



Archdeacon and Deacon Director's Conference Spring 2013 Open Space Notes

DIOCESE OF TORONTO – DISCERNMENT PROCESS WITH MENTORS

Once a parish has received its bishop's permission to enter the diaconate discernment process, it establishes a Parish Discernment Committee and completes an application to the Coordinator of the Community of Deacons. This form states information such as the parish, incumbent, chair and members of the discernment committee and reasons for asking to enter the process (what a deacon would bring to the parish, why one is desirable, etc.).

On reception of this form, the coordinator makes an appointment to go to that parish and preach on the diaconate, and also meet with the discernment committee. An experienced deacon is then named as Mentor to that parish and will attend all meetings of the discernment committee; s/he may also preach there. The role of the Mentor is to ensure that the parish has a proper grasp of diaconal ministry, that their vision for a deacon is reasonable, viable and in concordance with the understanding of diaconal ministry. We have used "Listening Hearts" and "Many Servants" among other resources for this discernment, along with the Ordination Charge to deacons in the BAS.

The purpose of appointing a deacon as Mentor is two-fold: one, to model from his/her own experience the ministry of a deacon and two, to ensure that the parish and its incumbent truly understand the diaconal calling and ministry.

There are two vestry motions to be passed, the first one affirming that the parish does indeed wish to proceed to discern the potential for diaconal ministry within their parish and community, and the second one affirming that the parish does wish to proceed to the discernment of specific individuals to raise up as deacons. The discernment committee (still with the guidance of the Mentor and the Coordinator as needed) then proceeds to the identification of potential candidates, who will be presented to the parish for a final vote on submitting their names to the bishop. These may be self-identified candidates or ones identified by the parish and/or the discernment committee.

At this point the Mentor's job is complete and the application becomes the responsibility of the Coordinator.