

**The Episcopal Diocese of San Joaquin
Office of the Bishop and The Commission on Ministry
Steps toward ordination, Vocational Deacon**

Please note that this document is not intended to present a “box ticking” exercise, but rather a roadmap for discernment and process. Along the way, while there are tasks to be completed, discernment that reflects growth, self-awareness, and spiritual maturity is critical.

Part One

An individual who believes she/he is being called to explore the possibility of entering into a formation process toward the diaconate is to complete the following steps in Part One over the course of a minimum of six months.

Please Note: It is not necessarily the case that all tasks have to be completed in the order listed. Whenever you have a question, please feel free to contact Chair of the Commission on Ministry, Director of School for Deacons, or the shepherd assigned to you by the Commission on Ministry. Note: COM = “Commission on Ministry”

MOST IMPORTANT: WHEN SUBMITTING DOCUMENTATION AS INDICATED WITHIN THE EXPECTATIONS BELOW, PLEASE BE SURE TO SUBMIT TWO COPIES: ONE TO COM CHAIR AND ONE TO THE CANON TO THE ORDINARY.

Task	Notes	For Help	Date Completed
Meet with church cleric		Church Cleric	
Attend Diocesan Day of Discernment (scheduled and announced by COM)		Ask cleric or COM Chair	
Send letter of interest to Bishop as an aspirant to becoming part of the Diaconal Formation process.	Mail to Bishop; send copy to Canon to the Ordinary and to the COM chair	Ask Director, School for Deacons	
Preliminary interview with Bishop and/or Canon	This is a prerequisite and should occur prior to taking any of the steps listed beyond this item	Call the diocesan administrator at diocesan offices in	

		Fresno to make an appointment.	
Compose spiritual autobiography See "Spiritual Autobiography Instructions" for guidance	This needs to be accomplished prior to meeting with the Church Discernment Committee	Use attached guidelines as a suggestion; contact your shepherd (if already assigned). Send copy to COM chair and to Canon to Ordinary	
Attend a "Meet and Greet" with COM		COM will contact you	
COM assigns you a shepherd with the committee.		COM will inform you	
Complete "Context for Ministry" Project See "Context for Ministry Instructions"	Project needs to be approved by Director, School for Deacons and COM chair.	Contact church cleric, COM chair or Director of School for Deacons. Send verification of completion to COM chair and to Canon to Ordinary	
Form Church Discernment Committee		Done in conjunction with local cleric.	
Obtain recommendation from "Church Discernment Committee" Sponsoring congregation submits Form 2 to Chair of COM and Canon to the Ordinary	This should be set up with the help of your church cleric	Church cleric; send copy to COM chair and to Canon to Ordinary	
Submit Application for Holy Orders – Form I (one)	This is a lengthy application with multiple sections. Allow plenty of time for completion.	Church cleric; Shepherd; Director, School for Deacons	

Pursuant to a minimum of the Canonically required six months, the Bishop will make a decision regarding granting status as an applicant/aspirant, including the “go ahead” to matriculate into the Diocesan School for Deacons or some other diocesan approved program.			
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Part Two

Progression from Applicant/Aspirant status to Postulant

This progression requires a minimum of 9 months and satisfactory completion of all designated items.

Please note that the Bishop and/or Canon and/or the Commission on Ministry may request to meet with someone who has begun this process at any time.

Task	Notes	For Help	Date Completed
Register on-line for first semester courses in School for Deacons	Go to diocesan website and identify the blue rectangle on top left of the home page entitled “School for Deacons and Center for Learning.” Click on that icon to access all necessary information. Note: Approval to matriculate in an alternate program of study must be approved by the Bishop. This request, with all applicable details, should be submitted to the Canon to the Ordinary, who will involve all necessary parties in deliberation about the	Director, School for Deacons and Center for Learning	

	program, and in turn will offer a recommendation to the Bishop.		
Successful completion of two semesters (September – June) in School for Deacons or in an alternate program if approved by the Bishop.	Grades for each course will be given by the instructors, who will also forward these to the Bishop and Canon. It is the Canon who keeps the official folder for those in the process. If matriculating in an alternate program, grades from that program must be submitted to the Canon to the Ordinary, verifying successful completion of previously approved courses.		
Schedule psychological evaluation. There is a form available through the Episcopal Pension Fund related to this evaluation. However, this form is optional.	Contact Canon to receive contact information for approved psychologist. The evaluation is valid for three years from the time it is dated. Those in the process should plan in such a way as to not (hopefully) have to repeat it. If the aspirant is not ordained within three years of the date of the evaluation, it must be repeated. This report is sent directly to the Bishop for confidential review.	Canon to the Ordinary	
Submit results of a recent medical examination – form available online	This is reviewed only by the Bishop. It also is valid for three years, so the same		

	as indicated above for the psychological applies here.		
Complete social ministry project. Send documentation of completion of project to COM Chair, Director of School for Deacons, and to the Canon to the Ordinary	This is the second of two projects. The project should be submitted as a proposal to the Chair of COM and the Director, School for Deacons. They will consult with the Canon and/or Bishop if deemed necessary. Please note that this project may also be the result of a request by the Bishop that the postulant engage in a specific ministry. The chair of COM or the Director of the School for Deacons will notify the postulant of approval of the project	Chair of COM Director, School for Deacons Note: Canon and Bishop may choose to be involved	
Work with spiritual director and submit Form 6 to Canon to the Ordinary and Chair of COM prior to applying for postulancy.		Spiritual Director	
Submit application for postulancy, Form 3 to Chairperson of COM, and copy to Canon to the Ordinary	This form is a request for an interview with COM		
Attend interview with COM	Recommendation will be made by COM to the Bishop.	COM will provide you all details and assist you through this part of the process.	
Meet with Bishop and Chairperson of COM	This may be scheduled by COM on the same day as the aforementioned interview. At this meeting the Bishop will indicate his/her decision regarding postulancy.		

Bishop sends written notification of status.	The Office of the Bishop will send a letter informing applicant of their decision as stated in the aforementioned meeting.		
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Part Three

Progression from Postulant to Candidate

This progression requires a minimum of nine months, and satisfactory completion of all items listed.

Please note that the Bishop and/or Canon and/or COM may request to meet with the postulant at any time during the process.

Task	Notes	For Help	Date Completed
Complete registration for third and fourth semesters in School for Deacons or in required semesters and courses if being taken in an alternate program.	If not in diocesan School for Deacons, submit proof of continued acceptance in and registration for alternate program, specifying courses being taken.	Director, School for Deacons	
Meet with COM at least once during postulancy, as requested by COM.		Chair of COM will contact the postulant.	
Submit “Ember Day Letters” to Bishop four times annually.	Bishop will forward letters to Canon for filing in postulant’s folder.	Shepherd	

Complete “Safeguarding God’s Children,” and “Safeguarding God’s People,” on-line. Submit form 4 to Chair of COM and Canon to the Ordinary	If the postulant has not already accomplished this, it must be completed before the end of postulancy. Please note: It is valid for three years, and must be renewed thereafter.	Contact the rep in your parish, your clergy or the Canon to the Ordinary’s office. You will be registered for this program and given a password to access it.	
Complete Healing Racism Training. Submit form 5 to Chair of COM and Canon to the Ordinary	May be completed during candidacy. In some locations it is still referenced as “Anti-racism Training.”	Contact Canon to the Ordinary for options.	
Director of School for Deacons or of alternate program verifies successful completion of courses in which student has matriculated.		Written verification sent to Bishop, Canon and Chair of COM.	
Clergy and Vestry/Bishop’s Committee of your sponsoring congregation-submits recommendation for candidacy (Form 7)		Clergy and Senior Warden forward Form 7 to Canon to the Ordinary and Chair of COM. If there is no clergy assigned to the congregation, contact the Canon to the Ordinary for further instruction.	
Submit application for interview for candidacy with COM and Standing Committee. Form 8	Conference will be scheduled by COM and postulant will be notified.	Submit application to Chair of COM with copy to Canon to the Ordinary.	
COM and Standing Committee will meet with Canon and Bishop	At this meeting the Bishop will share with the postulant the		

to offer their recommendation regarding candidacy. The Bishop, shepherd and Chair of COM will then meet with the postulant.	recommendation he/she has received, and indicate his/her decision regarding candidacy.		
The Office of the Bishop will send written official notice of the Bishop's decision regarding candidacy.		Office of the Bishop	

VERY IMPORTANT

At some point between the beginning of the postulant's third semester of study and the acceptance of candidacy, dependent on the individual's progress and discerned "readiness," the Bishop will assign a field placement. This placement is carefully chosen by the Bishop, a decision which is preceded by his/her consultation with all who have been part of the individual's formation process. During this time, the individual is to register for the Field Placement Course. This course, offered in the School for Deacons, must be taken by all who aspire to ordination in the diocese, regardless of whether they have matriculated in the School for Deacons or some other preapproved program. The Bishop will also designate the length of his assignment, and their hopes and expectations during this important phase of formation.

Progression from Candidacy to Call to Ordination

Task	Notes	For Help	Date Completed
Complete Latino Ministry training during postulancy or candidacy	The Diocese will provide opportunities within the framework of need sometime during this process.	Director, School for Deacons, Canon to the Ordinary	

Complete 1 (one) unit of Clinical Pastoral Education at an accredited ACPE site during postulancy or candidacy.	The Canon to the Ordinary can help you identify appropriate CPE sites. Scholarship money is available if needed.	COM Chair or Canon	
Obtain certificate of completion of Formation Program in School for Deacons or alternate program	This will be sent to you without your having to request it, and the report will be presented to the Bishop, Canon, and Chair of COM	Director, School for Deacons or Director of alternate program	
Submit for the second time evidence of participation in an ongoing spiritual formation program. Form 6	Send to Canon to the Ordinary with copy to Chair of COM.		
Document attesting to successful completion of field placement to be submitted by mentoring cleric of the church to which candidate was assigned by the Bishop. See Attachment "T"	Send a copy to the Canon to the Ordinary and Chair of COM.		
Ember Day Letters continue to be sent to the Bishop. See Attachment "L"	Bishop will provide these to Canon for filing in the individual's official folder.		
Submit application for ordination; see Form 9	Send to Canon to Ordinary and COM chair.		
Diaconal Ordination Exams (DOEs) successfully completed.	These are to occur prior to attendance at the Candidate's interviews with the Diocesan Standing Committee and COM, and will be administered in January of the last semester.	Canon to the Ordinary	

Clergy and Vestry/BC of sponsoring congregation submit endorsement for ordination, Form 10		Clergy and Senior Warden from your sponsoring congregation. Send to chair of COM and to Canon to the Ordinary	
Clergy and Vestry/BC from congregation where field placement occurred submit endorsement for ordination; Form 10		Clergy and Senior Warden from your home parish. Send to chair of COM and to Canon to the Ordinary.	
Submit application for ordination – Form 8		Send to chair of COM, copy to Canon	
Meet with Bishop and Canon regarding ordination date and to discuss how you might live out your ministry		Work with Canon to schedule	
Bishop advises candidate of their decision regarding ordination			
Office of the Bishop submits written declaration of Bishop's decision regarding ordination.		Office of the Bishop	