

DIOCESE OF NIAGARA

PROCEDURE AND REQUIREMENTS REGARDING THE CANDIDACY PROCESS FOR PRIESTHOOD



Moses was keeping the flock of his father-in-law Jethro, the priest of Midian; he led his flock beyond the wilderness, and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. There the angel of the LORD appeared to him in a flame of fire out of a bush; he looked, and the bush was blazing, yet it was not consumed. Then Moses said, 'I must turn aside and look at this great sight, and see why the bush is not burned up.' When the LORD saw that he had turned aside to see, God called to him out of the bush, 'Moses, Moses!' And he said, 'Here I am.'

Exodus 3:1-4

God calls to each of us from the burning bush and asks us to use our gifts in some form of ministry in the world. Part of discerning if your call is to ordained ministry in the Diocese of Niagara is your participation in the candidacy process.

Under normal circumstances, a candidate for Holy Orders passes through five stages in the process before ordination as a priest. The stages are:

The Inquiry	A person in the early stages of vocational discernment prior to initial interview. Meeting with the Bishop.
The Applicant	A person who has completed or is completing parish discernment ministry and has been invited by the Bishop to submit an application.
The Candidate	A person who has been approved for candidacy with the Diocese of Niagara by the Candidates' Committee and the Bishop.
The Transitional Deacon	A person ordained as a deacon and who intends to become a priest.
The Priest	A person who takes part in a distinctive ministry appointed by the Bishop for the spiritual care and leadership of parish communities.

The requirements for each phase of this process will normally be completed before a person advances to the next stage. Before making an application for theological training towards ordained ministry, the person is advised to allow sufficient time for the initial inquiry stage. Those interested in ordination in Niagara should contact the Bishop for a meeting early in their discernment process and have a subsequent meeting with the Director of Human Resources, preferably before applying to theological college. The Diocese expects to take an ongoing role in the candidate's formation beginning early in the process.

The Diocese may on occasion choose to shorten the candidacy time, e.g. if a candidate has been approved by another diocese or if a candidate has completed/is completing their post-baccalaureate theological training.

At no time during the candidacy/postulancy process, can the diocese guarantee ordination to an applicant. The Anglican Church of Canada prohibits ordination unless a job is available to the ordinand. On occasion, a candidate may be asked to interview with other Bishops and will receive references to enable them to do so.

The Inquiry

1. Those who are members of parishes within the Diocese of Niagara are encouraged to express their interest in a vocation to ordained ministry to their parish priest, exploring their understanding of being called to such ministry. The parish priest assists in further discernment of the nature of the call (e.g., parish or other ministries). This discernment takes place over a period of time and will involve an intentional ministry placement usually in their home parish.

Those who are coming to the Diocese of Niagara from another diocese or denomination will participate in a similar intentional ministry placement in a parish within the Diocese of Niagara. This placement is essential for such persons in order to familiarize candidates with parish and diocesan culture.

All such placements will involve an extended (minimum of four months to one year) experience of a range of parish ministries (teaching, preaching, hospital, social justice, pastoral, etc.) with the direct supervision by the parish priest. The potential applicant should meet with the rector and a parish team (consisting of two wardens and two other lay people) regularly to discuss the placement experience and how it reflects on their call. This parish discernment team will provide feedback in the form of a parish commendation. The parish should also receive the document entitled Ordination Prerequisites and the Competencies for Ordination to the Priesthood in the Anglican Church of Canada as important background information for their deliberations. If the commendation is favourable, the inquirer will be invited to apply for ordination.

No financial support is available from the diocese during this period.

If the inquirer has yet to meet with the Bishop, then such an interview will take place.

2. Inquirers, applicants and candidates are expected to have a spiritual director and to work regularly (ideally once a month) with that person, reflecting on their life in prayer and their understanding and articulation of their call to ministry. Having a spiritual director is mandatory and is at the directee's expense. Spiritual directors can be found through divinity colleges or Spiritual Directors International (www.sdiworld.org). The Diocese of Niagara does not endorse any particular spiritual director.
3. Inquiries may find resources available on the diocesan website. The documents are:
 - Competencies for Ordination to the Priesthood in the Anglican Church of Canada
 - Ordination Prerequisites
 - Procedures and Requirements Regarding the Candidacy Process

The annual application deadline is June 1st.

Applications will include:

- Application for Ordination form duly completed and signed
- Responses to five questions on page seven of the application
- Photocopies of applicant's baptismal and confirmation certificate
- Current Police Record Check which includes a Vulnerable Sector Check
- Photocopy of applicant's Drivers Licence

The Applicant

1. Once the Application for Ordination has been requested and received and Letter of Commendation has been submitted, the documents are assessed and applicants will be either invited to proceed to the next step or otherwise directed.
2. Interviews are arranged with the Candidates Committee (two separate interviews with two interviewers at each). One of the interviewers will be consistent throughout the process.

Initial interview	Normally in the Fall following the June 1 st application deadline
Second interview (upon completion of first year requirements)	Fall/Winter
Third interview	Winter/Spring

The Bishop, Director of Human Resources, Chaplains to Ordinands and interviewers meet to discuss applicants after each set of interviews has taken place. Additional interviews may sometimes be required. An interview with the Bishop may be scheduled following the initial interview review by the Candidates' Committee. Following initial interviews recommendations for ongoing discernment and formation may be made to the applicant.

3. A Chaplain to Ordinand is assigned to each recommended applicant and the applicant is encouraged to be in regular contact with their chaplain. This relationship will end with the candidate's priesting or their withdrawal from the ordination process.
4. Field work placements and a full-term parish internship (minimum of three months) which are required both by the college and the Diocese will be made in consultation with the Director of Human Resources and with the College Field Education Supervisor.
5. Each applicant/candidate is required to write a letter to the Bishop semi-annually (Advent-November 30 and Pentecost-May 15) to indicate how they are progressing in their training, spiritual life and practice of ministry. Issues for growth identified by the Candidates' Committee should be addressed in the letter.
6. Once an applicant has been approved by the Candidates' Committee, their name is added to the list for assessment by the Advisory Committee on Postulants for Ordination (ACPO).

At the request of the diocesan Bishop, the applicant will attend a regional conference of the ACPO for vocational assessment and direction regarding suitability for training. The ACPO recommendation is not mandatory for ordination, but is normally expected. There are occasional situations when an ACPO recommendation may request that an applicant postpone theological training for a period of time or may make other significant recommendations. ACPO usually takes place in the spring (April/May) and fall (October). Partners are not invited to this conference. Applicants will be scheduled as soon as possible after their acceptance as a Niagara candidate.

7. The Diocese of Niagara has a mandatory vocational assessment requirement for all recommended applicants. The cost of the assessment is borne by the diocese. With the written permission of the applicant, the vocational assessment report is shared with the Bishop and the Bishop's designate.
8. After being recommended by ACPO and a positive vocational assessment report, the applicant becomes a candidate who is now eligible to receive diocesan bursaries.

The Candidate

1. Candidates are again interviewed in the fall/winter by the Candidates' Committee. These interviews will focus on the candidate's progress in pursuit of the goals identified for their formation at earlier stages in the process. The Bishop, Director of Human Resources, Chaplains to Ordinands and interviewers meet to discuss applicants after each set of interviews has taken place. Following interviews recommendations for ongoing discernment and formation may be made to the candidate.
2. The feedback from these interviews will be helpful to the Bishop in determining the readiness for ordination.
3. Reporting Expectations: It is the **candidate's responsibility** to ensure that the Director of Human Resources receives reports/transcripts from their college, field education/parish placements and internships throughout the process.
4. At some point during the candidate's time in the process, there is a requirement for a Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE)/Supervised Pastoral Education (SPE) unit to be completed. The final reports (supervisors' and candidates') must be submitted to the Director of Human Resources. A meeting with the Director of Human Resources always follows the completion of the CPE/SPE unit. Applications for subsidies to reimburse tuition costs may be available either through the diocesan theological students' budget or an individual Leadership Grant.
5. Candidates, and partners where applicable, will be invited to attend annual events with the Bishop and the Director of Human Resources.
6. Candidates are again interviewed by the Candidates Committee. These interviews usually take place in the winter/spring. An assignment designed to elicit information about the candidate's experience of the training process and what they have learned will precede these interviews and form the basis for discussion during the interviews. Candidates are also required to provide a resume. The feedback from these interviews will be helpful to the Bishop in determining the readiness for ordination.
7. In the spring of their final year, students deemed ready for ordination meet with the Bishop and the Director of Human Resources to discuss any available ministry positions in the Diocese of Niagara. A person will only be ordained if there is a position available.

The Transitional Deacon

1. Prior to ordination, the potential ordinand is required to attend a pre-ordination retreat.
2. Attendance at New 2 Niagara and other mandated programs is mandatory post-ordination.
3. The newly ordained clergy all participate in the post-ordination training program, Staring Well. The new clergy meet regularly with their appointed supervisor for ongoing evaluation and spiritual growth. The Bishop may consult with the supervisors.
4. Mentors may be assigned for at least a two-year period.

The Priest

Prior to ordination to the priesthood, the individual, the supervising rector and the churchwardens will evaluate the individual within the ministry setting and with reference to the individual's ministry covenant. Upon successful completion of this evaluation, the Bishop makes the decision about ordination to the priesthood. The ordinand is required to attend a pre-ordination retreat.

Reapplication

Applicants who are not recommended to proceed in the ordination discernment stream in the Diocese of Niagara following their initial interviews will be directed to their parish priest. The decision of the Bishop may not be appealed; however, applicants may reapply after a period of 24 months. The reapplication requires a cover letter with resume that would indicate that there have been significant changes/developments to support beginning this process again.

Appeal

Candidates who have been declined later in the process may appeal to the Bishop. The Bishop may affirm the decision or review the decision - a process which may include more interviews, further training or additional experiences. The Bishop's decision is final.

Other Matters

In consultation with the Bishop and Director of Human Resources, the candidate is free to discuss employment possibilities elsewhere in the Church.

It is expected that theological students will be responsible for the cost of their training. Limited grants are available from the diocese and candidates may apply for grants prior to August 31 of each year on the prescribed form available.