



THE ORDINATION PATH OF VIA APOSTOLICA

What Are Holy Orders?

Via Apostolica is committed to the biblical truth that all Christians are called to ministry. We are called to be witnesses of Christ's death and resurrection in the world, and a holy and royal priesthood in the world. At the same time, Via heeds the biblical call to set aside some for a special work of spiritual service and leadership to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ (Ephesians 4:12). In the Hebrew Scriptures, God established Levites and priests to serve and guide his chosen people. Likewise, God has blessed the Church with the New Testament ministries of deacon, priest (presbyter), and bishop. These three holy orders were beautifully articulated in the second century by the early Church Father and martyr Ignatius of Antioch.

The apostle Paul, in exhorting a young presbyter, Timothy, got to the heart of New Testament ordination when he wrote: Do not neglect the gift you have, which was given you by prophecy when the council of elders laid their hands on you (1 Timothy 4:14). In this earliest description of ordination, we see that when spiritual leaders lay their hands on a candidate, that person receives both an immediacy and power in the Holy Spirit (prophecy) and a gift of love and service for the Church and those far from the Church. This was modeled by the Apostles in Acts 6:5-6.

The creeds proclaim the church to be "one, holy, catholic (i.e., universal), and apostolic." Bishops are a powerful sign of this reality in their unity across time (from the age of the apostles) and space (throughout the world). Since ordination to any order always comes through a bishop, all ordained ministry participates in this sign. Thus, ordination is not primarily about the individual, or even about the parish, but rather about the Church universal.

People might ask: "If everyone is called to serve, why then are only some ordained?" Ordained ministry is more than a call to serve the Church; it is the call to be the Church's servant. Ordination is not about being recognized and validated; it is about recognizing and serving Christ in the least of his brothers (Matthew 25:40).

What Does It Mean to Be a Deacon?

The first of the three orders of ordained ministry is that of deacon. All who are called to holy orders are ordained to this ministry. As Richard Hooker, an important early Anglican theologian explained: The fundamental order is that of deacon. Every priest, every bishop is first of all and always a deacon.

The very name of this ministry (Greek diakonos = servant) is a reminder of Jesus' teaching that all authority in his church exists for service: You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. It shall not be so

among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant (diakonos)” (Matthew 20:25-26). This servant leadership was perfectly exemplified by the Lord Jesus himself, who came not to be served but to serve (Matthew 20:28).

The ministry of deacon is captured in the symbol of the towel. The deacon strives to model the Lord Jesus washing his disciples’ feet at the Last Supper (John 13:1-20). The deacon figuratively washes the feet of the saints (cf. 1 Timothy 5:10) by unstinting and selfless service to the parish family and to the poor. The ministry of a deacon is one of “field leadership” as exemplified by the church’s first deacons, who assumed responsibility from the apostles for the daily distribution of food to widows (Acts 6:1-7). The specific form that this leadership takes depends on each deacon’s unique gifts (e.g., leadership development, Bible studies, pastoral care, visiting the sick, and caring for the underserved and the forgotten).

Some deacons are later called to serve as priests or even bishops. All the same, the order of deacons should never be viewed as simply a stepping stone to other ordained ministry. Rather the servant leadership of the deacon should be seen as a model for all forms of ordained ministry and no one should be ordained a deacon who would not be willing to remain in that order indefinitely or forever.

What Does It Mean to Be a Priest?

The second of the three orders of ordained ministry is that of priest. The Church, in her ordination liturgy, traditionally has identified three essential facets of this sacred ministry: to TEACH, to SANCTIFY, and to GUIDE. Thus, the bishop asks someone about to be ordained to the priesthood: Will you then give your faithful diligence always so to minister the doctrine [teach], sacraments [sanctify], and discipline of Christ [guide], as the Lord has commanded and as this Church has received them, according to the Commandments of God, so that you may teach the people committed to your charge with all diligence to keep and observe them?

As one who teaches, the priest must not only preach the word (2 Timothy 4:2), but must also contend for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints (Jude 1:3). Thus, one being ordained to the priesthood is asked: Will you be ready, with all faithful diligence, to banish and drive away from the Body of Christ all erroneous and strange doctrines contrary to God’s Word...?

As one who sanctifies, the priest is entrusted with ministering the sacred gifts of Word and Sacrament that Christ himself has given so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish (Ephesians 5:27). Thus, in laying his hands upon one being ordained to the priesthood, the bishop pronounces the following words: Receive the Holy Spirit for the Office and Work of a Priest in the Church of God, now committed to you by the Imposition

of our Hands. If you forgive the sins of anyone, they are forgiven. If you withhold forgiveness from anyone, it is withheld. Be a faithful minister of God's holy Word and Sacraments; in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

As one who guides, the priest must be a faithful pastor, modeling his ministry on that of the Good Shepherd, who lays down his life for the sheep (John 10:11). He must reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching (2 Timothy 4:2). Thus, one being ordained to the priesthood is asked: Will you be ready, with all faithful diligence, ... to use both public and private admonitions and exhortations, to the weak as well as the strong within your charge, as need shall require and occasion shall be given?

Traditionally, the bishop has presented a Bible and a chalice to each newly ordained priest as part of the rite of ordination. Together, Bible and chalice serve as a powerful symbol of the priest's call to preside at the regular parish celebration of Word and Table.

What Does It Mean to Be a Bishop?

The third of the three orders of ordained ministry is the office of bishop. The bishop, like the priest, is called to TEACH, to SANCTIFY, and to GUIDE. Thus, at the ordination and consecration of a bishop, we pray: give your grace to all Bishops, the Pastors of your Church, that they may diligently preach your Word, duly administer your Sacraments, and wisely provide godly Discipline. At the same time, the bishop is called to be a living icon of the unity of the church across time and space, as well as the pastor/shepherd of his priests and deacons. The ministry of every priest and deacon is an extension of and participation in the ministry of the bishop (cf. Numbers 11:24-25), just as the bishop, as pastor, shares in the ministry of the one great shepherd of the sheep, the Lord Jesus Himself (Hebrews 13:20).

Traditionally, the bishop is presented with a staff and a ring at his ordination. The staff symbolizes the bishop's call to be the visible shepherd of God's holy people (Simon, son of John, do you love me?...Tend my sheep" —John 21:16), and the ring symbolizes the bishop's call to love Christ's bride, the Church, just as Christ loved her and gave himself up for her (Ephesians 5:25).

What is the Path to Ordination?

Via Apostolica takes the training of our leaders very seriously. This is especially true when we are talking about training towards ordination. We believe that ordained ministry is a gift of God – something that is received rather than merited, discerned rather than claimed. We are also convinced that ordained ministry is meant to be a gift to the church, rather than to the individual that is to be ordained. Ordination in its essence is about service to others rather than personal recognition or fulfillment.

It is the work of the Church, and especially of her ordained ministers, to discern the individuals whom God has called for this purpose. Indeed, it is entirely possible for a parish and its leadership to discern an individual's potential call even before the individual may be privately aware of it. While many are involved in the discernment process (e.g., the individual, fellow members of the parish, and the leaders God has placed over the individual), it is the bishop who ultimately must prayerfully discern an individual's call for ordained ministry. Therefore, each person who desires to pursue holy orders, their church, their leaders and the bishop himself, must first accurately discern the calling of the individual and help equip them to walk out that calling in the church before completing the journey with the Ordination itself.

For those who are seeking to train towards ordination in the jurisdiction of Via Apostolica, we have taken the qualifications laid out in scripture (1 Timothy 3:1-13) and created five categories that we believe are vital for every ordained minister.

Character -- Competency -- Compatibility -- Communal Standing -- Charism

1. Character

The character of ordained clergy must be that of a humble servant giving themselves for the sake of glorifying God and serving the Church into its calling upon the earth. There must be a mature character for each ordained minister. An ordained minister should model the personhood of Christ to the church.

2. Competency

There are a number of skills needed in order to teach, train and lead the Church in a mature, humble and servant-hearted way. All clergy in training must be competent in each of these areas before ordination.

3. Compatibility

To be clergy in Via Apostolica, we must know that you agree to the Vision, Values, and Doctrine of this jurisdiction and will work to walk those out in a convergent faith.

4. Communal Standing

Every person that receives ordination into apostolic ministry must be in good standing in their community. This is their community at home, their community at work/school and their community in the church. It would be wrong to lift someone into a place of leadership in the church when their family or peers could not follow them.

5. Charism

We believe that ordination is ultimately decided by and dictated by God and because of that he will give the charism, or gift, needed for the office. We believe that each person will show signs of their calling, even before ordination, which acts as a confirmation to the church and leadership that God has indeed called this person to ordained ministry.

As we said above, the path to ordained ministry is not meant to be discerned alone, nor is it the responsibility of the aspirant to adequately prepare themselves for ordination. God has called us to serve leaders into their callings in the church, and we desire to be part of that process. As a result, we have broken down the training into a three-sectioned path where each of the five qualifications for ordination will be completed.

DISCERNING	EQUIPPING	COMPLETING
<p>Compatibility → Communal Standing → Charism</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Initial Clergy Conversation 2. Director of Leadership Development Meeting 3. Spiritual Autobiography 4. Interview Process: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Lead Pastor b. Congregational Committee c. Postulant Support Team 5. Letter to the Bishop <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Bishop Meeting 	<p>Competency → Character</p> <p>This section of the path must be broken down into two sections.</p> <p>Character</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Personality Assessment 2. Marriage Assessment (if married) 3. Criminal Record Check & Vulnerable Sectors Check 4. Psychological Examination 5. Spiritual Director 6. Healing Prayer 7. Corpus Christi <hr/> <p>Competency</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 8. Academic Sufficiency 9. Active Ministry 10. Curacy/Internship 11. Priestly Ordination Exams 12. Church Planter Assessment (if church planting) 	<p>Competency → Charism</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Final follow-up with the Director of Leadership Development 2. Final Meeting with Postulant Support Team 3. Meeting with Bishop <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ At this point the aspirant has done everything necessary for ordination. During the meeting with the Bishop a date is set for ordination with the next steps being practical outworking of that ordination. 4. Days of Prayer 5. Ordination Ceremony Training 6. Ordination Ceremony

The jurisdiction of Via Apostolica is committed to planting churches and training leaders in the ministry he has called us to, which is a ministry of Word, Sacrament, and Spirit, from a posture of servanthood, which works tirelessly for the salvation of those outside of Christ.

DISCERNING

Compatibility – Communal Standing– Charism

1. *Initial Clergy Conversation*

Simply put, this is the conversation where you inform a clergy member of Via Apostolica that you are interested in Holy Orders. The clergy will then contact Via's Director of Leadership Development for step two.

2. *Director of Leadership Development Meeting*

In this meeting, the Director will speak with you about the training track, what is expected of you, and how we believe the journey could go. You will leave this meeting with clarity on your training track as well as the timing you can expect.

In this meeting the director will begin to assess what is needed for Character and Competency training, working with you to tailor the path for your life situations. Keep in mind that there is always potential for life situations (i.e. Marriage, children, job change) to bring change to the path, and timing talked about in this meeting. There is need for flexibility on both sides.

3. *Spiritual Autobiography*

As a first step, you will be asked to tell us a story about God. This story is how God revealed himself through your life, how he called you to ordained ministry and what you believe are your God-given strengths and weaknesses for ministry. This will be used for the interview process moving forward.

4. *Interview Process:*

a. *Lead Pastor*

- i. The Lead Pastor interview's purpose is so the Lead Pastor can hear your desire for ordination, seeing if they are able to affirm this calling along with you.

b. *Congregational Committee*

- i. Together with the Lead Pastor, the Director will assemble a small group of congregants to interview you concerning your desire for ordination. The congregational committee will then take time for prayerful discernment. Once, both the interview and prayerful discernment have been completed the committee will write a review of their findings and thoughts about your calling and send this to the director.

c. *Postulant Support Team*

- i. This is the last of our discerning interviews. This group will be the final group that will come alongside you to help you discern your calling. In addition to that, this group will walk with you through the next stage, meeting with you once per year to help you stay on track and continue to

help you as you look to identify areas that need to be addressed as you move forward toward ordination.

- ii. To help you do this we will be hand picking this team to help walk with you in specific areas of your training. For example, there will be someone who is adept in pastoral ministry and will be available for meeting and discussing pastoral situations you find yourself in.

5. *Letter to the Bishop & Meeting*

Upon completion of these interviews, all information will be given to the Bishop, who is responsible for the final approval. He will then request a meeting with you where he will inform you of the outcome of the Discerning Process. There are two possible outcomes from this meeting.

- a. Moving Forward Not Recommend– The Bishop believes that moving ahead into the Equipping section of the path is not a right fit for you at this time and does not recommend you proceed.
- b. Moving Forward Recommended – The Bishop believes ordained ministry is in your future and recommends that you move to the next stage on our ordination path.



EQUIPPING

Character

1. Personality Assessment

You have a specific personality that was formed in the Lord's will through your life. We believe that every person has strengths and weaknesses and there is no personality type better suited for ordained ministry than any other. For this reason, we ask you to take an assessment with [Understandmyself](#) that will help you to walk away with an assessment of how to healthily engage in your strengths and work on your weaknesses no matter what personality you have.

A copy of this assessment will be given to your Postulant Support Team, the Director and could be delivered to your Spiritual Director as well.

2. Marriage Assessment (if married)

We believe that the sacrament of Marriage must be held to the highest honor and as you are being equipped for ordination, a healthy marriage is of the utmost importance. For this reason, we have asked every married aspirant to take a [Marriage Assessment](#). When this assessment is complete, you will take the results to your Lead Pastor to walk with you through areas that need strengthening.

A copy of this assessment will be given to your Postulant Support Team, the Director and could be delivered to your Spiritual Director as well.

3. Criminal Record & Vulnerable Sectors Check

You are responsible for having both these checks done before ordination and a copy given to the Director.

4. Psychological Examination

You will be asked to meet with a psychologist as part of your overall preparations. The report coming back from this examination will be given to the Director and for you to keep for yourself as well.

5. Spiritual Director

We are committed to the character development and spiritual health of our ordained ministers. Because of this, we believe that it is essential when being equipped for ordination to have a Spiritual Director walk with you, encouraging you and challenging you in your discipleship. Since we don't currently have trained Spiritual Directors in Via, we will help you get set up with a Spiritual Director.

6. *Healing Prayer*

Once again, for the sake of your discipleship, we ask that you take part in healing prayer opportunities. This could be one on one sessions but does not need to be limited to that. This can also be part of your relationship with your Spiritual Director.

7. *Corpus Christi*

As part of our training that is specific to Via Apostolica, we ask that you complete all three phases of Corpus Christi. We are all called to live in the Identity of who we are as sons & daughters, worshiping and proclaiming Christ in the world as the priesthood of all believers, and building the Kingdom of God through serving others through the church.

If there has been training in another discipleship school, we will work with you to assess whether you need all three years or supplementation of certain years.

Competency

8. *Academic Sufficiency*

Every ordained clergy must be competent in their handling of the gospel proclaimed in the scriptures. There are different standards in different areas for ordained ministry. Take notice of the breakdown below.

a. *Permanent Deacon*

Are you called to be a permanent deacon? If so, we ask that you receive education in the area of diaconal ministry. The [Certificate of Diaconal Studies](#) at Trinity School for Ministry will make sure you receive training in the necessary areas of theology, spirituality, history and servanthood.

b. *Transitional Deacon/Priest – Presbyter*

Are you called to the order of presbyter/priest? We ask that you receive theological education to the end of MDiv or MATS. The Bishop reserves the right to ordain you either during or after the completion of this degree, depending on how the Spirit is leading. If you feel called to be a priest in Via Apostolica, then in this time of equipping you should be working on one of these two Masters Degrees. We would suggest, for the sake of your training and future to strongly consider the MDiv, which is a standard for most ordinations.

We understand that attending an Anglican or Anglo-Catholic seminary is not always an option because of this we will work to ensure that you receive proper training in Anglican theology, polity and practice. Every individual will know what is being required of them before the end of their Directors meeting and will have help to receive the proper training.

9. *Active Ministry*

It is expected that before entering the Ordination Path, you will have been actively involved in volunteer ministry in your local church. We believe that a heart to enter servant ministry without title or authority is a foundational requirement of all God's people and a place of significant equipping for ordained ministry.

10. *Curacy/Internship*

During the interviews, the Postulant Support Team and Director will evaluate whether a Curacy or Internship will be a necessary part of your training. By giving you a specific role of ministry oversight in a local church, you will gain experience in ministry leadership and authority.

Whether you receive training while in active volunteer ministry or an official curacy or internship we will be looking for sufficiency in certain areas.

Diaconal Ministry

- a) Servant Leadership
- b) Catechist Sufficiency
- c) Missionally Focused
- d) Ministry Leadership
- e) Liturgical Sufficiency

Priesthood Ministry Training

- a) Teaching
- b) Spiritual Life
- c) Liturgical Sufficiency
- d) Sacramental Life
- e) Church Governance
- f) Ministry Leadership

11. *Priestly Ordination Exams*

It is vital that each postulant be able to clearly relay the central tenants of the Christian faith as convergent Anglican ministers in both theology and practice. Therefore, as you near the completion of your training we will require you to write a series of ordination exams. These exams will assess your proficiency in the following areas:

- a. *Holy Scripture*
- b. *Church History/Anglican Church History*
- c. *Doctrine*
- d. *Liturgics*
- e. *Moral Theology & Ethics*
- f. *Ascetical Theology*
- g. *Practical Theology*
- h. *The Missionary Work of the Church*

We will provide you with all the information you need to study for this exam. It is not meant to *trip* you up but to *build* you up and confirm you have what you need as a foundation for ordained Anglican ministry. There will be no surprises in these exams.

12. Church Planter Assessment (if church planting)

If you are planning to Church plant through Via Apostolica, you must know where your areas of strength and weakness are because these areas will be significantly challenged through Church Planting. Because of this, you must take the [Church Planters Assessment](#) and then have a meeting to walk out the results with the Director of Leadership Development.

*If you are called to Church Planting there will be additional training and support that will be given to you during your equipping previous to ordination and after.



COMPLETING

Competency - Charism

1. *Final follow-up with the Director of Leadership Development*

This meeting is to review each area that you have just been equipped in, making sure there was nothing missed along the way and to confirm that ordination is the proper next step.

Prior to this meeting, the Director will forward you the Anglican Church in North America and Via Apostolica Constitutions and Canons for you to review. Though we are ordaining you into the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic church, we do this through Anglican Orders. As a result, we must be sure that if you have any questions or concerns about our Province or District, they are addressed before ordination so that you can confidently affirm your ordination into the jurisdiction of Via Apostolica.

2. *Final Meeting with Postulant Support Team*

This team has walked with you through the entire process, and they know how this process has been for you better than anyone and must have one final meeting to approve, encourage and affirm your final step into ordination.

3. *Meeting with Bishop*

The Bishop will take the warning in scripture not to lay on hands hastily very seriously, and because of that, he must have the final say in any and all ordinations. This meeting is to give him confidence in the next step, which is to ordain you into ordained ministry within Via Apostolica. At the end of this meeting, you will receive your final approval, if the Bishop can give it, and have the date for when you will be ordained. You will also receive a copy of the vows you intend to take at your ordination for reflection and prayer.

4. *Prayer Days*

In preparation for your ordination, the Bishop asks that you take a minimum of two days of prayer. We ask that you take the ordinal, that includes the vows you are about to make, in order to reflect, pray and seek the Lord in preparation for the Ordination Ceremony.

5. *Ordination Ceremony Training*

This training will happen in the final days leading up to the ordination. The Bishop will walk you through the ordination service to make sure you know what to expect. We want you to feel ready, equipped, supported and blessed during your ordination. This training is to give you peace, allowing you to rest into what God is about to do.

6. *Ordination Ceremony*