

## **Guidelines for Petitioning for Ordination in the OCA**

*These Guidelines were Approved at the Fall, 2013 Holy Synod Meeting*

A. The following procedure will be used by seminary students who may be seeking ordination in the Orthodox Church in America:

B. If students, at any point after their first year of studies, intend, with the blessing of their confessor, to petition for ordination, they must:

1. Be interviewed, with their spouse if applicable, by their diocesan bishop, who will give his blessing to proceed with the petitioning process;
2. Be interviewed, with their spouse if applicable, by their confessor;
3. Be evaluated by the appropriate authorities at their Seminary in accordance with the Seminary's internal methods of assessment and the Seminary issues a letter of recommendation;
4. Undergo a standard agreed-upon battery of psychological testing under the supervision of their Seminary and paid for by the Orthodox Church in America (see appendix A for recommended tests);
5. Undergo a standard criminal background check through the Chancery of the Orthodox Church in America;
6. If approved by the proper Seminary authorities, students must present their portfolio to the Metropolitan. This portfolio shall include
  - i. A letter from the Diocesan Bishop
  - ii. A letter from the confessor,
  - iii. A letter from the Dean of the Seminary
  - iv. Results from the psychological test
  - v. Results of the criminal background check
7. The Metropolitan will make his decision for approval of ordination and inform the candidate of his decision. If not approved, then a written response to the candidate will be sent.
8. The date of ordination will be set in consultation with the Chancery, Diocesan authority and the Seminary.

**Appendix A:** Recommended Psychological Tests. These tests are subject to change upon the recommendation of the Holy Synod of Bishops, the Board of Theological Education and other qualified consultants.

- I. The psychological testing of candidates petitioning for ordination or reception into the Orthodox Church in America is now standard practice.

- II. The testing must be of equal or greater nature for all and at equivalent and qualified institutions. The tests cannot be done by someone not licensed and qualified to administer the tests.
- III. The Orthodox Church in America will pay for all standard testing for Seminary candidates who will be entering into service in the Orthodox Church in America. Those clergymen petitioning to enter into the Orthodox Church in America will either pay for the testing themselves or with some agreement with the Diocesan authorities with whom they will be serving.
- IV. All candidates for ordination or reception will have a standardized criminal background check which is paid for by the Orthodox Church in America.
- V. The information contained in both the psychological test and the criminal background tests are strictly confidential and can only be reviewed by competent and assigned authorities. The contents may not be shared with anyone outside of these authorities.
- VI. The tests and checks will not be conducted without the written permission of the applicant.
- VII. Currently, these tests are the standardized norms to be used:
  - A. Psychological Testing:
    1. Personality Inventory which can include 16 Personality Factor (PF), 16 Personality Test (PT), Personal Data Inventory, MMPI-2 and MCMI-III
    2. Leadership Style which can include FIRO-B and MBTI
    3. Vocational Interest Scale which can include R-COPE (Religious Coping Index)
    4. Personal Interview with will include an in-depth clinical interview combined with other tests.
    5. The tests results will include a comprehensive written report which will include raw data and interpretive comments.
  - B. Background Check
    1. Criminal History
    2. Employment Verification
    3. Driver's License and SSN Verification
    4. I-9 Verification
    5. Sexual Offender Registry Search
    6. Consumer Credit History

***Checklist for Ordination in Orthodox Church in America***  
*(This form to accompany portfolio)*

**Candidate's Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Diocese:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Requested Ordination Date:** \_\_\_\_\_



P.O. Box 675  
Syosset, NY 11791-0675  
Tel: 516.922.0550  
Fax: 516.922.0954  
Website: www.oca.org

**1. Interview (with spouse if applicable) by Confessor and Accompanying Letter**

Approved \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**2. Evaluation by Seminary and Accompanying Letter**

Approved \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**3. Psychological Evaluation Received and Reviewed**

Approved \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**4. Background Check Received and Reviewed**

Approved \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**5. Review of Portfolio by Diocesan Bishop**

Approved \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**6. Interview (with spouse if applicable) by Diocesan Bishop and Accompanying Letter**

Approved \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**7. Review of Portfolio by Metropolitan**

Approved \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**8. Interview (with spouse if applicable) by Metropolitan and Accompanying Letter**

Approved \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

*Please check each of the steps and the appropriate authority needs to sign off. If any of the steps are not approved, a written explanation needs to be provided on a separate sheet.*

**Completed portfolio with all letters and material returned to Chancery. Newly ordained clergyman to complete and return Clergy Questionnaire and supporting documents for clergy file.**

The Orthodox Church in America  
6850 North Hempstead Turnpike  
Syosset, NY 11791

## **Statement of Candidate for Ordination to the Holy Priesthood**

*I am of the Orthodox Christian Faith: as such, I am not in communion with the heterodox. I am not a Mason; nor am I a member of any subversive or secret organizations; I have never been convicted of a felony or misdemeanor that could be a canonical impediment to my ordination. There are no legal impediments to my Ordination.*

*I am in good physical condition: I do not possess any incurable diseases or physical defects which would be impediments to my Ordination.*

*I am requesting Ordination for no reason other than to serve God and the Church according to the Holy Canons and Tradition established by the Holy Fathers. Hence, I further promise:*

- 1. to celebrate all rites and services according to the order of the Church and to be satisfied with the free-will offerings of my parishioners: to celebrate, on Sundays and Holy Days, the Divine Liturgy and other services: to observe the fasts:*
- 2. to preach the Word of God to those entrusted to my care and to all who would hear it, and to take all measures to teach God's People, regardless of age, by initiating classes, retreats. and other educational ministries;*
- 3. to keep a decorous home, as behooves one who serves the Altar;*
- 4. to conduct myself properly in the Sanctuary and to serve as an example to others; to be concerned with the beauty of the Lord's House:*
- 5. to do nothing to bring discredit to my office:*
- 6. to dress in accordance with my calling;*
- 7. to do nothing without the will of the bishop: to adhere always to all instructions from the diocesan authority and other organs of the Church Administration;*

8. *to be guided by the teachings of the Holy Orthodox, Catholic and Apostolic Church and the Holy Fathers;*

9. *to follow all Spiritual and Ecclesiastical authorities understanding that Ecclesiastical Canon Law takes precedence over any civil law, and all Canonical and Ecclesiastical authority must be exhausted before any dispute is brought before civil courts or procedures; and*

10. *to maintain my Certificate of Ordination and make available if requested.*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Candidate

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Candidate

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**Reference of Father Confessor**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Father Confessor

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Father Confessor

**Statement of Ordaining Hierarchy**

I, \_\_\_\_\_, Bishop of \_\_\_\_\_

have ordained \_\_\_\_\_ to the Priesthood on

\_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_. He is

assigned/attached to \_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Ordaining Hierarchy

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Ordaining Hierarchy

The Orthodox Church in America  
6850 North Hempstead Turnpike  
Syosset, NY 11791

## Oath of Allegiance to the Holy Priesthood

*I, the undersigned, presently called to the Order of the Holy Priesthood, bow down to Almighty God as witnessed in His Holy Gospels and do make this solemn vow:*

*I promise, in accordance with the Will of God, to fulfill all Church observances, services, rituals and prayers as prescribed by the Orthodox Christian Tradition;*

*I will recite the prescribed secret prayers diligently before offering the Holy Eucharist, and I vow not to introduce any changes or innovations to the customary Church ceremonial worship services;*

*I promise to uphold the teachings of truth and other pastoral instructions according to the teachings of the Holy Orthodox, Catholic and Apostolic Church and the Holy Fathers; to endeavor with my mind, heart and soul to protect the souls of the faithful entrusted to my care, against every heresy and schism, and to labor with every means available to return to the True Flock of Christ those who may have strayed from His path;*

*I vow to lead an honorable and sober life, putting aside all that is vain, worldly and vulgar; to set a good example, in humility and meekness, in order to guide others to good and noble things;*

*In all that I do, I will seek not my own vain honor and interests, but the Glory of God, the welfare of God's Holy Church, and the salvation of my neighbor;*

*As a cleric of the Orthodox Church in America, I will obey all the decisions of the Higher Spiritual and Ecclesiastical Leadership in all matters pertaining to my spiritual and administrative responsibilities;*

*I will with diligence and with the fear of God care for the good estate and development of the Orthodox Church in America;*

*I will serve under the canonical jurisdiction of the ruling bishop of a diocese of the Orthodox Church in America and I will not seek acceptance into another diocese or church without the written blessing of my bishop. In addition, I vow not to attempt to leave this canonical jurisdiction without a Letter of Release and the appropriate canonical release from the Primate of the Orthodox Church in America;*

*In cases of disputes between me and the spiritual and ecclesiastical authority of the diocese and the Orthodox Church in America , I promise to exhaust all internal procedures of the diocese and the Orthodox Church in America before bringing the dispute to the civil courts or tribunals in my jurisdiction;*

*I also recognize and understand that, with respect to my spiritual and administrative responsibilities within the diocese and the Orthodox Church in America, Ecclesiastical Canon Law takes precedence over any civil law and I understand that, pursuant to Canon Law, I may be subject to Canonical disciplinary measures.*

*I am assured in my heart that, by the prayers of the All-Pure Theotokos and the saints, the Lord God will help me with His blessings and mercy.*

*In affirmation of my solemn vow, I kiss the Word and Cross of my Savior, Jesus Christ Amen*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Candidate

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Father Confessor

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date



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6850 North Hempstead Turnpike  
Syosset, NY 11791

## **Statement of a Candidate for Ordination to the Holy Diaconate**

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- 2. to preach the Word of God to those entrusted to my care and to all who would hear it, and to take all measures to teach God's People, regardless of age, by initiating classes, retreats. and other educational ministries;*
- 3. to keep a decorous home, as behooves one who serves the Altar;*
- 4. to conduct myself properly in the Sanctuary and to serve as an example to others; to be concerned with the beauty of the Lord's House:*
- 5. to do nothing to bring discredit to my office:*
- 6. to dress in accordance with my calling;*
- 7. to do nothing without the will of the bishop: to adhere always to all instructions from the diocesan authority and other organs of the Church Administration;*

8. *to be guided by the teachings of the Holy Orthodox, Catholic and Apostolic Church and the Holy Fathers;*

9. *to follow all Spiritual and Ecclesiastical authorities understanding that Ecclesiastical Canon Law takes precedence over any civil law, and all Canonical and Ecclesiastical authority must be exhausted before any dispute is brought before civil courts or procedures; and*

10. *to maintain my Certificate of Ordination and make available if requested.*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Candidate

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Candidate

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**Reference of Father Confessor**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Father Confessor

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Father Confessor

**Statement of Ordaining Hierarchy**

I, \_\_\_\_\_, Bishop of \_\_\_\_\_

have ordained \_\_\_\_\_ to the Diaconate on

\_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_. He is

assigned/attached to \_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Ordaining Hierarchy

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Ordaining Hierarchy

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*I promise to uphold the teachings of truth and other pastoral instructions according to the teachings of the Holy Orthodox, Catholic and Apostolic Church and the Holy Fathers; to endeavor with my mind, heart and soul to protect the souls of the faithful entrusted to my care, against every heresy and schism, and to labor with every means available to return to the True Flock of Christ those who may have strayed from His path;*

*I vow to lead an honorable and sober life, putting aside all that is vain, worldly and vulgar; to set a good example, in humility and meekness, in order to guide others to good and noble things;*

*In all that I do, I will seek not my own vain honor and interests, but the Glory of God, the welfare of God's Holy Church, and the salvation of my neighbor;*

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*I will with diligence and with the fear of God care for the good estate and development of the Orthodox Church in America;*

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*In affirmation of my solemn vow, I kiss the Word and Cross of my Savior, Jesus Christ Amen*

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Signature of Candidate

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Father Confessor

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date