Retreat	Sep
DFA110	Spirituality/Prayer	6	Oct
DFA120	The Book of Common Prayer	6	Nov
DFA130	Scripture	6	Dec
DFA140a	Church History – General	6	Jan
DFA140b	Church History – Anglican/Episcopal	6	Feb
DFA150a	Church Theology: Theory	6	Mar
DFA150b	Church Theology: In Living	6	Apr
DFA160	The Rector Connection and Diaconate	6	May
DFA170	Care of Self & Others with “Companions on the Way”	Retreat	Jun
DFA200	Service in Action	6 weeks	Jul/Aug
DFA210a	Church Ethics: Theory	6	Sep
DFA210b	Church Ethics: The Issues	6	Oct
DFA220	Preaching	6	Nov
DFA910	<i>Inquiring Minds</i> : Readings from “Take & Read” and Written Reflections	Ongoing	
DFA920	<i>Listen to the World</i> : Scripture, “Always We Begin Again”, Journaling	Ongoing	
DFA930	<i>Liturgy In Action</i> : Participation in Sunday Eucharist at Trinity Cathedral	Ongoing	
DFA940	The TAW Community Rule of MP, EP and <i>Prep/Serve the Feast</i>		
	<i>Ember Day</i> Letter(s) to the Bishop		
	Spiritual Direction	Ongoing	
	The Bishop & Standing Committee Connections/Meetings		
	Sexual Misconduct Prevention Training		
	Anti-Racism Training		Dec
	Formation Essay Examination		
	Reflecting Upon Ordination	Quiet Day	Jan/Feb
	Ordination in the <i>Season of Epiphany</i>		Jan/Feb