

The Vocational Diaconate in the Diocese of Edmonton

Definition

Deacons are persons who are called by God into a *prophetic ministry**, authorized by the church, and ordained by a bishop to a lifetime ministry of Word and Service to both the community and the congregation in a ministry that connects the two.

**prophetic ministry: For the purposes of the vocational diaconate in the Diocese of Edmonton, prophetic ministry refers to a ministry that witnesses to the power of the Holy Spirit calling the church and the world to transformation. A prophet in the Gospels is “one who speaks forth”.*

Vision

This ministry is not about Sunday mornings primarily. Rather it is ministry at the margins, always with a view to changing a system and challenging the church as well as the world to ask the important questions. The liturgical role of vocational deacons is important but very minimal. Their presence at liturgies is more sign than function.

Criteria for Discernment of Vocation

Person should demonstrate the following evidence of core values:

1. Christian faith in God, and an active prayer life consisting of Daily Offices, regular attendance at the Eucharist, and a ministry of intercession for his/her field of ministry.
2. An articulate call to the Diaconate with specific reference to prophetic servanthood, with demonstrated experience of service particularly related to the marginalized, the poor, the weak, the sick and the lonely, and with a particular commitment to ecological or social justice ministry. The person will demonstrate that this ministry is presently being exercised at work or as a volunteer.
3. Love of and commitment to the Body of Christ as expressed in the Anglican Church of Canada.
4. An integration of faith, action, theological reflection, and a balanced personal life.
5. Self-awareness including knowledge of their own strengths and weaknesses, and a willingness to grow and change. Ability to be honest and open with others especially when mediating conflict.

6. An understanding of holy orders and a willingness to live under the authority of the Bishop, and as a co-operative member of a parish clergy team. Commitment to being a team player, leadership ability, ability to work in groups, and respect for the opinions of others. The ability to gather a support group, and work with other deacons engaged in specialized ministries.
7. An ability to relate to all people regardless of race, class, culture, age, disability, gender, orientation.
8. A commitment to being a life-long learner with training in the particular ministry and willingness to engage in on-going training and education.
9. An active plan for self-care, taking into account self, family, and friendships.

Discernment Process

- Interview with the Bishop, to outline what s/he has done in the area of specialty making a presentation of 10 to 20 minutes, then answering questions.
- Bishop initiates, through the rector, a Parish Discernment Committee.
- The Parish Discernment Committee
 - (a) Will engage in study on the Diaconate and Prophetic ministries from Scripture, Tradition, and the Ordinal (to be evolved).
 - (b) May spend a period of time in field trips/experiences in the area of interest e.g. prison ministry, inner city, hospitals, ecology.
 - (c) Will review the candidate's actions in particular projects relating to diaconal and prophetic ministry.
 - (d) Will conduct an interview after engaging the Diaconal Study Process. The interview will explore the core values and understand the sense of call and depth of ministry experience. The report will then be sent to the Bishop along with references from the area of special interests.
- Bishop decides whether candidate may proceed.
- Interview with Examining Chaplains who may recommend spiritual gifts inventory, and further Vocational assessment.

Pre-requisites; Education and Training Guidelines

Pre-requisites: Adequate training, at a post-secondary and practical level, for the specific ministry identified.

Education/Training: Normally two year program of study through an accredited Anglican seminary – to include courses in the following:
Christian Theology
Spiritual Formation
Scripture: Old and New Testaments
Moral Theology and Ethics
Social Justice and Social Issues
Church History
Diocesan Diaconal formation

Written Submissions Required:

1. C.V. (3 pages maximum)
2. Spiritual Autobiography (3 pages limit)
3. What about ordination to the vocational diaconate will enhance your ministry and the church's prophetic engagement with this area of ministry?

Checklist

Your Prayer life is vibrant – i.e. Offices are said regularly; you attend the Eucharist weekly; you have daily Intercession for your area of ministry and your parish.

Spiritual Direction – monthly meeting with one's Spiritual Director.

You have a recognizable ministry already.

A support group of friends, parishioners and others is in place.

There is a willingness to connect with and support the diocesan community of vocational deacons.

You are a team player.