

CHURCH OF IRELAND

HOUSE OF BISHOPS



**SELECTION PROCESS FOR
TRAINING FOR THE ORDAINED MINISTRY**

AN INFORMATION BOOKLET

Table of Contents

Foreword	4
Part I – Introduction	
Introduction	5
Background	6
Part II - Criteria for Selection	
Purpose	7
Selection Criteria	7
Part III – The Process	
Outline of the Process	9
The Selectors	10
First Steps – your Diocese	10
The Application Form	10
References and Referees	11
Part IV – Before attending a Selection Conference Consultation	
Meeting the Psychologists	12
Grants Committee	12
Academic Aptitude Assessment	12
Part V - Selection Conference	
General Information	14
Part VI – After Selection Conference	
After Selection Conference	15
Part VII – Going to the Church of Ireland Theological Institute	
Going to the Church of Ireland Theological Institute (CITI)	16

Revised 2018

Foreword

The Archbishops of Armagh and Dublin

Every baptized Christian is called to a life of ministry within the Church of God. Ordained ministry within the Church is a special calling which brings with it both great privileges, great opportunities and great fulfilment.

The process of discernment in matters of vocation to the ordained ministry is shared between the individual who may feel called to ordained ministry and the Church, which must affirm that process at every step.

The first step in affirmation takes place in the context of selection for training. A heavy responsibility is placed on those responsible for selection, the outcome of which is a judgment as to whether a person should enter a programme of training for ministry. Thereafter there are further opportunities to confirm that judgment during training, and after the training course has been completed successfully. After ordination there will be other occasions upon which discernment as to the direction that an individual's ministry might take.

The Church of Ireland is an episcopal church and has always placed strong emphasis on the responsibility of its bishops for all matters to do with selection, training, ordination and deployment. These are responsibilities the bishops take most seriously.

This booklet is designed to assist those whose call to ordained ministry is being examined and tested in the context of suitability for training. We hope that it will answer some of the questions that are often asked and we commend it for prayerful and thoughtful study.

+Richard Armagh

+Michael Dublin

Part I

Introduction

God's call is at the heart of vocation. All ministry in and through the Church begins with God's call. Selection for ordination training is a recognition of this call which can be tested during training. All of us who have been baptized are entrusted by God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit with ministry. Every member of the Body of Christ is called to serve. God the Holy Spirit equips us and sends us out as bearers of the good news and as witnesses into the world.

Those in ordained ministry are called to a ministry of Word and Sacrament. You have been given this information booklet because you are offering for selection and thinking of undertaking training for ordained ministry.

"In order to fulfill its mission, the Church needs persons who are publicly and continually responsible for pointing to its fundamental dependence on Jesus Christ, and thereby provide, within a multiplicity of gifts, a focus of its unity. The ministry of such persons, who since very early times have been ordained, is constitutive for the life and witness of the Church."¹

Here you will find practical information to encourage and support you on this pilgrimage of exploration together with the Church, in seeking God's will. The sections cover the following topics: background information, the criteria for selection, an overview of the process, details of the pre-selection process, the Selection Conference itself, and the possible outcomes from the Conference.

¹ *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry* Faith and Order paper No.111 WCC Geneva 1982 Page 21

Background

In the early 1960's the Central Advisory Committee on Training for the Ministry (C.A.C.T.M.) was established to advise the Bishops, as appropriate, concerning the outworking in practice of their responsibility for selection and training for the ordained Ministry.

Selection Conferences were organized under the auspices of CACTM. Although not correctly, in the common parlance of the Church of Ireland, these, in themselves, became known as CACTM.

Over the years, the members of CACTM and its Selection Conferences served the Church faithfully and fruitfully. From time to time, the work and process were reviewed.

In 2001 a substantial internal review of Selection Conferences was undertaken by the Bishops. The consequent report articulated seventy-seven recommendations and challenges which shaped the subsequent process of discussion and deliberation by the House of Bishops. As a result a new selection process was put in place to enable selection for training for the ordained ministry in the Church of Ireland.

In the course of the discussions of the House of Bishops it also became apparent that a set of new circumstances (principally the formation and work of the Theological College Council) necessitated the setting up of a liaison group to replace CACTM and its advisory and co-ordinating role.

In 2002, therefore, the Bishops inaugurated the *Bishops' Liaison Group on Ordination (BLGO)* which under the chairmanship of the Archbishop of Armagh provided a liaison forum for the various groups associated with training and ordination: the Bishops, the Theological College Council, Selection Conferences and the Central Director of Ordinands.

Since 2009 we have the Theological Institute and a new model of Selection and Training.

The training course now covers the following areas:

Spirituality , Theological Reflection , Pastoral Care, Vision, Leadership, Worship and Preaching, Worship and Liturgy, Communicating the Faith, Management and Change, Administration, Vocation & Conflict. For more information on the training course, see the CITI website at www.theologicalinstitute.ie

Part II

CRITERIA FOR SELECTION FOR THE ORDAINED MINISTRY IN THE CHURCH OF IRELAND

[approved by the House of Bishops]

Purpose

These criteria are intended for

- the guidance of the selection panel and
- greater clarity and openness in the selection process.

The purpose of these criteria is to assist the panel of selectors in their task of discerning the suitability of a candidate for training for the ordained ministry of the Church of Ireland.

Such discernment will lead to one of three categories of advice being given to the sponsoring bishop

- a recommendation
- not recommended
- a conditional recommendation

for a course of training.

The criteria are to be taken as a whole unit. Throughout the entire process they are to be exercised in the context of prayer and a seeking of God's will for the future of the candidate and the well being of the Church. The selectors are looking for potential in the areas identified in these criteria as well as actual ability.

Criteria

1. A top priority is that the candidate is sensing a vocation to the ordained ministry of the Church of Ireland. Full recognition should be given to the fact that candidates may be at differing stages in their understanding of God's call. Some may express a sense of remarkable clarity in their understanding whilst others may speak in more hesitant terms, but nonetheless real. A genuine call will include not only a personal response and understanding but also confirmation and encouragement from others. The candidate needs to show signs of comprehending that vocation to the ordained ministry is a calling to a stretching and sacrificial way of life with particular demands, unique privileges and immense responsibilities.
2. Candidates should be baptized and confirmed, and also members of the Church of Ireland (or a Church in full communion therewith) and be familiar with the teachings, traditions, emphases and characteristic spirit of the Church of Ireland and the Anglican Communion. They should feel that the Church of Ireland is their spiritual home and be ready to work within it. They should express a preparedness to accept the will of the church.
3. Personal commitment to Christ and sincere belief in a triune God is essential. The candidate should possess a basic understanding of the Gospel and a desire to communicate it.

4. The candidate should participate regularly in corporate worship, in Holy Communion, and display a discipline in their personal devotional life of prayer and Bible study. Such spirituality should be foundational in their life and in determining their life style, and manifested in a life of service to others. It should be a source of strength and inspiration.
5. Integrity of character, mental stability and a growing emotional and spiritual maturity are to be in evidence. How the individual responds to fulfilling responsibility, coping with change, and dealing with pressure are important indicators of balance and stamina.
6. A compassion for people and an ability to relate to people are vital in an effective pastoral ministry. Therefore the ability to make and sustain relationships should be noted. Openness to others, a stable family life and the willing support of their spouse (if the candidate is married) are to be looked for.
7. It is vital that leadership skills are present in the candidate whilst remembering that the leadership of Christ is essentially that of humble service. The requirements of spiritual leadership are high and require a willingness to lead by example.
8. Candidates should have the intellectual capacity and quality of mind to undertake satisfactorily a course of theological study and display evidence of the ability to cope with the intellectual demands of ministry.
9. It is expected that candidates for the stipendiary ministry, if ordained, will be prepared to serve anywhere in the Church of Ireland for a minimum of three years.

The above criteria are the backdrop to the new template for

- selection for training for ordained ministry,
- the training for ordained ministry through the Theological Institute
- the ongoing training during the years of ordained ministry, often referred to as CME, Continuing Ministerial Education.

Part III

Outline of the Process

Step One: Local

The first steps you take will be in accordance with local diocesan procedures. These are broadly standard following consultation between the Bishops.

Step Two: Foundation Course

All candidates considering applying to the Selection Conference must first participate in the Foundation Course. They cannot commence training for ordained ministry until...

1. They have been recommended.
2. They have successfully completed the Foundation Course.

A person joins the Course after discussion with the local diocesan director of ordinands. This course is administered through the Church of Ireland Theological Institute.

Step Three: Application

Only names submitted by the diocesan directors of ordinands to the secretary of the Selection Conference will be forwarded an application form. Applications must be completed and returned by the closing date advised each year.

Step Four: Psychological Assessment

During the few months leading up to the Selection Conference, an assessment and interview will be arranged with a psychologist. Tests will be undertaken, usually via email, and a one to one meeting will take place. A report on this is compiled and sent to the Secretary of the Conference.

Any additional information required will be followed up by the Secretary to the Conference. References will be sought from those listed as referees. (Referees must be asked if they are willing to provide a reference, before submitting your application form).

Step Five: Selection Conference

In the Spring of the year of application applicants, approved by their bishop, will be invited to present themselves for interview at a Selection Conference.

The Selection Conference is chaired by a bishop who has responsibility to oversee the running of the conference and the selection process.

Interviews will be conducted by selectors from a panel chosen by the Bishops. These will normally include three interviews:

1. One with a bishop and a lay person
2. One with a priest and a lay person
3. One with the Director of the Theological Institute or a member of staff

In addition a group exercise may be conducted and evaluated by the psychologists. All in all, the conference will endeavour, under the guidance of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit to discern vocation, to assess suitability for training, and, where appropriate, under the guidance of the Bishops, to take into account the needs of the Church at a given time.

The selection conference always has a chaplain who is available to speak confidentially with any of the candidates.

Step Six: Advice

The selection conference will make a report to your bishop and give its advice. Along with a report, the advice usually falls under three headings: recommended for training, not recommended for training or a conditional recommendation.

Your bishop then has to reflect on the report and communicate his or her decision to you.

Your bishop will then advise the Church of Ireland Theological Institute regarding successful applicants, their details and when their training will commence.

The Selectors

The House of Bishops, in consultation with one another, has drawn up a panel of selectors. They are a group chosen for their expertise, given additional training and representative of regions, ages, genders, and theological perspective and expertise in the Church of Ireland as a whole.

In addition, specific training is given to the selectors concerning the nature and requirements of this particular process.

First Steps

The first steps towards ordination are taken in your local Church community and in the diocese. How this happens may vary slightly from diocese to diocese and bishop to bishop. Generally, however, the following points are relevant and normative:

- You meet your rector, and in time s/he will write to the diocesan director of ordinands to introduce you
- You meet the diocesan director of ordinands (DDO) who will advise you on the next steps to take
- These will certainly include diocesan assessment: perhaps a time of waiting before undertaking the 'Foundation Course' through the Church of Ireland Institute (CITI), meeting others in the diocese who are also exploring a call to ordained ministry; occasionally psychological and intellectual assessment.
- The diocesan director of ordinands reports to the bishop who, if satisfied, will meet you.
- The bishop decides whether or not to send you forward to a selection conference through this formal selection procedure.

The Application Form

The application form for selection conferences will be sent to you by email by the secretary to the selection conference at the request of your bishop or diocesan director of ordinands.

You should not use the form unless you have been recommended by your bishop to attend a selection conference.

The form will not be taken into consideration unless countersigned by the sponsoring bishop. The form should be completed before seeking the bishop's signature.

Before completion of the form, it is important to read this booklet in full and especially the section entitled *Criteria for Selection for Ordained Ministry in the Church of Ireland*.

The form should be completed online, printed, and it should not be stapled. The pages should be held together with a paper clip. The printed form signed where appropriate.

Names of referees must only be given with the prior knowledge and permission of the persons concerned.

Completed forms should be submitted no later than the closing date advised in the year in which it is intended to attend selection conference.

It should be noted that candidates recommended for training are accepted subject to satisfactory completion of a medical examination, successful completion of the Foundation Course, and on meeting the necessary requirements of the Admissions Policy of Trinity College Dublin.

The form, when completed, should be returned together with the following

- four passport size photos taken recently
- a copy of your Birth Certificate (photocopies will suffice)
- a copy of your Baptismal Certificate (photocopies will suffice)
- a copy of your Confirmation Certificate (photocopies will suffice)

to

The Secretary
Bishops' Selection Conference
Bishop's House
Moyglare
Maynooth
Co Kildare

References and Referees

When your application form is received the secretary of the selection conference will write seeking references from the following people who have been named by you:

- Your bishop
- Your rector
- Your diocesan director of ordinands
- Two lay people who know you well

It is important that you have advised each of your referees that you have included them as a referee for your application as they will be contacted.

Part IV

Before attending a Selection Conference Consultation

Meeting the Psychologist:

As part of the assessment for candidates for ordination, it is considered important that their capacity to cope psychologically with the demands of ministry is considered. To that end, in addition to providing biographical detail and a personal statement, candidates will be required to complete a number of psychological questionnaires (via email) which investigate their learning potential, character and personality disposition, emotional stability, coping style and motivation for seeking ordination. These instruments will form part of a psychological assessment which is conducted by the psychologists, who have experience in the assessment of individuals applying for ordination. Candidates will attend an interview with the psychologist before attending selection conference, during the course of which, aspects of their personal history, motivation for ordination, and their expectations about the demands of ministry will be explored. The findings and recommendations of the psychologists are then presented to the selection conference for further debate and consideration; and where necessary, to the candidate's bishop.

Psychological test results and issues arising from interview are treated in the strictest confidence and are only made available to those involved in the selection process.

Grants Committee:

An opportunity is afforded to each candidate to receive information from a representative of the Church of Ireland Theological Students' Grants' Committee for candidates for the Full Time Ministry Course only.

It may be of interest to applicants to note that for such candidate's accommodation and meals are paid for at the Church of Ireland Theological Institute (CITI) for the duration of the academic year for resident students. In some cases additional weeks are paid for. In addition fees for all approved courses payable to CITI, Trinity College, Dublin and to such other approved institution where an ordinand may be registered are covered

A personal allowance is also paid to each student at the rate applicable at the time. Where a student for the stipendiary ministry lives out of College due to special circumstances (with the permission of the Director) a further living out grant may be paid. Children's allowances are also paid at the applicable rate.

INTERNS: Second Year students, who are placed in a parish for parochial experience, also receive a placement grant.

The Grants Committee also administers a small number of trust funds which provide bursaries for certain eligible students.

Academic Aptitude Assessment:

Academic Aptitude Assessment is considered during the undertaking of the Foundation Course.

This assessment is considered a vital part of the process of selecting candidates offering themselves for training for the Ministry. Before candidates embark upon a course of study it is essential to ascertain the academic abilities of the individual in order to ensure they will be able to cope with the rigors of academic training.

Based upon the outcome of the Foundation Year, and in light of the assessment results from the other aspects of the selection process, a collective decision is made concerning a candidate's suitability for training.

Part V

Selection Conference

Timing

Candidates who are doing the Foundation Course or who have previously undertaken the Foundation Course may be sponsored by their bishop for attendance at a selection conference held in the Spring of each year.

Conference in Community

The conference is residential in a community framework of fellowship and worship. Candidates and selectors journey together in a process of prayer and discernment. A Chaplain(s) to the conference is/are nominated from a panel agreed by the House of Bishops.

Worship

The rhythm of liturgical worship is maintained throughout the conference. You may be invited to take part in reading the lessons or other appropriate parts of the Services.

Chairperson

The bishop with responsibility for selection conferences and the selection process generally attends throughout the conference and chairs the meetings of the selection panel.

Chaplain

The Bishops have drawn up a panel of chaplains in order to ensure that there is a chaplain in attendance at the selection conference. The chaplain has no role in the selection process and is available to both selectors and candidates alike to offer pastoral ministry and support in complete confidentiality.

Introductory

The conference begins with an opening session during which general information is given, the selectors and your fellow candidates are introduced.

Interviews

As stated earlier the interviews are conducted by a bishop, a priest, a member of staff of the Theological Institute, and two lay people.

Areas covered in the interview include:

- Areas covered and information you have given on your application form
- The statements you have made in response to the open-ended questions on the application form
- Anything which pertains to or arises from the published selection criteria and competencies.
- Any matters which you or the selectors may consider relevant to your application.

Part VI

After Selection Conference

After the selection conference the selectors will make a collective report, through the secretary to the conference. The report will be sent to your bishop with their recommendations. As outlined in the criteria for selection, the advice usually falls under three headings: recommended for training, not recommended for training, or conditional recommendation.

Your bishop then has to reflect on the report and communicate his or her decision to you.

Candidates who are not recommended for training will not, in general, be permitted by their bishop to return to a subsequent selection conference until a period of two full years has elapsed. If the candidate returns, information from their previous selection conference is not made known to the selectors, and the candidate comes anew to the conference.

Part VII

Going to The Church of Ireland Theological Institute

The Church of Ireland Theological Institute [CITI] trains men and women for the ordained ministry. The college provides in-service training and extra-mural courses in theological, biblical, and pastoral studies. Like many Anglican theological colleges, it is associated with a university – Trinity College Dublin – with which theological training for the Church of Ireland has been linked for several centuries. Less formal associations link the college to other theological and vocational institutions in Dublin and further afield

The college has a capacity for about forty-five students, graduate and non-graduate, married and single. The age range is broad and the student body represents a wide range of backgrounds, experience, and theological outlook. This range of geography and outlook provides a unique environment for ordinands to learn to appreciate the differing traditions and viewpoints that are characteristic of the Church of Ireland. Not least among the benefits of this tradition are the life-long bonds of friendship and understanding that are a peculiar strength of our church.

Situated in Dublin, students are in a position to benefit from the cultural and intellectual life of a major European city. Ordinands register in the University of Dublin, Trinity College, and have full access to the university cultural, medical, catering, and library facilities.

Academically, the Institute seeks to encourage the pursuit of theological understanding and the development of the student's ability to identify and respond to the spiritual, intellectual, and pastoral challenges of contemporary society, focusing on the following areas in their training:

- Spirituality
- Theological Reflection
- Pastoral Care
- Vision, Leadership
- Worship and Preaching
- Worship and Liturgy
- Communicating the Faith
- Management and Change
- Administration
- Vocation
- Conflict

The purpose of these studies is to equip students to engage convincingly with today's society, and to see how their spiritual and intellectual development is integral to the experience gained in a comprehensive programme of pastoral placements in parishes, hospitals, and schools throughout Ireland.

Most ordinands study for the degree of Master of Theology (M.Th)

All students have their own study-bedroom, but unfortunately there are no facilities for married students whose spouses reside with them in rented accommodation. The college provides a full catering service.

Central to the life of the college is the daily pattern of worship in the contemporary setting of the chapel, designed to facilitate modern liturgical understanding.

Much responsibility for the day to day running of the Institute is shared with the student representatives.

Further details about training for the ministry at the CITI are provided in the Institute prospectus, which may be obtained from:

The Director's Secretary
The Church of Ireland Theological Institute
Braemor Park
Dublin 14

Tel. 01 492 3506

Fax. 01 492 3082

E-mail.

admin@theologicalinstitute.ie