

Formation For Ministry



I have called you by name...you are mine
Isaiah 43

CANDIDATE'S HANDBOOK

Sponsored by the Diocese of Ogdensburg

Your Bishop's Fund at Work for You

Revised: January 2015

Table of Contents

A. Mission Statement/Goals/Objectives.....	3
B. Program Description	4-5
1. Academic Formation	
2. Ministry Formation	
3. Spiritual Formation	
4. Mentorship Experience	
5. Commissioning Service	
C. Application Process.....	5-6
1. Admission Prior to Acceptance	
a. Sponsorship	
b. Application	
c. Sponsor’s Recommendation	
d. Candidate’s Interview with Program Director	
e. Letter of Acceptance/Postponement	
2. Withdrawal From the Program Procedure	
a. Consultation with the Sponsor	
b. Notification to the Program Director	
D. Program Guidelines.....	6-7
1. Orientation	
2. Class Attendance/Absence	
3. Workshop Attendance/Absence	
4. Retreat Attendance/Absence	
E. Course Requirements.....	7-8
1. Theological Reflections	
2. Self-Reflections	
3. Program Evaluations	
4. Job Descriptions	
F. Candidate Supervision & Mentorship	8-9
1. Self-Evaluation by the Candidate	
2. Evaluation of the Candidate	
G. Finances	9
1. Tuition	
2. Special Fees	
3. Refreshments	
H. Harassment Policy.....	9

A. Mission Statement

Formation for Ministry is designed to provide academic, pastoral, and spiritual formation to those who are ministering or seeking to minister in local parishes or a recognized pastoral ministry, within the Diocese of Ogdensburg.

Goal

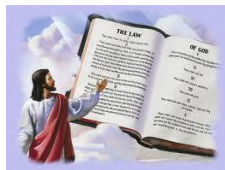
Formation for Ministry offers a foundation in the Catholic faith to enable Catholic adults to develop their gifts for ministry.

Objectives

- To provide a foundation in Scripture, Theology, and Spirituality consistent with the teachings of Vatican II.
- To facilitate an understanding of the lay minister's role and its complimentary nature to pastoral leadership.
- To develop practical and effective skills for ministry.

B. Program Description

1. Academic Formation



This component fosters a basic knowledge of church teaching. Introductory courses in Church, Scripture, Christology, Spirituality, Communications, Sacraments, Moral Theology and Catholic Social Teaching are offered over a two-year period. Each course is taught for 2 ½ hours one night for eight weeks. More pastoral than academic in nature, they combine theological content with practical application to the candidate's life experiences and ministry. In addition, course work is provided to assist candidates in the communication and collaboration skills so necessary in parish ministry. Course descriptions may be found on our website at www.rcdonj.org, as well as the candidate manual.

Course Descriptions

Introduction to Old Testament

Old Testament introduces the candidate to a basic understanding of Hebrew scripture with particular emphasis on the covenant and messianic prophecies as well as a distinction regarding Old Testament writing styles and interpretation.

Introduction to New Testament

This course is an introductory study of the composition, literature, and theology of the New Testament; its origin in early Christian communities and literary forms. Participants will be introduced to methods of New Testament criticism fostering a textual study which will nourish the life of faith in the light of the Second Vatican Council's "Dei Verbum." Special emphasis will be given to the Gospels and selected Pauline literature where redaction of the Word to historical situations in the first century will be correlated with challenges of Christian living today in personal and communal contexts.

Spirituality

The course will explore the meaning of true Christian ministerial spirituality and some of the ways it has been viewed and lived in Christian history. It will consider the vocation of the lay minister, prayer, sacramentality and the integration of prayer and action as well as the centrality of spirituality in family, work and community. Suggestions for supports, techniques and approaches will be made and all of this will be applied, through theological reflection in each session, to the present and future life experience of the lay pastoral minister

Ecclesiology

This course presents an understanding of the Church as found in Vatican II's "Dogmatic and Pastoral Constitution on the Church." It includes current theological models of how the Church sees itself and how such views supports and challenges the pastoral minister today.

Moral Theology

This is an introductory study of the principles and themes found in a Catholic understanding of moral living. Personal as well as systemic issues in morality will be discussed.

Sacraments

This course is designed to assist you to a better understanding of Catholic worship as expressed in the Church's liturgical rites, particularly the celebration of the sacraments. After a brief introduction to the ideas of worship and liturgy in general, an overall theology of the sacraments as the focus of the Christian's faith life within the Church will be offered. An outline of the historical and theological developments of each of the seven sacraments will be presented as a background to understanding the sacramental rites as reformed by the Vatican Council II, especially the Sunday celebration of the Eucharist. The impact of this understanding for programs of sacramental preparation and the celebration of the sacraments in today's parish will be a central concern.

Christology

The purpose of this course is to investigate the person of Jesus the Christ. We do this by asking who he is in Sacred Scripture and Christian Tradition, who he is in the celebration of the Church's sacramental life, and how his teachings affect our moral lives and commitments. The approach is both historical and theological with special attention to the unity of the so-called "Jesus of history" and the "Christ of faith."

Catholic Social Teaching

This course will examine the commitment of Christianity to enable spirituality to be operative in the framework of social action necessary in our day. Participants will reflect upon the biblical understanding of the relationship between Christian love and the meaning of justice, between eschatological hope and human liberation. The Church's call to Social Justice will be studied through a brief survey of catholic Social Teaching sine Pope Leo XIII, focusing on issues of equality and human rights, economic justice, pacifism and just war theory. Finally, reflection on

the roles of the Church, Church ministers, and individuals today will be expressed through integrating papers on: conversion and transformation of consciousness, specific issues relative to contemporary experience today.

2. Ministry Formation

This component aims at the development of ministerial and pastoral skills in specific areas of ministry.

First Year:



A “Vision of Ministry” information workshop is offered in October and is required for all candidates, and optional for sponsoring Pastors/Administrators and Parish Staff during the first year of the program. Presentations are made by workshop facilitators and participants in the areas of ministry training: Presentations on a variety of ministries that include Outreach ministry, Youth Ministry, and Catechetical Leadership will assist candidates with their discernment and selection of their area of ministry. The day also includes a presentation of “Protecting God’s Children” for any candidates who have not yet completed their safe environment certification.

In the spring of the first year, an “Evangelization” workshop is offered on a Saturday to inform candidates of the Bishop’s Document “Go and Make Disciples.” This workshop will offer practical suggestions to candidates seeking to engage in parish ministry.

Second Year:



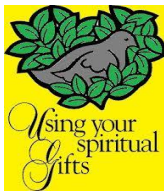
The candidate will attend four Saturday workshops, two in the fall and two in the following spring. The fall workshops will address the topics of Evangelization and issues of Prayer, Liturgy, Worship and Lifelong Catechesis that are central to every area of ministry. The workshops offered in the spring will provide opportunities for candidates to learn about investigate and discuss the issues of their specific areas of ministry.

3. Spiritual Formation

In this component, candidates learn about the importance of personal spirituality and the relationship between spirituality and ministry. The *Spirituality* course is designed to allow candidates to allow their own spirituality and consider strategies for spiritual formation. Candidates are also encouraged to seek spiritual direction

during their period of formation. In addition each year, a weekend retreat experience will offer a time to pray and reflect on God's call to holiness and to the fullness of the Christian life.

4. **Mentorship and Ministry Experience**



This component entails a supervised ministerial experience by the parish designated mentor or sponsor of the candidate, or his/her delegate. The candidate and sponsor draw up a ministerial job description, as a guide for mentoring and ministerial experience within the parish. The job description also becomes a learning model and evaluation tool used by the supervisor in assessing the progress of the candidate's ministerial potential, and final area of placement in parish ministry.

5. **Commissioning Service**



Following the completion of the two year formation program and satisfaction of all class, retreat and workshop requirements, and recommendation by the sponsor, The Bishop or his delegate will commission the candidate for lay ministry service to the Church.

C. Application Process

1. **Admission Procedure**

a. Sponsorship

A person must be sponsored by a Pastor/ Administrator or a director of a recognized pastoral ministry within the Diocese of Ogdensburg.

b. Application

Upon receiving permission from a sponsor to enter the program, the applicant requests an application form from the Program Coordinator. The application form is completed and returned to the Formation for Ministry Program Coordinator.

c. Sponsor's Recommendation

The sponsor completes a written form recommending the applicant to the program and returns it to the Formation for Ministry Program Coordinator.

d. Candidate's Interview

Prior to acceptance into the program, the applicant is interviewed by one of the Formation for Ministry staff members.

e. Letter of Acceptance/Postponement



When the individual is accepted into the program, letters of acceptance are sent to both the applicant and to the sponsor. If, following the application process, an applicant's circumstances have changed and entry to the program must be delayed, letters of postponement can be requested from the Formation for Ministry office; copies of these letters will be sent to both the applicant and the sponsor.

2. Withdrawal Procedure

a. Consultation with the Sponsor

If a candidate decides at any time during the program that he/she should *withdraw* from the program, consultation with the pastor is required.

b. Notification to the Program Coordinator



Once a decision by the candidate has been made to withdraw from the program in consultation with the sponsor, written permission of the pastor/sponsor, as well as a letter of withdrawal from the candidate, must be submitted to the Formation for Ministry office. It is possible to resume the program at a more appropriate time.

D. Program Guidelines

1. Orientation

Prior to the beginning of classes an orientation is held with the sponsor and candidates. The purpose of this orientation is:

- a.** To meet the Site Coordinator and classmates
- b.** To become familiar with the site location
- c.** To pray together

2. Attendance Policy

It is expected that a candidate attend each class. The Formation for Ministry office must be notified in advance if a class will be missed because



of personal illness or serious family emergency. The candidate is responsible for contacting the instructor about make-up work and doing the required readings and assignments. Repeated absences will require that the course segment of the eight weeks be repeated at the next cycle, unless adequate arrangements can be made between the instructor and candidate and are approved by the Formation for Ministry Program Coordinator.

Cancellations/Weather

In case of severe weather, the Program Coordinator will notify the Site Coordinator who will then notify the candidates regarding class cancellations. If a class is canceled due to inclement weather, the instructor and Program Coordinator will, in collaboration, determine how the class lessons and assignments will be made-up.

3. Workshop Attendance/Absence



A workshop is an integral component of ministry formation and participation is required. Absences require pastor/supervisor permission and signature. The orange color form for completion is included in your Handbook Folder. To accommodate those who work or have other responsibilities during the week, all FFM workshops are scheduled on Saturdays. Check the FFM calendar for specific dates and times for these workshops.

4. Retreat Attendance/Absence

Each year while in training, candidates will participate in a weekend retreat experience provided by the program. The retreats begin on Friday evening and conclude after Sunday Liturgy. Dates are listed on your program calendar. It is expected that candidates will make whatever arrangements are necessary to clear personal calendars so they can participate *fully* in the retreat experience. Absences require pastor/supervisor permission and signature. The orange color form for completion is included in your Handbook Folder.

E. Course Requirements

1. Theological Reflection papers:

Throughout each course, candidates will be required to complete one or more written assignments reflecting on their learning in light of their experiences: family, parish, world, work. Questions for reflection(s) will be provided by the instructor. Reflections may also be shared by the individuals within the class sessions. The papers will be given to the instructor who will comment on the reflections and submit them to the Program Coordinator who will review the

papers and return them to the candidates. **Please note that due dates on all assignments are firm; alternative arrangements must be made with the instructor prior to the dates that assignments are due.**

2. Self-Reflection Papers



Candidates are expected to meet regularly with their sponsor/supervisor and keep them apprised of their progress in the FFM program. It is the responsibility of the candidates to schedule the appointments. Prior the meeting, the Formation for Ministry office will provide the sponsor with a letter of progress for the candidate and will also receive a copy of the candidate's self-reflection paper once the paper has been submitted to the FFM office. After discussion, the sponsor/supervisor will add his or her comments and sign the paper. The candidate will also sign the paper and submit it to the Formation for Ministry office by the expected due date. It is important to remember that the purpose of the self-reflections is so the candidate and supervisor may evaluate continuing growth and integration of prayer, studies and ministry into everyday living. **Please note that due dates on all assignments are firm; alternative arrangements must be made with the instructor prior to the dates that assignments are due.**

3. Program Evaluations

At the end of each course, workshop and retreat, evaluation forms are given to candidates. Positive, honest and creative suggestions are sought for the purpose of improvement, and are essential in the on-going development of the program.

4. Job Descriptions

During the second year of the program, the candidates receive a ministerial job description that lists his/her area of ministerial responsibilities. The second-year self-reflection papers are instrumental in assisting the candidate and the sponsor to determine an appropriate area of parish ministry. The job description naturally flows from the dialogue between the positive lay minister and the sponsor.

The purpose of the job description is:

1. To determine specific areas of ministry and clarify roles and responsibilities.
2. To describe exactly the contents of the agreement between the pastor, the parish and the ministry candidate.

3. To give a realistic expectation of time commitments to the parish during the second year of formation.
4. To give a clear commitment of time for the two years of parish service following becoming a commissioned lay minister.

There is an expectation that all commissioned lay ministers will have a 30-hour supervised ministry experience immediately following their becoming commissioned as a lay minister.

F. Candidate Supervision and Mentorship

The purpose of supervision is to assist candidates to become more skilled and effective better ministers. In this regard:

1. Individuals are encouraged to increase their skills, awareness and knowledge in ministry through mentorship in the parish;
2. Individuals are enabled to provide better quality ministry to others;
3. Individuals are presented with opportunities to assess the effectiveness of their ministry via guidance and on-going feedback from supervisors/mentors in the parish;
4. Individuals are encouraged to evaluate their satisfaction with their ministry;
5. Individuals are enabled to grow spiritually through spiritual direction, work in their specific area of ministry and supervision.



A. Self-Evaluation by the Candidate

This end-of-program evaluation is based on the candidate's ministry experience. The evaluation form seeks reflection on the achievement of the job description. The candidate discusses the responses with his/her mentor/supervisor and forwards the signed evaluation to the Program Coordinator prior to becoming commissioned.

B. Evaluation by Sponsor/Supervisor

The sponsor/supervisor, in dialogue with the candidate, completes an evaluation form. The form is in reference to the participation of the candidate in fulfilling the responsibilities of the job description. The signed evaluation will be forwarded to the Program Coordinator prior to Commissioning. A job description for the two years after commissioning will also be completed at this time.

G. Tuition and Program Costs

1. The tuition fee will be paid by the sponsor per year.



2. Additional costs such as books, workshops and retreats are the responsibility of the candidate unless other arrangements are made with the sponsor

3. Refreshments, as desired, are provided by the candidates for weekly classes.

H. Harassment Policy

Formation for Ministry follows the Harassment Policy of the Diocese of Ogdensburg.

Contact Information:

Dc Patrick J. Donahue, D.Min



Program Director

pdonahue@rcdony.org

315-393-2920 ext.1412

Mailing:

Diocese of Ogdensburg

Formation for Ministry Program

100 Elizabeth Street

PO Box 369

Ogdensburg, NY 13669