Checklist
Ordination to the Priesthood
Diocese of the Rio Grande

Name ____________________________________________ Age ________

Home Congregation ____________________________________________

Year Confirmed/Received/Transferred into DRG ________________

The Road to Ordination as a Priest

• Individuals who believe they are called to ordination as a Priest must complete extensive
discernment within their own congregations. Only after they are recommended by their
congregational discernment committee and their Rector/Vicar/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), is located on the diocesan website.

• 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.8.2 (a) & (b)], before the Bishop makes a final
determination on Postulancy.

• Once the Bishop sends the Aspirant/Nominee an official letter designating her/him a
Postulant, the Commission on Ministry of the Baptized (COMB) begins its work with the
Postulant. **It is at this point, when made a Postulant, that an individual actually enters
“the ordination process.”**

• 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
Priesthood). 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, Ordination to the Transitional Diaconate, and Ordination to the Priesthood). 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 Priesthood

DATE ACTION REQUIRED

Postulancy

_______ Bishop’s letter of acceptance 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 on the Priesthood, and the Standing Committee of the DRG [III.8.3(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

_______ As required by Canon, individuals in the ordination process (whether as Postulants, Candidates, or Ordinands to the Transitional Diaconate or the Priesthood) 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.8.3(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 letters.

Record of Ember Week Letters
Dates Sent: 1st year: ________, ________, ________, ________
2nd year: ________, ________, ________, ________
3rd year: ________, ________, ________, ________

_______ Once Postulant and Chair of COMB receive Bishop’s letter granting admittance to Postulancy, Postulant will contact Chair to set up an appointment to meet, in
person or electronically, with the COMB’s Committee on the Priesthood to review and evaluate the Postulant’s proposed program of education and formation. The CP then presents its evaluation and recommendation to the COMB and the Bishop.

**MDiv** For Postulants attending residential seminary, the Committee on the Priesthood also monitors the canonically required reports on academic performance and personal qualifications for ordination (including seminary-assigned field work and Clinical Pastoral Education) that are provided at least once a year by the seminary or other formation program [III.8.5(j)]

If the Postulant is attending seminary on-line, the CP will monitor any field work assignments made by the seminary, as well as canonically required reports on academic performance and personal qualifications for ordination.

**BSFM** Postulants over age 50 who are seeking ordination as bi-vocational priests normally will attend the IONA Initiative in the Bishop’s School for Ministries. The Committee on the Priesthood periodically reviews the Postulant’s progress.

In consultation with the Bishop, CP may assign Postulant to field placement in a congregation(s) other than the Postulant’s home congregation.

Placements are listed below:

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Those studying for the priesthood are required to complete a basic unit of CPE (Clinical Pastoral Education) before they are ordained.

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The Committee on the Priesthood 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 Postulant apply for Candidacy; Chair of COMB or the Postulant’s COMB Liaison then communicates with Postulant about initiating an application for Candidacy.

**Candidacy**

To apply for Candidacy, the Postulant shall:
1. Write a letter to Bishop requesting Candidacy [III.8.4(a)] which includes the date of admission to Postulancy

2. Provide a letter of continuing support by Postulant’s home 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 on the Priesthood 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.8.4(b)]

Standing Committee of DRG shall interview the Postulant and make a Candidacy recommendation to the Bishop [III.8.4(b)]

Bishop’s letter of acceptance admitting Postulant to Candidacy is recorded in the Register and sent to Candidate and to other appropriate persons/bodies [III.8.4.(b)]

If the COMB’s Committee on the Priesthood requests, the Candidate will meet, in person or electronically, with the CP to review the Candidate’s progress in education and formation. With the approval of the COMB and the Bishop, the CP may adjust coursework or recommend supplementary study during Postulancy or Candidacy to ensure that the Candidate will be well-prepared for General Ordination Exams or Diocesan canonical exams [III.8.5(g,h)] and is fulfilling any areas of emphasis that the Bishop, COMB, and/or CP determine are necessary

MDiv For Candidates attending residential seminary, the Committee on the Priesthood will continue to monitor seminary-assigned fieldwork.

If the Candidate is attending seminary on-line, the CP will continue to monitor evaluations of any field work assignments made by the seminary

BSFM The CP will continue to assign and monitor the field work of those in the IONA Initiative. In consultation with the Bishop, the CP may assign these Candidates to field placement in a congregation(s) other than the Candidate’s home congregation.

Placements are listed below:

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Committee on the Priesthood will recommend to the COMB and the Bishop that a Candidate in an M.Div. program is ready to take General Ordination Exams; CP will...
recommend when Candidates training in the IONA Initiative are ready to take Diocesan canonical exams

Under the supervision of the Examining Chaplains, Candidate will take GOEs or Diocesan canonical exams in order to demonstrate basic competence in seven canonical areas: [III.8.5(g)]

1) The Holy Scriptures
2) History of the Christian Church
3) Christian Theology
4) Christian Ethics and Moral Theology
5) Christian Worship according to the use of the Book of Common Prayer, the Hymnal, and authorized supplemental texts
6) The Practice of Ministry

If the Examining Chaplains request, Candidate will meet with them to discuss the results of GOEs/Diocesan canonical exams and, if needed, Chaplains will recommend and supervise additional study for Candidate to gain proficiency in an area(s). Examining Chaplains will work with the Committee on the Priesthood 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 at www.praesidiuminc.com/enroll
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 Transitional Diaconate

______ The Committee on the Priesthood and the Examining Chaplains will prepare a final written assessment and recommendation on ordination and certify to the COMB that the Candidate has successfully completed a program of education and formation and is ready for ordination as a Transitional Deacon [III.8.6]. At this point either a representative of the COMB or the Bishop’s Office will alert the Candidate to apply for Ordination to the Transitional Diaconate

At least 18 months from the time of written acceptance of nomination by the Nominee as provided in III.8.2(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 8 [III.8.6(c)(1)]

______ (2) Provide a letter of support from the Candidate’s home congregation, signed and dated by at least two-thirds of the Vestry or comparable body and the Member of the Clergy exercising oversight [III.8.6(c)(2)]

______ Within 36 months prior to ordination as a Transitional 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 Transitional 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.8.6(c)(5)]

______ Bishop then shall provide the following information to the Standing Committee [III.8.6(c)]:

(1) ____ Candidate’s letter requesting ordination as a Transitional Deacon
(2) ____ Letter of support from Candidate’s Vestry and supervising Clergyperson
(3) ____ Written evidence of admission to Postulancy and Candidacy
(4) ____ Certificate from seminary, the Iona Initiative, 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 Transitional Diaconate

______ Consent of Standing Committee [III.8.6(d)]. 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 as a Transitional Deacon
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 transitional diaconate [III.8.6(e)]. All Deacons, whether vocational or transitional, 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.8.6(e)]:

> 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.

Bishop will appoint or approve the **Transitional Deacon** to serve in a Parochial Cure to fulfill III.8.7(e).
**Ordination to the Priesthood**

In October, the Committee on the Priesthood, after consultation with the Bishop, will communicate with *Transitional Deacons* ordained in the summer to remind them to apply for ordination to the Priesthood. If a *Transitional Deacon* has been assigned additional work to reach competency in any of the seven canonical areas, the CP makes sure he/she is making progress on that assigned work before recommending that the *Transitional Deacon* apply for ordination. *Transitional Deacons* who are deemed ready to apply will then contact Ms. Mary Jewell to set a tentative ordination date and proceed to complete their application for ordination.

A *Transitional Deacon* may be ordained as a *Priest* [III.8.7(a)]:

1. After at least six months since ordination, and eighteen months from the time of acceptance of nomination by the Aspirant/Nominee as provided in III.8.2(b)
2. Upon attainment of at least twenty-four years of age
3. If the medical evaluation, psychological evaluation, and background check have taken place or been updated within thirty-six months prior to ordination as a Priest

To apply for ordination to the Priesthood, the *Transitional Deacon* shall

1. Write a letter to the Bishop requesting ordination as a Priest under Canon 8 [III.8.7(b)(1)]
2. Provide a letter of support from the Ordinand’s home congregation, signed and dated by at least two-thirds of the Vestry or comparable body and the Member of the Clergy exercising oversight [III.8.3(b)(2)]

COMB may or may not meet with the *Transitional Deacon* at this point. After the Committee on the Priesthood has reviewed the Deacon’s file and recommends ordination to the Priesthood, the COMB makes a final determination about ordination. If the COMB agrees, it attests to the *Transitional Deacon’s* successful completion of the following four required areas and recommends the *Deacon* for ordination to the *Priesthood*:

1. Program of formation designed during Postulancy under Canon III.8.5
2. Proficiency in the required areas of study
3. Successful completion of service in a Parochial Cure
4. Successful completion of additional educational or formational training recommended by the Committee on the Priesthood or the Examining Chaplains to be completed prior to ordination as a *Priest*

Bishop shall obtain in writing and provide the following information to the Standing Committee [III.8.7(b)]:

1. An application from the *Deacon* requesting ordination as a *Priest*, including the Deacon’s dates of admission to Postulancy and Candidacy and ordination as a Transitional Deacon
2. A letter of support from the Deacon’s home congregation, signed by at least two-thirds of the Vestry and the Member of the Clergy or other leader exercising oversight
3. Evidence of admission to Postulancy and Candidacy, including dates of admission, and ordination to the Diaconate
4. A certificate from the seminary or other program of preparation, written at the completion of the program of preparation, showing the Deacon’s scholastic record in
the subjects required by the Canons, and giving an evaluation with recommendation as to the Deacon’s other personal qualifications for ordination, together with a recommendation regarding ordination to the Priesthood.

(5) _____ A statement from the COMB attesting to the Transitional Deacon’s successful completion of the four required areas listed in the previous entry

_______ Consent of the Standing Committee certifying that the canonical requirements for ordination to the Priesthood have been met and that there is no sufficient objection on medical, psychological, moral, or spiritual grounds, and that they recommend ordination, by a testimonial addressed to the Bishop. The Standing Committee has a policy of interviewing the Transitional Deacon in person prior to certifying by a testimonial to the Bishop its recommendation for ordination [III.8.7(c)]

_______ Bishop, after receiving the Standing Committee’s testimonial recommending ordination, may ordain the Transitional Deacon to the Priesthood [III.8.7(d)]

_______ At the time of ordination the Transitional Deacon shall subscribe publicly and make, in the presence of the Bishop, the declaration required in Article VIII of the Constitution [III.8.7(c)]:

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

**After Ordination to the Priesthood**

_______ The newly ordained Priest, whether employed or not, shall be assigned a mentor Priest by the Bishop, in consultation with COMB. The mentor and new Priest shall meet regularly for at least a year to provide guidance, information, and a sustained dialogue about priestly ministry [III.9.2]

_______ Bishop and COMB shall require and provide for the continuing education of Priests and keep a record of such education [III.9.1]