

Checklist

Ordination to the Diaconate

Diocese of the Rio Grande

Name _____ Age _____
Sponsoring Congregation _____
Year Confirmed/Received/Transferred into DRG _____

The Road to Ordination as a Deacon

- Individuals who believe they are called to ordination as a Deacon must complete extensive discernment within their own congregations. Only after they are recommended by their congregational discernment committee and their Priest-in-Charge may individuals apply for acceptance into the Bishop's discernment process for Aspirants.

Information about the congregational discernment process and the Bishop's discernment retreat process, called BACAM (Bishop's Advisory Committee on Admission to the Ministry), may be found under "**Discernment & Aspirancy**" at <http://dioceserg.org>

Members of the Commission on Ministry of the Baptized (COMB) attend the two BACAM Retreat held each January and February. After the Retreats, the Bishop, in consultation with BACAM, selects persons with evident gifts and fitness for ordination to the Diaconate.

- If the Aspirant successfully completes the BACAM process and the Bishop then recommends that she/he apply for Postulancy, the individual must complete a Postulancy Application, as canonically required [III.6.2 (a) & (b)], before the Bishop makes a final determination on Postulancy.
- Once an individual becomes a Postulant, he/she must submit an Ember Day letter four times per year during Ember Weeks and must continue submitting letters regularly for the entirety of the process (i.e. from being named a Postulant until ordination to the Diaconate). For details on Ember Day letters, see page 2 of this Checklist.
- Each individual in the ordination process is personally responsible for making sure she/he has completed the appropriate paperwork and met requirements at each stage (Postulant, Candidate, and Ordination to the Diaconate). No one from either the COMB or the Bishop's Office will routinely notify you of missing paperwork, requirements, or deadlines.

The following checklist applies only to persons who have never been ordained. Consult Section 10 of Title III for information about the reception of clergy already ordained in another Church.

Formal Preparation for Ordination to the Diaconate

DATE ACTION REQUIRED

Postulancy

_____ Bishop’s letter admitting Aspirant/Nominee to **Postulancy** is recorded in the Register and sent to the **Postulant**, with copies going to the Member of the Clergy or other leader exercising oversight of the Postulant’s congregation, the Commission on Ministry of the Baptized (COMB), the Commission’s Committee for the Diaconate, and the Standing Committee of the DRG [III.6.3 (d)]; in addition, copies go to the Canon for Education and Formation, the Dean of the Bishop’s School for Ministries, and the Canon to the Ordinary.

_____ **Ember Day Letters**

As required by Canon, individuals in the ordination process (whether as **Postulants, Candidates, or Ordinands to the Diaconate**) shall communicate with the Bishop by letter four times a year in Ember Weeks. Each letter reflects on the Postulant’s academic experience as well as personal and spiritual development. Information about content of Ember letters is found in the Canon [III.6.3 (e)]. In addition, follow these instructions for your letters:

- Bishop Vono prefers to receive Ember Day letters by email: bp.michael@dioceserg.org.
- A copy of each letter must be submitted to the Bishop’s Assistant, Mary Jewell, for the official record. Send Ms. Jewell both an email copy and a signed copy via the U.S. Postal Service. Her email is MJewell@dioceserg.org. The Diocesan mailing address is:
The Episcopal Diocese of the Rio Grande
6400 Coors Blvd NW
Albuquerque, NM 87120
- Ember Day letters give the Bishop an opportunity to respond pastorally to each individual. These letters are intended solely for the Bishop, so please do not send a copy to your COMB Liaison.
- If you wish to speak with the Bishop about anything that requires action rather than a pastoral response, please address those requests to the Bishop in a separate correspondence.
- Ember Day letters are to be thoughtful, formal, and typed.

Record of Ember Week Letters

Dates Sent: 1st year: _____, _____, _____, _____
 2nd year: _____, _____, _____, _____
 3rd year: _____, _____, _____, _____

_____ **Initial Meeting with COMB’s Committee for the Diaconate**

Postulant meets, in person or electronically, with the COMB's Committee for the Diaconate to review and evaluate the Postulant's proposed program of education and formation. The CD then presents its evaluation and recommendation to the COMB and the Bishop.

BSFM Generally, **Postulants** seeking ordination as deacons will attend the IONA School for Ministry in the Bishop's School for Ministries. The Committee for the Diaconate periodically reviews the Postulant's progress.

In consultation with the Bishop, CD will assign **Postulant/Candidate** to field placement in congregations other than the Postulant's sponsoring congregation during Year 2 of the IONA School.

Placements are listed below:

DATES	CONGREGATION	SUPERVISING PRIEST
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

In consultation with the Bishop, CD will assign *the Postulant/Candidate to* field placement in non-parochial settings during Year 3 of the IONA School.

Placements are listed below:

DATES	CONGREGATION	SITE SUPERVISOR
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

In consultation with the Bishop, the Committee for the Diaconate will assign *the Postulant/Candidate* a **Deacon Mentor** to provide a source of individual counsel and support to the **Postulant/Candidate** during this period of formation and field work.

The Committee for the Diaconate regularly reports to the COMB on each Postulant's progress and recommends to the COMB when a **Postulant** has made suitable progress to be considered for Candidacy.

COMB, with the Bishop's consent, recommends that *the Postulant* applies for Candidacy; The Chair of COMB or the Postulant's COMB Liaison then communicates with *the Postulant* about initiating an application for Candidacy.

Candidacy

To apply for Candidacy, the **Postulant** shall:

_____ (1) Write a letter to the Bishop requesting **Candidacy** [III.6.4 (a)] including date of admission to Postulancy.

_____ (2) Provide a letter of continuing support by *the* Postulant's sponsoring congregation signed by at least two-thirds of the Vestry or comparable body and by the Member of the Clergy or other leader exercising oversight.

_____ Committee for the Diaconate reviews the Postulant's file to make sure that requirements to date have been met and reports to COMB.

_____ COMB attests in writing to the continuing formation of the **Postulant**. COMB may or may not ask to meet with the **Postulant** before attesting to her/his formation in preparation for **Candidacy** [III.6.4 (b)].

_____ Standing Committee of DRG shall interview the **Postulant** and make a **Candidacy** recommendation to the Bishop [III.6.4 (b)].

_____ Bishop's letter of acceptance admitting *the Postulant* to **Candidacy** is recorded in the Register and sent to *the Candidate* and to other appropriate persons/bodies [III.6.4.(b)].

_____ If the COMB's Committee for the Diaconate requests, the **Candidate** will meet, in person or electronically, with the CD to review the Candidate's progress in education and formation. With the approval of the COMB and the Bishop, the CD may adjust coursework or recommend supplementary study during Postulancy or Candidacy to ensure that the **Candidate** will be well-prepared for Diocesan canonical exams [III.6.5(f,g)] and is fulfilling any areas of emphasis that the Bishop, COMB, and/or CD determine necessary.

_____ **BSFM** The Committee for the Diaconate will continue to monitor the field work of those in the IONA School.

_____ Committee for the Diaconate will recommend to the COMB and the Bishop that a **Candidate** in training in the Iona School is ready to take Diocesan canonical exams.

_____ Under the supervision of the Examining Chaplains, *the Candidate* will take Diocesan canonical exams in order to demonstrate basic competence in five canonical areas: [III.6.5 (f)]

- (1) Academic studies including, The Holy Scriptures, theology, and the tradition of the Church
- (2) Diakonia and the diaconate
- (3) Human awareness and understanding
- (4) Spiritual development and discipline
- (5) Practical training and experience

_____ The Candidate will meet with the Examining Chaplains to discuss the results of Diocesan canonical exams, and, if needed, Chaplains will recommend and supervise additional study and a date for completion for *the Candidate* to gain proficiency in an area(s). Examining Chaplains will work with the Committee for the Diaconate to assure that competencies are met.

_____ In preparation for ordination, the *Candidate* is responsible for completing training in each of the following areas and submitting a copy of their certificate of completion for each to the Bishop's office: [III.8.5 (h)]

- (1) _____ Prevention of sexual misconduct – to include all modules for Safeguarding available in the on-line certification program available on <http://www.dioceserg.org>
- (2) _____ Civil requirements for reporting and pastoral opportunities for responding to evidence of abuse
- (3) _____ Constitution and Canons of the Episcopal Church, particularly Title IV
- (4) _____ Church's teaching on racism

Ordination to the Diaconate

_____ The Committee for the Diaconate and the Examining Chaplains will prepare a final written assessment and recommendation on ordination and attest to the COMB that the *Candidate* has successfully completed a program of education and formation and is ready for ordination to the *Diaconate* [III.6.5 (i)]. At this point either a representative of the COMB or the Bishop's Office will alert the *Candidate* to apply for Ordination to the Diaconate.

At least 18 months from the time of written acceptance of nomination by the Nominee as provided in III.6.2 (b), and upon attainment of at least 24 years of age, and the completion by the COMB of the above steps, the *Candidate* shall

- _____ (1) Write a letter to the Bishop requesting ordination as a *Deacon* under Canon 6 [III.6.6 (b)(1)]
- _____ (2) Provide a letter of support from the *Candidate's* sponsoring congregation, signed and dated by at least two-thirds of the Vestry or comparable body and the Member of the Clergy exercising oversight [III.6.6 (b)(2)].

_____ Within 36 months prior to ordination as a *Deacon*, the *Candidate* must complete the following [III.8.5 (k)]:

- (1) _____ Background check, using approved forms
- (2) _____ Medical exam by a professional, using approved forms
- (3) _____ Psychological evaluation/or update of original evaluation completed by a professional designated by the Bishop, using approved forms

_____ The COMB shall certify the *Candidate* as formed for ordination to the Diaconate and provide this certificate to the Bishop's office. The COMB may or may not choose to meet with the *Candidate* before certification [III 6.6(b)(5)].

_____ Bishop then shall provide the following information to the Standing Committee [III.6.6 (b)]:

- (1) _____ Candidate's letter requesting ordination as a Deacon
- (2) _____ Letter of support from Candidate's Vestry and supervising Clergy person
- (3) _____ Written evidence of admission to Postulancy and Candidacy
- (4) _____ Certificate from the Iona School or other training entity showing the Candidate's scholastic record in the subjects required by the Canons and giving an evaluation with recommendation as to ordination
- (5) _____ Certificate from COMB recommending ordination to the Diaconate

_____ Consent of Standing Committee [III.6 6(c)]. The Standing Committee has a policy of interviewing the **Candidate** in person prior to certifying by a testimonial to the Bishop its recommendation for ordination to the **Diaconate**.

_____ Once the Standing Committee's testimonial is presented to the Bishop, and there is no sufficient objection on medical, psychological, moral, or spiritual grounds, the Bishop may ordain the **Candidate** to the **Diaconate** [III.6.6 (d)]. All Deacons can expect to be ordained in a single joint service to take place in the summer.

_____ At the time of ordination, the **Candidate** shall subscribe publicly and make, in the presence of the Bishop, the declaration required in Article VIII of the Constitution [III.6.6 (d)]:

I do believe the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the Word of God, and to contain all things necessary to salvation; and I do solemnly engage to conform to the Doctrine, Discipline, and Worship of the Episcopal Church.

Post-Ordination

_____ The Bishop, after consultation with the **Deacon** and the Member of the Clergy or other leader exercising oversight, may assign a **Deacon** to one or more congregations, other communities of faith or non-parochial ministries. (iii.7.3)

_____ For two years after ordination, the **Deacon** shall continue a process of formation developed by the Committee for the Diaconate with the authorization of the Bishop [III.7.4 (f)].

_____ The Bishop or the Bishop's designee, in consultation with the COMB shall assign each newly ordained **Deacon** a mentor Deacon where a suitable mentor Deacon is available. The mentor and **Deacon** shall meet regularly for at least one year to provide guidance, information, and a sustained dialogue about diaconal ministry [III.7.4 (g)].