

Discernment Process for Ordination

To the Diaconate and to the Priesthood



Prepared by the Bishop & Commission on Ministry
of the Diocese of El Camino Real

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Dear Leaders,

God calls us all to be ministers and leaders in the church and in our communities. If you are reading this letter, it is likely because you are at a point in your own discernment, when you are exploring what new paths of ministry may be opening for you. You are at a crossroads, one with several paths before you. Like those of old, when coming to a crossroads, a person pauses, prays and listens for what may be the best way forward.

The discernment about your path lies in the place of that pause. This is a process that is guided by the Holy Spirit, and one that happens in community. While you may have an idea, a desire, or a wish for your next steps, discernment is a process that takes into account your sense of your calling, and the calling as it is understood by your parish community, your deanery, your family, the Commission on Ministry, the Standing Committee, and me, your bishop. Together we stand with you, pray with you, and converse with you as you are at this crossroads.

This document, “Discernment Process for Ordination” is a practical guide to the steps of this process, and the presentation of the different orders of ministry. We are all called, by virtue of our baptism, into ministry. Whether or not that is the life of a priest, a deacon, or a lay leader, is what we are discerning together. No matter the outcome of this discernment process, your call as a baptized person is always to—with God’s help—attend to your own formation, grow in your engagement with community, and expand your service to all of God’s creatures.

“Discernment Process for Ordination” is not intended to be a checklist or a proof of adequacy; rather, it is a way to walk through discernment in a thoughtful manner. Discernment is never about transactions; it is always about the movement of the Holy Spirit in ways that are surprising and unexpected.

Please know that as you walk this pilgrim path of discernment about your ministry, we will all hold you and the process in prayer. Walk gently and humbly, and above all, listen very carefully.

Faithfully,

+Lucinda Ashby

Fourth Bishop of the Diocese of El Camino Real

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Overview of Canon 6 and Canon 8 Ordination Processes in the Diocese of El Camino Real

	Canon 6, Vocational Diaconate	Canon 8, Priesthood
First Steps	<p>Confirmed Communicant in good standing. Member of ECR parish for one year.</p> <p><i>Discus call in detail with rector. Rector sends letter of introduction to Bishop supporting continued discernment. Meet with the Bishop. Begin working with Diocesan Discernment Committee (DDC). DDC makes recommendation to the Bishop for Holy Orders. Sponsoring parish endorses for Holy Orders. Submit completed Nomination Packet to the Bishop's Assistant.</i></p>	
Nominee	<p>There is no set timeframe to be a Nominee.</p> <p><i>Begin meeting with Spiritual Director. Complete a psychological examination and a medical examination. Submit completed Application Packet for Ministry Discernment Retreat (MDR) to the Bishop's Assistant. Attend the Ministry Discernment Retreat (by invitation from the Bishop only). Commission on Ministry recommends Nominee to Bishop. The Bishop admits Nominee to Postulancy.</i></p>	
Postulant	<p>There is no set timeframe for Postulancy.</p> <p><i>Pursue an approved program of formation. (seminary or local formation program) The formation program will send a report to the Bishop during the second year. Postulant begins writing Ember Day Letters to Bishop. Continue to work with Spiritual Director. Participate in sexual misconduct prevention training. Begin Field Education. Complete Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE). Sponsoring and field parish endorse candidacy. Submit a letter to the Bishop requesting candidacy. Commission on Ministry and Standing Committee recommend Candidacy. The Bishop admits Postulant to Candidacy.</i></p>	
Candidate	<p>There is no set timeframe for Candidacy.</p> <p><i>Complete an approved program of preparation. (seminary or local formation program) Continue writing Ember Day Letters to the Bishop. Continue work with Spiritual Director. Complete Field Education. Participate in anti-racism training. Participate in community engagement training. (IAF, ABCD, COPA, etc.) Demonstrate Spanish language proficiency – Liturgical Spanish or above.</i></p>	
	Submit application for Vocational Diaconate.	GOE's OR Portfolio Review
	<p><i>Sponsoring parish and field education site endorse ordination to the Diaconate. Commission On Ministry and Standing Committee recommend ordination to Diaconate.</i></p>	
	Canon 6, Vocational Diaconate	Canon 8, Priesthood
Diaconate	<p><i>Ordination to the diaconate.</i></p>	
	<p><i>Ordinand: for Deacon and Priest Diaconate is a minimum of 6</i></p>	<p><i>Six or more months serving with Bishop/COM approved Mentor.</i></p>

	<i>months. Bishop gives ordination date. Ordinand plans service with approval from the Bishop. Bishop places Deacon in Faith Community.</i>	<i>Sponsoring and diaconal parish/institution endorse ordination to the Priesthood. Commission On Ministry and Standing Committee recommend ordination to the Priesthood.</i>
Priesthood		<i>Bishop gives ordination date. Deacon plans service with approval from the Bishop. Priest is called to a cure. Assigned a clergy mentor. Attend Diocesan On Ramp program.</i>

Introduction

The Diocese of El Camino Real seeks leaders with spiritual and relational gifts who can both lead and accompany a faith community within the structures of our Episcopal Church. We look for persons who (1) are Christ-centered and spiritually grounded; (2) have a talent for gathering and developing community; (3) practice good stewardship of their own and others’ time, talent, and treasure; (4) demonstrate emotional maturity; and (5) appreciate and respect the practice of authority in the Church. While some gifts may already be apparent in those seeking Holy Orders, others will be nurtured over time.

This document describes the procedures under the Canons for those persons considering or seeking Holy Orders in the Diocese of El Camino Real. Persons in the ordination process are advised to become familiar with both the ordination Canons and the procedures described in this document. Some of the non-canonical procedures described in this document may be tailored for an individual based on their experiences.

Vocational Diaconate

Canon 6: Of the Ordination of Deacons

Section 1: Selection *The Bishop, in consultation with the Commission, shall establish procedures to identify and to select person with evident gifts and fitness for ordination to the Diaconate.*

Priesthood

Canon 8: Of the Ordination of Priests

Section 1: Selection *The Bishop, in consultation with the Commission, shall establish procedures to identify and to select person with evident gifts and fitness for ordination to the Priesthood.*

First Steps

1. A person entering the discernment process must be a confirmed communicant in good standing at a parish in the Diocese of El Camino Real for a minimum of one year.
 - a. *Canon 1.17 Of regulations Respecting the Laity*

Section 3: All communicants of this Church who for the previous year have been faithful in corporate worship, unless for good cause prevented, and have been faithful in working, praying, and giving for the spread of the Kingdom of God, are to be considered communicants in good standing. (Canon 1 page 86 -- 1.17.3)

2. Discuss call in detail with Rector.
 - a. The Rector of a sponsoring parish or institution plays an important role throughout the discernment process but is especially involved in the early stages. Along with the Vestry and sponsoring parish, the Rector affirms the person's call at each new stage of their discernment journey, as will be described below. Please see **Appendix A** for a more thorough description of the Rector's role in these first steps.
3. The Rector sends a Letter of Introduction to the Bishop to support continuing discernment.
 - a. When the parishioner is discerning a call to Holy Orders, the Rector of the sponsoring parish or institution will be asked to write a short letter to the Bishop. This letter is sent prior to the person's first meeting with the Bishop.
4. Meet with the Bishop.
 - a. The Bishop is one of three diocesan bodies with whom the individual will meet with throughout their discernment process, the other two being the Commission on Ministry (COM) and the Standing Committee (SC). These three accompany the person seeking ordained ministry in different ways. The COM interviews and discerns alongside the person, making recommendations to the Bishop on whether or not to advance the individual's discernment process. The SC affirms that all requirements have been met at each stage of the process. The Bishop decides whether and when the person is prepared to enter subsequent stages of their discernment process, considering information received from the COM, the SC, and the person in process. This initial meeting with the Bishop establishes a relationship that is expected to continue throughout the person's journey. The Discerner is thus urged to maintain regular contact with their Bishop, communicating concerns and hopes along the way, and trusting the Bishop to accompany them on their path of discernment and offer counsel, support, and correction as needed.
5. Diocesan Discernment Committee.
 - a. Once the Bishop has determined that the person may move forward in the discernment process, they will begin working with the Diocesan Discernment Committee (DDC). The person will meet with the DDC for a minimum of 8 sessions over a period of 3 months.
 - b. At the conclusion of their work, the DDC shall write a report and will nominate the person to the Bishop for Holy Orders.
6. Sponsoring parish endorses nomination for Holy Orders.
 - a. The Vestry and Rector of the sponsoring parish shall vote to endorse for Holy Orders **(Form 6). Appendix D**
7. Submit completed Nomination Packet to the Bishop's Assistant.
 - a. Canon 6 Section 2: *Nomination (Vocational Diaconate)*

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:
 - (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.**

b. Canon 8 Section 2: Nomination (Priesthood)

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:
 - (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.*

- c. The Nomination Packet shall include:
- i. Letter of Recommendation from the Rector of the sponsoring parish.
 - ii. Recent photograph.
 - iii. Application for Holy Orders **(Form 1). Appendix D**
 - iv. List of the nominee's education beyond high school and copies of official transcripts.
 - v. Description of the outcome of the ordination process if the nominee had previously applied for Holy Orders.
 - vi. Endorsement of Nomination for Holy Orders **(Form 6). Appendix D**
 - vii. Report from the Diocesan Discernment Committee.

Nominee

1. Begin meeting with a Spiritual Director.
 - a. The Commission on Ministry provides a list of approved Spiritual Directors.
Appendix C
2. Complete a psychological evaluation using an approved psychologist.
 - a. Canon III.6.5(j)(2) *Within thirty-six months prior to ordination as a Deacon, the following must be accomplished[...] 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.*
 - b. Canon III.6.5.k *Reports of all investigations and examinations shall be kept permanently on file by the Bishop and remain part of the permanent diocesan record.*
 - c. Before attending the Ministry Discernment Retreat the Nominee shall complete a psychological examination with an approved professional. This shall be valid for 36 months. The Nominee shall also complete the Life History Form and Behavioral Screening Questionnaire which are available from the Bishop's Assistant.
3. Complete a Medical Examination
 - a. Canon III.6.5(j)(2) *Within thirty-six months prior to ordination as a Deacon, the following must be accomplished[...] 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.*

- b. Canon III.6.5(k) *Reports of all investigations and examinations shall be kept permanently on file by the Bishop and remain part of the permanent diocesan record.*
 - c. Before attending the Ministry Discernment Retreat, the Nominee shall complete a medical examination with an approved professional and submit the CPG medical examination form to the Bishop's Assistant. This shall be valid for 36 months. Forms are available from the Bishop's Assistant.
4. Submit completed application packet to Bishop's Assistant.
 - a. The packet should include:
 - i. Authorization for Background Investigation **(Form 10)**
 - ii. CPG Medical Examination Form
 - iii. Three Personal References **(Form 12)**
 - iv. Psychological Evaluation including the BSQ and Life History CPG forms
 - v. Official Transcripts from College and/or University
 - vi. Transcripts and Evaluations from Theological Education
 - vii. Application for the Ministry Discernment Retreat
 5. Attend Ministry Discernment Retreat by Invitation from the Bishop.
 - a. The Nominee will attend the Ministry Discernment Retreat with the Commission on Ministry.
 - b. The COM interviews Nominee and recommends Nominee to Postulancy to the Bishop.
 6. Bishop shall notify the Nominee regarding Postulancy.

Postulant

1. The Postulant will be assigned a Shepherd from the COM and who will meet with them regularly throughout the ordination process.
2. Pursue approved program for formation, either seminary or local formation program.
3. Begin writing Ember Day Letters to the Bishop.
 - a. Vocational Diaconate: *Canon III.6.3(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.*
 - b. Priesthood: *Canon III.8.3(e) Each Postulant for ordination to the Priesthood shall communicate with the Bishop in person or by letter, four times a year, in the Ember Weeks, reflecting on the Postulant's academic experience and personal and spiritual development.*
 - c. Appendix E: How to write Ember Day Letters.
4. Continue meeting with Spiritual Director.
5. Certification in Sexual Misconduct Prevention Training.

- a. Explanation *Canon 3.6.3 and 3.8.3: Sexual misconduct prevention complying with Titles III & IV of the Constitution and Canon of the Episcopal Church, civil requirements for reporting, and opportunities for responding to evidence of abuse.* The combination of *Safeguarding God's People* and *Safeguarding God's Children* satisfies this requirement.
6. Begin Field Education Training.
 - a. As a practicum in ministry, field education is designed to provide a rich supplement and a variant to the postulant's current parish experience. Placement shall be arranged between the Postulant, Bishop, and formation program and may not be the Postulant's sponsoring parish. The field education training shall begin during postulancy and will continue into candidacy.
 - b. Seminarians are required to select a parish for the second year of field work that is currently involved in broad-based community organizing or is ready to do so. This experience is designed to help the postulant or candidate focus on organizing methodology as a model for ministry in the parish and the wider community.
 - c. Part of the postulant's experience at the field education parish or approved ministry site will involve working with one of the local broad-based community organizing groups such as COPA and IAF. The supervisor from the field ed parish shall send a written description and evaluation to the Bishop's Assistant at the end of the year.
7. Complete CPE.
 - a. The Postulant must satisfactorily complete the basic unit of Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) through an accredited CPE program and supervisor, or a program approved by the Bishop and the COM. The Postulant shall ensure that the CPE supervisor sends a letter of evaluation to the Bishop's Assistant.
8. Sponsoring parish endorses Candidacy.
 - a. The Postulant shall ensure the Rector and Vestry of their sponsoring parish submits **Form 7A** endorsing them for Candidacy. **Appendix D**
9. Field education site endorses Candidacy.
 - a. The Postulant shall ensure the Rector and Vestry of the field education site submits **Form 7B** endorsing them for Candidacy. **Appendix D**
10. Second year report from Formation Program.
 - a. Canon III.8 Section 5(j) *The seminary or other formation program shall provide for, monitor, and report on the academic performance and personal qualifications of the Postulant or Candidate for ordination. These reports will be made upon request of the Bishop and Commission, but at least once per year.*
 - b. The approved program of formation attended by the Postulant shall submit a second-year report to the Bishop.
11. Postulant shall write a letter to the Bishop requesting Candidacy which includes the date of admission to Postulancy.
12. The COM shall conduct an interview for Candidacy with the Postulant and shall submit a letter of recommendation for Candidacy to the Bishop.

13. The Standing Committee shall conduct an interview for Candidacy with the Postulant and shall submit a letter of recommendation for Candidacy to the Bishop.
14. The Bishop shall notify the Postulant regarding Candidacy.

Candidate

Canon III.6 Section 4. Candidacy (Vocational Diaconate)

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.*
- (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.*
- (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.*

(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.

Canon III.8 Section 4 Candidacy (Priesthood)

Candidacy is a time of education and formation in preparation for ordination to the Priesthood, 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 Priesthood 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 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 Priesthood. 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 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.*
- (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.*
- (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 Dean of the seminary the Candidate may be attending or the director of the program of preparation.*
- (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.

1. Complete an approved program of preparation, either seminary or local formation program.
 2. Continue writing Ember Day Letters to the Bishop.
 3. Continue meeting with Spiritual Director.
 4. Complete work at field education site.
 5. Certification in anti-racism training program.
 - a. The candidate shall attend and obtain a certificate of completion for anti-racism training, and this may be completed through courses offered at seminary. "A Storied Pilgrimage With Race" is the preferred curriculum in this diocese.
 6. Complete Community Engagement Training.
 - a. Candidates will engage with Broad-Based Community Organizing during a focused second year of Field Education. Community organizing is a method of developing skills for the church during these changing times. It teaches a process of finding and growing leaders within the congregation that helps the church to be responsive to the needs of the people in the community in which it is located. General information about community organizing agencies can be obtained from the Bishop's Assistant.
 - b. Upon completion of the training, the supervisor shall send a written description and evaluation to the Bishop's Assistant.
 7. Demonstrate at least Spanish Liturgical Proficiency.
 - a. The Candidate shall demonstrate proficiency in Liturgical Spanish (**Form 14**).
- Appendix D.**
8. Take General Ordination Examination (GOE) or Submit a Portfolio for review if a call to the priesthood has been discerned.
 - a. GOE: The candidate shall notify the Bishop by October 1st that they plan to take the GOEs. It is the responsibility of the candidate to sign up at the appropriate time.
 - b. Portfolio Review: Beginning in Postulancy and continuing throughout the program of preparation, the person in process shall gather and retain documentation from course and field work which demonstrates increasing proficiency in the seven required canonical areas of study:
 - i. Holy Scriptures
 - ii. Church History
 - iii. Christian Theology
 - iv. Christian Ethics and Moral Theology
 - v. Contemporary Society
 - vi. Liturgics and Church Music, and
 - vii. Theory and Practice of Ministry.
 - viii. Plus, the additional areas of Homiletics and Christian Education.

At the beginning of the final year in seminary or local formation program, the person in process shall submit documentation of work in the seven canonical areas to the Bishop's Assistant.

For those in process considering the Portfolio Review instead of General Ordination Exams, the full portfolio will be reviewed by the Diocesan Board of Examining Chaplains as appointed by the Bishop. The evaluation will be reported to the Bishop and the Chair of the Commission on Ministry.

8. Sponsoring parish and field education site endorse ordination to the Diaconate.
 - a. The Candidate shall ensure the Rector and Vestry of their sponsoring parish submits **Form 8A** endorsing them for Ordination. **Appendix D**
 - b. The Candidate shall ensure the Rector and Vestry of the field education site submits **Form 8B** endorsing them for Ordination. **Appendix D**
9. The COM shall conduct an interview for Ordination to the Diaconate with the Candidate and shall submit a Letter of Recommendation for Ordination to the Bishop.
10. The Standing Committee shall conduct an interview for Ordination to the Diaconate with the Candidate and shall submit a Letter of Recommendation for Ordination to the Bishop.
11. The Bishop shall notify the Candidate regarding Ordination.

Vocational Deacon Ordination Canon III.6.6

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:

- (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.

To the Right Reverend _____, Bishop of _____

We, the Standing Committee of _____, having been duly convened 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) _____

(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.

1. The Bishop will notify the Ordinand of the chosen ordination date.
2. The Ordinand shall plan their ordination service with approval by the Bishop.
 - a. The Ordination Customary may be obtained from the Bishop's Assistant.
3. The Bishop will place the Deacon in a Faith Community.

Transitional Deacon Ordination to the Diaconate Canon III.8.6

Sec. 6. Ordination to the Diaconate for those called to the Priesthood

- (a) A Candidate must first be ordained Deacon before being ordained Priest.*
- (b) To be ordained Deacon under this Canon, a person must be at least twenty-four years of age.*
- (c) The Bishop shall obtain in writing and provide to the Standing Committee:*
 - (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 date 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.

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

To the Right Reverend _____, Bishop of _____

We, the Standing Committee of _____, having been duly convened at _____, do testify that A.B., desiring to be ordained to the Diaconate and Priesthood under Canon III.8 has presented to us the certificates required by the Canons indicating A.B.'s preparedness for ordination to the Diaconate under Canon III.8; and we certify that all canonical requirements for ordination to the Diaconate under Canon III.8 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) _____

(e) 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.

1. The Bishop will notify the Ordinand of the chosen ordination date.
2. The Ordinand shall plan their ordination service with approval by the Bishop.
 - a. The Ordination Customary may be obtained from the Bishop's Assistant.
3. Following ordination, the Bishop will place the Transitional Deacon in a Faith Community to complete a minimum of six months of mentorship with a Bishop and COM-approved mentor.

Priesthood Ordination Canon III.8.7

Sec. 7. Ordination to the Priesthood

(a) A person may be ordained Priest:

- (1) after at least six months since ordination as a Deacon under this Canon and eighteen months from the time of acceptance of nomination by the Nominee as provided in III.8.2(b), and
- (2) upon attainment of at least twenty-four years of age, and
- (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

1. Sponsoring parish and mentorship site endorses Ordination to the Priesthood.
 - a. The Deacon shall ensure the Rector and Vestry of their sponsoring parish submits **Form 9A** endorsing them for Ordination. **Appendix D**
 - b. The Deacon shall ensure the Rector and Vestry of the mentorship submits **Form 9B** endorsing them for Ordination to the Priesthood. **Appendix D**
2. The COM interviews the Deacon and shall submit a letter of recommendation for Ordination to Priesthood to the Bishop.
3. The Standing Committee interviews the Deacon and shall submit a letter of recommendation for Ordination to Priesthood to the Bishop.

To the Right Reverend _____, Bishop of _____

We, the Standing Committee of _____, having been duly convened at _____, do testify that A.B., desiring to be ordained to the Priesthood has presented to us the certificates required by the Canons indicating A.B.'s preparedness for ordination to the Priesthood have been met; and we certify that all canonical requirements for ordination to the Priesthood 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) _____

4. The Bishop shall notify Deacon regarding Ordination to the Priesthood.
5. The Bishop will notify the Deacon of the chosen ordination date.
6. The Deacon shall plan their ordination service with approval by the Bishop.
 - a. The Ordination Customary may be obtained from the Bishop's Assistant.
7. The newly ordained Priest is called to a cure.
8. The newly ordained Priest is assigned a clergy mentor by the Bishop and will attend the diocesan On-Ramp program.

Appendices

Appendix A

The Role of the Rector and Sponsoring Parish

The sense of call to ordained ministry arises from the relationship between God, an individual, and their church community. Discernment of this call thus begins at the parish level and primarily involves the Rector. The Vestry, as representatives of the parish, are required to affirm and endorse an applicant at each major step. The sponsoring parish, in turn, does all it can to support their member throughout the discernment process, from pre-nomination through its conclusion.

The Rector is often the first person to whom a parishioner turns to discuss their sense of call to ordained ministry. The diocese will provide training for all Rectors, to help prepare them to receive and work with any who come to them expressing a perceived call. Months or years of dialogue with the Rector may pass before the individual is ready to take the first formal steps in the process. During this period, the Rector may recommend prayer, study, spiritual direction, special readings, and lay ministry projects appropriate to the order to which the person feels called.

Once the Rector and parishioner are in accord regarding the person's call, the Rector sends the Bishop a short letter of introduction, indicating support for the individual seeking further discernment. The letter should verify that the person has met the following pre-requisites:

- be a communicant in good standing and a leader in the congregation for at least one year;
- be baptized and confirmed or received into the Episcopal Church (documentation required);
- have a bachelor's degree or equivalent if seeking priesthood (waived at the Bishop's discretion);
- have met with the Rector for a significant amount of time, regarding their call; and
- have the Rector's support for continuing the discernment process.

If the Bishop approves continued discernment, the following steps detail the continued role of the Rector and Vestry.

- Once the Bishop assigns the discerner to the Diocesan Discernment Committee (DDC), the Rector will notify the Vestry that the discernment process continues. Upon completion of its work, the DDC sends the Rector a copy of their report.
- If the DDC nominates the Discerner, the Rector will write a detailed letter to the Bishop, stating that the individual meets all canonical requirements, and providing reasons for the Rector's recommendation that the parishioner enter the formal ordination process.
- If the Bishop invites the Discerner to attend the Ministry Discernment Retreat (MDR), the Rector participates in the MDR as directed by the Commission on Ministry (COM).
- If, after attending the MDR, the Bishop admits the Discerner to Postulancy, the Rector and Vestry will be required to sign endorsements for the Discerner's Candidacy and Ordination at the appropriate times.
- Throughout the discernment process, it is expected that the Rector, Vestry, and Sponsoring Parish will pray for and support their member in every possible way.

Appendix B

How to Write an Amazing Ember Day Letter

(Edited by Bishop Lucinda and adapted from rockthatcollar.com)

Greetings, my fellow Episcopalians!

So you've been admitted to postulancy for Holy Orders. Congratulations! Time to get to work brainstorming your first [Ember Day letter](#).

[Ember Days](#) are special occasions when the church is invited to pray for all those preparing for a life in ministry. If you yourself are preparing for a life in ministry, and by chance you have picked the ordained kind, Ember Days seem like they should be a chance for everyone to dote on you. Nope! Instead, they are a chance for you to do a little extra work.

By canon law, if you are in the ordination process as a [postulant](#) (step 1) or [candidate](#) (step 2), you are required to "report" to your bishop four times a year — during, you got it, the Ember Days. I will just go ahead and tell you when they are, because as far as I am concerned there is no earthly way you could guess.

The Ember Days roll around four times a year, on the Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday following:

- Ash Wednesday (late winter/early spring)
- Pentecost Sunday (late spring/early summer)
- Holy Cross Day (always September 14)
- St. Lucy's Day (always December 13)

During the Ember Days, your bishop will pray for you, and you will return the favor by writing her a letter. What should this letter say? The canons, so eager to make you write it, don't really help you out with that part. If you are seeking ordination as a deacon, you are expected to reflect on your "academic, diaconal, human, spiritual, and practical development"; if a priest, just your "academic experience and personal and spiritual development."

Nonetheless, for both spiritual and practical reasons, Ember Day letters are worth taking seriously. From a spiritual standpoint, they are a chance to pause and reflect on how God is working in your life. On the practical side, they are a chance to demonstrate both your spiritual maturity and your writing ability to your bishop, who will surely be sharing her impressions of you with your future employers.

1. Major and minor life updates (how you and your family are doing)

Are you getting serious with someone you're dating? Newly engaged? Newly pregnant? Thinking about applying for a PhD? Taking a semester off from seminary to care for a new baby or follow your spouse abroad for work? These are all things your bishop will want to know about, and you want her to hear about them from you.

2. Ministry updates (how you are involved in your church or other faith communities)

Are you preaching once a month at your field education site? Leading a student group on your seminary campus? Contributing devotionals to d365.org (you should!)? All these things are part of your life in ministry, not just a lengthy prelude to your ordination. They will show the bishop how you are already leading in the church, and give her a sense of where your heart is. Also, if you're working part-time as a children's minister, and a church in your diocese will soon have an opening

for a curate with experience in children's ministry, why not give the bishop a reason to have you in mind?

3. Formation updates (including, but not limited to, your academic work)

If you are a student right now, this is the place to list the classes you are taking, and maybe mention which one you like the best, one interesting thing you read or discussed in that class, and why it mattered to you. Whether you're a student or not, this is also the place to include reflections on any formation-y stuff you're doing at the moment: field education, CPE [Clinical Pastoral Education], anti-racism training, Toastmasters classes, etc.

3a. Reading updates (what you've read lately that wasn't for school)

An addendum to the formation update: optional but always enjoyable! What books, essays, articles, or devotionals have captured your interest lately? How did you come across them? What did you learn from them that was unexpected or surprising?

4. Spiritual updates (how your prayer life is treating you)

Which prayer practices are meaningful to you right now? Are there any Bible verses or images or metaphors of God that have had particular resonance for you lately? As you get more involved in the life of the church and see how the sausage gets made, what questions or struggles are coming up for you? Has there been a recent moment when you've felt especially close to God?

Appendix C

List of approved Spiritual Directors

To be populated soon with Bishop approved Spiritual Directors.

Appendix D

Forms

This appendix is a separate document and may be obtained from the Bishop's Assistant. Below is a list of the forms required for Ordination.

- Form 1: Application for Nomination for Holy Orders Diocese of El Camino Real
- Form 2: Application for Ministry Discernment Conference Diocese of El Camino Real
- Form 3: Application for Ordination to the Vocational Diaconate
- Form 4: Application for Ordination to the Transitional Diaconate
- Form 5: Application for Ordination to the Priesthood
- Form 6: Endorsement of Nomination for Holy Orders
- Form 7A: Endorsement of Application for Candidacy by Sponsoring Parish
- Form 7B: Endorsement of Application for Candidacy by Field Education Parish
- Form 8A: Endorsement for Ordination to the Diaconate by Sponsoring Parish
- Form 8B: Endorsement for Ordination to the Diaconate by Mentorship Site
- Form 9: Endorsement for Ordination to the Priesthood
- Form 9B: Endorsement for Ordination to the Priesthood by Mentorship Site
- Form 10: Authorization for Background Investigation
- Form 11: Medical Examination – this form is published by the Church Pension Fund
- Form 12: Three Personal References
- Form 13: Report of Evaluation of Psychological Condition
- Form 14: Certification of Spiritual Formation Program
- Form 15: Certification of Second Language Proficiency