

Statutes – DoMN Commission for Orders and Ministries¹ (draft)

General

1. It is appropriate that in every diocese or Institute of consecrated life there be a stable group making up the Commission for Orders and Ministries, which in collegial session, medics the past record of each candidate for Orders or Ministries.

Membership

2. Six individuals appointed by the ordinary, who between them, have the following skills
 - Practising catholic
 - Involvement in parish
 - Understanding of parish and diocesan life
 - Be a 'fit and proper person'
 - Gender balance
 - Demographically representative of the diocese
3. Ex-officio- Director Safeguarding and Chancellor.
4. Only individuals endowed with experience, sound doctrine, and considered judgment should belong to this Commission, and they should be appointed by the Ordinary for a specified term.

Meetings

5. The Commission can establish its own method for the study of the past record of the candidate.
6. The collegial session should be presided over by the Ordinary (Bishop) or by his delegate.
7. In the conduct of the sessions of the Commission there needs to be the utmost freedom in order that each member is able to express his own opinion in accordance with his conscience.
8. The meetings of the Commission by their nature will be held in closed session.
9. The discussion or the study of the information concerning each candidate must end with a vote, that can be secret if any of the members so request, and in which an answer is to be given to the question of whether or not to recommend to the Bishop or the competent Superior acceptance of the candidate's request to be admitted to the respective liturgical rite.²

¹ See- <https://www.usccb.org/resources/1997%20Circular%20Letter%20English.pdf>

² Congregation for the Clergy, The Gift of the Priestly Vocation, parr. 204 states, "the discernment of the suitability of the candidate is known as the scrutiny. It must be undertaken at certain points, five in fact, along the path of priestly formation: admission to candidacy for orders, the ministries of lector and acolyte, diaconate, and priesthood".

<http://www.clerus.va/content/dam/clerus/Ratio%20Fundamentalis/The%20Gift%20of%20the%20Priestly%20Vocation.pdf>

Decisions

10. The opinion of the Commission is not binding upon the Bishop or Superior, however it is an act having great moral value, and should not be set aside except for grave and well-founded reasons (cf. can. 127 § 2).
11. The affirmative or negative opinion of the Commission must be registered in the personal file of the candidate, with an explicit indication of the result of the vote.
12. It lies to the place of the Bishop or Superior, or of whomever he delegates, to inform the candidates of the decision taken.
13. A positive decision of the Bishop or Superior must be expressed in the form of a Decree of Admission (cf. can. 1034 §1) issued a sufficient length of time in advance (i.e., not less than one month) of the date of institution or Ordination.

Matters on which the Commission is to be consulted

14. The ordinary will consult the commission, before making a decision, on the following:
 - a. Requests for admission,
 - i. as a student for the diocese (who wishes to be a parish leader),
 - ii. to candidacy,
 - b. Requests for instillation as,
 - i. lector,
 - ii. acolyte,
 - iii. catechist,
 - c. Requests for admission to,
 - i. Diaconate,
 - ii. Priesthood,
 - d. Requests for incardination to the diocese,
 - e. Requests for set term ministry by an non-incardinated cleric in the diocese,
 - f. Appointments (and/or reappointments) to the ecclesiastical offices of,
 - i. Chaplain
 - ii. Rector
 - iii. Parish Priest (pastor)
 - iv. Assistant priest (associate pastor)
 - v. Parish leadership Team (member, sacramental priest, priest supervisor)
 - vi. Parish administrator
 - vii. Pastor emeritus (a retired priest who does supply)
15. The Council of Priests, Council for Mission, College of Consultors, Diocesan Finance Council, and Diocesan Trustees are never to be consulted on the matters in point 14.

Rev Matthew Muller
Chancellor

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