

Covenant between the Bishop and Diocese of Colorado and Postulants and Candidates for the Priesthood

The Bishop and Diocese and _____ hereby enter into a covenant for the purpose of supporting _____'s response to a call to serve God as a Priest in the Episcopal Church.

Admission to Postulancy for the Priesthood represents the Diocese's affirmation of a call. Therefore, the stages of Postulancy and Candidacy are not primarily focused on discernment of a call, but on responding to that call. The Diocese, through the Canon to the Ordinary, the Executive Administrator, the Standing Committee, the Commission on Ministry, the Board of Examining Chaplains, and others takes on the role of working with Postulants and Candidates to ensure that they are well-prepared and equipped for their ministry and are confident in their call.

Spiritual Health

Postulants and Candidates are to meet regularly with a spiritual director. If physically present in the state during the summer, Postulants and Candidates should plan on attending the Holy Orders Retreat. Those who are engaged in work outside the state are not expected to attend. Since all facets of wellness are related, Postulants and Candidates are also expected to work on maintaining and improving mental, physical, social, and emotional well-being.

Communication

In order for this collaborative process to be of most benefit to individuals and the Church, all involved must be discreet in the sharing of personal information. Diocesan officials (those people and groups listed in the first paragraph) will not share outside the process information about Postulants and Candidates. On the other hand, for this process to be the most supportive to everyone, the Diocese requires—and officials, Postulants, and Candidates must expect—a free flow of information within and between these groups and individuals. The Diocese recognizes the confidential nature of the relationships with Rectors/Vicars and with spiritual directors and will respect that confidentiality.

Postulants and Candidates for the Priesthood will write to the Bishop each Ember tide. These Ember Day Letters are to keep the Bishop informed about formation and life in general. Either the Bishop or the Canon to the Ordinary will reply to these letters, and they will be filed in the Executive Administrator's office.

Financial Support

The Bishop desires that sponsoring parishes financially support their Postulants and Candidates for the Priesthood. The Bishop may have limited funds available as well for financial support. The

Bishop and Diocese will assist in every way possible to lessen the financial burden of responding to this call. The Bishop expects seminarians to be faithful and responsible in their financial management, to use any financial support received to maximum benefit, and to seek assistance and advice when needed.

Academic Preparation

The Board of Examining Chaplains will assign someone to each Postulant to work collaboratively on a comprehensive plan for education and formation. The biggest decision upon admission to Postulancy is usually the selection of a seminary. For Postulants who have already done some seminary work, the BOEC will evaluate and discuss the work done and guide the decisions about what further work will best prepare each postulant for service as a Priest. This liaison with the BOEC will also consult on course selections and other educational decisions throughout this important period of formation. In other words, the BOEC will be involved in Postulants' and Candidates' entire formation, rather than just evaluating General Ordination Exams (and yes, Candidates will need to take the GOE). While the Bishop and Diocese don't require that Postulants and Candidates maintain a specific grade point average, they do expect seminary courses to be taken for a grade and for students to put in the work required to get maximum benefit out of each course.

Clinical Pastoral Education

Postulants and Candidates will successfully complete one basic unit of CPE, and the final evaluation will be submitted to the Diocese.

Admission to Candidacy

The COM will meet with Postulants during their senior year of seminary immediately preceding Diocesan Convention. This interview will be primarily to address any educational or formational needs that might be missing and to ensure that the Postulant is on track to complete seminary and to be ordained the following June. These interviews happen around Convention so that seniors can attend and network with clergy who might be interested in calling a curate or assistant.

Other Items

- Postulants and Candidates for the Priesthood in this Diocese are considered, by virtue of their status in the Holy Orders process, to be licensed for the following ministries: Worship Leader, Preacher, Eucharistic Minister, Eucharistic Visitor, and Catechist (as outlined and defined in Canon III.4—"Of Licensed Ministries").
- Postulants and Candidates shall not exercise pastoral leadership of a congregation but rather carry out these ministries as a part of their formation under the supervision of an Episcopal Priest, Seminary faculty, CPE supervisor, or other appropriate official.

- Postulants and Candidates shall not preside at weddings, funerals, baptisms, or other public, pastoral offices. They may assist a priest at such services.
- Emergency baptisms shall only be performed when a Priest or ordained hospital chaplain cannot be reached in a timely manner. Postulants and Candidates may very well be required to exercise pastoral judgment in urgent situations, and the Diocese expects them to err on the side of good pastoral care. (The point is, do not perform a baptism in the hospital simply because the CPE program expects you to. If there is time to find an ordained person, do so and use your best pastoral judgment.)
- Postulants and Candidates shall not exercise the ministry of anointing with oil for healing. If anointing is pastorally appropriate, they should engage a Priest to do so. As with emergency baptisms, Postulants and Candidates are to err on the side of good pastoral care in this area.
- Postulants and Candidates shall not serve as: members of Vestries/Bishop's Committees, delegates to Diocesan Convention, deputies to General Convention, members of the Standing Committee, Commission on Ministry, Board of Examining Chaplains, or the Committee on Spiritual Direction. If serving in any of these capacities at the time of admission to Postulancy, they shall resign.
- Postulants and Candidates shall not wear clerical collars of any sort at any time. If this presents a conflict in a specific program, the Canon to the Ordinary should be notified and consulted.

Deployment

The Bishop expects prospective ordinands to be ready to serve according to the mission needs of the Diocese. The Bishop reserves the prerogative not to ordain someone who does not have a cure because of inability or unwillingness to relocate.

Conclusion

The Diocese deeply desires that Postulancy and Candidacy for the Priesthood be seen as a partnership that will bring to the Church the very best, most-prepared, most-confident priests possible. All the officials in this process approach this work with deep seriousness, joy, and prayer. Postulants and Candidates are encouraged to make the most of every opportunity for formation and learning. They're also encouraged to abide by the motto, "when in doubt, ask." The Canon to the Ordinary and Executive Administrator are the primary points of contact for any question that may come up, and they would rather be consulted ahead of time than to address a difficulty later.

Postulants and Candidates are called to a wonderful ministry, and all those involved in the process promise to hold them in prayer and support them in every way possible.

Postulant's Signature

I have read the above and had opportunity to ask questions about this covenant. I pledge to honor this covenant and work faithfully in my formation to become a Priest in the Diocese of Colorado.

COM Chair's Signature

On behalf of the Bishop and Diocese, my signature represents a pledge by all those involved in the Holy Orders Process to support, encourage, and equip the Postulant for ministry as a Priest in the Diocese of Colorado.
