



The Anglican Diocese of Central Newfoundland

Discernment Processes for Holy Orders

The discovery of a Vocation may be manifested in different ways and at different times in life.

God who calls, is fully aware of the best timing for each of us, and patiently guides and accompanies every one to that season. There are common elements of the voices of discernment which can and must be truthfully, bravely and joyfully examined.

The Rt. Revd. John Watton
March 2017

Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send,
and who will go for us?" And I said, "Here am I; send me!"
Isaiah 6:8

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Introduction

If you are reading this guide, chances are you have arrived at a point in your life where you can relate to St. Augustine's prayer in his ***Confessions***: "Thou hast made us for thyself, and our heart is restless until it finds its rest in thee."

Let me welcome you to this part of your journey with open arms, and thank you for taking the step of faith of trusting in the ministry of discernment that will flow from the Church.

From the earliest times of human consciousness, communities had a sense of a sacred reality which transcends this world. This reality of "something above us" includes a sense of a God who has a desire to communicate with humanity. This interaction manifests itself in a gift like way in the arenas of our lives. Ever since the infancy of humanity, people discovered that within their groups were individuals who served as guides of Holy Revelation and Wisdom who seemed able to connect this gift to the life of the local community. In time, a common feature of community, although manifested differently in every culture, was a recognition and "setting aside" of people who would serve in this capacity.

Our Holy Scriptures and subsequent historical narratives relate a community and institutional story of the development of different ministries and understandings within the Christian Church. All three orders are considered "consecrated," "ordained" or "made" according to our ordination liturgies.

Our understanding of New Testament teaching is that three distinct orders of ordained ministries have been known:

1. **Bishops** - The order of Bishops who carry on the apostolic work of leading, supervising, and uniting the Church.
2. **Presbyters, or Priests** - The order of ordained elders, or presbyters, now generally known as Priests. In our Book of Alternative Services (BAS p. 631), you will find a concise description of how priests are to work together with the Bishops, take part in the governance of the Church, the carrying out of its missionary and pastoral work, and in the preaching of the Word of God and administering of Holy Sacraments.

3. **Deacons** - The order of Deacons who, in assisting bishops and priests in all of this work, have a special responsibility to minister in Christ's name to the poor, the sick, the suffering and the helpless.

This particular guide is to provide guidelines about how we "set people aside for ministry." It is a fairly detailed resource for you to study and its intent is to speak to Lay Ministry, Transitional and Vocational Diaconate, and the priesthood. We begin by reviewing our understanding of the nature of vocation in the life of the Church. A little further in this document you will see the basic process we use in our diocese. Please know however, that the intent of the process is to guide people...not to provide legislation or a set of rules. In every case, discernment and getting people for ministry is an honest, shared, and loving journey which is shared by the community of faith, and your Bishop.

An Understanding of Vocation in the life of the Church

The Fourfold Ministry as it speaks to the Diocese of Central Newfoundland.

We have mentioned above that three distinct orders of ordained ministries have been known, but in our Diocese, because of the proven faithful ministries of our lay people, have a clear understanding of a fourfold ministry.

A Biblical Understanding

When we speak of Holy orders we often do so from our traditional understanding that they are a form of hierarchy. A close look at the New Testament reveals the development of different ministry functions, but really gives no place for hierarchy. As we build on a scriptural foundation a strong argument can be made that there are four Holy Orders, each with a function, designation and responsibility that is discerned within the Body of Christ, and for the Body of Christ.

The New Testament speaks of the Great Commission, in which all Christians participate by virtue of their baptism. This ministry of the baptized is the central ministry of the Church, with the function of ordained ministry centered around enabling and equipping the baptized to fulfil their ministry.

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In the Central Diocese we celebrate and value the ministry of the baptized as a profound, powerful and beautiful thing. It has taken place through generations of concrete expressions of faith wherever our people live. It continues today. There would be no Churchno Mission, without the Ministry of the Laity. Our laity construct the buildings, support the function and policies of Anglicanism; share in worship and outreach, and pay the bills.

Our Laity are involved in enabling and sharing ministries, and by nature of the “Ministry of Baptism and Confirmation”, are called and commissioned to be ambassadors of faith in and through their realities of being rich, poor, weak or strong, as Christian friends, parents, godparents, relatives, community workers, volunteers, employees, employers..... with integrity.

All of this teaches us that discernment for ministry is not just about a path to ordination, but to discovering our Vocation. All Christians are called to be in a constant process of discerning God’s will by asking: “What is it that our Lord would have us do with the gifts and talents given us? - How do we work together to please the Heart of God?”

For some that may be Holy Orders. Others may need to have a lay ministry defined, so they can claim it, and be prepared to joyfully serve in it. The discernment process is intended to help each one who is exploring discover and take ownership of a meaningful vocation in Christ.

There are many different ministries in the Church – each being of equal significance.

In our Diocese we understand Vocation to be:

That way of life God calls us to, and affirms us in.

In our Diocese we understand discernment to be:

The discovery of a calling that can be clearly identified, and affirmed by the Body of Christ.

In our Diocese we understand equipping the saints to be:

That which we do to ensure those who make a commitment to any ministry, receive the discernment affirmation, education, resources and ministry to which they are called.

Discernment Process for Holy Orders in our Diocese

As the Church lives its witness today, processes of discernment, affirmation and training are becoming increasingly complex. Seminaries are no longer filled with young, single men; no longer is ordination reserved for any one class, race, gender or age. As a Diocese we will work with people who are questioning, searching and looking for training.

Consider Ephesians 4: 11 – 13:

11 The gifts he gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, 12 to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, 13 until all of us come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ. (NRSV)

Vocational approaches are wonderfully diverse and exciting today. People come to the bishop at different ages, with different life experiences, theologies, education and resources. We trust that God is in the midst of all processes.

It is important to note a few things here.

First, we anticipate discernment processes will take different and yet unknown paths and are joyfully prepared to walk them with you.

Second, the change and diversity we live in, highlights the importance of careful discernment.

Thirdly, in terms of ministry in the Church, true discernment is never a self-directed individual choice. It is not uncommon for people of different ages and life experiences to make personal choices concerning ordination, and define boundaries and expectations in what they are prepared to do.

It is not incredibly unusual to discover that some have begun theological education with the intent of ordination before seeking counsel from local clergy or the diocesan bishop. When this has happened it reveals that vocational discernment processes have not been followed. Ordained ministry should never primarily be seen as an employment opportunity, nor should anyone think they have “earned the position.”

Here is a simple way of looking at the process:

1. An interior search or restlessness. “What am I supposed to be doing?” “How can I find out what I am supposed to be doing?”
2. Often when others fellowship with you they may sense that you are searching. Sometimes it is the affirming voices of your life’s companions that may lead you to thinking about a vocation.
3. What begins as an interior search, leads to a process that honors the place of God's will in our lives and for the Church. The Community of Faith (your Church), working with and under the authority of the Bishop, is an integral part of this process, providing the assessment, guidance and affirmation of the revealed and affirmed truth of our vocation.

The discovery of a Vocation may be manifested in different ways and at different times in life. God who calls, is fully aware of the best timing for each of us, and patiently guides and accompanies everyone to that season. There are common elements of the voices of discernment which can and must be truthfully, bravely and joyfully examined.

The Benefits of a Discernment Process

Our Diocesan discernment processes will help you explore and challenge some common notions such as:

- Ordination is where the "real" work of ministry happens.
- That if one is called to baptismal ministry it is somehow inferior to ordained ministry, and not a real vocation.

In addition, by helping you grow in understanding ,a discernment process will help you

- Discover if you honestly see ministry as a vocation or “a job”

- Clarify the needs and expectations of the Church local, and in our larger context.
- Understand what it really means to be a lay minister, deacon, priest or bishop
- Lead you on a journey of self-discovery that will connect you to experiences of vulnerability, compassion and trust, through the fellowship of those with whom you hope to share ministry with in the future. It is a loving gift from the Spirit to you.

This guide is for use by:

- Anyone wishing to learn what is meant by Vocation.
- All who are discerning a personal call to lay ministry.
- Those who feel called to ordained ministry.
- Clergy and lay leaders who guide, enable and support people in their discernment.

The aim of this guide:

- To create a unified biblical understanding of the discernment process in our diocese.
- Enable aspirants to explore (a) baptismal ministries, (b) the vocational, diaconate, (c) transitional diaconate or priesthood, and do so with the support, guidance and tools needed to do the work of discernment.
- To outline the commitment of the diocese and the bishop to equipping the saints for ministry. (Ephesians 4)

There is much work to be done in this process, and in time this guide will evolve as a result of our shared experiences. While discernment and preparation is very much a collaborative ministry of the entire Church, the Diocesan Bishop alone bears the responsibility and is the final authority over ordination.

The guide lays out the principles and procedures outlined by the bishop to be used consistently throughout the diocese so that we raise up faithful, disciplined, effective and inspirational leaders for our church. Following the criteria, the guide describes the process of discernment, from initial exploration of call through to application to the Bishop to be considered for postulancy, and ordination.

Thank you for drawing near with faith, and considering how to best offer yourself to our Lord and the Church.

This guide and process is offered to you as a gift with a prayer that you, and all who walk with you, will be drawn every closer to the perfect will of God, and that together we will return to offer thanksgiving for the transformation of hearts and minds through God's Grace.

We praise and glorify you Father, for by his death Christ has overcome death; and that, having ascended into heaven, he has given his gifts abundantly to your people, making some, apostles; some, prophets; some, evangelists; some, pastors and teachers; to equip them for the work of ministry and to build up his Body. And now we give you thanks that you have called us to a time of discernment and preparation to share this ministry entrusted to your Church.

Amen.

+John, March 2017

Before a Formal Process Begins

Getting to some Practical Considerations

As you read through this document please understand that it is not intended to be something carved in stone but to provide information about our loving and thankful response to people who seek to offer themselves.

As mentioned above in the introduction, a journey begins when a person perceives a call to Holy Orders.

Whether the person perceives this call within themselves or a clergy or lay leader recognizes and invites the person to consider such a call, the process will be the same. Remember: While discernment and preparation is very much a collaborative ministry of the entire Church, the Diocesan Bishop alone bears the responsibility and is the final authority over ordination and commissioning of all diocesan ministries.

Expectations of a person wishing to be a **formal** vocational inquirer.

- A confirmed member of the Anglican Church of Canada
- An active member of a parish for at least one year before beginning the process described in this document.
- A person who has demonstrated a committed connection to the parish and in his or her relationship to God through regular attendance and participation in the Sunday liturgy (or the parish's principal liturgy).
- A person who participates in parish activities and demonstrates a pattern of life that expresses a connection to God.
- A person who exhibits healthy and respectful interpersonal relationships with others.
- One who will have some sense of affirmation from a broad spectrum of people in the parish.
- One who will have had some discussion with their families, and has begun to share some questions with the incumbent.
- If and when the clergy leader of the parish believes an individual is ready to begin the formal process of discernment, and affirms so with the Bishop, the initial phase of the process begins.

Criteria For Holy Orders

The Diocese of Central Newfoundland is preparing for the future by encouraging faithful, gifted, and capable people to explore their vocation. That includes discernment of lay ministry, the diaconate or the priesthood.

As you will see in all of our discernment documents, we are seeking men and women who have both an inner awareness of a call from God and who are affirmed in that call as recognized by others through the life of a congregation within the diocese.

Our processes intend to help people become spiritually centered in their baptismal covenant, firmly rooted in a community of faith, in relationship with Jesus, and witnesses of God's Way of Love through prayer, worship and stewardship.

We trust the Spiritual Life of our Churches

Our Diocese is blessed with the strengths, abilities and characteristics of our people. These gifts present themselves by various generations through life experience, church background, innovative thinking, and in the offering of "time treasure and talent". Community discernment is essential for the affirmation of a call.

In the case of those in discernment for the diaconate or the priesthood, the gifts, abilities and characteristics listed below form a foundation for the discernment of a call to Holy Orders. ***What you read below should both challenge and excite you as you consider your own potential to grow in Christ. As you read through please consider how each statement connects to your life.***

In our Diocese We are searching for:

- A person who is drawn to be in community with other believers in faith that Christ is constantly building and equipping the Church to reach the World.
- A person who trusts the authority and wisdom of the Church to prepare and commission them for pastoral and sacramental ministry.
- A person who trusts the authority and wisdom of the Church to prepare and commission them for the ministry of enabling people for Christian life and ministry (Ephesians 4).

- A person who trusts the authority and wisdom of the Church to prepare and commission them and as such draws near with the attitude found in Philippians 2:3:
Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves. (NRSV)
- A person who learns from their experience: both their successes and their failures.
- A person who, after making ordination vows, will acknowledge the authority and responsibility that others (archbishops, bishops, archdeacons, rectors, elected and appointed lay leaders, etc.) carry in relationship to them.
- A person who can nurture productive relationships with those carrying authority and responsibility, and with those who offer themselves as servants in any way.
- A person who shows an obvious joy in the success of others.
- A person who is open and intrigued by learning processes and sees God as moving and active through Scripture, tradition, and reason.
- A person who listens and loves to learn from other disciplines and from the wisdom of the community.
- A person who is committed to increasing their own learning and theological understanding over time.
- A person who feels a call to be a living example of Christ-like service offered to the entire world by the people of God.
- A person who feels a call to lead others in the church community into loving service in the world.
- One who has developed and a “Rule of Life” evidenced by a deep commitment to all the dimensions of his or her baptismal covenant, including care for creation.
- A person who is learning to be a good steward by being:
 - One who cares for her or himself in terms of body, mind and spirit.
 - One who nourishes the important relationships in their life.
 - One who generously and in balanced fashion gives time, talent and treasure in gratitude to God who is the source of all we have and are.

In Our Diocese we are searching for A Person who has the Gifts, Ability and Desire to:

- **Draw people together and build community:** We seek people who are gifted in gathering people into community and then building and developing that community over time by helping groups of diverse people come together around shared values and a sense of purpose.
- **Represent the voice of the Spirit in the Church:** We seek people who have a sense of presence and are emotionally and relationally mature. As clergy we are to be people whose presence grounds, encourages and inspires others.
- **Value and model Christ like relationships:** We seek people who can exercise leadership that balances authority and humility in a parish setting, which will in turn create balanced oversight and processes of unity within a community of faith in its spiritual journey.
- **A Maker of Disciples:** Assisting others in identifying and developing their gifts and skills in service to God, the church and the broader community.

The Process at a Glance

The first steps in a journey of discernment

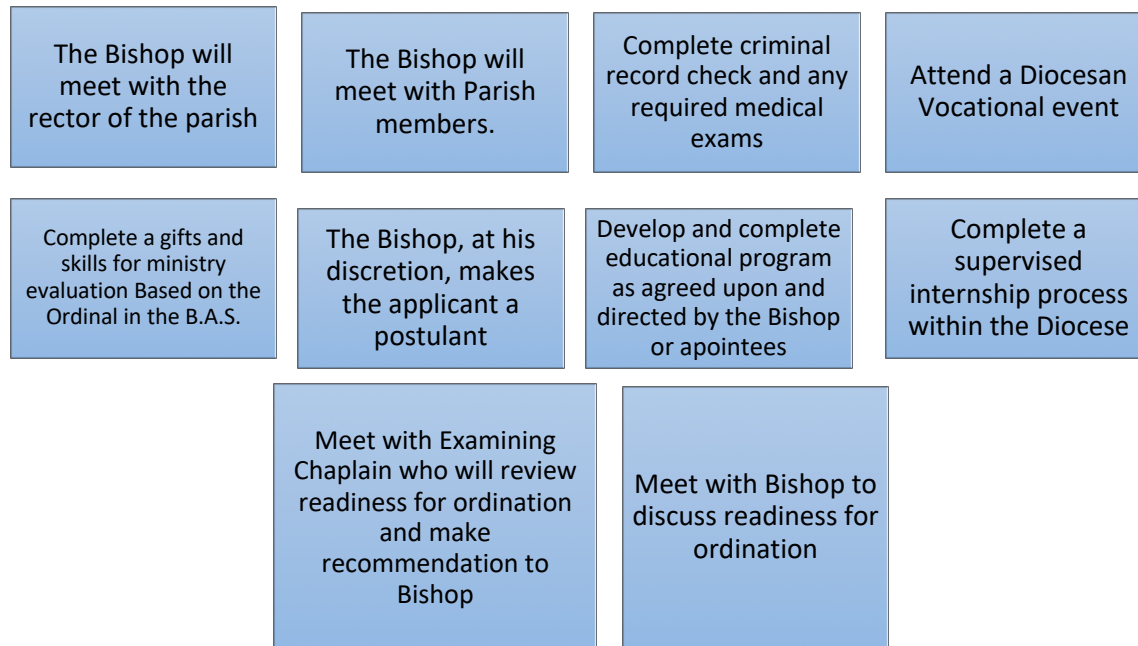
Table One: Being called to one of the four orders of Ministry

Inward Reflection	Inquirer may have forms of Discussion with family	Signs of Affirmation from the community of Faith
Informal affirming Discussions with Parish Leaders	A discussion and guidance from an incumbent (your minister)	A discussion with the Bishop Ask your questions.. Stage one of the education process will be outlined. (See Appendix)
Formal understandings begin to emerge and the inquirer may decide as to how they would like to proceed as they get a clearer picture.	The inquirer writes an informal personal letter to the Bishop outlining his or her spiritual journey, and how the sense of calling has been felt. A Spouse will also be asked to write a letter of support, and express any concerns.	Formal application process begins. Support Group processes are discerned.
Written Parish Commendation	Written Rector's Commendation	Written Personal Profile Completed (Inquirers Form /Application)
The next steps depend on the type of ministry being discerned		

Next Steps After Initial Discernment Process

Vocational Diaconate Discernment

Table Two: Being called to the Diaconate

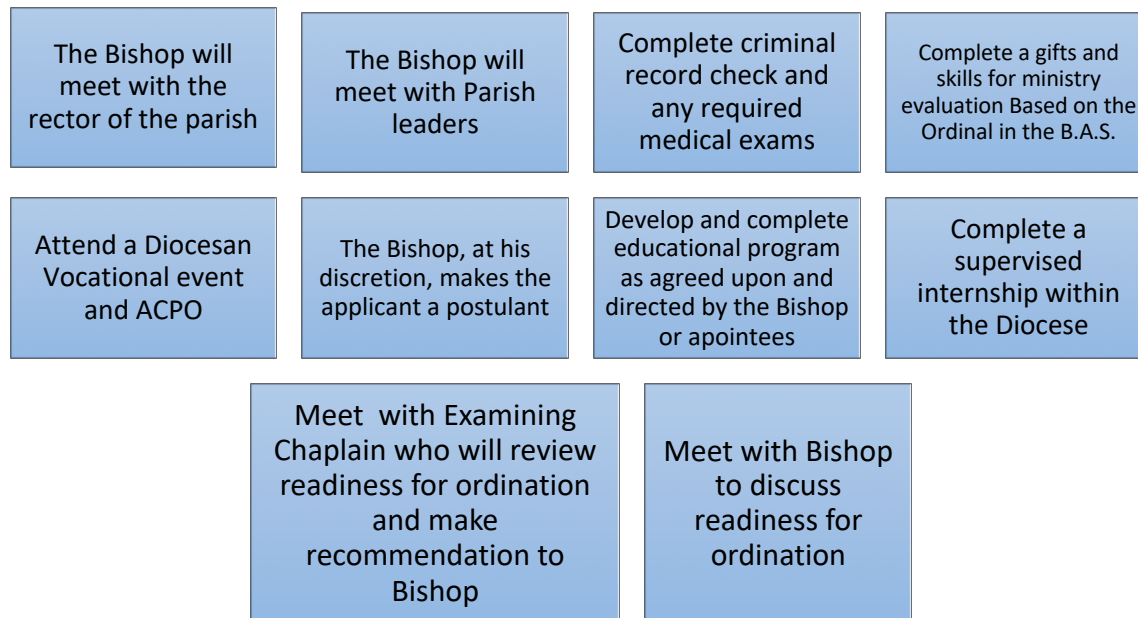


Next Steps After Initial Discernment Process

Transitional Diaconate Discernment

Table Three: The process of becoming a Transitional Deacon

The Transitional Diaconate to Priesthood



The Process described in More Detail

Being called to one of the four orders of Ministry (Table One)

Inward Reflection and Family Discussions (Blocks One and Two on Table one)

When someone arrives at: “I think God is calling me to ministry”, the potential for your life to be changed becomes a reality. Remember, this movement also includes the lives of many people around you. To the extent that this is the case, the call must be understood as is a shared one.

Your first approach to any discussion may simply be a gentle expression of the spiritual stirring you are feeling. You might find yourself talking about how a vocation would change your plans and life. You would likely be doing honest searching to see if your spouse / fiancé or potential partner is anywhere near where you are theologically. If you are being called, there should be an assumption that God is speaking to the people who will be part of your journey. In the case of family relationships, early discussions will be an exploration as to whether or not you have arrived together at the point in your lives where you can articulate how a relationship God’s has shaped you, and where it is leading you.

Are you ready for some tough but loving questions?

These are vital in your early discernment process. Remember God is present for you in each one.

- If you have retired from another profession and are making a decision to seek a ministry position, are you looking for a second paid career, or responding to a vocational call? How do the people who have waited to join you in retirement feel about a huge commitment to discernment, training and commissioning?
- Just what is it that we are asking of others when we respond to the feeling that we are being led to a vocation?
- If you are a younger person and have children, will they have a choice in the matter?
- If your spouse / fiancé or potential partner is on the road to a profession, how will this journey affect them?
- If you are coming through a loss or dramatic life change, do you see a vocation in the Church as an answer to loneliness or grief?
- Does your commitment to this leading come with conditions around time, debt, property, location or responsibilities?

Signs of Affirmation from the Community of Faith (Blocks Three and four on Table one)

Discernment generally begins when someone's inward voice causes them to ponder about the path they feel that are supposed to take. This often leads to outward conversations which provide counsel and affirmation from the faith community, clergy and other spiritual leaders. The next step would be a request for guidance and affirmation by the diocesan bishop. Sometimes these things occur simultaneously and we feel "it was meant to be."

Discernment is important to the one who seeks a vocation, and to those among whom the vocation is exercised. The "Still Small Voice" which causes an inquirer to move from a quiet conviction to conversation is enabled by the community of faith.

St. Paul wrote that 'we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another' (Romans 12:5). That means:

- Ministry is meant to be a mutual community experience.
- Ministries that are effective, enduring and without unhealthy conflict only occur in places where leadership empowers committed laity to live out a shared vision of what their congregation's ministry can be.
- Ministry discerned or exercised without the involvement and nurture of the community cannot succeed, for it denies the very fabric of discernment as identified in Ephesians Chapter 4 (Above)

The Community of Faith Calls, Discerns, Affirms, Equips and Gives the Commission to Ministry

It is the work of the community of faith to confirm the call to both Ordained ministry and baptismal ministries of the laity. A discernment process in partnership with the bishop, enables us to be where God calling us, and to be as specific about the application of ministry as possible.

The need for a discernment process is evident. Whenever the Holy Spirit calls us as individuals to new journeys, guidance is always provided through an affirmation process that is revealed and nurtured in the unified context of vibrant Christian community. This unified context also empowers episcopal responsibility and authority. (The ministry of the Bishop)

Thinking about today

There is no question that models of ministry and training are changing, but basic understandings of our Lord's call remain. Our goal is to enable the work of the Spirit in our diocese. The Bishop and Diocese will enable your call by:

- The Spirit Within speaking to an inquirer (You)
- Community Ministry discernment from the whole people of God. (Your Church family)
- Episcopal Affirmation (The Bishop)
- Theological Training and Formation

A discussion with and guidance from an incumbent (your minister)

(Block Five on Table one)

By this time you have had discussions with your guiding pastor. Early meetings with the clergy leader will be held to explore your sense of call and understanding of the process of discernment. These should be times for the inquirer (you) and the clergy leader to pray together and explore your sense of call, spiritual biography and experience in the Church.

Even though you may be blessed by the mentoring of a retired clergy or someone outside a parish, in our polity and tradition the Rector or priest in charge of your parish is the one entrusted with enabling your process on a diocesan level. You may even have spoken with the bishop, but at some point a formal conversation must be held with the incumbent of your spiritual home within the diocese. **Your life and relationship with your parish is an important part of the discernment process.**

When the time is right, the rector will speak to the bishop first, then guide you to make an appointment to meet with the bishop.

A discussion with the Bishop.

(Block Six on Table one)

Stage one of the education process will be outlined. (See Appendix)

The initial conversation with the bishop is not to formalize anything but will provide a place and time for you to ask any questions, express concerns, and to begin sharing your experience of what God is doing in your life. The Bishop will provide what is needed to ensure you have the support you need and a clear understanding of the discernment process.

If you are willing, at this point we will begin (or continue) what is known as the first stage of your education process. We will look for resources that will enable you to learn about vocation, discernment and understandings about commissioning and ordination from the perspective of the Anglican community of faith .

Formal understandings begin to emerge and the inquirer decides how they would like to proceed. (Block Seven on Table one)

This step is an extension of conversations with the bishop. Our goal is to ensure you have a clear picture of the ministry you are seeking and how you will get there. You will always be encouraged to ask questions! Once initial questions have been answered and time has been given to prayer the inquirer, (you) will be asked by the bishop if you wish to move forward.

A Personal Letter to The Bishop (Block Eight on the Table)

The inquirer will be invited to write an informal personal letter to the Bishop outlining his or her spiritual journey, and how the sense of calling has been felt. At this time, if applicable, a spouse or fiancé will also be asked to write a letter of support, and given the opportunity to express any concerns. These letter will remain confidential and not be used for anything but the bishop's discernment.

Formal Application Process Begins. Support Group Processes Are Discerned (Block Nine on Table one)

After the inquirer has written the Bishop, the Bishop, or those assigned to this ministry will make the necessary contact with the Rector and the Parish. A support mechanism will be initiated. How it looks and operates will depend on the resources and people available. This is a very important step, for without the confirmation and affirmation of the community of faith, discernment is not

complete.

Wherever the inquirer lives and worships, and those who walk with them in faith will be a part of this process.

The goal is to ensure the enquirer (you) has encouragement and support, and to provide the bishop with greater insight and recommendations.

Written Parish and Rector's Commendations (Blocks 10 and 11 on Table one)

When the parish team feels it is ready, they will submit a written commendation (see the Appendix) to the Bishop. When the parish committee has completed their work, the Rector will submit both written commendations to the bishop.

Formal application process

Personal Profile Completed (Inquirers Form and Application)

(Block Twelve on Table one)

At this point the you will complete the Inquirer's application form and submit it to the bishop's office. It is an in-depth application which will become the official document used by the bishop, and those commissioned in any way to provide support and evaluation through the process.

- The next steps depend on the type of ministry being discerned
(Block Thirteen on Table one)

Looking at the Processes:

1. Vocational Diaconate Process

A vocational deacon is an ordained person who has been given a singular ministry of servanthood. At the present time in our diocese deacons tend to serve the parish in which they live under the direction of the Incumbent, but all diocesan deacons are directly under the authority of the bishop, and may be called upon to serve the Church in the diocese in diverse ways. The language we use may refer to them as “Permanent Deacons,” “Perpetual Deacons” or “Vocational Deacons,” but it should be remembered that there is no hierarchy of deacons, but different functions. Persons who are ordained as deacons and are journeying to ordination to the priesthood are called **“Transitional Deacons.”**

The process for applying for ordination as a vocational or transitional deacon follows the full completion of the process outlined in table one and described above.

A Vocational Deacon will be closely tied to their parish, so together with the Bishop or assigned diocesan Coordinator, the applicant enter into a deeper intensive discernment process both for the individual and the parish.

Being called to the Vocational Diaconate (Table two)

Once the inquirer has applied to the Diocese to continue with the discernment process:

The Bishop will meet with the rector, and Parish members (Blocks One and Two on Table Two)

The Bishop will meet with the rector of the parish, then with the Parish Members for further discussion. This will be a time of conversation, sharing and developing a process of walking alongside the one who is enquiring. It is understood that vocational deacons are being called and formed to serve in a specific parish, with specific expectations of a diaconal (servanthood) ministry. That means the parish must be closely involved in the formation of the deacon. The path to the vocational diaconate will be different than the one to a transitional ordination, and it must be clearly understood that Vocational Deacons will not become Priests in the process.

Complete criminal record check and any required medical exams
(Block Three on Table Two)

At this time if not already done, a criminal record check must be completed and given to the diocesan office. Also, as may be required and appropriate, complete medical and psychological exams may be requested.

Attend a Diocesan Vocational Event
(Block Four on Table Two)

The next step is to attend a Diocesan Vocational event. This will be a time of assessment, fellowship and discernment with a larger representation of body of the Church. The location, timing, content and place of this event will vary depending on the needs of people in the diocese. These events will consider the vocations and ministries of all believers. At the present time vocational deacons do not attend A.C.P.O. * but there is a clear need for a detailed discernment process that provides a supportive gateway where a formal decision about the ordination process can be made.

Complete a gifts and skills for ministry evaluation based on the Ordinal in the B.A.S.
(Block Five on Table Two)

This will be done in conjunction with a vocational event or under the guidance of a mentor.

The Bishop, at his discretion, makes the applicant a postulant
(Block Six on Table Two)

Following a vocational gathering, affirmation of the community of faith is clear, and the inquirer feels they are ready to make a commitment, the Bishop, will review all that has transpired and at his discretion, makes the applicant a postulant. Being a postulant does not guarantee ordination, but it clearly indicates that a trusted vocational relationship exists.

Develop and complete educational program as agreed upon and directed by the Bishop or appointees

(Block Seven on Table Two)

Once a postulant is declared, we will formally develop and complete an educational program as agreed upon and directed by the Bishop or appointees. At the present time in our diocese there is a discernment process underway to outline requirements for those preparing for ordination. This is a national trend.

Complete a supervised internship within the Diocese

(Block Eight on Table Two)

An essential component is the completion of a supervised internship within the Diocese before ordination. Internships are valuable both for parishes and the student. A primary goal of an internship is to create an environment where mentoring and modeling can take place. Interns can see the practical side of parish life, and have an experience of the many challenges rectors face in ministries that are becoming increasingly complex. Vocational Deacons will have an internship that has been formed through local people and resources. The Diocese is in the process of making resources available.

An internship will help the student think through the processes of their training and how can their gifts must be focused in ministry. Internships help parishes see the value of their life together, and the potential of a nurturing community. Also, by an intern being in practice, potential needs and concerns can be addressed.

Meet with Examining Chaplain who will review readiness for ordination and make recommendation to Bishop

(Block Nine on Table Two)

When all is completed, our diocesan Examining Chaplain will review readiness for ordination, establish the process and make recommendation to Bishop

Meet with Bishop to discuss readiness for ordination

(Block Ten on Table Two)

The Postulant will meet with the Bishop to discuss readiness for ordination

Transitional Diaconate

The process of becoming a transitional deacon (Table Three)

The Bishop will meet with the rector of the parish, then with the Parish Members for further discussion.

(Blocks One and Two on Table Three)

This will be a time of conversation, sharing, and developing a process to walk alongside the one who is enquiring.

(It is understood that the path to ordination as a deacon is also the path to ordination as a priest. The Discernment process requires some different evaluations and documents. Also, If and when an inquirer is declared a postulant by the bishop, the process will involve a more focused diocesan process.) Once the inquirer has applied to the Diocese to continue with the discernment process:

Complete criminal record check and any required medical exams

(Block three on Table Three)

At this time if not already done, a criminal record check must be completed and given to the diocesan office. Also, as may be required and appropriate, complete medical and psychological exams may be requested.

(Blocks four five and Six Table on Table Three): Complete a gifts and skills for ministry evaluation based on the Ordinal in the B.A.S. This will be done in conjunction with a vocational event or under the guidance of a mentor, and prior to preparation for ACPO.

Attend a Diocesan Vocational Event The next step is to attend a Diocesan Vocational event. This will be a time of assessment, fellowship and discernment with a larger representation of body of the Church. The location, timing, content and place of this event will vary depending on the needs of people in the diocese. These events will invite all who consider the vocations and ministries of all believers.

A.C.P.O

The inquirer must attend an A.C.P.O. conference. At this time attendance of the conference will be confirmed, and the bishop or assigns will guide the inquirer through the process. Only following A.C.P.O will a formal diocesan commitment to the enquirer, and future processes be made.

**The Bishop, at his discretion, makes the applicant a postulant
(Block Six on Table Three)**

Following A.C.P.O. , the Bishop, will review all that has transpired and at his discretion, makes the applicant a postulant. Being a postulant does not guarantee ordination, but it clearly indicates that a trusted vocational relationship exists.

Develop and complete educational program as agreed upon and directed by the Bishop or appointees (Block Seven on Table Three)

Once a postulant is declared, we will formally develop and complete an educational program as agreed upon and directed by the Bishop or appointees. At the present time in our diocese there is a discernment process underway to outline requirements for those preparing for ordination. This is a national trend.

**Complete a supervised internship within the Diocese
(Block Eight on Table Three)**

An essential component is the completion of a supervised internship within the Diocese before ordination. This is part of the completion of most degree programs. Internships are valuable both for parishes and the student. A primary goal of an internship is to create an environment where mentoring and modeling can take place. Interns can see the practical side of parish life, and have an experience of the many challenges rectors face in ministries that are becoming increasingly complex.

An internship will help the student think through the processes of their training and how can their gifts must be focused in ministry. Internships help parishes see the value of their life together, and the potential of a nurturing community. Also, by an intern being in practice, potential needs and concerns can be addressed

Meet with Examining Chaplain who will review readiness for ordination and make recommendation to Bishop

(Block Nine on Table Three) When all is completed, our diocesan Examining Chaplain will review readiness for ordination, establish the process and make recommendation to Bishop

**Meet with Bishop to discuss readiness for ordination
(Block Ten on Table Three)**

The Postulant will meet with the Bishop to discuss readiness for ordination

Resources and Forms

Appendix 1: Glossary of Terms

Appendix 2: Inquirer's Form

Appendix 3: Parish Support Team Guide

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Appendix 6: Rector's Commendation

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Second Stage: Vocational Diaconate

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Appendix 10 Two level Learning Plan

Second Stage Transitional Diaconate

Appendix 5 – ACPO Parish Commendation Form

Appendix 7: Criminal Record Check

Appendix 8: A gifts and skills for ministry evaluation

Appendix 10 Two level Learning Plan

Appendix 11: ACPO documents

Appendix 1: Glossary of Terms

For the purposes of this guide:

A.C.P.O. refers to the Provincial Advisory Committee for Postulants to Orders, the body which makes recommendations to the Bishop whether an applicant is ready to become a postulant for the priesthood.

“Applicant” refers to the person who is discerning a call to the priesthood or to the diaconate and has been being officially affirmed by a clergy leader.

Clergy Leader refers to the rector or priest-in-charge of the nominating congregation. The clergy leader plays an integral role in this process, from the moment a call is perceived through ordination. If at any time during the process on the parish level the clergy leader no longer senses a call in the aspirant, the process will stop.

“Deacon / Diaconate” refers to a person whose permanent ordination will be as a deacon, also referred to as a vocational deacon.

“Inquirer” refers to the person who is discerning a call to the diaconate or priesthood before being officially affirmed by a clergy leader and a parish ministry group.

“Parish Discernment Group” refers to the group which in phase two of the process will explore the applicant’s sense of call, discuss the progress of the applicant on their action-learning plan and assess whether or not the group affirms the applicant’s call to the priesthood or to the diaconate.

“Parish” refers to the parish, congregation or faith community that is discerning that a person is indeed called to the priesthood or the diaconate.

Postulant refers to the designation given an inquirer at the Bishops discretion following the outlined assessment processes. To be a postulant means that you are sponsored by the Diocesan, and there is an understanding of a commitment between you and the Diocese through the time of formation.

“Priest / Priesthood” refers to a person whose eventual ordination will be as a priest, and includes the initial ordination as a transitional deacon.

Appendix 2. – Inquirer’s Form

This form is to be used in conjunction with the Diocese of Central Newfoundland Discernment and Application Package, and is to be completed by the Inquirer after initial contact with the clergy leader of his/her parish and initial conversation with the bishop. Please complete the original and make additional copies of this form. The original is forwarded to the bishop. Keep one copy for your records, and give one copy to your rector. In time, copies will be made available to the Parish Discernment Group should it be convened. Information on the form may be shared at the appropriate times with anyone involved in your discernment process.

Part I - Identification

Name: _____

Address: _____

Postal Code: _____

Telephone _____

Home: _____

Work: _____

Cell : _____

Email address: _____

Part 2 – Church history

Present Parish: _____

Incumbent: _____

Length of affiliation with this parish: _____

Date and Place of Baptism: _____

(if applicable):

Date, Place and By Whom Confirmed or Received into the Anglican Church of Canada: _____

(if applicable): Former Denominations _____

Part 2 – Church history (cont.)

How long have you been worshipping in the Anglican Church? Years _____

Describe the consultation process (if any)

you have had with your clergy leader: _____

The order of ministry you are exploring: Vocational Deacon _____

Priest _____ Still unsure _____

Have you previously applied for admission to the ordination process in this or any other diocese? _____

If yes, give date, diocese and name of bishop: _____

Have you ever applied for ordination in another denomination? _____

If yes, give date, place and denomination: _____

Have you ever been ordained in another denomination? _____

If yes, give date, place and by whom _____

What position(s) did you occupy in that denomination? _____

Part 3: Family Background

Date and place of birth: _____

Citizenship: _____

Marital Status: _____

Spouse's name and occupation: _____

Names and ages of children: _____

Is your family supportive of your inquiries into your vocation? _____

What is their understanding of the changes in your family dynamics that could occur should you be ordained? _____

Do you have plans in place to finance the costs of your theological education?

Yes: _____ No: _____ Explain: _____

Part 4: Educational Background

School	Year of Graduation	Degree(s)
High School		
University		
Graduate School		
Theological Education		
Other certificates and licenses:		

Languages:

Spoken: _____

Read and write: _____

Part 5: Work Experience

Are you presently employed? _____

If so, your present Employment and responsibilities: _____

How long you have been with your employer: _____

Please list and date previous Employment and responsibilities:

To what professional organizations (if any) do you belong? _____

Briefly describe how you feel your work experiences have helped you in your spiritual formation and preparation for ministry: _____

Part 6: Secular and Leisure Activities

To what community organizations do you now belong and what is your role?

To what community organizations have you belonged in the past and what was your role? _____

What are your main leisure activities? _____

In what ways have you served as a volunteer in your communities? _____

Part 7: Church Related Activities

Present parish involvement: List any offices you presently hold: _____

Previous parish involvement: _____

Present and past deanery/diocesan/provincial/national involvement: _____

Part 8: Spiritual Background

On separate pages provide answers to the following:

1. Give a brief description (2 or 3 pages) of your spiritual journey.
2. Why do you wish to be ordained?
3. What do you see as the evidence of your call to Ordained Ministry?
4. Describe the work you have done to explore the theology and nature of the priesthood or diaconate and the role of the priest / deacon in the church and in the world.
5. Describe how your call has been tested in the Christian Community? What do you believe you are called to do in the church and in the world?

Do you currently have a spiritual director? YES NO

Give the names addresses, phone and email of at least two people who would be willing to witness to your spiritual development:

- 1) _____

- 2) _____

Signature: _____ Date: Sponsoring
Incumbent: _____

Please attach a complete resume or curriculum vitae to this form.

Appendix 3 – Guide for Parish Discernment Groups

The structure and form of these groups is being discerned. This process will evolve as our Diocese moves forward in discernment.

We trust our parishes

It is hoped that the formation and ministry of people in this group will not only be of benefit to the enquirer, but a blessing to the parish.

Appendix 4 Parish Commendation

Parish Discernment Group Report to the Bishop

Evaluation of the Applicant

Applicant's Name _____

Parish Rector _____

Associate Clergy (if applicable) _____

Parish Discernment Group Chair _____

Names of Parish Discernment Group Members. (add your position if you presently hold an office in the Church)

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

4 _____

5 _____

6 _____

7 _____

8 _____

Please answer the following question to the best of your ability, giving specific examples. These questions are to be answered by the Parish Discernment Committee as a group.

1. List the dates on which you met with the Applicant.

2. As you see it, what is the Applicant's understanding of Christian Ministry? _

3. In the group's conversations with the Applicant on the Criteria for Holy Orders, what have you identified are the Applicant's strengths? What areas have you identified that need continued development? _____

4. What is the Applicant's personal understanding of his/her vocation to ordained priestly or diaconal ministry? _____

5. How clearly is the Applicant able to speak about this vocation? _____

6. Describe the Applicant's past and present history of ministry. Please be specific. _____

7. What is your impression of the Applicant's intellectual, emotional and spiritual capacities?

Intellectual: _____

Emotional: _____

Spiritual: _____

8. Are there any physical or emotional conditions that would limit the Applicant's ability to engage in ordained ministry that you know of? If yes, please describe. _____

Please be specific:

1. Describe the Applicant's strengths. _____

2. Describe any areas that need developing. _____

3. What is your general sense of the Applicant's suitability for ordination? _____

4. Would you be happy to have him or her as a deacon or priest in your parish?
Yes _____ No _____
5. If not, why not? _____

6. Are there any other factors that you consider significant? _____

7. Do you recommend that the Applicant should continue in the discernment process?

Yes___ No___ Not yet ___

Why? _____

Signatures of Chair and Committee: _____

At The appropriate time, the Parish and Clergy will be asked to complete the forms for ACPO.

Appendix 5 – Clergy leader letter of support to the Bishop

The clergy leader who has been most involved with the applicant during the discernment process writes a letter to the Bishop indicating his or her personal discernment of the applicant's vocation.

Please also include comments on whether the applicant is meeting the criteria for Holy Orders and any recommendations for formation. Please indicate any areas where the applicant needs to grow and develop in order to become a fully effective minister in the Church.

Appendix 6 Two Level Learning Plan explanation:

1. As the inquirer works through the process he or she will be meeting on a regular basis with the clergy leader or Bishop to reflect on the learning. Through this phase the inquirer will read books and articles about the priesthood or the diaconate and have discourse with others who are priests, deacons and active lay people and hear about their experience of their own vocations. This reading and learning from others will also be discussed in one or more of the inquirer's regular meetings with the clergy leader. Costs for books and materials will be borne by the inquirer. The parish may consider subsidizing if they wish.
2. After the inquirer is declared to be a postulant, discussions around theological education requirements will be formalized. These requirements will depend on previous education, life experience, theological formation experience, and will be determined in consultation with the postulant, bishop and assigns, and those who provide accredited theological education for our diocese.

Appendix 7 Concerning the Order of Deacons



Anglican Diocese of Central Newfoundland

Information on the Diaconate in the Diocese of Central Newfoundland March 2017

Information on the Diaconate in the Diocese of Central Newfoundland March 2017 This first Document has been prepared by the Rt. Revd. John Watton, for study and revision as the Diocese joyfully discovers, enables and commissions the gifts and calling of the people of God within our diocese for our local and larger church communities.

While many of the processes we need to establish or rebuild around education, gathering and discovery, are in very early stages, it is vital that we have a point of reference for future work.

This particular guide centers on the Order of Deacon as a whole and includes both the transitional and vocational diaconate. It is intended to be used in conjunction with the diocesan policy guide: on discernment and postulancy. Let us hold each other in prayer as we look forward to the unfolding vision and work of the Holy Spirit in our midst.

+John

March 2017

Concerning the Order of Deacons

What is the Diaconate?

The Diaconate is a separate, distinct, and equal order of ordained ministry that has the essential character of compassionate and humble dedication to:

- Serving, teaching and enabling others to serve those in need, the weak, the sick, and the lonely, and those defeated by the forces of the society in which we are immersed.
- Prophetically holding before the Church, the needs of the world.
- To be involved in liturgy in ways that lifts up the examples of Christ's servant ministry.

The Diaconate is as old as Church community. It was instituted by the Apostles themselves. The terms "Deacon" and "Diaconate" derive from the Greek word *diaconia*, which means service or ministry.

The sixth chapter of the Book of Acts is an illustration of developing ministries in the Church. The emerging community of followers of Christ grew rapidly and so did demands on the leaders. Large gatherings required logistical accommodations such as food, lodging, other human needs. As people gathered in hope of healing and restoration, much brokenness and need were concentrated in on place.

Acts 6: 1 – 5a:

Now during those days, when the disciples were increasing in number, the Hellenists complained against the Hebrews because their widows were being neglected in the daily distribution of food.

2 And the twelve called together the whole community of the disciples and said, "It is not right that we should neglect the word of God in order to wait on tables.[a] 3 Therefore, friends,[b] select from among yourselves seven men of good standing, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may appoint to this task, 4 while we, for our part, will devote ourselves to prayer and to serving the word." 5 What they said pleased the whole community,

These first deacons were appointed by the apostolic laying on of hands; the Order of Deacons still serve the Church today.

Over the course of centuries, the vocation of the permanent Diaconate all but disappeared as the Diaconate became only a stepping stone to ordination as a priest. What began as a call to recognised servanthood, became a traditional Diaconate, seen as an essential part of formation for Priesthood.

Changing parish needs have caused the Church to prayerfully review perceptions of ministry; the permanent Diaconate is being rediscovered.

The Call to Diaconal Ministry

Please refer to the document Discernment Processes for Holy Orders for a detailed policy and process of discernment in our Diocese.

As mentioned in the Discernment Processes for Holy Orders document and appended articles, the call to Diaconal Ministry often emerges from within an individual through a prayerful experience of God. It is also understood to be a natural result of life in a parish that the community will recognize the qualities of an individual and encourage a vocational exploration. Today, we find that as some parishes explore possibilities of "raising up" a deacon, individuals may be identified and encouraged to explore their callings. In our diocese, that call must be recognized by the individual, the parish and the bishop. Our commitment is to ensure that spiritual process is enabled, and all enquirers will be supported in seeking God's will and clarifying it for themselves and the Church.

Some signs of a call as revealed through an individual's daily actions:

- Reflects the attitude found in Philippians 2:3:
Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves. (NRSV)
- A desire to enable others to serve and an obvious joy in the success of others
- Being a symbol and model for the ministry of all the baptized
- A Team builder and reconciler
- Gifted in reminding the community and the wider Church of the needs of the world, interpreting those needs, and enabling the community to provide active responses to them.
- Demonstrating a strong non-judgmental empathy with the grieving, powerless, poor, sick, weak and lonely.
- An ability to lead within the parish.
- An active ministry outside of the parish, love of community, and
- A willingness to learn, change and challenge their own opinions.

The Process

The Process for discernment, preparation and ordination are to be found in the diocesan document: Discernment Processes for Holy Orders.

At the present time discernment processes are guided by the bishop. It is planned to expand the bishop's ministry through mentorship, discernment committees, spiritual direction, and through the development and appointment of a specific archidiaconal ministry.

Discernment committees are not formed until after initial conversations as outlined in Discernment Processes for Holy Orders. That way, potential candidates for ordination can be gently approached or declined at the proper time of the process as the case may be. If a nominee is declined, they will be informed in such a way as to ensure appropriate pastoral care is immediately available. The discernment process is fully intended to support and enable all people in finding their true calling and to preserve their dignity and self-esteem. In each case, the parish will appoint a Discernment Committee. This Committee considers if the parish community is called to support a diaconal ministry. Through the process the parish will be educated about the diaconate in order make an informed decision. If the parish decides to continue, the Discernment Committee then considers possible candidates who have both an active ministry

and demonstrate leadership abilities. When there is a consensus on the individual or individuals, the Parish Vestry votes first on supporting a deacon, and then nominates this individual (s). At this point the discussions with the bishop around formation begin.

Formation and Education of Deacons

At the present time, much discernment is unfolding in regard to the processes of formation, and standards for education for all clergy in the diocese. As a Church we are hopefully living and moving through much change. In our Diocese we are gifted with people who are skilled at teaching, experienced at mentorship, and aware that God is calling us to new and exciting things. This will take time.

While the diocesan policy manuals illustrate the heart of our movement, provide foundations for equipping the saints, and carry the authority of the episcopal office, our policies as reflected in the manuals will be considered as “Living documents”, and will evolve and grow through our shared discernments as the “Spirit gives us the ability” (Acts 2:4).

The Visible Ministry of Deacons

The ministry of Deacons in the Diocese of Central Newfoundland has three parts:

- Parochial Ministry within a parish that has been discerned and commissioned locally.
- Diocesan Diaconal ministry which connects with the vision of the diocese as a whole in relation to deanery, provincial, nation and world affairs.
- Teaching by connecting ministries that may exist within their parish boundaries to the broader Church such as:
 1. Social Ministry: i.e. with people in hospitals, homes for the elderly, prisons, in shelters or with young people.
 2. Through the expertise of their past or present occupations .
 3. Pastoral Care including chaplaincies;
 4. Advocating (assisting the Diocese and the Bishop on behalf of
 5. Disadvantaged or disenfranchised people)

The Pastoral and Liturgical Functions of Deacons

Liturgical Functions of a Deacon

. Liturgical functions lift up the examples of Christ's servant ministry and symbolize the deacon's call to proclaim the Gospel, serve and enable others to serve. Guided by the Bishop and local custom, it is usual for the Deacon to:

- Read the Gospel
- Set the table for the Eucharist
- Enable the ablutions and clear the table
- Enable local customs: i.e. Deacons should have a role in coordinating the "Prayers of the People" and be well connected as a supporter and teacher of Altar Guilds.
- Dismiss the people

In The Diocese of Central Newfoundland Deacons MAY:

- Prepare and deliver sermons. It is expected that deacons will be teachers of the faith. (see the note below)
- Preside at some liturgies and offices, and with permission from the incumbent and bishop confer some of the sacraments.
- Only preside at weddings (without Eucharist) and at funerals (without Eucharist) or conduct Baptisms (without Eucharist), with permission from the incumbent and bishop. These are considered exceptional circumstances.
- Serve as parish administrators in partnership with Church Wardens when an incumbency is vacant.

In The Diocese of Central Newfoundland Deacons may NOT:

- Preside at a Eucharist,
- provide blessings,
- provide absolutions
- hear confessions, (reconciliation of a penitent)
- confer Unction. Also, Deacons cannot confer the Sacrament of Confirmation, which is reserved to the Bishop.
- Confer the Sacrament of Confirmation which is reserved to the Bishop.
- Take the Sacrament to members of the parish who are unable to attend in person, unless the bishop provides a license
- Serve consecrated sacrament to the gathered community in a liturgy sometimes identified as a "Deacon's Mass."

Preaching as a Deacon

Deacons should not focus on the priestly function of teaching theological concepts in their preaching, but upon their ordained responsibility to promote Jesus' message of servant ministry. They shall focus on teaching and enabling others to live out their Baptismal Covenants.

Deacons are called by life examples to:

- Emphasize the servanthood qualities of Christ's teaching.
- Motivate the congregation to serve the poor, the sick, the suffering, the helpless, and the lonely in their parish and communities.
- Create opportunities for such ministries to take place.
-

Accountability

Deacons are directly accountable to the Bishop in all cases. In the name of the Bishop, the Incumbent of the parish where a Deacon is licensed will have supervisory and administrative authority over the parish activity of the Deacon.

Duties in Exceptional Circumstances

- There is a clear designation of the duties of a deacon in these guidelines. It is important to remember that Deacons may be called upon by those in authority over them, in consultation with the bishop to minister in exceptional circumstances. Should this happen, it should not be considered that there has been a policy change, or that permission has been given to engage a new ministry. (See note below)

Examples of this are:

Deacons may only preside at weddings (without Eucharist) and at funerals (without Eucharist) or conduct Baptisms (without Eucharist), with permission from the incumbent and bishop. These are considered exceptional circumstances.

Membership in the Councils of the Church

Deacons who are licensed for active duty in a parish in the Diocese of Central Newfoundland are voting members of the Synod of the Diocese and can serve as clergy on other councils of the church, if the constitutions of those councils allow.

Compensation of Deacons

Vocational deacons are ordinarily non-stipendiary, having other source(s) of income. However, deacons should receive compensation from the parish they serve for mileage and other expenses related to the performance of their

ministry, and with parity with other licensed diocesan clergy in relation (but not limited to) diocesan clergy days, conferences, and continuing formation.

Parishes may an honorarium of a nominal amount. If so, the diocesan Executive Archdeacon should be consulted in regard to current policy and Revenue Canada Guidelines.

Appendix 8: Frequently Asked Questions

1. What are the differences between the ministries of a lay person and an ordained deacon?

By our Baptismal Covenant everyone is called and commissioned to represent Christ by service and love. There are many calls and many ministries, many gifts and many ways to share them. Deacons are called to fulfill: "...a special ministry of servanthood." (BAS 655). The committed lay person is one who volunteers their time freely, chooses where, how and how long they serve in any given capacity. Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, they give selflessly in many ways, both within the parish and well beyond.

Ordained clergy vow to be accountable to their Bishop, and other clergy who may have authority over them. Ordained clergy have both rights and responsibilities of supervision and direction.

Deacons have undergone a process of discernment, education, screening for suitability and preparation. They then make public vows for life before God, and to serve God and Church all their days. In the presence of the gathered Church, they are ordained. These persons become accountable to their bishop under the supervision of their incumbent, and answerable to both their bishop and their parish. They are licensed by their bishop to practice as deacons in specific and explicit ways.

2. How does a close-knit parish say yes to one potential deacon and no to another without hurting the individuals who offered themselves or who are nominated?

The first and fundamental choice a parish makes is whether or not to have a deacon. Discernment committees are not formed until after initial conversations as outlined in Discernment Processes for Holy Orders. That way, potential candidates for ordination can be gently approached or declined at the proper time of the process as the case may be. The Bishop is an important part of these conversations. If a nominee is declined, they will be informed in such a way as to ensure appropriate pastoral care is immediately available. The discernment process is fully intended to support and enable all people in finding their true calling and to preserve their dignity and self-esteem.

3. What happens to those who have already self-identified as potential candidates?

The incumbent of the Parish will be asked to become part of the process. This person will be asked to review the Discernment Processes for Holy Orders document, and then meet with the bishop who will help them engage the process of discernment. There are no short cuts to ordination.

4. How does the process become adapted or modified in parishes that already have Licensed Lay Ministers?

The Parish Discernment Committee must articulate the clear distinction between a lay reader and a deacon. A lay reader is a parochial position where the deacon helps the priest with pastoral duties and leading services. The deacon does not take over the role of lay readers but works with them as a team member, with the goal of assisting their ministries. Deacons are often already lay readers and they must be seen as having a different function after ordination.

5. How long should a church expect the process to take place from inquiry to ordination?

There is no set time. We all have different needs so the process must provide time for the parish to prepare for the implementation of diaconal ministry through thoughtful reflection and education. Those preparing to become deacons will have distinctive educational and practical requirements based on their needs and experience. Time for a candidate's education must be considered as if not already completed. Remember: While discernment and preparation is very much a collaborative ministry of the entire Church, the Diocesan Bishop alone bears the responsibility and is the final authority over ordination and commissioning of all diocesan ministries.

Future Developments

The Community of Deacons

That within the Diocese of Central Newfoundland, deacons will regularly meet together and with their Bishop and Executive Archdeacon for fellowship, learning, and mutual support.

Diaconal Covenant

To encourage and facilitate well-being and growth, that each deacon has a written “Covenant” that will be renewed annually with their Bishop and parish specifying responsibilities of all parties.

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