



Rector's Careful Inquiry

The formal process of discerning a call to ordination begins with the Rector's careful inquiry – a series of 3 (or more) conversations between a rector (or a priest appointed by the rector) and the person exploring ordination.

At least one of these conversations should include his or her spouse or fiancé, if applicable. Beyond the general willingness and support of the spouse, which is vital, it is also important to know if the marriage is strong and growing and that the spouse feels a sense of agency in this life trajectory. Does the couple express positive mutual regard for one another? What do they do for fun together? How do they support one another in times of stress? Does the spouse joyfully embrace the life their spouse's call might necessitate? We strongly recommend, though do not require, the [Prepare/Enrich Marriage Assessment](#).

At the end of these conversations, the Rector must be comfortable about encouraging the individual to pursue further discernment.

If this is the case, the rector completes the attached form along with a detailed, 2-3 page written report of those conversations and sends it to the Bishop's office. If the Rector is not comfortable about proceeding, that fact and the reasons for it should be communicated to the person. **Rectors, please consult the Canon to the Ordinary if you have questions about the Careful Inquiry or if you need help in determining how to proceed with a person.** This is important and holy work. Please undertake it with a prayerful heart, and do not hesitate to ask for help from the Bishop's Office.



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Rector's Careful Inquiry Form

Suggested topics for conversations

Participant Information

Rector Name: _____ Parish: _____

Interviewee Name: _____ Date of Submission: _____

Conversation 1

Conversation Date _____

Discuss who or what has shaped him or her as a person; what things have contributed to spiritual growth; personal spiritual disciplines; growing edges in spiritual or emotional life; family and relational history.

Initial conversation about call – what has brought this person to seek ordination: What gifts seem to fit or not to fit such a call?

Suggest some things to think about in preparation for next conversation. Discuss the process of writing the Essay on Personal Life, Call, and Ministry, which will be required before postulancy.



Conversation 2

Conversation Date _____

Discussion of ordination – for example, you could look at the ordination service in the prayer book and discuss.

Discussion of Essay on Personal Life, Call, and Ministry, if written. What was interesting, helpful? What questions or concerns does essay raise?

Discuss the ways in which the shape, challenges and demands of ordained ministry fit the person’s personality, gifts and skills.

Include spouse or fiancé (e) in this conversation and ask for his or her input. Discuss his or her thoughts and about this direction. Discuss the expected impact of ordination on the family.

Suggest some things to think about in preparation for next conversation:



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Conversation 3

Conversation Date _____

Follow up on issues, questions, thoughts, second thoughts raised in earlier conversations.
Have a frank conversation about insights, hopes, and concerns regarding this person's pursuit of ordination with as much specificity as possible.
Directions about the next steps in the ordination process:



Conclusion

The Rector should be noting the following in a person seeking ordination, all of which should be addressed in detail in the report that accompanies this form:

Characteristics	Answer
Deep, growing personal faith that can be easily expressed and shared with others (Has the individual led anyone to Christ?)	Yes_____ No_____
Clear sense of call that is connected to gifts	Yes_____ No_____
Some understanding and experience of the nature of the church and the place of ordained ministry within it	Yes_____ No_____
Demonstrated ability in areas of leadership, discipleship, mission and pastoral care seen through 100 hours of observed ministry	Yes_____ No_____
Emotional and physical health – including healthy family relationships	Yes_____ No_____
Intellectual and academic ability; curious, life-long learner	Yes_____ No_____
If married, spouse is supportive of move to ordination	Yes_____ No_____
If married, the couple shows signs of health, joy, and strength in their relationship	Yes_____ No_____

Please submit this completed form, along with the written report, to the Bishop's Office.