



The Episcopal Diocese of  
**LOUISIANA**

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**APPLICATION**  
**FOR**  
**HOLY**  
**ORDERS**

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The Episcopal Diocese of Louisiana  
1623 Seventh Street • New Orleans, LA 70115  
(504) 895-6634



# The *Episcopal* Diocese of Louisiana

Dear Diocesan Clergy and Inquirers for Discernment,

The Episcopal Diocese of Louisiana welcomes discernment of all Episcopalians who feel called to ministry whether it be ordained or lay. The discoveries you make during this time may lead you to pursue service as a member of the laity, diaconate or priesthood. As you enter this process, please know that you are being held in our prayers, that The Holy Spirit will move in your life as the Spirit also moves you in ministry.

The Episcopal Church recognizes that all Baptized people are called to minister in Christ's name, and it is the Church's responsibility to explore and identify the gifts of each of those serving Christ's mission at all times and in all places. In order to assist a person to identify the role into which God may be calling him/her, a formal process of discernment has proven helpful. Please remember that this type of discernment process requires time and commitment from the applicant, sponsoring priest, congregation and diocesan leaders. It is also a process that falls under the direct authority and supervision of the Bishop.

There are times when this process may seem difficult and confusing and it is a little different for each individual.

Vocational discernment is not an easy process. There are many steps, documents, meetings, prayers, conversations and time in quiet solitude. Much of this work is found in Title III of Canon Law for the Episcopal Church. The discernment process is designed to deeply examine four significant areas of an applicant's life: spiritual, vocational, physical and mental health and financial. During this time, questions will be explored about a person's spiritual gifts, leadership, prayer life, competencies, life and family circumstances, money, sacrifice, obedience and many other areas of experience. It is realistic to allow at least 12-18 months for the discernment process to unfold in a contemplative and measured way.

This letter serves as the opening for a packet that has been assembled to help guide clergy and inquirer in the process. You should find in the packet:

1. An application for discernment (that includes a spiritual autobiography)
2. Information for sponsoring priests (with a vocational discernment question guide and a template report to the bishop)
3. A vocational statement form for the inquirer,
4. A personal financial audit form for the inquirer

Please click the following link to download the worksheet:

<https://www.cpg.org/globalassets/documents/publications/planning-postulant-cash-flow-analysis-worksheet.xlsx>

5. A chart of the steps for the discernment process
6. And a Discernment Packet Checklist to help you keep track of completed items.
7. All documents in this packet must be filled out and returned to the Diocesan Office no later than September 30, 2024 in order for the inquirer to be considered for entry into the process beginning in January 2025. When completed packets have been received, each inquirer will be required to undergo a preliminary background check through Praesidium. Once the background check is clear, Ms. Jessica Lee, the bishop's executive assistant, will contact the inquirer to set up an individual interview with Bishop Duckworth in October. Admission to the formal discernment process and invitations to Ministry Conference (January 24 & 25, 2025) will be issued by Bishop Duckworth in November after all inquirer interviews have been completed.

We know that vocational discernment can be arduous and risky, the road may be difficult and sometimes seem very lonely. Remember, we are committed to being your companion along the way, and we will do our best to prayerfully discern God's will for your life from our canonical and pastoral perspectives. May God walk with you and guide you in this time of exploration, prayer and challenge.

Faithfully,

The Very Reverend Jay Angerer  
Chair, Commission on Ministry



# The Episcopal Diocese of Louisiana

## APPLICATION FOR DISCERNMENT & LIFE HISTORY QUESTIONNAIRE

### 1. Information Required Under National Canon III.6 (as revised 2022)

Discerning a call to ordination as a  deacon  priest

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PARISH	TITLE	FIRST NAME	FULL MIDDLE NAME	LAST	NICKNAME
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ADDRESS STREET/POB	CITY	STATE	ZIP+4
TELEPHONE CELL	WORK	E-MAIL	
DATE OF BIRTH (S/M/W/D)	PLACE OF BIRTH	SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER	MARITAL STATUS

Where applicable, please complete the information below for our records

SPOUSE'S LEGAL NAME (FIRST & LAST)	DATE OF BIRTH	SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER	WEDDING ANNIVERSARY
CHILD'S NAME	DATE OF BIRTH	SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER	SEX
CHILD'S NAME	DATE OF BIRTH	SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER	SEX
CHILD'S NAME	DATE OF BIRTH	SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER	SEX
CHILD'S NAME	DATE OF BIRTH	SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER	SEX

I have resided in this diocese since \_\_\_\_\_ . My religion as a child was \_\_\_\_\_ and as  
 as an adult \_\_\_\_\_ . I was baptized in \_\_\_\_\_ Church  
 on \_\_\_\_\_ by \_\_\_\_\_ . I was confirmed in \_\_\_\_\_  
 Church on \_\_\_\_\_ by \_\_\_\_\_  
 The Rt. Rev. \_\_\_\_\_ Bishop of \_\_\_\_\_ .

I have  have not  previously applied for admission as a postulant for Holy Orders. (If you have, give details)

I am moved to seek Holy Orders because

Education *(please attach a full transcript of all academic work completed)*

Highest level attained

Degrees earned

Areas of specialization Present

Occupation:

Past Occupations:

I have consulted with my pastor on \_\_\_\_\_ . *(If you have no rector/vicar, please state the name of the priest you consulted \_\_\_\_\_).*

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SIGNATURE

DATE

## 2. PERSONAL AND SOCIAL HISTORY

SIBLINGS: Number of brothers Ages \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

Number of sisters Ages \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

FATHER: Living? if yes, age health

Deceased? if yes, age at death your age at his death

cause of death

occupation

MOTHER: Living? if yes, age health

Deceased? if yes, age at death your age at her death

cause of death

occupation

What are some special talents or skills of which you feel proud?

How is your free time spent?

What kind of hobbies or leisure activities do you enjoy or find relaxing?

If you were not brought up by your parents, who raised you?  
between which years?

Who are the most important people in your life?

**SEQUENTIAL HISTORY:** Please outline your most significant memories and experiences within the following ages:

0-5:

6-10:

11-15:

16-20:

21-25:

26-30:

31-35:

36-40:

41-45:

46-50:

51-55:

56-60:

61-65:

Over 65:



### **3. SPIRITUAL AUTOBIOGRAPHY**

Draw a horizontal time line and mark off the line in five year segments. Using the line as a base, graph the ups and downs of your spiritual life, the lows being below the line and the highs being above the line. Using this graphic, do a narrative of your spiritual life. Refer to important people and events. There is no specified length. Please note that this autobiography is different from the sequential history requested on page 2.

## INFORMATION FOR SPONSORING PRIEST

As the sponsoring priest of an individual entering into vocational discernment, you will be the first official contact the inquirer will have. Please familiarize yourself with the ministry discernment process in the Diocese of Louisiana, noting that there are two distinct periods of time involved. The first is the Inquiry period in which a person, in concert with the Church, discerns his/her call. The second is the Ordination Process, which begins with the granting of postulancy to the individual. (See Discernment Tracking Chart, found on page 5 included in the Discernment Application Package) It is important to maintain uniformity of process across all the churches in the diocese to ensure that expectations are clear and that all individuals are treated equally.

Your role as a sponsoring priest is twofold: to help the inquirer explore and discern their specific vocational call, and to be a pastoral presence to the inquirer as that individual moves through discernment. Please remember that honest reflection with the individual about the ministry which seems most appropriate to him/her is a crucial component of this early stage of discernment. If you have questions or doubts, please contact the Canon to the Ordinary to discuss the situation.

***The inquirer and sponsoring priest should meet for intentional conversation no fewer than 6 times (over a period of at least 3 months).*** The inquirer should begin by sharing with the sponsoring priest the spiritual autobiography that was prepared for their Discernment Application. The sponsoring priest is then responsible for exploring the following areas with an inquirer over the course of their meetings:

- Vocation and Spirituality
- Leadership Skills and Ability
- Personal Background Information
- Physical and Mental Health
- Financial HealthFamily

In addition, the sponsoring priest is responsible for selecting one book written by an Anglican theologian that he/she and the inquirer will read and discuss together. A basic background check will be performed by the diocese through [www.praesadium.com](http://www.praesadium.com). And a personal financial audit form (included in Discernment Packet) will help the inquirer get a close look at their financial situation. The Values and Competencies for Clergy document (included in the Discernment Packet) should serve as the metric against which your conversations with the inquirer are based. Clearly, no one individual will possess all the qualities that are listed in the document, most particularly at this stage because so many of the competencies are acquired, but the inquirer should exemplify the capability and willingness to grow into many of the characteristics listed.

If, after these discussions, the sponsoring priest believes in good conscience that the inquirer may indeed be called into holy orders, and possesses the traits that lead toward effective ministry, the sponsoring priest will complete the Report to the Bishop (included in Discernment Packet) giving a summary of his/her conversations with the inquirer and recommending that the inquirer meet for an individual interview with the bishop. . The Bishop will decide whether the individual may continue with discernment. If so, the next step is the establishment of a Congregational Discernment Committee, which will be trained at the upcoming Ministry Conference in January and carry out its work with the inquirer over a period that typically lasts at least six months. Finally, the sponsoring priest and the Congregational Discernment Committee both report to the Bishop, who then will determine whether the inquirer may continue into the ordination process. If the sponsoring priest cannot in good conscience recommend that the inquirer proceed in the process, the sponsoring priest should be prepared to assist the inquirer in discerning what ministries in the church the inquirer might indeed be called into.

Thank you for your service to the church. If any part of the role of the sponsoring priest, or any potentially difficult conversations with the inquirer, seem especially daunting, please remember that we are here to assist.

## VOCATIONAL DISCERNMENT QUESTIONS FOR SPONSORING PRIEST

### **Spiritual:**

- What are the inquirer's current ministries?
- What other ministries might be suggested by the inquirer's gifts?
- How clearly does the inquirer articulate his/her faith?
- How does the inquirer's spirituality manifest itself to you?
- How does the inquirer differentiate between ministries of the laity and ordained?
- How well does the inquirer articulate his/her call to ministry?
- Could the inquirer serve the church more effectively as a lay person or as an ordained person?

### **Intellectual:**

- What is the inquirer's academic background?
- Does the inquirer have the skills and abilities to do the canonically required study and preparation?
- How does the inquirer reflect upon and grow from personal experience?
- Is the inquirer curious and does he/she demonstrate a desire to learn?
- Is there an ability to integrate theological concepts and transfer them to practical use?

### **Emotional:**

- How does the inquirer cope with stress?
- How does the inquirer deal with conflict, anger, or guilt?
- Is the inquirer's emotional maturity commensurate with his/her chronological age?
- How does the inquirer understand his/her sexuality? Is he/she comfortable with his/her own sexuality identity?
- Are their traumas in the inquirer's history? Do they continue to affect him/her? If the discernment process does not lead to ordination, is he/she mature enough to accept this outcome and continue to engage in ministry as a lay person?

### **Physical:**

- Can the inquirer handle the physical demands of ministry?
- Does the inquirer take good care of his/her physical needs?

**Personal/Financial:**

What are the inquirer's family responsibilities?

Is the inquirer's family supportive of his/her ministry?

How many times has the inquirer been married? If divorced, what were the circumstances?

What is the nature of the inquirer's relationship with any children from a previous marriage?

Is the inquirer able to relocate in order to serve where the church may need him/her to serve?

How will the inquirer finance his/her seminary/diaconate education?

Does the inquirer have any significant financial obligations that would interfere with his/her ministry?

**Leadership:**

Evaluated against the Core Values and Competencies, what are the inquirer's leadership strengths?  
Weaknesses?

Can the inquirer motivate others?

How effectively does the inquirer communicate orally? In writing?

In what ways has the inquirer demonstrated effective leadership?

How does the inquirer deal with authority?

How does the inquirer interact in a team leadership situation?

## **Sponsoring Priest Report to Bishop (Template)**

**Name of Sponsoring Priest & Parish:**

**Name of Inquirer:**

**List the dates you met with the inquirer:** (*\*Note: you are required to meet 6 times over a period of 3 months. Please do not fill out this report until you have met the minimum requirements.\**)

**What theological book did you read and discuss with the inquirer? Give a brief summary of the nature of your book discussions, noting any insights that inquirer discovered as well as your impressions of their aptitude for study.**

**Give a brief summary of your discussions/impressions of the inquirer based on the six area of exploration:**

**1. Vocation & Spirituality:**

**2. Leadership skills & Ability:**

**3. Personal Background Information:**

**4. Physical & Mental health:**

**5. Financial Health:**

**6. Family:**

**Is it your recommendation that the inquirer may be called to holy orders? Please explain.**

**Do you recommend the inquirer meet for an individual interview with the bishop?**

**Any additional comments?**

**Signature of sponsoring priest:**

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**The Rev.  
Rector/Interim/PIC of St.**





# The Episcopal Diocese of Louisiana

## VOCATIONAL STATEMENT

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Vocational Statement – Please articulate your sense of call as you understand it at this time. What does it mean to be called? Do you feel called to the diaconate or the priesthood? How would being ordained allow you to serve and minister in a way that your current vocation as a lay person does not?

## Applicants Statement of Financial Condition

Bishop Duckworth:

I have completed the Church Pension Group's financial planning tool "Postulant Cash Flow Analysis Worksheet". **A hard copy of the result is attached to this form.**

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Signed by Applicant

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Applicants name printed

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Date

**Ordination Tracking (6 Year Plan)**

COM = Commission on Ministry      DC = Discernment Committee      SC = Standing Committee

	<b>Jan (Ministry Conf.)</b>	<b>Feb</b>	<b>Mar</b>	<b>Apr</b>	<b>May</b>	<b>Jun</b>	<b>July</b>	<b>Aug</b>	<b>Sep</b>	<b>Oct</b>	<b>Nov</b>	<b>Dec</b>	
<b>Year 1</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inquirer meets with rector 2 times a month for 3 months.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inquirer meets with rector</li> <li>Basic Background check</li> <li>O-01 (Clergy reports to Bishop)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inquirer meets with rector</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inquirer meets with rector</li> </ul>					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Aspirant submits completed application to diocese (O-11)</li> <li>Eyes only letter from rector to Bishop to be delivered after meeting</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bishop's initial meeting with applicant (O-02)</li> <li>Bishop approves applications for Discernment (O-04)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parish Clergy gathers Discernment Committee (DC)</li> </ul>		
<b>Year 2</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Jan 1 email to Rector and Applicant inviting them to MC</li> <li>Applicant and DC attend Ministry Conference</li> <li>DC is trained Applicant has courtesy interviews with COM and SC</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discernment Committee begins work</li> </ul>						<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discernment Committee completes work</li> <li>Report of Committee (O-05)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Applicant is nominated by Vestry &amp; Rector and letter from Rector sent to Bishop's office (O-07)</li> <li>Applicant accepts Nomination and applies for Postulancy (O-08 &amp; O-09)</li> <li>Background checks initiated (O-10)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Nominee meets with Bishop (O-12)</li> <li>If approved, Medical and Psych evals are ordered (O-13-17)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bishop notifies COM of cleared Nominees (O-18)</li> </ul>		
<b>Year 3</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Nominee attends Ministry Conference</li> <li>Nominee meets with COM for first Postulancy interview (O-19)</li> <li>Nominee meets with SC for continued discernment. (O-19a)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2<sup>nd</sup> Postulancy interviews (if needed)</li> <li>COM sends MC report to Diocese with discernment recommendation (Lay, Deacon, Priest or defer a stated period of time)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Postulant, in consultation with the Bishop, applies to seminaries</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Admission to Postulancy after Bishop's approval (O-20)</li> <li>Periodic Financial review (O-21)</li> </ul>						<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Postulant begins <b>Junior</b> year</li> <li>Postulant begins writing Ember Day Letters throughout Postulancy</li> <li>(Local) Postulant assigned field ed parish and establishes field ed rubric.</li> <li>(Local) Postulant seeks CPE program</li> </ul>			
<b>Year 4</b>						<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Postulant enrolled in Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Postulant enrolled in CPE</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Postulant enrolled in CPE</li> <li>Receive CPE Evaluation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Postulant begins <b>middler</b> Year</li> </ul>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Postulant applies for Candidacy (O-22)</li> <li>Rector and Vestry provide Letter of Support (O-23)</li> </ul>	

	Jan (Ministry Conf.)	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
<b>Year 5</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Postulant attends Ministry Conference for Middler Review</li> <li>Meets with SC for Candidacy interview</li> <li>Middler Review with COM</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>COM attests to continuing formation (O-24)</li> <li>SC approves Candidacy (O-25)</li> <li>Bishop grants Candidacy (O-26)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Obtain <b>Middler</b> Evaluations from Seminary</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Postulant submits Periodic Financial Review (O-27)</li> </ul>	Encourage Summer Work			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Candidate begins <b>Senior Year</b></li> <li>Candidate applies for ordination to Diaconate (O-28)</li> <li>Letter of Support from Rector and Vestry (O-29)</li> <li>Certificate of Bishop Sent (O-30)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cert. and Rec. From seminary</li> <li>COM recommends ordination (O-31)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SC approves ordination (O-32)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Priest Candidate ordained transitional Deacon</li> </ul>
<b>Year 6</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>General Ordination Exams (Priest track only)</i></li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Transitional Deacon &amp; Vocational Deacon applies for ordination to respective order (O-33)</li> <li>Letter of support from Rector and Vestry (O-34)</li> <li>Review results to GOE's</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Seminary certifies completion of studies</li> <li>COM attests to completion of formation program (O-35)</li> <li>Certificate of the Bishop (O-36)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SC certifies vocational Deacon and Recommends for ordination (O-37)</li> <li>SC certifies transitional Deacon and recommends for ordination to the priesthood (O-37)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Vocational Deacon ordained</li> <li>Transition Deacon ordered to the Priesthood</li> </ul>					



# The Episcopal Diocese of Louisiana

## CHECKLIST OF REQUIRED MATERIALS

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NAME \_\_\_\_\_

### Postulancy Forms

- Application for Postulancy
- Spiritual Autobiography
- Vocational Statement
- College Transcripts (N/A for Vocational Deacons)
- Required Medical Examination
- Life History Questionnaire
- Behavioral Screening Questionnaire
- Vestry Nomination for Postulancy
- Background Check Consent Form
- Authorization and Release to Diocese  
*Includes approval for background check of Criminal Records, Credit Report, Driver's License Report, and Sexual Offender Database Check, which the Diocese will order.*

### Materials Completed by Others

- Psychological Report
- Physical Exam Report
- Vestry Nomination
- Background Screening Report