

**Diocese of Newark**  
**Commission on Ministry**  
***God is Calling: How Will YOU Answer***  
**February 9, 2013**  
**Guidelines for the Discernment Committees**

The following outline provides information to the Priest, Vicar, Priest-in-Charge (referred to as the "Priest" in this document) of a congregation that is sponsoring an individual as he or she begins a formal discernment process. The guidelines cover the composition of the Discernment Committee, expectations of that group, the role of the Priest, the role of the Commission on Ministry, and the timetable relating to the required attendance at the February 9, 2013 event.

Questions should be addressed to Rev. Tom Murphy, Chair of the Commission on Ministry, by email ([tmurphy@gracemadison.org](mailto:tmurphy@gracemadison.org)) or by phone (973-377-0106).

---

*Composition of Discernment Committee ("DC")*

1. Comprised of between five and seven members, one of whom is Chair
2. Following may not be members of the DC
  - a. Spouse, partner, or other family member of the Aspirant
  - b. Spouse, partner, or other family member of the Priest or other clergy in the parish
  - c. Anyone having a financial relationship with the Aspirant
  - d. Anyone having a conflict with the Aspirant
  - e. Anyone whose participation may represent a conflict of interests or the appearance of such a conflict
3. It must be kept in mind that the Aspirant and DC will discuss personal and private aspects of the Aspirant's life. There must be a high level of trust among the Aspirant and all members of the DC. Therefore, no one should be a member of the DC against the Aspirant's wishes.

*Expectations of DC*

1. Minimum of ten meetings with Aspirant
2. Minimum of four DC members per meeting
3. Priest is not to attend DC meetings
4. Formal written report at conclusion of discernment phase, following COM guidelines:
  - a. For Diaconate, to Bishop's Office and to Rev. Peter Jackson, COD Chair, ([pjackson\\_69@msn.com](mailto:pjackson_69@msn.com))
  - b. For Priesthood, to Bishop's Office and to Mr. David Sullivan, COM Documents Chair, ([attsully33@gmail.com](mailto:attsully33@gmail.com)).
5. Ongoing support group for individual

### *Ongoing Relationship of DC with Individual*

1. It is expected that the DC will continue to be a support group for the individual until the individual is either ordained or decides to continue or expand lay ministry
2. Contact between two and four times per year
3. Such relationship may take many forms; COM will discuss with DC

### *Timetable*

1. November-December 2012: Selection of DC members and approval of DC by COM
2. February 9, 2013: Attendance at Diocesan day-long event by Aspirant, Sponsoring Congregation's priest, Chair of DC, and a minimum of two other DC members
3. February 2013 – November 2013: Minimum of ten meetings of Aspirant and DC
4. December 31, 2013: Written and signed report of DC due to Priest
5. January 10, 2014: Action by Priest and Vestry to formally nominate Aspirant to enter process

### *Role of Priest*

1. Initial and ongoing conversations with individual
2. Contact COM to discuss individual and establishment of DC
  - a. Are there any reasons why Aspirant should not have a DC in your congregation (e.g., the Aspirant is an employee, or has some other conflict)?
  - b. Are there enough people to create a good DC from the members of your congregation?
  - c. The individuals selected should be reflective of the diversity of the congregation and Diocese to the extent possible (men and women, young and old, and so on).
3. Selection of DC members that are acceptable to Aspirant
4. Discuss selection of DC members with COM for its approval
5. Appointment of one member of DC to be its chair
6. Let the discernment process happen
7. Do not try to "solve" any issues that may arise in the DC; you should contact COM with any questions or concerns.
8. Priest does not attend DC meetings, nor does Priest receive written or verbal reports during discernment period until written report is issued by December 31, 2013.

### *Interaction with COM*

1. A member of the COM will be assigned to each DC
2. Chair of DC or Aspirant may contact COM representative with any questions or issues
3. Priest may contact COM with any questions or issues

*Immediate and Next Steps*

1. Once DC is approved, register for February 9th event with Kitty Kawecki by February 1, 2013.
2. Provide names and contact information of Aspirant, Priest, and Chair of DC
3. Attendance at February 9 event by Aspirant, Priest, Chair, and at least two other members of DC