



The Anglican Church of Canada  
Diocese of Montreal  
THE BISHOP'S COMMISSION ON MINISTRY

# **Protocol on the Discernment and Formation of Candidates for the Presbyterate**

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## FOREWORD

Ordination is a vocation and a privilege not a right. Every Christian is called by God, through baptism, to minister by the effective use of his or her spiritual gifts in life's context. The ordained ministry is only one of many ways in which God calls the baptized to serve Christ

The discernment of the particular form of vocation to which God is calling a person is the responsibility of that person and of the Christian community which he or she seeks to serve: an individual's sense of calling is never above the scrutiny and jurisdiction of the Church. It is for this reason that the Diocese of Montreal has a policy of corporate discernment procedures at parish, diocesan and regional levels. It is our responsibility to discern the signs or "clues" which will, in time, produce individuals capable of effective ordained ministry.

It is equally the responsibility of the Christian community to offer on-going support to individuals in their vocational development, whether it be lay or ordained. Hence the postulancy procedure makes provision for this support in a variety of ways:

- ❖ We offer support for the discernment of gifts for lay ministries for those not accepted in the ordination track.
- ❖ We are committed to clear lines of responsibility for communicating decisions to the candidate.
- ❖ Once accepted as an Aspirant, the candidate is assigned a liaison from within the membership of the Bishop's Commission on Ministry. It is the liaison's role to act as an intermediary between the Bishop and the Commission and the candidate: answering questions, monitoring progress, and so on.

**It is assumed that, at the end of the process, the candidate will be ordained, first to the transitional diaconate, and then to the presbyterate. The Bishop is the person who makes the final decision about ordination, guided by policies and procedures established from time to time by the provincial and national Houses of Bishop. However, in our tradition ordination is to "title" -- i.e., to a particular ministry as licensed by the Bishop, with its attached stipend and allowances. Ordination may therefore have to be delayed, even for a fully-qualified candidate, until a suitable title is found.**

## NOTE

There is a separate protocol governing the **Vocational Diaconate**, found on the diocesan website, [www.montreal.anglican.ca / resources](http://www.montreal.anglican.ca/resources).

## PROCEDURE FOR ORDINATION

An Inquirer after Holy Orders in the Diocese of Montreal will normally pass through five stages before being ready for ordination. The requirements for each stage must be successfully completed before the next stage is begun. With no prejudice to either party, the process may be terminated at any stage by either the Diocese of Montreal or the candidate. Discussion of the reasons shall precede termination.

A brief flow chart of the stages and individuals or groups involved follows.

<b>Church Level</b>	<b>Stage</b>	<b>Church Body Involved</b>	<b>Function</b>	<b>Candidate's Status</b>
Parish	IA	Incumbent	Initial discernment	Inquirer
	IB	Parish Ministry Group	Discerning Body	Applicant
Diocese	II	Bishop Bishop's Commission on Ministry : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Liaison</li> <li>• Sub-committee</li> <li>• Full Commission</li> </ul>	Discerning Body	Aspirant
Ecclesiastical Province of Canada	III	Advisory Committee on Postulants for Ordination (ACPO)	Discerning Body	Postulant
College	IV	Bishop's Commission on Ministry Faculty of MDTC , Incumbent & support group in assigned parish	Formation, Supervision and Evaluation	Postulant
Diocese	V	Psychological Assessment Medical check-up Police Report SPE/CPE	Discernment & evaluation	Ordinand
Diocese	VI	Bishop Incumbent	Ordination & placement Supervision and Evaluation	Transitional Deacon
Diocese	VII	Bishop	Ordination	Priest

At each stage of the process, the candidate and the parish/diocesan individuals or groups involved have a responsibility for open communication and discussion of both positive and negative recommendations. In the event of termination, the candidate will be offered support and re-direction by qualified persons in the diocese or the parish.

## **Stage IA From Inquirer to Applicant**

A person expressing interest in serving the Anglican Church in an ordained capacity should first of all confer with the Incumbent of the church where he or she has been worshipping. The inquirer must have been a member of the parish for at least two years, and (if not a cradle Anglican) have been formally an Anglican for three years.

One of the components of the conversation with the Incumbent should be an exploration of the nature of ministry itself, of the ministry of all the baptized, and of all the opportunities for both lay and ordained ministry in the Anglican Church of Canada. Examination of the particular call to priestly ministry should include a discussion of the candidate's spiritual, devotional and liturgical life, including the emotional and physical demands of parish ministry and in what way the candidate believes that priestly ministry differs from any of the "helping" professions in other spheres of life.

**If the Incumbent feels that it would be inappropriate at that time to pursue the inquiry, it is his or her responsibility to communicate the reasons to the individual in a mutually satisfactory way, and to offer suggestions for re-direction.**

**If, at any point from the outset of the conversations, an Incumbent feels unable to counsel an Inquirer, contact may be made with the Bishop's Commission on Ministry for guidance on procedure.**

**If the Incumbent feels that the call to ordination might be legitimate, and that the individual's personality and life style are compatible with ordained life, they proceed to Stage 1B. At this point the individual becomes an Applicant.**

## **Stage 1B**

A Parish Ministry Group is named by the Incumbent and Wardens. In the case of a multi-point parish it should include members from as many of the points as possible, and should reflect the whole spectrum of parish life - - but it should probably not consist of more than 6 or 8 people. The group does not convene until it is mandated by the Bishop's Commission on Ministry. When that is done, its first task is to choose a Chair and a Secretary.

The Applicant is asked to fill out *The Inquirer's History Form* (which is part of this on-line document) and submit it to the Incumbent. This form will include biographical information, as well as a brief history of his or her spiritual journey. Upon receipt of the completed form, the Incumbent convenes the Parish Ministry Group and contacts the Chair of the Bishop's Commission on Ministry (see Appendices I and II) to arrange for the Group to be mandated by the Commission.

The applicant is required to submit a current police report to the Bishop's office.

(NB A parish may have a semi-permanent Parish Ministry Group (PMG) which is a kind of "standing Committee" of the parish. Nevertheless, the PMG must be mandated afresh each time there is a new candidate to be assessed.)

The Parish Ministry Group and the Incumbent meet with a representative from the Bishop's Commission on Ministry to discuss their purpose and the process of discernment. Diocesan resource material will be given to each member. Once the briefing is completed, copies of *The Inquirer's History Form* are distributed to members of the Parish Ministry Group.

Over the course of six to eight months, the Parish Ministry Group meets with the Inquirer to explore his or her sense of vocation and aptitude for ordained ministry. At different times these explorations may be on a one to one basis or with the group as a whole.

Upon completion of this exploration, the Parish Ministry Group convenes to assess the results of their interviews and then makes either a positive or a negative recommendation to the Incumbent. In the case of a positive recommendation, the Applicant becomes an **Aspirant**. In the case of a negative recommendation, the group as a whole should meet with the Incumbent to elaborate their feelings and to arrive at a mutually acceptable conclusion.

The Incumbent and Convenor of the Parish Ministry Group meet with the Inquirer to communicate the recommendations of the Parish Ministry Group. It is the Incumbent's responsibility to:

- a) Offer moral support and suggestions for re-direction, if the recommendation is negative.

- b) Explain the next steps in the process if the recommendation is positive, and appoint a mutually acceptable member of the Parish Ministry Group to act as an advisor.
- c) Ensure that all necessary information and documentation is forwarded to the Chair of the Bishop's Commission on Ministry, with a request for an interview between the Applicant and the Bishop.

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## **Stage II The Aspirant**

**Step 1** All pertinent information is forwarded to the Chair of the Bishop's Commission on Ministry who reviews it and, where necessary, requests additional information. He/she then arranges for the Bishop to meet with the Aspirant, through the Bishop's Secretary

**Step 2** The Bishop meets with the Aspirant to discuss current and future opportunities for ordained ministry in the Diocese of Montreal, and to learn each other's expectations.

**Step 3** The Commission appoints a member to be the liaison who will guide the Aspirant through all subsequent steps in the process.

**Step 4** During this time the Aspirant, if not already a student at McGill or at Diocesan College, will see the clergy at the College about academic qualifications. It is desirable, but not essential, that a candidate for ordination in this diocese be trained at MDTC; it is essential that the seminary of choice be an institution accredited by the Association of Theological Schools of the USA & Canada (ATS). The final year before ordination, known as the In-Ministry Year, must be done at MDTC.

If the Aspirant is studying in Montreal, assignments will be made to one or more local parishes, for internships of not less than one year; this will continue until ordination. The Incumbents of these parishes, and the student's Lay Support groups within the parishes, become part of the process of discernment and formation.

Other steps which need to be taken at this point are a psychological assessment, police report, and Clinical Pastoral Education. The liaison can give guidance in this. Costs of all these are shared 50/50 by the Diocese, once the Aspirant has been approved by ACPO as a Postulant. The Aspirant may fit them into his or her schedule as convenient, but (except for CPE) they should be done before ACPO. At least one unit of CPE, at an accredited institution, must be done before ordination.

The results of these tests, along with any necessary explanations and recommendations, are returned to the Chair of the Bishop's Commission on Ministry.

**Step 5** During this time, at least one interview takes place between the Aspirant and a small sub-committee of the Commission.

**Step 6** The Commission, as a whole, meets to assess the results of the tests, interviews and reports from the parishes and the College, and then makes a recommendation to the Bishop either that the Aspirant be sent to ACPO, or that the ordination-track be terminated. It is the co-responsibility of the Bishop and the Chair of the Commission to communicate this decision to the Aspirant and also to the referring Incumbent and supervising Incumbent.

The Aspirant is given the opportunity to meet with any members of the Bishop's Commission on Ministry who may be able to help to prepare him or her for ACPO and to offer moral support during and after the experience.

**Step 7** If the decision is not to send the Aspirant to ACPO, the process is terminated and the Applicant should be offered re-direction and/or counselling if it is deemed necessary. If the decision is positive, arrangements are made for the Aspirant to go to the next session of the Advisory Committee on Postulants for Ordination (ACPO) for the Ecclesiastical Province of Canada. There is a considerable amount of paperwork, including essays, to be written by the aspirants for the ACPO assessors well before the conference.

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## **Stage III Aspirant to Postulant**

The assessment conferences of the Advisory Committee on Postulants for Ordination (ACPO) for the Ecclesiastical Province of Canada take place once a year, in May; expenses are paid by the diocese. Candidates at the conference are told of the assessors' recommendation before the end of the ACPO

weekend.

Upon notification by ACPO of their recommendation, the Bishop and the Chair of the Bishop's Commission on Ministry meet with the Aspirant and offer professional assistance or counselling if the decision is for re-direction or postponement.

If the recommendation from ACPO is positive, the Aspirant becomes a **Postulant**, and finishes his / her course of studies and any make-up courses needed, prior to admission to the In-Ministry Year at the College.

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**Stage IV The Postulant**

During the period following ACPO the Postulant continues to be supervised and evaluated by the Incumbent of the parish to which he/she is assigned. At the end of each academic year, an evaluation from the parish clergy supervisor, together with a self evaluation and one from the principal of the theological college is prepared, signed by the student and accompanied by the appropriate release form in accordance with law, is sent to the Bishop and the Commission. It is the responsibility of the college to ensure that a full and frank discussion of both strengths and weaknesses occurs and that there is no misunderstanding of the contents of the evaluation.

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**Stage V The Ordinand**

Upon completion of training and a full unit of Supervised Pastoral Education and with the appropriate positive reviews and evaluations, the Postulant is ready to be ordained as a **Transitional Deacon**. The final decision regarding ordination will be made by the Bishop in consultation with the Principal of the Theological College and the Bishop's Commission on Ministry.

**Note**

1. *Qualified students who are not raised from one stage to the next may still be encouraged to complete their course of studies and continue to apply for bursary assistance.*
2. *Students applying to the Diocese of Montreal who have already begun a course of theological studies, and/or have been previously sponsored by other dioceses are considered exceptional cases. All parties concerned must give clear and attested reasons for this relocation before such students may be accepted into any level of theological training in the Diocese of Montreal.*

## GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS IN DISCERNMENT AND FORMATION

The formularies of the Anglican Church of Canada see priestly ministry in these terms:

<b>BAS</b> p. 646ff	<p>Proclaim the gospel by word and deed</p> <p>Fashion one's own life accordingly</p> <p>Love and serve one's people</p> <p>Preach, absolve and bless</p> <p>Preside at the sacraments &amp; other pastoral ministries</p> <p>Be diligent in reading and study</p> <p>Persevere in public and private prayer</p>
<b>BCP</b> p. 649 ff	<p>Be a messenger, watchman and steward of the Lord</p> <p>Teach, premonish, feed and provide</p> <p>Seek out the dispersed</p> <p>Be studious in praying, reading and learning the Scriptures</p> <p>Be a wholesome and godly example and pattern</p> <p>Minister the doctrines, sacraments and discipline of Christ</p> <p>Banish error</p> <p>Promote quietness, peace and love.</p>

Many of these duties are, frankly, as incumbent on the laity as they are on the clergy (e.g., prayer, godly living). Those which are more specifically clerical seem to be most relevant to those destined for pastoral ministry, and are painted in very broad strokes which imply, rather than state, various aspects of what priestly ministry might involve -- a prophetic ministry of social justice, for example, or a special ministry as a spiritual director or evangelist or academic. Even these vocations are not restricted to ordained ministers, be they bishops, priests or deacons.

At all levels of discernment, therefore, those involved are urged once again (see also above, **PROCEDURE FOR ORDINATION, 1A**) to look for the elusive conviction on the part of the Inquirer that priestly ministry differs from any of the "helping" professions in other spheres of life.

## GUIDELINES FOR INCUMBENTS

In the document *Procedure for Ordination*, the first stage requires that someone interested in exploring the possibility of ordination to the ministry should first confer with the Incumbent of the parish in which he/she has been an active worshipping member for at least two years. This places initial responsibility on the Incumbent to decide whether the person should be encouraged to proceed further in the process, or be re-directed to some form of baptismal ministry in the church. This is a serious and necessary responsibility which should not be considered lightly or quickly. If, after due consideration, the Incumbent feels that the call might be legitimate and the person suitable for ordained ministry, the *Inquirer's History Form* should be completed and discussed. Information acquired in this process must be handled with great discretion because the relationship between the Incumbent and the Inquirer is one of trust. Confidentiality is imperative.

Once the *Inquirer's History Form* has been completed, the Incumbent should contact the Chair of the Bishop's Commission on Ministry for assistance in forming a Parish Ministry Group. At the conclusion of the parish level explorations, it is the Incumbent's responsibility to communicate the decision to the person and to provide any necessary counselling. If the decision is positive he or she is designated an Applicant. It is then the Incumbent's responsibility to ensure that all necessary information and documentation is forwarded to the Chair of the Bishop's Commission on Ministry, along with a request for an interview between the Bishop and the Applicant.

The Bishop's Commission on Ministry considers the following questions to be relevant to your process of discernment of an Inquirer's possible call to the ordained ministry.

1. Do you know the person well enough to make an informed decision or do you need more time?
2. Has he or she been a confirmed or received member of the Anglican Church for at least three years, and

participated actively in the worshipping life of your parish for at least two years?

3. Why is the person seeking ordination?
4. How does the person understand the role of the ordained ministry? How does he/she understand the role of lay or baptismal ministry?
5. How do you feel about the person? Are you comfortable in a one-on-one situation? If not, could you explain why?
6. Does the person behave in an open and honest way with other people? Do you feel that he/she would be able to keep a confidence? Is he/she a good listener?
7. How does the person relate to those in authority? Is he/she able to take constructive criticism without resentment?
8. Do you feel that this person is able to give physical or mental support to those in need and accept such support from others when he/she is in need?
9. Is there anything in the person's present lifestyle or character that would significantly enhance or impede the exercise of ordained ministry?
10. Do you believe that this person is physically, emotionally, spiritually and mentally capable of handling the demands of the ordained ministry?
11. Is the person aware of the financial demands of the required period of study?
12. How is this person viewed by other members of your congregation? Is this inquiry supported by lay leaders in your parish?
13. If the person is married, does he/she have the active support of the spouse and children?
14. Would you feel comfortable having this person (after training) as a fellow priest? If not, why not?

## GUIDELINES FOR A PARISH MINISTRY GROUP

- Composition** Appointed by the Incumbent and Wardens, the Parish Ministry Group (PMG) is composed of lay members of the congregation who are active in the worshipping life of the parish, and who represent the whole spectrum of parish life (and all points, if it is a multi-point parish). Clergy do not serve as members of the PMG nor do they attend the meetings.
- Purpose** The purpose of a PMG is to explore past and present experiences of the Inquirer's baptismal ministry and to examine further his or her sense of calling to, and suitability for the ordained ministry in the Anglican Church of Canada. Discernment of a call is a serious responsibility which is shared by clergy and lay members of the parish and should not be considered lightly or quickly. It is anticipated that the explorations will occur over a six to eight month period. Information acquired in the process must be handled with great discretion, because the relationship between the Inquirer and the PMG is one of mutual trust. Confidentiality is imperative.
- Procedure**
1. As soon as possible after their appointment, all members of the PMG should meet with the Incumbent and a representative from the Bishop's Commission on Ministry (BCM) to appoint a convenor for their explorations and to be briefed on their duties and procedure. At this time they will receive all the pertinent diocesan resource material.
  2. Prior to the first meeting with the Inquirer, copies of the Inquirer's History Form (including the account of his or her spiritual journey) will be distributed to all members.
  3. Once the members have reviewed this material and received any additional information they consider necessary, the Convenor contacts the Inquirer to arrange the schedule for the exploration process.
  4. Over a period of six to eight months, the PMG meets with the Inquirer to explore his or her sense of vocation and aptitude for the ordained ministry. At different times, these explorations may be on a one-on-one basis, or with the group as a whole.
  5. Upon completion of this exploration, the PMG convenes to assess the results of their interviews and then makes either a positive or negative written recommendation to the Incumbent.
  6. In the case of a negative recommendation, the group as a whole should meet with the Incumbent to elaborate their feelings and to arrive at a mutually acceptable conclusion.
  7. If the Incumbent and the PMG agree that the Inquirer should be encouraged to continue in the discernment process, the form entitled *Evaluation of the Parish Ministry Group* is completed and mailed to the Chair of the Bishop's Commission on Ministry. At this point the person is designated an Aspirant.
  8. If there are no further candidates in the parish at that time, the Parish Ministry Group is dissolved.

## SUPPORTING MATERIAL FOR A PARISH MINISTRY GROUP

### Introduction

In the process leading to ordination, the parish is called upon to play an important and active role in the discernment and evaluation of a candidate. This process requires the formation of a Parish Ministry Group (PMG) to explore with the candidate his or her sense of vocation and suitability for ordained ministry. The recommended time for this exploration is six to eight months. *Guidelines for A Parish Ministry Group* describe the composition, purpose and procedure of this group.

In the course of its explorations, the PMG should make full use of *Appendix I - Inquirer's History Form* and *Appendix II - Qualities Desired in Prospective Postulants for Ordination*.

### AREAS OF DISCUSSION AND CONCERN

#### Faith and Commitment

Relationship and commitment to Jesus Christ underlie anyone's interest in ordination.

*How cohesive and clear is the Inquirer in telling his /her faith story? Does the account of his/her spiritual journey show evidence of a maturing faith walk? What is this person's discipline of prayer, study and worship? What is his/her understanding of stewardship? What special gifts does this person have that make him/her especially suitable for the ordained ministry in the Anglican Church of Canada?*

#### Membership and Role in Community

The New Testament exhorts the Church to be a place of the deepest kind of sharing that touches every level of human experience: spiritual, emotional, social and material.

*What have been the communities, social groups and activities that have most formed, shaped and nurtured the Inquirer's life? How has the Church, as a community, been a part of this process? Who are the people who have had the most impact on the Inquirer and on his/her decision to seek ordination? What secular interests does this person have which indicate a healthy awareness of, and concern for the diversity of the people who make up the society in which he/she lives? What prior experience, training or employment makes this person especially suited for some form of ordained ministry in the Anglican Church of Canada? What baptismal ministry does this person exercise at this time? Does this person exhibit an open and affirming style with others, regardless of their race, age, or social condition?*

#### Family and Community History

When a person seeks to serve the Church in an ordained capacity, it is essential that his or her private and public life be compatible with a maturing Christian faith within the context of the Anglican Church of Canada. Later in the process, thorough physical and psychological examinations will be required. Therefore only a general sense of the Inquirer's well-being is required at this time.

*How does this person understand his/her private or family life as an extension of his/her faith?*

*How does he/she understand his/her public life as a reflection of his/her faith?*

*What do you know about the Inquirer's family? Is he/she presently living as part of a family unit? Is the family supportive of this interest in the ordained ministry? If he/she is not presently part of such a unit, is there a community of friends who are supportive of this interest in ordination? How is this interest expressed and demonstrated?*

*What do you know about the Inquirer's business or professional relations? How is he/she perceived by those with whom he/she is in daily contact?*

*Does the Inquirer realize that both in the process leading to ordination and afterwards, he/she will be asked to serve in a variety of parishes and locations? Is the person able to go wherever his/her gifts are likely to be best used by the Anglican Church? Are there any particular issues (such as health, or employment of the individual or any member of the immediate family) which would affect the mobility of this person?*

### **Religious Background**

Grace flows into one's life from different sources. An ordained leader in the Anglican Church is expected to have integrated old and new allegiances and experiences.

*In what religious tradition has the Inquirer been raised? What has participation in that tradition brought to his/her experience as a Christian and in particular as an Anglican? With what other congregations has the Inquirer been associated? At what stage in the person's life did his/her life as a committed and active Christian begin? Why is he/she an Anglican? If the person is a convert, what drew him/her to the Anglican Church? What drew him/her to this particular parish? How long has the person been a confirmed or received member of the Anglican Church of Canada?*

### **Affirmation by the Church**

Through the workings of the Holy Spirit, people with gifts and qualities of leadership are identified for ordained ministry in the Church, and that vocation is affirmed and authenticated by the members of the Body of Christ. When one feels called to the ordained ministry there need to be significant signs within the person's congregational and institutional experience, which indicate that the Church affirms that call.

*Who are the people who are identifying the Inquirer as having gifts to be offered through ordained service in the Church? What are these gifts and how are they made evident?*

*Who is encouraging the Inquirer to seek ordination? What are their reasons for so doing? If no- one is encouraging the Inquirer, why is he/she undertaking this process?*

### **Ministry: Lay or Ordained**

In the Anglican Church we are looking for priests who are drawn into the life of the Church out of confidence that it is indeed our Lord's own body in the world, and who seek to use their particular gifts to enable it to be that body all the more faithfully. These persons understand that they will play a significant role in its various ministries of worship, education, fellowship, pastoral care, witness and service. They also recognize that ministry is one of enablement and encouragement so that all of the baptized may claim their own particular ministries. It is therefore important that such persons be comfortable working with others, and give evidence of the ability to listen and respond appropriately to what people around them are saying and doing. We are looking for persons whose self-esteem is sufficiently healthy to enable them to be interdependent with those persons with whom they work and live.

Many capable, gifted, motivated and committed people have a hard time believing that they are, as lay people, what God has intended them to be: authoritative sources of life and ministry in the Body of Christ. Only ordination, they believe, can validate their ministry or give them authoritative status. If such status and authority has not been apparent in their ministry as a lay person, it should be seriously questioned whether this could be conferred by ordination.

*Can the Inquirer cite instances and situations in which his/her lay ministry has been particularly effective and satisfying? How does the Inquirer understand the ministry of the laity? How does the Inquirer understand the differences and similarities between ministering as a lay person and as an ordained person? How does he/she view the relationship between laity and clergy? What is the Inquirer's understanding of authority and power and the differences between the two? How does the Inquirer react and behave in a situation of conflict? What kind of ministry does this person already have? How do this person's gifts and ministry match the criteria we have for persons seeking ordination? How does the Inquirer respond to the question, "What will you do if the Church does not affirm your desire to be ordained?"*

## EVALUATION OF THE PARISH MINISTRY GROUP

Please return this form to: Bishop's Commission on Ministry  
Cathedral Place, 1444 Union Ave  
Montreal, QC H3A 2B8

Name and Address of Inquirer: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Telephone Numbers: Daytime \_\_\_\_\_ Evenings and Weekends \_\_\_\_\_

Name and Address of Inquirer's Parish \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Name and Telephone Number of Parish Incumbent \_\_\_\_\_

Name of PMG Convenor \_\_\_\_\_ Parish Position \_\_\_\_\_

Names and Parish Positions of PMG Members \_\_\_\_\_

Please answer the following questions to the best of your ability, giving specific examples. These questions are to be answered by the PMG as a group. You may use additional pages if more space is required.

1. Please list meeting dates with the Inquirer \_\_\_\_\_

2. What is the Inquirer's understanding of Christian ministry? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. What does he/she have to offer the Church? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

4. What is the Inquirer's understanding of his/her vocation to the ordained ministry? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

5. How clearly is the Inquirer able to talk about this vocation? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

6. Describe the Inquirer's past and present history of ministry. Please be specific. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

7. What is your impression of the Inquirer's intellectual, emotional and spiritual capacities?

a. Intellectual \_\_\_\_\_

b. Emotional \_\_\_\_\_

c. Spiritual \_\_\_\_\_

8. Describe the Inquirer's strengths. Please be specific. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

9. Describe the areas which need strengthening. Please be specific \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

10. What is your general sense of the Inquirer's suitability for ordination? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

11. Would you be happy to have him/her, after training, as a priest in your parish? \_\_\_\_\_

12. If negative or qualified, please explain: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

13. Are there any other factors which you consider significant? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

14. Do you recommend that the Inquirer should continue in the discernment process? \_\_\_\_\_

15. Why? \_\_\_\_\_

16. \_\_\_\_\_

17. Does the Incumbent agree with your recommendation? \_\_\_\_\_

Signed on: \_\_\_\_\_

---

Convenor of Parish Ministry Group

Incumbent of Parish

Inquirer

## GUIDELINES FOR THE BISHOP'S COMMISSION ON MINISTRY

### Composition

The Bishop's Commission on Ministry (BCM) is composed of clergy and lay members appointed by the Bishop for a five year term. The collective membership should possess skills in interviewing, communicating and counselling. If possible, the membership should reflect the fact that clergy and laity in the Anglican Diocese of Montreal are both male and female, old and young, Anglophone and francophone, and of varied ethnic and cultural backgrounds. They should also recognize the fact that the requirements for and demands on our ordained clergy are changing with the times.

### Purpose

1. To support and assist the Bishop in the role of determining the suitability of potential candidates for ordination.
2. To provide guidance to parishes in their role as discerners of possible candidates.
3. To assess motive, maturity, academic qualifications, moral character, and the psychological state of those persons considering the ordained ministry.
4. To prepare successful Aspirants for ACPO, and offer counselling if the decision is for redirection or postponement.

### Knowledge and Skills Required

The combined membership of the Commission should:

- be members of the Anglican Church of Canada with an knowledge of our faith and an appreciation of our particular style of worship.
- understand the spiritual, pastoral, educational and administrative requirements of the ordained clergy.
- be able to guide Aspirants in reflection on their possible calling by:
  - a) listening with empathy and responding appropriately;
  - b) asking insightful questions;
  - c) giving specific feedback;
  - d) clarifying expectations;
  - e) using humour effectively and constructively.

## **CONSIDERATIONS FOR THE BISHOP'S COMMISSION ON MINISTRY**

This section is to be completed by those chosen to be members of the Bishop's Commission on Ministry, in consultation with present or past ACPO examiners.

## **BISHOP'S COMMISSION ON MINISTRY REPRESENTATIVE TO PARISH MINISTRY GROUP**

As soon as a Parish Ministry Group (PMG) has been appointed, a representative from the Bishop's Commission on Ministry (BCM) should meet with all the members of the PMG and the Incumbent of the parish to brief them on their duties and responsibilities. This representative will continue to be available for consultation during the discernment process.

### **The Role of the BCM Representative**

1. To present the rationale for a PMG, emphasizing the importance of the role of the laity in the process of discernment.
2. To explain the diocesan policy and procedure for discernment and ordination
3. To describe the function of the PMG
  - a. See Guidelines for Parish Ministry Group
  - b. Note that a Convenor needs to be appointed
  - c. Reiterate that clergy do not serve as members of the PMG, nor do they attend its meetings
  - d. Emphasize the absolute necessity of confidentiality in all deliberations
  - e. Explain that the PMG is the group which recommends to the Incumbent whether or not the Inquirer should be encouraged to proceed with the discernment process
4. To ensure that all necessary diocesan material is made available to members of the PMG.
5. To be a continuing link between the PMG and the BCM
6. To meet with the Incumbent and the PMG at the conclusion of their explorations to:
  - a. review the results of the process and determine that all the necessary points have been covered.
  - b. ensure that the Inquirer has access to all material which will be made available to the BCM.
  - c. ensure that adequate support is given to the Inquirer, whether the recommendation be positive or negative.

## Appendix 1

**INQUIRER'S HISTORY FORM**

This form is to be used in conjunction with the document entitled "*Diocese of Montreal - Procedure for Ordination*", and is to be completed by the Inquirer after initial contact with the Rector of his/her parish. One copy is forwarded to the Bishop's Commission on Ministry, one is kept by the Inquirer, one by the Rector, and one copy is made available to the Parish Ministry Group should it be convened. Information on the form may be shared with anyone involved in the discernment process, including a psychologist. Completion of this form is only the first step in a process which, depending on the individual's continuing suitability and previous theological training or experience, could require up to six years before ordination as a priest.

Note: If there is insufficient room to answer the questions fully, please use additional pages.

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**PERSONAL INFORMATION**

Last Name \_\_\_\_\_ Surname(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, Province, Postal Code \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone (office) \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone (home) \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Present Parish \_\_\_\_\_

Incumbent \_\_\_\_\_ Length of affiliation with this parish \_\_\_\_\_

Date and place of baptism \_\_\_\_\_

Date, place and by whom confirmed  
or received into the Anglican Church of Canada \_\_\_\_\_

Former denomination(s) – if applicable \_\_\_\_\_

Have you previously applied for admission  
to the ordination process in this or any other diocese?  Yes  No

If yes, give date, diocese and name of Bishop \_\_\_\_\_

Have you ever applied for ordination in another denomination?  Yes  No

If yes, give date, place and denomination \_\_\_\_\_

Have you been ordained in another denomination?  Yes  No

If yes, give date, place and by whom \_\_\_\_\_

During the process a police check will be required. Have you ever been convicted for a criminal offence for which a pardon has not been granted?  Yes  No If so, please explain.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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## FAMILY BACKGROUND

Date and place of birth \_\_\_\_\_ Citizenship \_\_\_\_\_

Marital Status  Single  Married  Common-law spouse  Divorced  Separated  Widowed

Spouse's name \_\_\_\_\_ Spouse's occupation \_\_\_\_\_

Names and birth dates of children (if applicable) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Have you been previously married?  Yes  No

Have you ever been divorced?  Yes  No

If yes, give legal jurisdiction(s) and date(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Name(s) and address(es) of previous spouse(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Are you financially independent?  Yes  No

If no, would you require bursary assistance from the diocese if you were accepted into the process?  Yes  No

---

## EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND

High School \_\_\_\_\_ Year of graduation \_\_\_\_\_

CEGEP (or community college) \_\_\_\_\_ Year of graduation \_\_\_\_\_

University \_\_\_\_\_ Year of graduation \_\_\_\_\_

Major(s) \_\_\_\_\_ Degree(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Other certificate(s) or license(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Professional Association(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Language(s) French  spoken  read  written

English  spoken  read  written

Other \_\_\_\_\_  spoken  read  written

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## WORK EXPERIENCE

Present occupation and employer \_\_\_\_\_

Length of service \_\_\_\_\_

Previous occupation and employer \_\_\_\_\_

Length of service \_\_\_\_\_

To what professional organisation do you belong? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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## SECULAR, VOLUNTARY AND LEISURE ACTIVITIES

To what community organisation(s) and/or association(s) do you belong? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What is your role in these? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What are your main leisure activities? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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## CHURCH-RELATED ACTIVITIES

Present parish involvement? \_\_\_\_\_

Present deanery/diocesan/provincial/national involvement? \_\_\_\_\_

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## SPIRITUAL BACKGROUND

On separate sheets give a brief (2 or 3 pages) description of your spiritual journey.

Why do you wish to be ordained? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What do you see as the evidence of your call to the ordained ministry? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Describe how your call has been tested in the Christian community? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Do you currently have a spiritual advisor?     Yes     No

Give the names and contact information (address, phone, email) of  
at least two people who would be able to witness to your spiritual development

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Contact \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Contact \_\_\_\_\_

Signed on \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix II

**QUALITIES DESIRED IN PROSPECTIVE POSTULANTS FOR ORDINATION****1. Spirituality and Church Life**

- a. Deep faith, revealed in an obvious sense of God's presence, and an ongoing search for the meaning of life through relating the biblical model of life and the traditions of the Christian faith to personal life and spiritual reflection.

*Clues*      *Can articulate a personal faith story: finds God in events of his/her own life.*

*A sense that the person is open to trust in God even though there may be areas of expressed doubt about some aspects of the faith he/she has received.*

*A willingness to explore areas of doubt, without feeling that one's belief is threatened.*

- b. Awareness of the need to serve God, which is already reflected in the exercise of baptismal ministry; an understanding of the differences, as well as the relationships, between lay and ordained ministries; a commitment to empowering and preparing all the people of God for their ministries in the church and the world.

*Clues*      *Active participation in a leadership capacity in some aspect of lay ministry in a parish, work or school setting*

*Indication that the person sees ordination as a continuation of the valid gifts he/she is already using in lay ministry*

*The person does not leave you with the feeling that celebrating the Eucharist or giving absolution are the sole reasons for seeking ordination.*

- c. A confirmed or received member of the Anglican Communion for at least three years before application for consideration as a Postulant, and at least two years as an active participant in the worshipping life of the sponsoring parish; a breadth of church experience

*Clues*      *Regular attendance at parish worship services*

*Participation in small groups for prayer, study and/or spiritual direction*

*An appreciation by the person that the discernment of his/her call is not just personal, but is shared by others in the parish and in the wider faith community*

- d. A knowledge of, and commitment to the faith and tradition of the Anglican Church; an acceptance of its ecumenical role in to-day's world, and an openness to engaging with new theologies which may challenge current beliefs and assumptions.

*Clues*      *The person has participated as an Anglican in some type of ecumenical activity in the community.*

*Willingness to learn what other denominations or religions believe and how they worship, without feeling threatened by this learning*

*Is not dismissive of what the history of our and other religions, and of what other disciplines can teach us.*

**2. Vision for Ministry (pastoral and social concern)**

- a. Leadership potential which is evident by level of participation in both church and secular activities; a sense of humility combined with the understanding that effective church leadership is responsive to the guidance and will of God

*Clues*      *Has been selected by peers to take leadership roles in parish, school, leisure or business activities*

*Has a proven record of existing or developing administrative skills*

*Is able to work in groups, share leadership and respect the opinions of others*

*Is willing and able to delegate tasks, and let go of responsibility when appropriate*

*Seeks to deal with conflict honestly and creatively*

*Recognizes that a present day Anglican parish is administered by clergy and lay alike and would not resent this shared responsibility*

*Is not afraid to ask for help from those who are more experienced*

*Is aware of the need to distinguish between what can and cannot be changed in personal or parish life*

*Handles rather than "dumps" problems*

- b. Possesses basic communication skills which enable him/her to express and respond to the concerns of others; has, or is developing, the ability to express thoughts and feelings clearly in order to inform, motivate and/or challenge and persuade

*Clues      Is able to express feelings and beliefs clearly and without hesitation*

*Is able, or is developing the ability to speak publicly with assurance*

*Is an attentive and sympathetic listener*

*Is able to summarize written or spoken material*

*Is able to present well organized and clear written material and, if required, to defend the facts or ideas presented*

*Fluency in French and English*

- c. Shows an ability to build community and welcome newcomers into groups

*Clues      Has a good relationship with family and business or school associates*

*Has lasting comfortable relationships with individuals and/or groups*

*Is open to and enjoys diverse contacts with new people and ideas within and beyond the church*

*Is able to discern and affirm the gifts and needs of others*

*Speaks of "we" not "they"*

- d. Demonstrates healthy pastoral skills by the ability to be with others in their spiritual and emotional needs; is able to balance this with both personal needs and the corporate needs of the worshipping community

*Clues      The person is not driven by a "need to be needed" in order to gain and maintain a sense of self-worth.*

*Realizes that in any parish there will be conflicts about individual areas of responsibility, and is able to accept this and try, with God's help, to deal with it*

*Acknowledges that spiritual and personal needs vary from person to person, and that it may not be possible to deal with all problems with equal success*

*Has some inkling of being at risk of abusing power through sexual relations and conflict situations.*

- e. A desire to proclaim the Good News through social witness and evangelism, and the willingness to take the risks associated with making a difference in the church, the community and the world

*Clues      The person shows evidence of being willing to connect his/her their faith to concrete acts that respond to needs in the community.*

*Demonstrated ability to acknowledge that responding to the needs of others is part of a Christian's life.*

*Personal and professional contacts which are not limited to those of the same racial or social background.*

### 3. Personal Characteristics

- a. Authenticity: A sense of personal worth as a child of God; an evident moral integrity; a realization that a priest is human, not divine, and is therefore subject to human limitations and imperfections

*Clues Is at home with him/herself*

*Exhibits a sense of self-worth and confidence while being able to admit to limits and vulnerability without feeling threatened*

*Is able to accept mistakes and failures as a part of life, to learn from each set-back, and, on occasion, to laugh at one's own mistakes*

*Is able to ask for help, and accept it when it is given*

*Displays a sense of joy in living.*

*Is flexible enough to accept differing ways of approaching and solving a problem*

*Sense of vocation is naturally reflected in all his/her actions*

- b. Visible physical, emotional and spiritual health

*Clues Is not chronically fatigued or malnourished, but rather displays physical and emotional stamina to cope with the daily demands of life*

*Acknowledges that one can not devote all one's time to a job, and therefore adheres to a regular program of physical exercise or recreation*

*If there is a physical handicap or limitation, regards this as a part of the calling and not a cause for pity nor an excuse for failure*

*Has a realistic awareness of the limitations of personal strength and endurance, and a willingness to undertake only what is possible within these limitations*

*Is not trying to overcome or disguise past psychological trauma by means of this application*

*Displays an attitude of joy, hope and optimism in daily life*

*Actively seeks simplicity in their way of life.*

- c. A lifestyle which is compatible with the teachings of Christ, and the willingness to live in accordance with the official position of the Anglican Church of Canada on Sexuality and Ordination to Ministry in the Church

*Clues A genuine love of people as shown in his/her treatment of all persons regardless of sex, race, creed, colour, etc.*

*Has begun Family of Origin work - acknowledges that family relationships in the formative years have a great influence on one's patterns of behaviour*

*Is willing to address past hurts and seeks professional assistance where needed*

*Treats members of both genders with equal respect and dignity*

*If the person is married, he/she is addressing the issues of adjustment with spouse and children in the event of a possible change in life's direction and circumstances.*

- d. The person is intellectually curious and able to think clearly and critically

*Clues Has a satisfactory academic record coupled with a broad range of extra-curricular activities*

*Is open to and enjoys learning*

*Is able to converse easily on a reasonably broad range of subjects*