

The Local Discernment Committee Process:

- a. A Local Discernment Committee is convened by the sponsoring priest. The Committee can be “standing” or formed on an “ad hoc” basis depending on the needs of the parish and the wishes of the sponsoring priest.
- b. The Local Discernment Committee should begin each meeting with a reading from scripture with reflection and prayer to help ground all discussion in the Spirit.
- c. Each Local Discernment Committee meeting should last a minimum of one hour but no longer than two hours.
- d. The membership of the Local Discernment Committee is determined by the sponsoring priest; however, it is recommended that no more than 3 -4 lay members serve on the committee.
- e. The sponsoring priest selects the chair of the Local Discernment Committee who will be responsible for scheduling meetings and coordinating all paperwork throughout the process.
- f. The sponsoring priest shall provide an overview of the process and its purpose to the Local Discernment Committee. A copy of the Discernment Process flow chart as well a copy of the Discernment Manual should be provided to members of the Local Discernment Committee.
- g. The purpose of the Local Discernment Committee is to explore with each aspirant the degree to which the aspirant possesses the seven qualities deemed important to be ordained in the Diocese of Washington. It is understood that not every aspirant will necessarily have all seven qualities, but it is expected that an aspirant to continue to the next stage will have most of the qualities. The primary task of the local discernment committee is to provide a venue for the exploration of these qualities, not to evaluate whether the aspirant should be a priest in Diocese of Washington.
- h. It is recommended that the aspirant provide to the Local Discernment Committee written examples of how the aspirant exemplifies each of the seven qualities. It is suggested that these examples form the basis for discussion at each meeting.

- i. It is recommended that at least one meeting focus on the aspirant's spiritual autobiography: how and why does the aspirant feel called to ordained ministry? The aspirant should submit to the Local Discernment Committee a copy of his/her 3-5 page spiritual autobiography. Though the Committee is not assessing the aspirant's call, the aspirant will need to be able to articulate his/her call and the Local Discernment Committee is a good group to do that in. This exercise is intended to assist the aspirant in preparing the formal spiritual autobiography (Form 3) in the event that he/she moves forward.
- j. While there is no stipulated minimum number of meetings, it is anticipated that a thorough examination of the aspirant's qualities would take at least six meetings. However, the Committee should not meet more than twelve (12) months. The Local Discernment Committee may take one or more meetings to discuss an individual quality. During the twelfth month (or sooner based upon when the Committee determines it is ready), the Local Discernment Committee Feedback (Form 2) will be completed by the aspirant and by the chair of the Local Discernment Committee with the input of the Committee.
- k. The Local Discernment Committee and the aspirant will share their responses with the sponsoring priest and each other.
- l. If the aspirant decides to continue in the discernment process, the Committee's and the aspirant's forms should be sent to the Canon for Clergy Development.
- m. The sponsoring priest writes a recommendation, focusing on the ways the aspirant exhibits the qualities the Diocese has identified as important in priestly ministry. The recommendation is sent to the Canon for Clergy Development.
- n. The aspirant submits personal statements (Form 3) to the Canon for Clergy Development.
- o. All required information and submission must be completed and submitted to the Canon for Clergy Development at least one month before the Diocesan Review Group meets.

Form 2: Local Discernment Committee Feedback

Date: _____ Aspirant's name: _____

Committee Chair: _____

Self-Evaluation prepared by the Aspirant?: Yes or No

Reflecting over your time exploring the seven Qualities We Seek in a Priest, please share with us your committees' thoughts, providing examples and using additional space if necessary:

Three of the Qualities you believe best describe the aspirant:

1.

2.

3.

Two of the Qualities you believe least describe the aspirant:

1.

2.