

# ***FORMATION FOR MINISTRY***



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

## ***CANDIDATE'S HANDBOOK***

**A. Mission Statement/Goals/Objectives**..... 3

**B. Program Components**.....4

    1. Academic Formation

    2. Ministry Formation

    3. Spiritual Formation

    4. Mentorship Experience

    5. Commissioning Service

**C. Admission/Withdrawal**.....5

    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. Attendance**.....5-6

    1. Orientation

    2. Class Attendance/Absence

    3. Workshop Attendance/Absence

    4. Retreat Attendance/Absence

**E. Written Requirements**.....6-7

    1. Theological Reflections

    2. Self-Reflections

    3. Program Evaluations

    4. Job Descriptions

**F. Supervision**.....7

    1. Self-Evaluation by the Candidate

    2. Evaluation of the Candidate

**G. Finances** .....8

    1. Tuition

    2. Special Fees

    3. Refreshments

**H. Harassment Policy**.....8

A.

### **Mission Statement**

***Formation For Ministry is designed to provide academic, pastoral, and spiritual formation. It is for sponsored persons 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 Spiritually in light of Vatican II.**
- **To facilitate an understanding of the minister's role.**
- **To develop practical skills for ministry.**

## **B. Program Components**

### **1. Academic Formation**

This component fosters a basic knowledge of church teaching. Introductory courses in Church, Scripture, Christology, Spirituality, Communications, Sacraments, Moral Theology and Social Justice are offered over a two-year period. Each course is taught for 2 ½ hours one night a week for seven or more weeks, per the schedule. Pastoral in nature, the classes will combine the 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. Included in this year's course schedule is an additional offering on communication and Collaboration. Course descriptions may be found on our website at [www.dioogdensburg.org](http://www.dioogdensburg.org).

### **2. Ministry Formation**

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

#### **First Year:**

An "Evangelization" workshop is offered on a Saturday to inform candidates of the Bishop's Document "Go and Make Disciples." Practical suggestions are discussed for implementation in the parish.

A "Vision of Ministry" information workshop is offered on a Saturday for candidates, 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: Prison Ministry, Worship, Sick/Elderly, Family/Outreach, Youth, RCIA, Adult Faith Facilitator Catechetical Leader and Catechist Certification, to assist candidates with 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. Training will also be given for those not yet Safe Environment certified through the Protecting God's Children Program.

#### **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 purpose of a Spiritual Director in the "Spirituality" course. They are encouraged to seek spiritual direction in the second year of training. Each year, a weekend retreat experience will offer a time to pray and reflect on an individual's response to 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 training program and satisfaction of all class, retreat and workshop requirements, the candidate is recommended and accepted for a ministerial assignment by his/her sponsor. The Bishop or his delegate will commission the candidate for service.

## **C. Admission/Withdrawal**

### **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-**

If the individual is accepted into the program, letters of acceptance are received by the applicant and by the sponsor. If, following the application process, if an applicant's circumstances change and entry to the program must be delayed, upon request, letters of postponement will be sent to the applicant and to 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 and advice must be sought from the sponsor.

#### **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. Attendance**

### **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
- d. To discuss pertinent materials for the program

## 2. Class Attendance/Absence

*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 Website- nysdot.gov**

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 material 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. Workshops are scheduled on Saturdays. Check your calendar for specific dates and times.

## 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. Written Requirements**

### 1. Theological Reflections-

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.

### 2. Self-Reflections-

Candidates will meet, minimally, with their sponsor/supervisor. 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 the candidate is to complete the provided self-reflection response sheet in preparation for meeting with his/her sponsor/supervisor. 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.

### 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 forms center around these duties as the candidate undergoes a 30-hour supervised ministry experience.

##### **The purpose of the job description is:**

- a. To determine specific areas of ministry and clarify roles and responsibilities.
- b. To describe exactly the contents of the agreement between the pastor, the parish and the ministry candidate.
- c. To give a realistic expectation of time commitments to the parish during the second year of formation.
- d. To give a clear commitment of time for the two years of parish service following Commissioning as a Lay Ministry.

#### **F. Supervision and Mentorship**

The purpose of providing supervision to people in ministry is to assist individuals in becoming better ministers. In this process:

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 Commissioning.

#### **B. Evaluation of the Candidate-**

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. Finances**

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.