



## **Discernment Process**

Deacon, Priest or Monastic/Contemplative life

This document contains the process of discernment in the Diocese of Calgary for those discerning a call to Deacon, Priest or Monastic/Contemplative (“religious”) life.

You can expect the process to take up to 3 years. It is intended to be a process for individuals within the life of a community – not simply steps to work through to complete an individual desire.

## **All are gifted and necessary**

We begin with the assumption that everyone within the Body of Christ is called to use their gifts in a variety of ways.

1Corinthians12 speaks of gifts needed in the whole community of believers. *For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. All are necessary for the work of the community we cannot say we have no need of one another.*

## **Discernment – a definition:**

The act of discernment is the prayerful listening approach to hearing God's voice calling us to where we can fully live out our giftedness for the benefit of the Kingdom of God. This process is one of humbly and thoughtfully spending time in prayer – quietly listening and watching for God's leading and listening to others who are prayerfully listening with us.

Every step along the way should be steeped in prayer and deeply rooted in a scriptural and contemplative manner.

## **Discerning a Call to Ordained or Religious Life**

### Using Gifts and Leadership in a Parish and Community

The foundation is the expression of one's gifts in servant leadership in a parish and community. An important consideration is where you are already using your gifts in the life of the community.

### Spiritual Gifts Inventory & Preliminary Conversations

When sensing a call to any vocation (ordained or not) it is good to complete a Spiritual Gifts inventory to have a sense of your gifts. Please speak to your Priest or Regional Dean to find an inventory.

If after prayer and conversation with clergy, or others mature in the faith, you sense a possible call then we can begin the Diocesan process to continue discernment together.

# Diocesan Process of Discernment to Orders

*(remember this process can take up to 3 + years. There is NO rush.)*

## 1. Conversation with Parish Priest or Regional Clergy

It is important that your parish priest, (if there is no parish priest, the Regional Dean) is aware of your inquiry and sense of call before being in touch with the Diocesan Office.

## 2. Letter of Commendation from Parish

A letter from the parish priest, or if no priest, the wardens of the parish which commends the candidate to begin the process. There is an outline for this process which will be provided. This letter is emailed to [discernment@calgary.anglican.ca](mailto:discernment@calgary.anglican.ca) who will help arrange the first meeting with the Bishop.

## 3. Preliminary Conversation with Bishop

In this conversation you will be asked to discuss how you have perceived your call thus far.

## 4. Discussion with Discernment Chair

Here you will be walked through a number of pieces you can begin to prayerfully work on. They include:

- Ministry Gift Test
- Writing of a Spiritual Autobiography
- Writing a Reflection Ministry
- Writing a Reflection on Ontology (being)
- These pieces will be used in the Parish and Clergy Discernment Groups to help them prayerfully discern.
- A Criminal record Check with a Vulnerable sector check must be submitted at this stage.
- A personality test
- **NOTE:** Please do not proceed on these prior to receiving direction from the Discernment Chair.

## ONGOING PIECES

### 5 Bishops Chaplains for Ordained Ministry

This group is a combination of Lay and ordained people who oversee the process of discernment for you.

#### a. Chaplain Assigned

You will be assigned a chaplain who will prayerfully walk alongside you until the end of the process. This will ensure you have support and can ask questions or seek guidance needed. They do **not have** an evaluative part in the process.

### 6 Regular Ember Day Letters.

While the discernment process proceeds, you are asked to write regular letters to the Bishop. Once in the season of Advent and once in the season of Lent. The content of these letters will include where you are in process, where you find yourself spiritually, your prayer life, studies and overall things are going. Please ensure [discernment@calgary.anglican.ca](mailto:discernment@calgary.anglican.ca) is where you email these. They are to be 1-2 pages in length. You are expected to remember this responsibility on your own.

### 7 Personal Prayer/Devotion

It is an expectation that you will take up the practice of Morning and Evening Prayer as they are expected of all discerned calls.

### 8 Courses

The standard for a Priest is an MDiv (Masters of Divinity)

The standard for a Deacon is a licentiate.

Locally Ordained Priests are required to take all the courses the Calgary School of Discipleship offers before ordination. Courses can be found on the diocesan website.

Monastic/Contemplative courses will vary.

## 9 Parish Discernment Group

This group is made up of prayerful, Lay people who know you in your current parish. They meet with you for all gatherings except the last.

There is a specific outline of the process provided for the group when it begins. *The first meeting will be led by the Discernment committee chair.* DO NOT proceed without this initial meeting.

The group meets once/twice a month for approx. 5-9 months.

At the end of the time together the Lay group meets to draft a 1 page letter to the Bishop and emails it to [discernment@calgary.anglican.ca](mailto:discernment@calgary.anglican.ca) .

## 10 Clergy Discernment Group

This group is made up solely of clergy and the candidate. They meet for a much shorter amount of time. They too review the written documents and provide a written report to the Bishop which is also emailed to the Committee chair.

## 11 Second Conversation with Bishop

In this conversation the Bishop outlines any further steps which they may want to candidate to take in discerning. They may include:

- Further education   - Psychological Assessment
- ACPO weekend               - Internship at a Parish
- Other (at the discretion of the Bishop)

## 12 Final Discernment

The final decision to ordain someone is completely in the hands of the Diocesan Bishop who considers all of the conversations, reports and reflections. The Bishop's decision is final.

**Note:** The decision to ordain, does not mean you will receive a stipend. We cannot guarantee a paid position through this process.

If someone is **not** to be ordained, this allows conversation to seek where God is calling that person to ministry in other ways.

### IF Ordination is Discerned

In consultation with the Bishop, the discernment chair will choose a possible ordination date and work out the details of the service with the candidate(s).

The Postulant needs to be willing to accept placement by the Bishop anywhere in the Diocese. The Bishop, in discussion with the candidate will appoint the person to the post the Bishop deems most appropriate.

**Post Ordination** - The newly ordained will participate in a three-year Post Ordination Program.

To submit all materials or for information/questions please contact:

Rev. Dr. Pilar Gateman at:  
403-634-8950  
[discernment@calgary.anglican.ca](mailto:discernment@calgary.anglican.ca)