

(e) If the applicant is a member of a Religious Order or Christian Community recognized by Canon III.24, the letters of support referred to in Canon III.5 or Canon III.6 and any other requirements imposed on a congregation or Member of the Clergy may be given by the Superior or person in charge, and Chapter, or other comparable body of the Order or Community.

Member of a Religious Order or Community.

**Sec. 3.** An application for any dispensation permitted by this Title from any of the requirements for ordination must first be made to the Bishop, and if approved, referred to the Standing Committee for its advice and consent.

Dispensations.

**CANON 6: Of the Ordination of Deacons**

**Sec. 1.** Selection

The Bishop, in consultation with the Commission, shall establish procedures to identify and to select persons with evident gifts and fitness for ordination to the Diaconate.

Selection and Nomination of Deacons.

**Sec. 2.** Nomination

A confirmed adult communicant in good standing, may be nominated for ordination to the diaconate by the person's congregation or other community of faith.

(a) The Nomination shall be in writing and shall include a letter of support by the Nominee's congregation or other community of faith committing the community to

- (1) pledge to contribute financially to that preparation, and
- (2) involve itself in the Nominee's preparation for ordination to the Diaconate.

If it be a congregation, the letter shall be signed by two-thirds of the Vestry or comparable body, and by the Member of the Clergy or leader exercising oversight.

(b) The Nominee, if in agreement with the nomination, shall accept the nomination in writing and shall provide the following to the Bishop:

Application for admission as Postulant.

- (1) Full name and date of birth.
- (2) The length of time resident in the Diocese.
- (3) Evidence of Baptism and Confirmation.
- (4) Whether an application has been made previously for Postulancy or the person has been nominated in any Diocese.
- (5) A description of the process of discernment by which the Nominee has been identified for ordination to the Diaconate.
- (6) The level of education attained and, if any, the degrees earned, and areas of specialization, together with copies of official transcripts.

**Sec. 3.** Postulancy

Postulancy is the time between nomination and candidacy and may initiate the formal preparation for ordination. Postulancy involves

Postulancy for the Diaconate.

continued exploration of and decision about the Postulant's call to the Diaconate.

**(a)** Before granting admission as a Postulant, the Bishop shall

- (1) determine that the Nominee is a confirmed adult communicant in good standing, and
- (2) confer in person with the Nominee,

Commission to review the application.

**(b)** If the Bishop approves the Nominee proceeding into Postulancy, the Commission, or a committee of the Commission, shall meet with the Nominee to review the application and prepare an evaluation of the Nominee's qualifications to pursue a program of preparation for ordination to the Diaconate. The Commission shall present its evaluation and recommendations to the Bishop.

Previous refusal or cessation.

**(c)** No Bishop shall consider accepting as a Postulant any person who has been refused admission as a Candidate for ordination to the Diaconate in any other Diocese, or who, having been admitted, has afterwards ceased to be a Candidate, until receipt of a letter from the Bishop of the Diocese refusing admission, or in which the person has been a Candidate, declaring the cause of refusal or of cessation.

Admission to Postulancy.

**(d)** The Bishop may admit the Nominee as a Postulant for ordination to the Diaconate. The Bishop shall record the Postulant's name and date of admission in a Register kept for that purpose. The Bishop shall inform the Postulant, the Member of the Clergy or other leader exercising oversight of the Postulant's congregation or other community of faith, the Commission, the Standing Committee, and the director of the Postulant's program of preparation, of the fact and date of such admission.

Ember Weeks.

**(e)** Each Postulant for ordination to the Diaconate shall communicate with the Bishop in person or by letter, four times a year, in the Ember Weeks, reflecting on the Postulant's academic, diaconal, human, spiritual, and practical development.

Removal.

**(f)** Any Postulant may be removed as a Postulant at the sole discretion of the Bishop. The Bishop shall give written notice of the removal to the Postulant and the Member of the Clergy or other leader exercising oversight of the Postulant's congregation or other community of faith, the Commission, the Standing Committee, and the director of the program of preparation.

**Sec. 4. Candidacy**

Definition of Candidacy.

Candidacy is a time of education and formation, in preparation for ordination to the Diaconate, established by a formal commitment by the Candidate, the Bishop, the Commission, the Standing Committee and the congregation or other community of faith.

**(a)** A person desiring to be considered as a Candidate for ordination to the Diaconate shall apply to the Bishop. Such application shall include the following:

- (1) the Postulant's date of admission to Postulancy, and
- (2) a letter of support by the Postulant's congregation or other community of faith. If it be a congregation the letter shall be signed and dated by at least two-thirds of

the Vestry or comparable body and by the Member of the Clergy or other leader exercising oversight.

(b) Upon compliance with these requirements, and receipt of a written statement from the Commission attesting to the continuing formation of the Postulant, and having received approval in writing of the Standing Committee who shall have interviewed the Postulant and who shall have had an opportunity to review the documentation relating to the application of the Postulant, the Bishop may admit the Postulant as a Candidate for ordination to the Diaconate. The Bishop shall record the Candidate's name and date of admission in a Register kept for that purpose. The Bishop shall inform the Candidate, the Member of the Clergy or other leader exercising oversight of the Candidate's congregation or other community of faith, the Commission, the Standing Committee, and the Dean of the seminary the Candidate may be attending or proposes to attend, or the director of the Candidate's program of preparation, of the fact and date of such admission.

Admission to Candidacy.

(c) A Candidate must remain in canonical relationship with the Diocese in which admission has been granted until ordination to the Diaconate under this Canon, except, for reasons acceptable to the Bishop, the Candidate may be transferred to another Diocese upon request, provided that the Bishop of the receiving Diocese is willing to accept the Candidate.

Transfers to another Diocese.

(d) Any Candidate may be removed as a Candidate, at the sole discretion of the Bishop. The Bishop shall give written notice of the removal to the Candidate and the Member of the Clergy or other leader exercising oversight of the Candidate's congregation or other community of faith, the Commission, the Standing Committee, and the director of the program of preparation.

Candidate may be removed.

(e) If a Bishop has removed the Candidate's name from the list of Candidates, except by transfer, or the Candidate's application for ordination has been rejected, no other Bishop may ordain the person without readmission to Candidacy for a period of at least twelve months.

**Sec. 5. Preparation for Ordination**

(a) The Bishop and the Commission shall work with the Postulant or Candidate to develop and monitor a program of preparation for ordination to the Diaconate in accordance with this Canon to ensure that pastoral guidance is provided throughout the period of preparation.

(b) The Bishop may assign the Postulant or Candidate to any congregation of the Diocese or other community of faith after consultation with the Member of the Clergy or other leader exercising oversight.

Assignment.

(c) Formation shall take into account the local culture and each Postulant or Candidate's background, age, occupation, and ministry.

Formation.

(d) Prior education and learning from life experience may be considered as part of the formation required for ordination.

- (e) Wherever possible, formation for the Diaconate shall take place in community, including other persons in preparation for the Diaconate, or others preparing for ministry.
- Areas of competence. (f) Before ordination each Candidate shall be prepared in and demonstrate basic competence in five general areas:
- (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.
- Training. (g) Preparation for ordination shall include training regarding
- (1) prevention of sexual misconduct.
  - (2) civil requirements for reporting and pastoral opportunities for responding to evidence of abuse.
  - (3) the Constitution and Canons of the Episcopal Church, particularly Title IV thereof.
  - (4) the Church's teaching on racism.
- Ember Weeks. (h) Each Candidate for ordination to the Diaconate shall communicate with the Bishop in person or by letter, four times a year, in the Ember Weeks, reflecting on the Candidate's academic, diaconal, human, spiritual, and practical development.
- Evaluation of progress. (i) During Candidacy each Candidate's progress shall be evaluated from time to time, and there shall be a written report of the evaluation by those authorized by the Commission to be in charge of the evaluation program. Upon certification by those in charge of the Candidate's program of preparation that the Candidate has successfully completed preparation and is ready for ordination, a final written assessment of readiness for ordination to the Diaconate shall be prepared as determined by the Bishop in consultation with the Commission. This report shall include a recommendation from the Commission regarding the readiness of the Candidate for ordination. Records shall be kept of all evaluations, assessments, and the recommendation, and shall be made available to the Standing Committee.
- Examinations and evaluations. (j) Within thirty-six months prior to ordination as a Deacon, the following must be accomplished
- (1) a background check, according to criteria established by the Bishop and Standing Committee.
  - (2) medical and psychological evaluation by professionals approved by the Bishop, using forms prepared for the purpose by The Church Pension Fund, and if desired or necessary, psychiatric referral.
- (k) Reports of all investigations and examinations shall be kept permanently on file by the Bishop and remain a part of the permanent diocesan record.

**Sec. 6. Ordination to the Diaconate**

**(a)** A person may be ordained Deacon:

- (1) after at least eighteen months from the time of written acceptance of nomination by the Nominee as provided in III.6.2(b), and
- (2) upon attainment of at least twenty-four years of age.

**(b)** The Bishop shall obtain in writing and provide to the Standing Committee:

Ordination papers.

- (1) an application from the Candidate requesting ordination as a Deacon under this Canon.
- (2) a letter of support from the Candidate's congregation or other community of faith, signed and dated by at least two-thirds of the Vestry and the Member of the Clergy or other leader exercising oversight.
- (3) written evidence of admission of the Candidate to Postulancy and Candidacy, giving the dates of admission.
- (4) a certificate from the seminary or other program of preparation showing the Candidate's scholastic record in the subjects required by the Canons, and giving an evaluation with recommendation as to the Candidate's other personal qualifications for ordination together with a recommendation regarding ordination to the Diaconate under this Canon.
- (5) a certificate from the Commission giving a recommendation regarding ordination to the Diaconate under this Canon.

**(c)** On the receipt of such certificates, the Standing Committee, if a majority of all members consent, shall certify that the Canonical requirements for ordination to the Diaconate under this Canon have been met, that there is no sufficient objection on medical, psychological, moral, or spiritual grounds and that they recommend ordination. The Standing Committee shall evidence such certification, by a testimonial, addressed to the Bishop in the form specified below and signed by the consenting members of the Standing Committee.

Standing Committee to consent.

**To the Right Reverend \_\_\_\_\_, Bishop of \_\_\_\_\_ We, the Standing Committee of \_\_\_\_\_, having been duly convened at \_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_, do testify that A.B., desiring to be ordained to the Diaconate under Canon III.6 has presented to us the certificates as required by the Canons indicating A.B.'s preparedness for ordination to the Diaconate under Canon III.6; and we certify that all canonical requirements for ordination to the Diaconate under Canon III. 6 have been met; and we find no sufficient objection to ordination. Therefore, we recommend A.B. for ordination. In witness whereof, we have hereunto set our hands this \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, in the year of our Lord \_\_\_\_\_.**

**(Signed) \_\_\_\_\_**

Declaration of conformity.

(d) The testimonial having been presented to the Bishop, and there being no sufficient objection on medical, psychological, moral, or spiritual grounds, the Bishop may ordain the Candidate to the Diaconate under this Canon; and 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.

### **CANON 7: Of the Life and Work of Deacons**

**Sec. 1.** Deacons serve directly under the authority of and are accountable to the Bishop, or in the absence of the Bishop, the Ecclesiastical Authority of the Diocese.

Community of Deacons.

**Sec. 2.** Deacons canonically resident in each Diocese constitute a Community of Deacons, which shall meet from time to time. The Bishop may appoint one or more of such Deacons as Archdeacon(s) to assist the Bishop in the formation, deployment, supervision, and support of the Deacons or those in preparation to be Deacons, and in the implementation of this Canon.

Council on Deacons.

**Sec. 3.** The Bishop may establish a Council on Deacons to oversee, study, and promote the Diaconate.

Rights and responsibilities.

**Sec. 4.** 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. Deacons assigned to a congregation or other community of faith act under the authority of the Member of the Clergy or other leader exercising oversight in all matters concerning the congregation.

(a) Subject to the Bishop's approval, Deacons may have a letter of agreement setting forth mutual responsibilities in the assignment, and, if such a letter exists, it is subject to renegotiation with the Vestry/Bishop's Committee after the resignation of the Rector or the Priest-in-Charge.

(b) Deacons shall report annually to the Bishop or the Bishop's designee on their life and work.

(c) Deacons may serve as administrators of congregations or other communities of faith, but no Deacon shall be in charge of a congregation or other community of faith.

(d) Deacons may accept chaplaincies in any hospital, prison, or other institution.

(e) Deacons may participate in the governance of the Church.

(f) For two years following ordination, new Deacons shall continue a process of formation authorized by the Bishop.

Mentors.

(g) The Bishop or the Bishop's designee, in consultation with the Commission, 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.

**Sec. 5.** The Bishop and Commission shall require and provide for the continuing education of Deacons and keep a record of such education. Continuing education.

**Sec. 6 (a)** A Deacon may not serve as Deacon for more than two months in any Diocese other than the Diocese in which the Deacon is canonically resident unless the Bishop of the other Diocese shall have granted a license to the Deacon to serve in that Diocese. License to serve in another Diocese.

**(b)**

(1) A Deacon desiring to become canonically resident within a Diocese shall request a testimonial from the Ecclesiastical Authority of the Diocese in which the Deacon is canonically resident to present to the receiving Diocese, which testimonial, if granted, shall be given by the Ecclesiastical Authority to the applicant, and a duplicate thereof may be sent to the Ecclesiastical Authority of the Diocese to which transfer is proposed. The testimonial shall be in the following words: Letters Dimissory.

**I hereby certify that A.B., who has signified to me the desire to be transferred to the Ecclesiastical Authority of \_\_\_\_\_, is a Deacon of \_\_\_\_\_ in good standing, and has not, so far as I know or believe, been justly liable to evil report for error in religion or for viciousness of life, for the last three years.**

**(Date) \_\_\_\_\_ (Signed) \_\_\_\_\_**

(2) Such testimonial shall be called Letters Dimissory. If the Ecclesiastical Authority accepts the Letters Dimissory, the canonical residence of the Deacon so transferred shall date from the acceptance of the Letters Dimissory, of which prompt notice shall be given both to the applicant and to the Ecclesiastical Authority from which it came.

(3) Letters Dimissory not presented within six months from the date of transmission to the applicant shall become void.

(4) A statement of the record of payments to The Church Pension Fund by or on behalf of the Deacon concerned shall accompany Letters Dimissory.

**Sec. 7.** On reaching the age of seventy-two years, a Deacon shall resign from all positions of active service in this Church, and the resignation shall be accepted. The Bishop may, with the consent of the Deacon, assign a resigned Deacon to any congregation, other community of faith or ministry in another setting, for a term not to exceed twelve months, and this term may be renewed. Resignation.

**Sec. 8.** Release and Removal from the Ordained Ministry of this Church

Release and Removal of a Deacon.

If any Deacon of The Episcopal Church shall express, in writing, to the Bishop of the Diocese in which such Deacon is canonically resident, an intention to be released and removed from the ordained Ministry of this Church and from the obligations attendant thereto, including those promises made at Ordination in the Declaration required by Article VIII of the Constitution of the General Convention, it shall be the duty of the Bishop to record the matter. The Bishop, being satisfied that the person so declaring is acting voluntarily and for causes which do not affect the person's moral character, and is neither the subject of information concerning an Offense that has been referred to an Intake Officer nor a Respondent in a pending disciplinary matter as defined in Title IV of these Canons, shall lay the matter before the Standing Committee, and with the advice and consent of a majority of the Standing Committee the Bishop may pronounce that the person is released and removed from the ordained Ministry of this Church and from the obligations attendant thereto, and is deprived of the right to exercise in The Episcopal Church the gifts and spiritual authority as a Minister of God's Word and Sacraments conferred in Ordination. The Bishop shall also declare in pronouncing and recording such action that it was for causes which do not affect the person's moral character, and shall, at the person's request, give a certificate to this effect to the person so released and removed from the ordained Ministry.

In disciplinary cases.

**Sec. 9.** If a Deacon submitting the writing described in Section 8 of this Canon be the subject of information concerning an Offense that has been referred to an Intake Officer or a Respondent in a pending disciplinary matter as defined in Title IV of these Canons, the Ecclesiastical Authority to whom such writing is submitted shall not consider or act upon the written request unless and until the disciplinary matter shall have been resolved by a dismissal, Accord, or Order and the time for appeal or rescission of such has expired.

Declaration.

**Sec. 10.** In the case of the release and removal of a Deacon from the ordained Ministry of this Church as provided in this Canon, a declaration of release and removal shall be pronounced by the Bishop in the presence of two or more Members of the Clergy, and shall be entered in the official records of the Diocese in which the Deacon being released and removed is canonically resident. The Bishop who pronounces the declaration of release and removal as provided in this Canon shall give notice thereof in writing to every Member of the Clergy, each Vestry, the Secretary of the Convention and the Standing Committee of the Diocese in which the Deacon was canonically resident; and to all Bishops of this Church, the Ecclesiastical Authority of each Diocese of this Church, the Presiding Bishop, the Recorder of Ordinations, the Secretary of the

House of Bishops, the Secretary of the House of Deputies, The Church Pension Fund, and the Board for Transition Ministry.

**CANON 8: Of the Ordination of Priests**

**Sec. 1. Selection**

The Bishop, in consultation with the Commission, shall establish procedures to identify and select persons with evident gifts and fitness for ordination to the Priesthood.

Selection and nomination to the Priesthood.

**Sec. 2. Nomination**

A confirmed adult communicant in good standing may be nominated for ordination to the Priesthood by the person's congregation or other community of faith.

(a) The Nomination shall be in writing and shall include a letter of support by the Nominee's congregation or other community of faith committing the community to:

Application for admission to Postulancy.

- (1) pledge to contribute financially to that preparation, and
- (2) involve itself in the Nominee's preparation for ordination to the Priesthood.

If it be a congregation, the letter shall be signed by two-thirds of the Vestry or comparable body, and by the Member of the Clergy or leader exercising oversight.

(b) The Nominee, if agreeing, shall accept the nomination in writing, and shall provide the following to the Bishop:

- (1) Full name and date of birth.
- (2) The length of time resident in the Diocese.
- (3) Evidence of Baptism and Confirmation.
- (4) Whether an application has been made previously for Postulancy or the person has been nominated in any Diocese.
- (5) A description of the process of discernment by which the Nominee has been identified for ordination to the Priesthood.
- (6) The level of education attained and, if any, the degrees earned and areas of specialization, together with copies of official transcripts.

**Sec. 3. Postulancy**

Postulancy is the time between nomination and candidacy and may initiate the formal preparation for ordination. Postulancy involves continued exploration of and decision about the Postulant's call to the Priesthood.

Postulancy for the Priesthood.

(a) Before granting admission as a Postulant, the Bishop shall

- (1) determine that the person is a confirmed adult communicant in good standing.
- (2) confer in person with the Nominee.
- (3) shall consult with the Nominee regarding financial resources which will be available for the support of the Postulant throughout preparation for ordination. During