

# Letter of Support from the Congregational Discernment Committee for Admission as a Postulant to the Priesthood

Form P3

*These are instructions for the Congregational Discernment Committee to express support for an aspirant to continue discerning a call to the priesthood. The Vestry/Bishop's Committee/Council shall be informed of the final discernment. The instructions for the CDC's communication to the Vestry/Bishop's Committee/Council are at the end of this document.*

If the Congregational Discernment Committee (CDC) discerns the aspirant might have a call to the priesthood, and that broader discernment by the church is appropriate, then a letter shall be written supporting the person's nomination for admission as a postulant to the priesthood. The points listed below shall be addressed in the letter. The purpose is to create a full and rich picture of the person being nominated. If there is something unique about the person which has not been elicited in the following points, please include details. This letter will be read by the Bishop's Advisory Council on Ordained Ministry (BACOM) in further discernment of the aspirant's call. Send this letter to:

Executive Administrator  
The Diocese of Colorado  
1300 Washington Street  
Denver, CO 80203-1311

Please address the following points:

1. What is your understanding of a priest's role in the Episcopal Church? Why do you believe this aspirant has been called to the priesthood instead of the vocational diaconate or Lay Ministries?
2. Describe the discernment process used by this committee.
3. What passion does the aspirant have for God and God's people? What sets this the aspirant on fire?
4. Tell how this aspirant is currently proclaiming and teaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ; serving and caring for the young and old, strong and weak, rich and poor in the parish; demonstrating God's forgiveness; and participating in sacraments of the church? (*Read the Examination on pages 531-2 BCP.*) Please give examples.
5. Describe your understanding of the nominee's spirituality and prayer life.
6. What other gifts does the aspirant have? How well do they match with those gifts needed to be an effective priest? How else do they build up and serve the body of Christ? Please give examples.

7. How does the aspirant facilitate lay leadership, manage personal control issues, and reconcile conflicts with others? Please give examples.
8. Describe how the aspirant reacts and interacts with authority and responds when in a position of authority. Please give examples.
9. Do you respect this person and how was that respect won? Would you want the aspirant to be your priest? Please give personal examples.
10. Describe the factors that might inhibit this person's ordained ministry. Will remedial work or further training overcome those limitations?
11. What are the significant relationships in the aspirant's life? What are the *responsibilities* of the aspirant towards these relationships? How do these persons respond to the aspirant's pursuit of Holy Orders? Will these persons be supportive of the time, energy and money the Holy Orders Process and the ordained life will require? Please give quotations and examples.
12. If this person has been divorced, describe the reconciliation that has occurred with the aspirant and the former spouse. What work has been done to address this division with the children (if any), the community, and with God?
13. Given the present state of the church and the world and the need for leadership, describe the aspirant concerning the following: dealing with change within the church; having a high enough energy level; being willing to risk; being self differentiated; being faithful, responsible and accountable; and understanding and embracing the ordination vows.
14. Is the aspirant aware of the following: ordination is a call, not a right; ordination does not occur if there isn't a position for the candidate; no position is guaranteed upon completion of the process; and there are standards of compensation and pension in the Diocese of Colorado, but not all parishes adhere to them? Does the aspirant accept these conditions?
15. Is there anything else the Bishop, the COM, and the BACOM should know about the aspirant?
16. The sponsoring parish needs to support the aspirant throughout postulancy, candidacy, and ordination with prayer; emotional encouragement; opportunities for growth; and financially to the best of the parish's ability. Is this Committee willing to encourage this support from the Sponsoring Clergy, the Vestry/Bishop's Committee and fellow parishioners to do the same?
17. No matter what the outcome of this process, will you continue to hold this person in prayer for God's direction and peace?
18. The CDC is a vital part of raising up leaders in the church. The COM would appreciate your comments about your experience of being on a CDC: what worked, what didn't work, what was confusing, and other suggestions for improving this part of the Holy Orders process.

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*Instructions for the CDC's communication to the Vestry/Bishop's Committee/Council.*

The Congregational Discernment Committee needs to communicate with the Vestry/Bishop's Committee/Council summarizing, clarifying and answering any questions they might have. **It is, however, important to respect the confidentiality of the discernment process and not to divulge personal information of the nominee that would compromise confidentiality.**

The focus of the communication to the Vestry shall be:

1. the process of discernment,
2. the outcomes of that process, and
3. any further recommendations in the development of the aspirant's ministry

Also, the CDC shall encourage the Vestry/Bishop's Committee/Council to pray for God's peace and direction in the life of the aspirant.