

REPORT OF THE COMMISSION ON MINISTRY 2009

The Commission on Ministry has the privilege of working with the bishops as they select and guide the formation of postulants and candidates in preparation for ordination to both the diaconate and priesthood. Our work is supported by many others, including sponsoring parishes and clergy, parish discernment committees, internship and field education parishes, seminaries, spiritual directors, and the families of postulants and candidates.

We are grateful for the support and guidance of many in this diocese and beyond in helping to prepare those in our diocese who are called to ordained leadership in the church. We are particularly grateful for the support of clergy and laity in preparing postulants and candidates for diaconal ministry and for the support of divinity school faculty.

The Commission strives to uphold the ministry of all baptized people but most of our work centers on recruitment, discernment, and formation for ordained leadership in the Episcopal Church. We work collegially with the bishops, Standing Committee, officer for ordained vocations, diaconate program coordinator, examining chaplain, and COM chaplain.

Members of the COM continue to serve as liaisons to parish discernment committees, advisors to postulants and candidates, and meet monthly with the bishops and officer for ordained vocations. They continue to work in collaboration with the Standing Committee to make the ordination process accessible and to improve coordination and communication for all involved.

This past year the Commission received commitment forms from 35 individuals, of which 28 filed applications for postulancy. Of those 28, 12 were accepted as postulants to the priesthood and seven to the diaconate effective June 1, 2009. A larger than usual number of applicants was the result of not accepting new postulants in 2008 because of our work revising the ordination process.

The COM continues to award scholarship assistance to those preparing for Holy Orders. Funding for this assistance comes from a diocesan endowment created in 2001 to support theological education and from donations to the bishops' discretionary funds received during parish visitations. This year \$51,000 was awarded to postulants and candidates. Scholarships ranged from \$1000 to \$8000 per person. These scholarships help to address the significant amount of debt incurred by those in the ordination process, which has long-term effects on deployment decisions.

The Commission reports the following data for the past year:

In January, seven transitional deacons were ordained to the priesthood. In June, three candidates were ordained to the diaconate and six to the transitional diaconate.

Prior to ordinations in June, there were 40 people in the ordination process. Following June ordinations, a total of 37 remain in the process as postulants, candidates and transitional deacons – 22 for the priesthood, nine for the diaconate, and six transitional deacons. They come from 34 sponsoring parishes throughout all 12 deaneries in the diocese.

The average age of new postulants this year:

Year	Priesthood	Diaconate	Combined
2009	36	58	45

The average age of new postulants over the preceding five years:

Year	Combined
2008	No new postulants accepted
2007	33
2006	43
2005	36
2004	38

Submitted by:

The Rev. Patrick Gray and Angela C. McConney, Esq.
Co-chairs, Commission on Ministry