

Expectations of a Seeker entering the first circle of discernment—‘Here I Am, Send Me’

- Commit to the entirety of the process, understanding that it is a six month process that will involve travel and committed chunks of time, primarily on Saturdays.
- Commit to doing the required preparation, reflection, and prayer for each session.
- Commit to helping your fellow seekers to discern by asking thoughtful, reflective questions to help clarify their calling.
- Honor group norms, especially those related to confidentiality.
- Remain open to what is heard; do not be completely focused on one path or outcome.
- Understand that recommendations coming out of the process may be shared with your priest and the diocesan office.

Expectations of a Seeker entering the second or third circle of discernment—‘More Deeply into Christ’ or ‘Power from on High’

- Meet with your priest and have further conversation about what was heard in the first circle of discernment and together decide which circle (‘More Deeply into Christ’ or ‘Power from on High’) is appropriate for the next step.
- Provide input to your priest as she/he organizes your local discernment committee for either the second or third circle. Know that it is the priest’s role to accomplish this task, not yours.
- Commit to the entirety of the process, understanding that it is a three-to-four month process that will involve committed chunks of time.
- Commit to doing the required preparation, reflection, and prayer for each session.
- Remain open to what is heard; do not be completely focused on one path or outcome.

Expectations of Facilitators for ‘Here I am’ circle

- Attend one of the diocesan training sessions for discernment facilitators.
- Read the handout describing what discernment truly is and how our processes facilitate it.
- Prior to the first session, read through the entire process in order to gain the big picture.
- Commit to the entirety of the process, understanding that it is a six month process that will involve travel and committed chunks of time, primarily on Saturdays.
- Commit to doing the required preparation, reflection, and prayer for each session.
- Prior to the first session, communicate with the diocesan office to obtain the number of books needed.
- Communicate with all participants prior to first session about where and when the first meeting will take place and what they should bring.
- Prepare opening and closing worship for the first session; after that, schedule participants to lead opening and closing worship at subsequent sessions.
- Encourage and model for the participants how to ask insightful, challenging, and open questions.
- Commit to writing observation notes after each session and then write up a summary for each seeker after the final session. If affirmation toward Holy Orders is heard, then a copy of the summary should be sent to the seeker’s priest, the Bishop and the Chair of the Commission on Ministry.

- In collaboration with the participants, set the schedule and location of meetings and make sure to communicate this information to all participants.
- Maintain confidentiality and communicate the expectation of confidentiality with participants, understanding that summaries may be provided to participants' priests and the Bishop and COM Chair.

Expectations for Diocesan Clerics in regard to Discernment

- Discernment is a spiritual practice to which all persons are invited to participate. Clergy are encouraged to empower and equip all disciples to utilize processes of discernment at various times of their lives.
- Yearly, each parish should provide clear communication and education about discernment: what it is and what is available---particularly for persons who are in times of transition, recently retired, looking to consider how their gifts are used, or considering a specific call.
- Clergy should proactively listen and seek people who have the gifts of evangelism, leadership, and pastoral care, and then begin conversations with them about considering a call to ordained ministry when appropriate
- Clergy should read through and be familiar with the purpose and benefits of each of the three circles of the diocesan discernment process, *Circles of Light*.
- Clergy should become familiar with the spring and fall diocesan schedule for the first circle, 'Here I Am'.
- Be aware and communicate clearly with parishioners discerning possible calls to Holy Orders that the discernment process, prior to attending a diocesan discernment retreat, will span from 18 -22 months.
- If approached by individuals interested in discernment but who are not in your parish, please refer them to their local clergy.

Expectations for Clerics with parishioners in the process or who are interested in discernment

- Clergy should read through and be familiar with the purpose and benefits of each of the three circles of the diocesan discernment process, *Circles of Light*.
- Be familiar with the spring and fall diocesan schedule for the first circle, 'Here I Am'.
- Be aware and communicate clearly with parishioners discerning possible calls to Holy Orders that the discernment process, prior to attending a diocesan discernment retreat, will span from 18 -22 months.
- When first learning of a parishioner's interest in discernment, meet with the individual to understand what she/he may be seeking and, if appropriate, direct her/him to register for the next offering of the 'Here I Am' circle (spring or fall)
- You may want to check in with the person at various points throughout the 'Here I Am' process.
- At the end of the process (typically 6 months), the individual will have received guidance from the group about possible next steps in his/her life. This would be a good time to ask if the individual would like to meet with you. If the individual has been encouraged to continue discerning a call toward Holy Orders, you will receive a summary from the facilitator.
- If the person is encouraged to discern a possible call to Holy Orders and decides to pursue the second circle, 'More Deeply into Christ', then you will need to meet with the individual at least three

times. Be prepared be honest with the discernee about the strengths and challenges that person might have. And be prepared to dissuade them if there are serious reservations.

- If you cannot affirm the direction, then please continue to shepherd the individual appropriately. Have him/her consider the third circle, 'Power from on High', as further discernment for his/her next steps. The formation of a discernment committee for this circle is the same as for the second circle. (see below)
- If you do affirm the direction, then you are to organize the individual's local discernment committee. This means contacting the Chair of the COM who will provide the next steps including: characteristics and roles of individuals who will serve on the committee, and the name and contact information for the COM member who will do the orientation for the committee prior to its first session. You should also contact the Bishop to inform him of the seeker's moving into the second circle of discernment.
- Please hold this process and participants, both the seeker and companions, in prayer throughout the duration of the committee's work.
- After the committee has completed its work, meet with the facilitator about has been heard in the process and review the committee's written summary (which is provided to you and the Diocese) in order to be certain you have a full grasp of the outcome of the process.
- Meet with the individual for the same reason. Ask what she/he is hearing and feeling now.
- Pray.
- If you discern that the affirmation to Holy Orders still stands, then bring the possible nomination to the Vestry. The nomination must be approved by a 2/3 majority vote of the Vestry.
- If approved, make certain the Vestry Nomination Form is properly signed and that it is accompanied by the report of the discernment committee and a letter of support from you to the Bishop.
- Make certain the seeker accepts the Nomination and submits the appropriate form to the Diocesan Office.
- Continue to pray for and support the individual throughout the process.
- Have a conversation with the Vestry and the congregation at large as to how the parish will support the individual during the process, possibly including a financial gift.