

Report of the Commission on Ministry to the 220th Diocesan Convention

Current Status of Individuals in the Process

- Nominees
 - Two nominees will be interviewed for postulancy in January 2004
- Postulants
 - Seven postulants are in seminary
 - Two postulants have been approved for candidacy. These individuals are taking their GOEs in January
 - One postulant who has completed the GOE requirements has been approved for candidacy
 - One postulant is completing some remedial work in preparation for ordination to the transitional diaconate
- Transitional Deacons - of the four transitional deacons at the beginning of the 2003 period:
 - Three have been ordained to the priesthood – two in December 2003 and a third in January 2004
 - The fourth will be ordained on a date to be determined
- Nominees
 - One nominee will be interviewed for discernment in a parish other than their own in January 2004
 - Six other nominees are in various stages of completing work with their Parish Committees on Ministry or additional personal discernment in preparation for a second interview for discernment in a parish other than their own

Visits to Seminarians

A decision was made that visits to seminarians should occur twice a year – one in the fall and again in the late winter or spring. Visits of the Bishop, Canon for Ministry Deployment, and COM co-chairs to General Theological Seminary occurred in February and November. These visits included meetings with the Dean of the Seminary, the Executive Director of Enrollment Management, and the seminarians from the diocese.

Workshop on Changes to the Canons affecting Commissions on Ministry

The Canon for Ministry Deployment and the COM co-chairs attended a workshop in November at General Theological Seminary to learn about the changes in the canons that affect Commissions on Ministry. This workshop included representatives not only from the Diocese of New Jersey, but also from the Dioceses of Long Island and New York City. In addition, to learning about the changes in the canons, attendees shared practices of their COMs.

Recruitment

The COM Recruitment Committee has developed a summer internship to encourage college students to consider the priesthood. Brochures and other materials to advertise this opportunity have been developed and distributed. Members of the committee have conducted workshop seminars and meetings announcing the opportunity, including sessions at the “Equipping the Servants” Workshop and at the Diocesan Convention. While there were no applications for the internship for the summer of 2003, there are several parishes that are enthusiastically waiting to participate in the program.

Applications for the 2004 experience have begun to be received and the committee anticipates more than three applications.

Discernment Shepherds

A committee has been formed to provide guidance and training to Parish Committees on Ministry. All PCOMs with nominees in the process have been trained. This committee also monitors the progress of each nominee at the very early stages.

Visit with Antoinette Daniels, Executive Director of Enrollment Management at General Theological Seminary

In November, Ms. Daniels met with the COM to discuss issues of recruitment, application processes, application requirements, finances, and financial aid.

Financial Aid

The COM awarded \$41,000 in financial aid to four postulants attending seminary in the 2003-04 academic year. All postulants who applied for financial aid received assistance. In addition, some small grants for summer support or other assistance were made.

The COM is concerned about the increasing debt with which nominees are entering the process. Additional questions have been added to the application to identify any potential financial challenges from the onset.

Other

The COM has been reviewing practices of other dioceses to enhance its own practices.

To address continuing education of clergy, a series of clergy days with outside speakers have been developed.

Submitted by
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