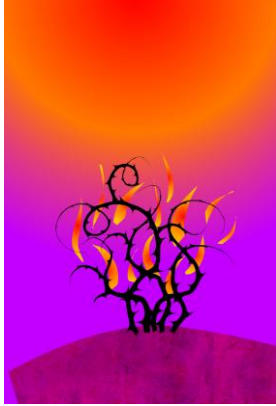


DIOCESE OF NIAGARA
PROCEDURE AND REQUIREMENTS REGARDING
THE CANDIDACY PROCESS FOR VOCATIONAL DEACONS



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. Normally, those called to the office of deacon will have a ministry outside the parish primarily serving those on the margins of society and outside the institutional Church. Their secondary vocation (approximately 20% of their time) will be spent in the parish where they may assist in the Eucharist and help enable lay ministry. While the parish will pay for any expenses incurred and provide funds for education, their work in the parish is unpaid. They will not be in charge of congregations or parishes. Part of discerning a call to ordained ministry in the Diocese of Niagara is participation in the candidacy process.

Under normal circumstances, a candidate for Holy Orders passes through a four stage process before ordination as a deacon. The stages are:

The Inquiry	A person in the early stages of vocational discernment prior to initial interview, will meet with his/her Rector/Priest-in-Charge and the Director of Deacons and or Deputy Director of Deacons.
The Applicant	A person who has submitted an application for Holy Orders and has met with the Executive Officer and the Director of Deacons. The parish process will be started during this stage and the applicant's Regional Archdeacon will be informed.
The Candidate	A person who has been approved for candidacy with the Diocese of Niagara by the Candidates' Committee and the Bishop.
The Vocational Deacon	A person who takes part in the governance of the Church, in the carrying out of its mission to serve all people, particularly the poor, the weak, the sick and the lonely.

The requirements for each phase of this process will normally be completed before a person advances to the next stage. Before making any formal application for training towards ordained ministry, the person is advised to allow sufficient time for the inquiry stage and application process. Those interested in ordination to the Vocational Diaconate in Niagara should contact their rector. The Diocese, through the Candidates' Committee, expects to take an ongoing role in the candidate's formation beginning early in the process.

At no time during the candidacy/postulancy process can the diocese guarantee ordination to an applicant.

The Inquiry

1. The person expressing interest in a vocation to the diaconate will share with his or her rector, his or her understanding of being called to ordained ministry, and the rector 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 (minimum three months to one year), during which specific ministry in a leadership context is undertaken (teaching, hospital, social justice, pastoral) with direct supervision by the rector or another professional. The inquirer will be required to meet with the Director of Deacons/Deputy Director of Deacons during this time.
2. Regular participation in the life and worship of the home parish in the Anglican Diocese of Niagara for at least three years prior to application.
3. Education requirements will be the equivalent of a Certificate in Christian Studies which will include courses in the following:
 - Old Testament
 - New Testament
 - Theology
 - Anglican Church History
 - CounselingOther courses may be recommended by the Director of Deacons.
4. Those wishing to apply for ordination may find the necessary documents available on the diocesan website (www.niagara.anglican.ca/beingAnglican/vocation), then select Diaconate. The documents are:
 - Procedures and Requirements Regarding the Vocational deacons Candidacy Process
 - Application for Ordination

The application submission should include:

- Application for Ordination form duly completed and signed
- Responses to five questions on page seven of the application
- Copies of applicant's baptismal and confirmation certificates
- A current Police Record Check which includes a Vulnerable Sector Check
- A photograph for identification purposes

The Applicant

1. Once the Application for Ordination (as outlined above) has been received, candidates will be invited to meet with the Executive Archdeacon and the Director of Deacons.
2. After the above interview the applicant will begin the parish process of discernment as outlined on the website.
3. Interviews are arranged with three members of the Candidates Committee. One of the interviewers will be consistent throughout the process.
4. The first interview with the candidates committee will be held after the Parish Discernment Process has been completed and Parish Commendation for Deacons submitted. The second interview will take place midway through the process. The final interview will take place once the academic requirements have been successfully completed.
5. The Bishop, Executive Officer, Director of Deacons, Deputy Director of Deacons and interviewers meet to discuss potential candidates after each set of interviews has taken place. Additional interviews may sometimes be required.
6. The applicant becomes a candidate upon completion of an initial interview and approval by the Candidates Committee, Director of Deacons, Executive Officer and Bishop.
7. A meeting with the Director of Deacons, Executive Officer or Bishop may follow.

The Candidate

1. Candidates are required to have a Spiritual Director upon acceptance as a Niagara candidate. Candidates will meet with their Spiritual Director regularly, ideally once a month. 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. The cost associated with a Spiritual Director is the responsibility of the candidate.
2. Each candidate is required to meet with the Director of Deacons and the Deputy Director of Deacons once a year to review progress in his/her training, spiritual discipline and practice of ministry. Issues for growth identified by the Candidates' Committee should be addressed at this time.
3. Reporting Expectations: It is the candidate's responsibility to ensure that the Director of Deacons receives reports/transcripts from their college/university throughout the process, which will continue until the successful completion of the required courses.
4. After completion of the exit interview and upon receiving the Bishop's approval, the candidate will meet with the Director of Deacons to discuss ordination. Each new ordinand will be assigned a mentor and will meet with that person regularly for two years after ordination.

The Deacon

1. Prior to ordination, the ordinand will attend a pre-ordination retreat.
2. All Deacons are required to attend a Volunteer Screening and Safe Church seminar within the first year of ordination.

Reapplication

Applicants who are not chosen from their initial interview to be a candidate with the Diocese of Niagara will be directed to their Rector/Priest-in-Charge. The decision of the Candidates Committee may not be appealed; however, applicants may reapply after a period of 24 months. The reapplication requires a cover letter with resume indicating 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

It is expected that the candidate will be responsible for the cost of their training, purchase of their Byzantine stoles and other vestments as required.