

Model 2 – A large suburban parish

Committee on Ministries

A member of the church, who has been in good standing for a year or more, contacts the Rector about his or her desire to pursue ordained ministry. The Rector will meet with the aspirant individually to discuss the matter and then, if indicated, appoint a committee.

The Rector will suggest that the aspirant write a spiritual autobiography to share with the committee, and offer some reading for the aspirant and committee to pursue together.

The committee will meet with the aspirant a minimum of three times within a six month period and then form a recommendation, offering a written report to the Rector and Vestry. Should the committee, Rector and Vestry agree, the aspirant will then be recommended to the Bishop for consideration at the diocesan level. The written report will be used as a resource for the Rector's letter of introduction to the Bishop.

The committee might begin with a conversation among themselves as to what qualities they have appreciated in clergy they have known over the years, and what the identifying marks are, for them, of a good and trustworthy priest. Many of these qualities develop with education, experience and time; how can they be identified before the person enters seminary?

Some useful questions to pursue:

How has this person come to a sense of vocation? Does his/her decision to pursue this make sense to you?

Can he or she reasonably complete the requirements for ordination in this Church (i.e. seminary education, examinations, public speaking)? How realistic is the person in planning the transition from his or her present life into the ministry?

Is this person a leader? Do others turn to her/him for guidance and support?

Does he or she show a keen interest in the scriptures, life and teaching of the Church and in the sacraments? How do we know that?

Will he or she have the stamina which is often required of clergy? An appropriate sense of boundaries and confidentiality? Tact?

How would this person's presence in the ordained ministry affect the community as a whole?

Are there any "red flags?" These need not preclude a positive decision, but would be helpful to note as the aspirant continues in the process.