

RECTOR'S GUIDE

THE DIOCESE OF
CHURCHES
FOR THE SAKE
OF OTHERS

RECTOR'S GUIDE

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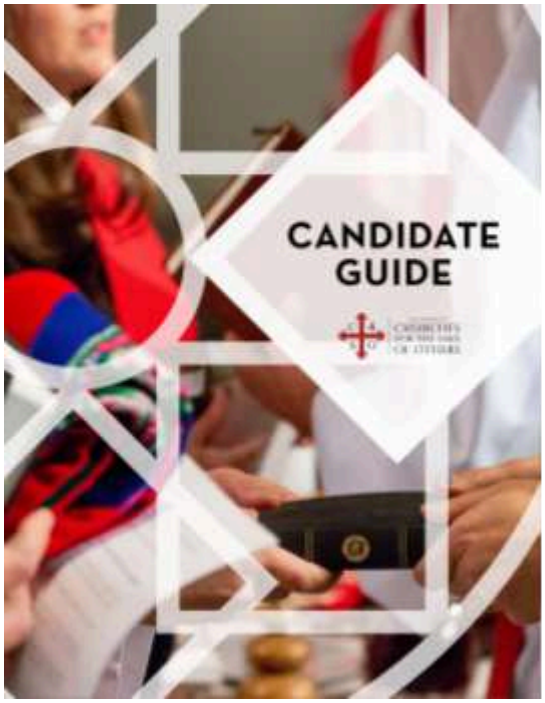
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OVERVIEW of the Rector's Role

As the Rector of a C4SO Church, you will have the honor and responsibility of walking with individuals throughout the Path of Discernment to Holy Orders, and the ability to mentor and support Aspirants from the beginning, helping them explore their callings. You are uniquely positioned to do so, having an existing relationship with the Aspirant and an established connection to the diocese. This relationship and your unique point of view allow you to provide pastoral connection and address whether or not an Aspirant is a good fit for ordination, and also to advocate for them as they move through each process of the Path of Discernment.

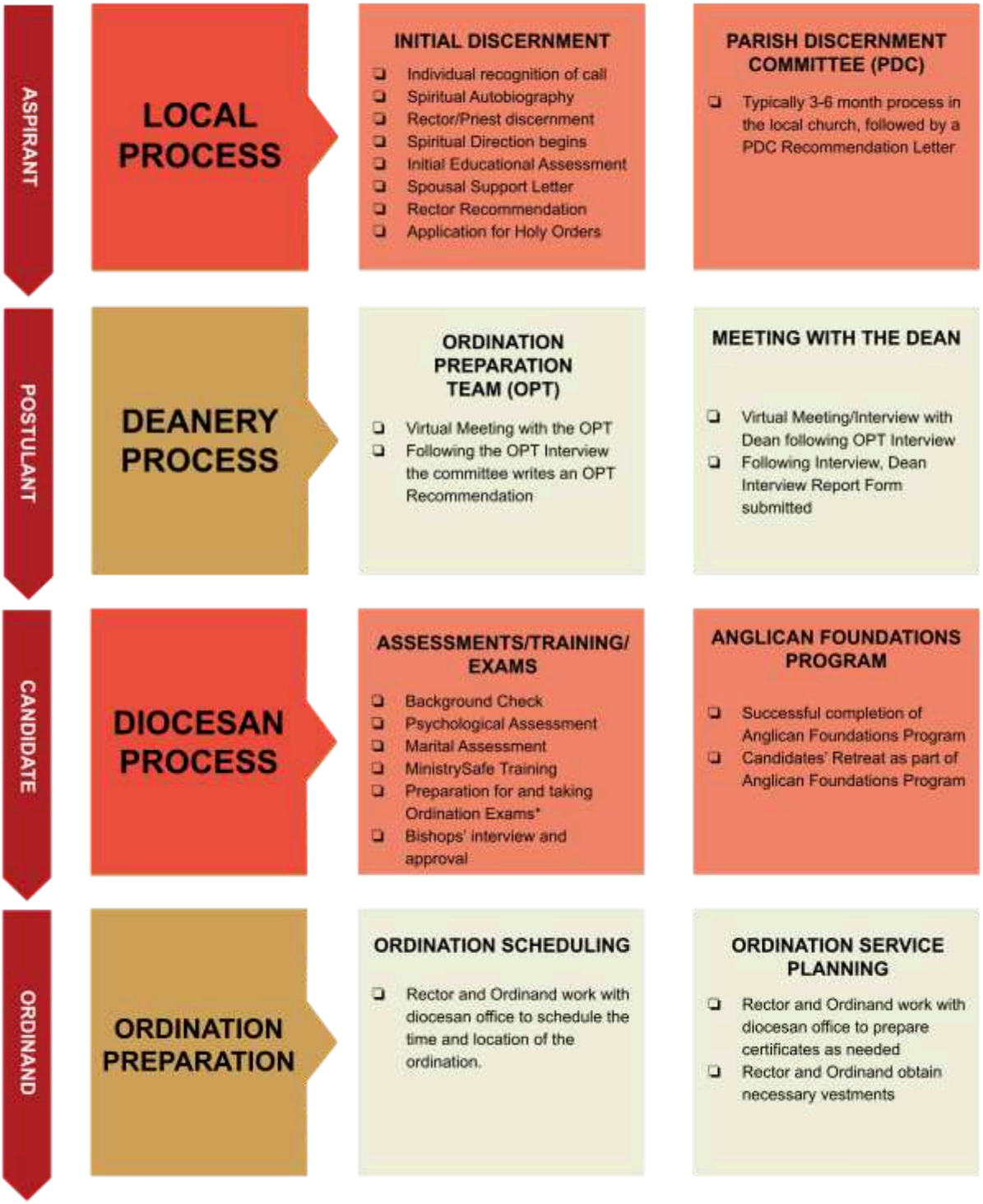
CANDIDATE GUIDE



Please familiarize yourself with the **C4SO Candidate Guide,** along with the rest of this guide, before you begin conversations with an Aspirant. If you have any questions along the way, your Dean is a great resource for help.

STEP BY STEP

The Path of Discernment to Holy Orders



**Vocational Deacons need to complete Ordination Exams prior to Ordination to the Diaconate; Transitional Deacons needs to complete Ordination Exams prior to Consecration to the Priesthood*

LOCAL PROCESS

The Path of Discernment for an Aspirant begins with the Rector and the local church.

Note: If Aspirants are not currently in a local Anglican church, they may approach the diocese and will need to be appointed a Rector or Priest with whom they may undergo the discernment process.

1 Individual recognizes call (from God and in community) and begins personal discernment to Holy Orders/pastoral ministry.

2 Individual approaches local Priest/Rector to begin local discernment. If local discernment moves forward from this stage, the individual is considered an Aspirant.

3 Aspirant is encouraged to begin spiritual direction with a spiritual director approved by the Rector.

4 Aspirant writes Spiritual Autobiography which is then discussed and reviewed with the Priest/Rector. This should be 8 pages or less, double-spaced.

5 Rector conducts an initial Educational Assessment, based on the Aspirant's vocational plan and C4SO education guidelines. This will determine what further education might be needed, and whether the Aspirant will decide to request an Academic Exception.

6 Spouse writes Spousal Support Letter. Aspirant and spouse have intentional discussion about expectations and pressures of ministry. The spouse then prepares a letter of support for Aspirant to pursue ordination. This letter can be sent directly to the diocese (ordination@c4so.org).

7 Priest/Rector writes letter of recommendation and begins setting up the Parish Discernment Committee (PDC). If the Priest/Rector discerns any issues after this point in the process, he or she should immediately contact the diocesan office.

8 Aspirant undergoes discernment process with Parish Discernment Committee (PDC). This typically takes about 3-6 months. At the end of the process, the PDC submits a written recommendation to the Canon for Ordinations and Rector. Once the PDC has concluded, the Aspirant becomes a Postulant (formally requesting candidacy for ordination).

9 Aspirant completes Application for Holy Orders. Rector notifies Canon for Ordinations to begin the Deanery Process.

Deanery Process

After the Local Process, the Aspirant becomes a Postulant and moves into the Deanery Process.

1 **Postulant meets with Ordination Preparation Team (OPT)** to assess character, competency and calling. This is typically done over Zoom/Google Meet. The OPT submits a written recommendation to the Rector, Dean and diocesan office.

2 **Postulant meets with the Dean** for a formal interview. This is also typically done over Zoom/Google Meet. The Dean will then submit a written recommendation to the diocesan office.

3 **Dean submits recommendation** to the diocesan office by filling out the Dean's Interview Report.

4 **Diocese notifies Postulant that application is complete,** and that he or she is now a Candidate and ready to enter diocesan process.

5 **Diocese invites the Candidate to join the Anglican Foundations Program** (if not yet begun)**.**



Diocesan Process

After the Deanery Process, the Postulant becomes a Candidate and moves into the Diocesan Process.

1 **Candidate submits authorization for Background Check** which covers sexual misconduct, criminal, and financial histories, and checks personal and professional references.

2 **Candidate completes MinistrySafe Training,** unless already completed.

3 **Candidate undergoes Psychological and Marital Assessments** (when applicable).

4 **Candidate prepares for and takes Ordination Exams.** Vocational Deacons will take exams prior to ordination as a deacon. Those aspiring to the Priesthood will take exams sometime prior to consecration as Priest. If remediation is suggested, a plan will be made with the Rector and/or Dean.

5 **Successfully complete the Anglican Foundations Program.** More details can be found at

https://c4so.org/anglican-foundations-program/.

6 **Attend the Candidates' Retreat** as part of the Anglican Foundations Program.

7 **Canon for Ordinations reviews your file.**

8 **The Bishop conducts an interview and gives final confirmation for ordination.**

Ordination Preparation

The Ordinand begins work planning and scheduling their ordination.

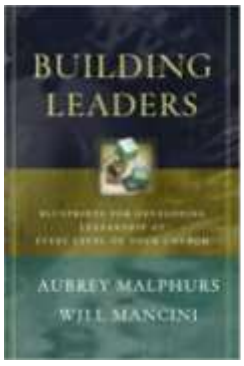
1 **Rector and Ordinand work with Diocesan Office to schedule ordination.**

2 **Prior to the ordination service, Rector works with Diocesan Office** (and others) to plan details of the ordination service. Sample bulletin and invitation documents available at https://c4so.org/ordination-preparation/.

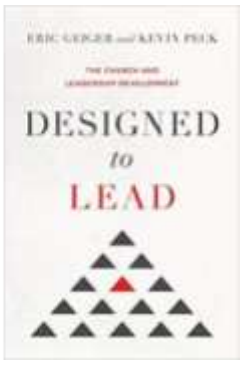
LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

We believe a Rector/Priest of a local parish must establish a culture of discipleship that fosters leadership and equips individuals to begin discerning the call to ministry early on in their discipleship—both to lay and ordained ministry. As Rector, you play a crucial role in planning ways to identify, raise up and cultivate leadership in your congregation.

For resources to assist you in leadership development, consider:



Building Leaders: Blueprints for Developing Leadership at Every Level of Your Church
Aubrey Malphurs and Will Mancini



Designed to Lead: Church Leadership Development
Eric Geiger and Kevin Peck

RECTOR'S DISCERNMENT AND RECOMMENDATION

The process of discerning a call to ordination begins with discernment—a series of conversations between you as Rector and an Aspirant (alongside the work of the Spiritual Autobiography). At least one of these conversations should include the Aspirant's spouse or fiancé, if applicable. The conversations will culminate in your Rector's Discernment Report.

These conversations should cover the following three areas:



1 CALLING

General

- Deep, growing personal faith that can be easily expressed
- A growing understanding and experience of the nature of the Church and the place of ordained ministry within it

- Clear sense of call to ordained ministry that is connected to gifts

Specific

- Is there a call to a specific area of ordained pastoral ministry?
- Where/how would this individual be serving in a local context? *(This doesn't need to be finalized at this point, but an intentional conversation needs to take place.)*

The Deacon's Calling

A Deacon's calling includes the following responsibilities:

- Sharing their faith and life with non-Christians
- Assisting in the sacraments
- Seeking and serving both those in the community and the neighborhood, particularly the poor and marginalized

The Priest's Calling

A Priest's calling includes the Deacon's responsibilities as well as the ones below:

- Leading and discipling a community of faith, developing leaders and disciples to utilize their gifts and abilities for the Kingdom
- Shepherding a community, especially in times of conflict or in financial need
- To make Christ's presence tangible through preaching and celebrating Baptism and Eucharist
- Hearing corporate and private confession and absolving

2. CHARACTER

Prov. 4:23:

"Put everything you have into the care of your heart, the hidden, causative, motivational you. For everything you do flows from it. It is the real source of your outward life, and it determines what your life amounts to."

Assess overall maturity, emotional, physical and relational health—including family relationships.

As part of discerning character, you will discuss past or current moral failings, character issues, addiction, emotional and mental health struggles, etc., that could be a barrier to pastoral leadership.

3. COMPETENCY

Aspirant should display a demonstrated leadership ability as it pertains to the specific vocational requirements.

In addition, Aspirant should display a demonstrated intellectual and academic ability as it pertains to the specific ordained role.

Discuss the skills, experience and education needed for the Aspirant's expected vocational call.

Identify any areas that require growth, support or education/training, and develop a plan to address these areas.

Suggested (though not comprehensive) topics for conversations:

1 Discuss ordination—Review both the ACNA ordinal and the prayerbook liturgy for ordination to understand the requirements and expectations of ordained clergy.

2 Hold an initial conversation about calling—what has brought this person to seek ordination? What gifts seem to fit or not to fit such a call?

3 Discuss the Aspirant's spiritual journey.

4 Develop an intentional prayer practice for this time of discernment.

5 Discuss the ways in which the shape, challenges and demands of ordained ministry fit the person's personality, gifts and skills.

6 Include spouse or fiancé in this conversation, and ask for his or her input.

7 Suggest some things to think about in preparation for the next conversation.

8 Follow up on issues, questions and thoughts that were raised in earlier conversations.

At the end of these conversations, you as Rector should be comfortable about encouraging the Aspirant to pursue ordination. If you determine that there are special considerations or risks for a particular Candidate, contact the diocese early in the process for guidance. This could include factors like a divorce, past trauma or wounding, or legal/financial concerns. These are best handled early in the process to ensure an Aspirant's fitness, or to allow for additional formation or recovery in preparation for ministry. If you as Rector are not comfortable about proceeding, communicate that fact and the reasons to the Aspirant.

You will then write a Rector's Discernment Report to be included with the Application for Holy Orders and sent electronically to the Bishop and Canon for Ordinations, and eventually given to the Parish Discernment Committee to be read prior to their first meeting. Your Report should briefly introduce the Aspirant, concisely capture your discernment, and clearly communicate your approval to move forward with the Path of Discernment.

The Report should convey confidence in the Aspirant's:



Again, please consult the Canon for Ordinations if you have questions or need help in determining how to proceed with an Aspirant. This is important and holy work. Please undertake it with a prayerful heart, and do not hesitate to ask for help.

SPIRITUAL DIRECTION

An Aspirant's spiritual life is a key component to discerning Holy Orders and becoming a spiritually healthy leader. As Rector, you are in the position of making sure that an intentional process of spiritual formation happens early on in the Path of Discernment, if it hasn't already. At C4SO, we believe that spiritual direction is a fundamental component to spiritual formation. The Aspirant(s) under your care will benefit from regular, ongoing meetings with a spiritual director, at least throughout the discernment process.



SPIRITUAL AUTOBIOGRAPHY

Once the Aspirant has initiated discernment conversations with you, invite him/her to begin work on a Spiritual Autobiography. The exercise of writing a Spiritual Autobiography provides the Aspirant with a thoughtful practice that will help him/her prepare for the often-asked question, "Why do you want to be ordained?" A Spiritual Autobiography is a description of the call to ordained ministry within the context of a life story. This should be approximately 8 pages, double spaced.

This should include, but is not limited to, the following questions (in no particular order):

1 When and how did you first become aware of and/or committed to following Jesus Christ?

2 What regular spiritual disciplines/practices are incorporated into your life and what does that look like?

3 In what ways have you grown in Christ-likeness over time? What obstacles, trials and/or failures have you faced in life? How have these events shaped your faith?

4 How have you engaged in ministry? What fruit have you seen?

5 What are your strengths and barriers, particularly those recognized by others? How does your present context draw on your God-given personality and strengths?

6 To what do you believe God is calling you? Outline your journey and call to Holy Orders. Why ordination as an Anglican?

If the Aspirant is married or engaged to be married, please request a letter written by the Spouse or Fiancé that indicates their own support for the Aspirant—including their own perspective on the Aspirant's call to ministry, personal character and any reasons for concern, if any exist.

The Spiritual Autobiography, Spousal Support Letter and Rector's Recommendation should be included as attachments to the Aspirant's Application for Holy Orders and submitted to the Canon for Ordinations. The Spiritual Autobiography and Spousal Support Letter will be shared with the Parish Discernment Committee and the Ordination Preparation Team at the appropriate times. Those who receive this document will treat it with utmost respect and confidentiality.

EDUCATIONAL POLICY

At C4SO, we believe one of the best ways we can support individuals exploring ordination is to ensure they are well-equipped for on-the-ground ministry and have found the support, relationships and education needed for thoughtful discernment and formation. Investing time and resources in early professional development helps build on individuals' God-given gifts, and ensures they are able to enter ministry with confidence. As Rector, you can help the diocese assess whether the individual's educational plan meets the professional standards of the ACNA, and practically addresses his or her long-term career expectations.

Vocational Diaconate:

We recommend a Certificate of Diaconal Studies from an accredited school for the Vocational Diaconate and/or completion of the Anglican Foundations Program. Alongside local mentoring, this ensures that individuals have the skills and knowledge in Anglican history, vocation, liturgy and pastoral care to be well-equipped to serve in a parish. Successful completion of one of these programs will satisfy these diocesan educational requirements.

A Candidate's ministry focus may require additional training in specific areas, especially if they are employed outside of a parish. It is important they discuss those needs with those who will be supervising them during the course of their career. Requirements vary, so Candidates must do their research ahead of time. Please note: if medical or military chaplaincy is their primary vocation, they will likely need to start their ordination with the Special Jurisdiction, in conjunction with their local parish. Please see www.anglicanchaplains.org for contact information.

Priest:

We recommend an MDiv from an accredited school for Candidates to the Priesthood. This is the standard in the ACNA because the programs have been developed to equip Candidates for parish leadership. Successful completion of an appropriate degree program, the Anglican Foundations Program and Ordination Exams will satisfy the diocesan educational requirements.

Transitional Deacons:

All Candidates for the Priesthood will be ordained to the Transitional Diaconate first. Candidates can complete their education and Ordination Exams prior to ordination to the Diaconate. Where ministry needs require, C4SO may issue an Academic Exception to allow a Candidate to be ordained to the Diaconate prior to degree and/or exam completion.

Academic Exceptions:

In some cases Candidates with appropriate education other than an MDiv or who have significant ministry experience, may have the educational requirement waived or reduced, or ordination accelerated ahead of completion of a degree. Vocational setting and requirements, local support/mentorship, past experience and demonstrated academic success are key factors in considering a Candidate for an exception. Candidates should apply for an Academic Exception at https://www.c4so.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/AcademicException_Form_v2.pdf. A decision to apply for an Academic Exception must be made during the Local Process before moving on to the Deanery Process.

APPLICATION FOR HOLY ORDERS

If you recommend that the Aspirant moves forward, he or she must complete the Application for Holy Orders and all of its requirements. You and the Aspirant will receive confirmation that the Application has been received, allowing the Aspirant to move forward in the process.

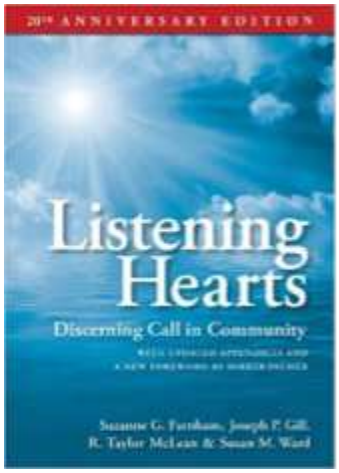

APPLICATION
for Holy Orders

Please see the **Application for Holy Orders form** for more details about this process.

PARISH DISCERNMENT COMMITTEE

Following the acceptance of the Application for Holy Orders by C4SO, you as Rector will form a Parish Discernment Committee (PDC). A PDC is made up of parishioners who walk with an Aspirant seeking to discern a vocational call to ministry, while remaining open to the Holy Spirit's movement in their own lives. This is an opportunity for you as Rector to engage mature church members in the building of the Kingdom. These members must be persons of prayer, humility, wisdom, confidentiality and openness to the working of the Holy Spirit. It is expected that all members of this committee will be open to and shaped by the movement of the Holy Spirit in their gatherings. They will have good listening and pastoral skills, be able to listen to the Holy Spirit, and understand the expectations, duties and responsibilities of Deacons and Priests.

As Rector, you will form a PDC. The PDC will consist of 3-5 people, and everyone must be a mature Christian and a layperson; we encourage you to include at least one vestry member. Married couples should not serve together. You may chair the PDC, but we prefer that you delegate this responsibility to another person of mature Christian character and experience. You should instruct the leader and all members of the PDC as to the function and calling of Priests and Deacons, and you should remain available to answer questions throughout the process.



Consider this helpful resource for PDC members:

Listening Hearts:
Discerning Call in Community
Farnham, Gill, McLean, and Ward

FINAL STEPS

of the Local Process

Once the Parish Discernment Committee has confirmed the Aspirant is ready to move forward, you will contact the Canon for Ordinations to set up the Dean's Interview, and the Aspirant will move forward to the Deanery Process. At this point, the Local Process of the Path of Discernment to Holy Orders is complete, and the individual becomes a Postulant.

Even though the Local Process is complete, you will still be highly involved, helping the individual through the rest of the Path of Discernment.

Postulants and Candidates often experience emotional ups and downs as they go through this process. As Rector, you can help them engage in spiritual disciplines to stay close to God and connect with their church community for support. This can help stave off feelings of isolation and insecurity throughout the process.

You will be copied on all reports and recommendations from the Deanery and Diocesan Processes and alerted if any problems arise.

If a local parish situation raises your concern about the Aspirant's suitability or readiness for ministry, promptly contact your Dean and the Canon for Ordinations.




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