



Exploring a Call to Ordained Ministry in The Diocese of Canterbury

At the beginning of the services where deacons and priests are ordained, the Bishop or Archbishop reads these words:

“The Church is the Body of Christ, the people of God and the dwelling-place of the Holy Spirit. In baptism the whole Church is summoned to witness to God’s love and to work for the coming of his kingdom. To serve this royal priesthood, God has given particular ministries...”

The ministry of deacons and priests in the Church of England is a ministry of service, both privately in prayer and the study of scripture and publicly as they lead the people of God in worship, preach and teach and take the good news of Jesus into the world. As such, those who are ordained into the Church of England will be able to recognise and articulate both an inner (individual/private) call and an external (public/affirmed) call to that ministry. Because this sense of call is so central to this ministry, we often use the word ‘vocation’ to describe it. Vocation is derived from the Latin word *vocare* which means ‘to call’. Because recognising and articulating that call is a task for which we need the wisdom and guidance of the Holy Spirit, we also use the term ‘discernment’ when talking about the process.

I don’t know where this document finds you and your sense of vocation at the moment. For some, you may be responding to a recent or sudden call. For others, you may have been aware of the presence of a call to ordained ministry for as long as you can remember. Some may be actively resisting a call that other people tell you is there. For others, you may never have shared what you believe God is calling you to with anyone else.

The discernment process described here is designed to nurture and test both your internal sense of call and the church’s external call to you to enter ordained ministry. It is a rigorous and in-depth process, so that when the Bishop or Archbishop asks: *“Do [those whose duty it is to know these ordinands and examine them] believe them to be duly called to serve God in this ministry?”* and *“Do you believe that God is calling you to this ministry?”*, everyone is able to answer with a hearty *“We do so believe”*.



**SECOND-YEAR CURATES WITH BISHOP ROSE
AT THEIR ORDINATION TO THE PRIESTHOOD IN 2021**

Photo: Jim Drew. Cover Photo: Jon Marlow.





The Shape of the Discernment Process.

The diagram below shows the different stages which make up the discernment process in the Diocese of Canterbury. This includes aspects that are unique to this diocese and also a standardised national process which is used across the Church of England. The process is overseen by The Revd Jon Marlow, The *Diocesan Director of Ordinands (DDO)* and you will be working with Jon or one of team of *Assistant Diocesan Directors of Ordinands (ADDOs)*. ADDOs are ordained Deacons or Priests who are in active ministry in the diocese. The rest of this booklet explains these different stages and the paperwork and preparation which is needed for each one.



The DDO Team and all those who are involved in the process are there to advise Bishop Rose as she makes the decision whether to sponsor you for theological training and subsequently, whether to ordain you. What all these bishop's advisors are discerning is the extent to which you inhabit six qualities:

- Love for God
- Call to Ministry
- Love for People
- Wisdom
- Faithfulness
- Potential

These are not treated as abstract concepts, but are seen in four domains, Christ; the Church; the World and the Self. The grids at the end of this booklet begin to explain how the six would be seen in the four domains for both a Distinctive Deacon and a Priest. All stages of the local and national process will unpack, explore, and assess the 24 statements which occur in the intersections between the six qualities and four domains.

Starting to Explore a Call to Ordained Ministry

To start this process, you will need to be involved in the life of a local Church of England congregation in the Diocese of Canterbury and we recommend that you spend some time with the leaders of this congregation talking about and praying for your ministry and your calling. Please remember that the ministry which you are currently involved with is just as much a vocation as that of your Vicar, Curate or Chaplain and ordained ministry is just one aspect of the church's wider vocation "*to witness to God's love and to work for the coming of his kingdom*".

Because all vocations are valuable, the stage before entering the formal process of discernment to the ordained ministry involves exploring what the Bible has to say about our





discipleship and calling, especially as it relates to our four diocesan pillars of Prayer, Studying the Scriptures, Generosity and Evangelism. We will also discover some of the different ways in which people across the diocese describe their vocation and the practical ways they have followed that call. This involves a one-day session called *'Here I Am'* and an eight-week course called *'Deepening Discipleship'* both of which give you opportunities to talk with others to help discern whether your particular call is to enter the discernment process described below, or whether you would like to follow a different pathway, such as Licensed Lay Ministry (also known as Reader Ministry), serving as a church officer or Authorised Local Ministry (ALM).

At this stage you should also have a sense whether your call is to be ordained as a *Distinctive Deacon*, or to be a *Deacon* who is subsequently ordained as a *Priest*. The books on the reading list at the end of this booklet will help you understand what makes each of these ministries distinctive.

Towards the end of this exploratory stage, you can request a pack of documents which you will need to read and complete in order to enter the next stage (*The Discernment Cohort Programme*). The longest of these is called the *'Ordained Ministry Enquiry Form'* which includes detailed biographical and financial information, asks you to describe the ministries you are currently involved with and also invites you to make a start articulating your calling to ordained ministry.

At this stage you will also need to supply the names of two referees, complete a DBS Check and Data Protection Consent Forms and complete two modules of online safeguarding training. The full list of documents you will need to submit are:

- Ordained Ministry Enquiry Form (OMEF).
- Confidential Safeguarding Declaration.
- Statement of Financial Position.
- The names of two Referees, one from your church community and one external to the church. (At this stage we will only write to your incumbent or chaplain asking them to give their support for you to enter the discernment process.)
- Data Protection Consent Form.
- Confirmation that you have completed online safeguarding training.
- Scanned copies of your birth certificate, baptism certificate and confirmation certificate. We will need to see the originals as some point in the process.

On receipt of your confidential declaration and OMEF, we will arrange for you to have a new Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Check. This is necessary, even if you currently have a DBS or hold a licence to minister in the Diocese of Canterbury.

There are two things which will add extra stages to the process which will be triggered by this paperwork. One is called a *Canon C4 Faculty*, which is required by law for anyone who wishes to be ordained who has been divorced and remarried, or who is married to a spouse who has been divorced. The Canon C4 officer will want to understand the background to the divorce(s) and to assure the bishop that your current relationship is stable.

The other extra stage will be required if a DBS Check come back with any 'blemishes'. We should already be expecting this as you will have declared it on your confidential declaration and the Diocesan Safeguarding Team will carry out a *Safeguarding Risk Assessment* before you enter the discernment process.





Discernment Cohort Programme

One of the joys of Christian ministry is that it is a team effort. We work as one body, with Christ as our head and everyone playing a part according to their gifts, passions and opportunities. Within the context of a church that lives, learns and serves together, discerning and exploring our vocation should also be a shared activity. In the Diocese of Canterbury, our *Discernment Cohort Programme* creates a small group of six candidates and two members of the DDO Team who will walk with you on your discernment journey.

The purpose of this programme is twofold. The first purpose is *formational* – the group is there to help you develop your understanding of ordained ministry and your own vocation, and to help you inhabit the qualities, attributes and characteristics associated with those who will be ordained deacon and priest. The second purpose is to gather evidence showing how you do inhabit the six qualities. This will be used by your (A)DDO to write the *sponsoring papers* which will be submitted before you attend the Stage Two assessment. The sponsoring papers will focus on how you have developed over the programme, rather than where you were at the start.

The outline below gives an indication of the structure of the eleven-month programme. Each of the individual assignments will be explained in detail at the preceding meeting and you should allow enough time to prepare properly for each meeting. All candidates are invited to keep a journal during the discernment process, and this would include your own reflections on the presentations, discussion, and shared learning during the meeting.

| | |
|--------------|---|
| Month 1: | Cohort Meeting: Welcome and Introductions – 1000 Words |
| Month 2: | What is a Priest/Deacon I – The Ordinal |
| Month 3: | What is a Priest/Deacon II – Widening our Interpretation |
| Month 4: | Individual Meetings with (A)DDO |
| Month 5: | The Five Marks of Mission |
| Month 6: | A Place of Welcome |
| Month 7: | Maintaining Healthy Relationships |
| Month 8: | Individual Meetings with (A)DDO |
| Months 9/10: | Theological Reflections on an Aspect of your Current Context |
| Month 11: | Preparation for <i>Stage One</i> of the <i>Shared Discernment Process</i> |

Carousel Conversations

Stage One of the National *Shared Discernment Process*

Stage One assessments will take place over a morning or afternoon session and will comprise a carousel of six *Multiple Mini Interviews* which explore different topics related to the six qualities. These will last 15 minutes each and will use a variety of creative techniques to help you engage with the issues being explored. The six stations do not map neatly onto the six qualities, they are:

- Vocation to Priesthood/Diaconate
- The Church of England
- Articulating Faith
- Practical and Pastoral Care
- Living as a Disciple
- Engaging with the World





Each of these six stations will give feedback in the form of a numerical rating from 1-7. The feedback from these conversations will be used to plan more focussed work which you will need to undertake before attending the residential Stage Two assessment. This is also a break-point in the process for anyone whose report had raised 'red flags' which could be a barrier to ordination.

The paperwork which is needed before attending the carousel conversations comprises one page of contact details and some yes/no questions about some of the areas you have covered in the process so far. A second page invites you to introduce yourself to the assessors and also gives space for some comments from your (A)DDO.

Focused Work directed by one of the DDO Team.

At this stage, the (A)DDOs who facilitated your discernment cohort will have got to know you well and will have received a report from the carousel conversations which will help them to build up a picture of how you inhabit the six qualities and where you might benefit from extra study, conversation, or experience. We will also ask your referees to write a detailed reference for you as you move through this stage.

With all this information in front of you, your (A)DDO or another member of the DDO Team will now work with you to devise a personalised programme which could include a placement in another church, practice interviews, psychometric testing, further reading or formal. There may also be some continued work in small groups if a number of candidates need to address the same area or would like to hone their presentation or facilitation skills.

Psychological Wellbeing Interview

The Assessment for Psychological Wellbeing gives both you and your (A)DDO insight into aspects of your life and experience which may have an impact both on the discernment process and on ministry.

Typically lasting for around 90 minutes, an assessment focuses not on the Discernment Qualities, but on other areas which allow a deeper understanding of emotional health, integration, and well-being. The assessment will be done by a qualified professional – usually trained and experienced in psychotherapy or psychodynamic counselling and always accountable to a professional body. They will have been appointed to work empathically and insightfully with candidates as a part of the wider discernment process.

Interview with Bishop Rose

When you and your (A)DDO agree that you are ready to attend Stage Two of the national process, they will book you a meeting with Bishop Rose. This will be when your (A)DDO feels that you are able to demonstrate how you meet the six criteria so that you are likely to receive a positive recommendation from the national assessors.

Bishop Rose, as the Bishop in Canterbury, will authorise funding for your training and license you to a curacy. This meeting is her opportunity to get to know you and to be sure that the person presented in your paperwork is the person she meets. Following this meeting, Bishop Rose will decide whether to sponsor you to the national Stage Two assessment. As Bishop Rose will not normally meet you again after Stage Two, this is an indication of her confidence that, should you be recommended at that stage, you are suitable to be trained for ordained ministry.





Please be aware that If Bishop Rose sponsors you for training, this does not guarantee that you will be ordained, or that you will be offered a stipendiary curacy. Towards the end of your training, your college or course Principal will make a further recommendation to Bishop Rose which will guide her whether to ordain you and where you would be best suited to minister.

Before you meet Bishop Rose, you will work with your (A)DDO to prepare a draft copy of the paperwork which you will write for the Stage Two assessment.

Stage Two of the National *Shared Discernment Process*

The Stage Two assessment is a residential two-day process, although there is provision for candidates to attend during the day if this is necessary. During the two-day period, candidates will take part in a group exercise and will produce a 500-word written reflection prompted by it. Candidates will have two 90-minute interviews with pairs of assessors. Each pair will explore 12 of the 24 boxes on the qualities/domains grid. The assessors at Stage Two will not revisit the content of the Stage One assessment but will be looking for evidence of development in these areas.

Six weeks before the date of the Stage Two assessment, you and your (A)DDO need to submit the following paperwork to the National Ministry Team:

- Candidate's Proforma and Narrative. This is your statement to the assessors and includes:
 - Section A – Contact Information
 - Section B – About You. Up to 1,600 words describing your occupational history, significant life events and their impact upon you, and your learning.
 - Section C – The Six Qualities. Up to 2,000 Words which will help to bring you and your sense of calling to life for the assessors.
- Sponsoring Papers. These will be written by your (A)DDO and signed by both of you. They are also structured around the six qualities and will draw on all the work you have done and the conversations which have taken place in the process so far.
- Two references.
- An updated safeguarding confidential declaration.
- *Safeguarding Risk Assessment or Canon C4 Faculty (only if needed).*

Bishop's Decision and IME1

Following the Stage Two assessment, the assessors will write a report for Bishop Rose which will make a recommendation whether you should be sponsored for training. If the recommendation is positive, you have three years to enter *Initial Ministerial Education* (IME) Phase 1. This can be full-time or part-time at one of the Church of England's *Theological Education Institutions* (TEIs). The amount of funding available is determined by your age, and the length and mode of training will be determined by the available funding, your current level of theological education and the type of ministry you are training for. You will usually have a discussion with your (A)DDO before the Stage Two assessment about which training pathway might be most suitable for you.





What's Next?

This booklet has looked at the different stages of the discernment process in some detail. Please don't be put off by the number of meetings or the quantity of paperwork involved, you only need to concentrate on one component at a time and you will be supported by the DDO Team throughout the whole process. We envisage that it is possible to complete the whole process so that you could start training two years after filling in your first forms.

If you were given this booklet by a leader at your church, and want to explore a call to ordained ministry, the next step would be to contact Jon Marlow using the details below.

For more information about the *Deepening Discipleship Course*, including when the next course will start, please search for 'Deepening Discipleship' on the [Diocese of Canterbury Website](#).

If you haven't spoken to your Vicar or Chaplain about your sense of call, please give them a copy of this booklet and arrange to have a conversation with them.

Now that you've read this booklet, you may feel that you are called to something other than ordination. If this is the case, please continue the conversation with your local clergy, a member of the Vocations Team (below) or one of the *Bishop's Advisors* listed overleaf.

Contact the DDO and Vocations Team

The Revd Jon Marlow
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and Vocations Officer
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Lay Ministries Adviser
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Diocese of Canterbury
Diocesan House
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Support and Encouragement

Bishop Rose has appointed advisors who can offer help and support at any point as you explore your calling. These advisors do not form part of the formal discernment process, so they are able to talk confidentially and impartially.

Samuel Keeler-Walker – Bishop’s Advisor for LGBT+
skeeler-walker@diocant.org

Revd Beatrice Musindi – Bishop’s Advisor for BAME Affairs
beatrice.musindi@hotmail.co.uk or 01843 579945 (home) and 01634 803254 (work)

Karen Adams – Bishop’s Advisor for Disability
kadams@diocant.org

Revd Estella Last – Bishop’s Advisor for Women’s Ministry
stellalast@gmail.com or 01227 206272

Revd Martin Burrell - Bishop’s Advisor to Gypsy, Traveller and Roma Communities
mburrell51@googlemail.com or 07791 536713

Revd Fr Kevin Jacobs SCP – Bishop’s Advisor for Self-Supporting Ministry
frkevin.0614@gmail.com or 07572 690460

Reading Suggestions

There are a lot of books available which discuss mission and ministry in the Church of England, and you will be asked to engage with some of these during the discernment process. As you get started, please have a look at one of two of the books on this introductory list:

Rosalind Brown, *Being a Deacon Today: Exploring a Distinctive Ministry in the Church and in the World* (Norwich: Canterbury Press, 2005).

Stephen Cottrell, *On Priesthood: Servants, Shepherds, Messengers, Sentinels & Messengers* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 2020).

Steven J. L. Croft, *Ministry in Three Dimensions: Ordination and Leadership in the Local Church*. New ed. edn (London: Darton Longman & Todd, 2008).

John Lees, *Self-supporting Ministry: A Practical Guide* (London, SPCK, 2018).

Magdelene Smith, *Steel Angels: The Personal Qualities of a Priest* (London: SPCK, 2014).

Miranda Threlfall-Holmes and Mark Newitt (Eds), *Being a Chaplain* (London: SPCK, 2011).

Graham Tomlin, *The Widening Circle: Priesthood as God’s Way of Blessing the World* (London: SPCK, 2014).





What are we looking for?

These grids begin to explain how the six qualities (on the left-hand side) would be seen in the four domains (along the top) for both a Distinctive Deacon and a Priest. All stages of the local and national process will unpack, explore, and assess the 24 statements which occur in the intersections between the six qualities and four domains.

| Distinctive Deacon | Christ | Church | World | Self |
|--|--|---|---|---|
| Love for God <i>The candidate...</i> | Is reliant on God - Father, Son and Holy Spirit - and lives out an infectious, life-transforming world-focussed faith | Is rooted in scripture, the worship of the Church and the living traditions of faith | Whole heartedly, generously and attractively engages with God's world | Is prayerful and studies the Bible |
| Call to Ministry <i>The candidate...</i> | Responds to the call of Christ to be a disciple | Understands the distinctive nature of ordained diaconal ministry | Is committed to being a public and representative person of the Church in the forgotten corners of the world | Articulates an inner sense of call grounded in diaconal service |
| Love for People <i>The candidate...</i> | Welcomes Christ in others, listens, values and respects and has a special care for those in poverty and the marginalised | Builds relationships which are collaborative and enabling Keeps pastoral and professional boundaries | Shows God's compassion and care in the world in multifaceted contexts and with social agencies | Has empathy and is aware of how others receive them Keeps personal boundaries |
| Wisdom <i>The candidate...</i> | Is inquisitive, curious and open to new learning that connects church and world Can learn and reflect | Shows instinctively collaborative leadership that enables healthy churches to be bridge-builders in their communities Understands safeguarding / safety in church communities | Is robust and courageous in reflecting the world to the Church and the Church to the world Recognises the need to assess risk | Is a mature and integrated person of stability and integrity Is personally self-aware |
| Fruitfulness <i>The candidate...</i> | Embraces the different and animates others to be witnesses and servants | Shows the capacity to exercise diaconal sacramental and liturgical ministry and effective and enabling teaching ministry | Is a storyteller of God's love and agent of God's kingdom of justice | Has resilience and stamina |
| Potential <i>The candidate has potential to...</i> | Grow in faith and to be open to navigating the future in the company of Christ and guided by the Holy Spirit | See the big picture in their context and, within it, enable a Christian community to serve | See where God is working in the world and to read the signs of the times | Be adaptable and agile |

| Priest | Christ | Church | World | Self |
|--|---|--|--|---|
| Love for God <i>The candidate...</i> | Is reliant on God – Father, Son and Holy Spirit – and lives out an infectious, life-transforming faith | Is rooted in Scripture, the worship of the Church and the living traditions of faith | Whole-heartedly, generously and attractively engages with God's world | Is prayerful and studies the Bible |
| Call to Ministry <i>The candidate...</i> | Responds to the call of Christ to be a disciple | Understands the distinctive nature of ordained priestly ministry | Is committed to being a public and representative person | Articulates an inner sense of call grounded in priestly service |
| Love for People <i>The candidate...</i> | Welcomes Christ in others, listens, values and respects; cares for those in poverty and the marginalised | Builds relationships which are collaborative and enabling Keeps pastoral and professional boundaries | Shows God's compassion for the world | Has empathy and is aware of how others receive them Keeps personal boundaries |
| Wisdom <i>The candidate...</i> | Is inquisitive, curious and open to new learning Can learn and reflect | Shows leadership that enables thriving and healthy churches, handles conflict, and can lead in mission Understands safeguarding / safety in church communities | Is robust and courageous and prepared to take risks Recognises the need to assess risk | Is a mature and integrated person of stability and integrity Is personally self-aware |
| Fruitfulness <i>The candidate...</i> | Embraces the different and enables others to be witnesses and servants | Shows the capacity to exercise sacramental, liturgical and an effective and enabling teaching ministry | Shares faith in Christ and can accompany others in their faith | Has resilience and stamina |
| Potential <i>The candidate has potential to...</i> | Grow in faith and be open to navigating the future in the company of Christ and guided by the Holy Spirit | Manage change, and see the big picture | See where God is working in the world and respond with missionary imagination | Be adaptable and agile |

