



School For Ministry

Theological Field Education

General Underlying Principles

1. In the Episcopal Diocese of San Diego, Theological Field Education is a prerequisite and an integral part of the curriculum for diaconal and priestly ordination. It has three integrated components: the postulant, the supervisor and the setting where the learning experience and the theological reflection upon that experience will take place.

2. The Learning - Serving Covenant is an agreement between the student and the supervisor. The form contains the learning goals, the ministry work and its evaluation. It will be developed by the two together and signed and dated by them.

3. At the beginning of the Spring semester, the Director of Theological Field Education will schedule the group meetings of all the postulants and their supervisors for the students' report of a critical incident. The students will email their Verbatim Reports to the director who in turn will forward a copy to the group. The director will also facilitate the group meetings.

4. The vocation of the deacon, in part, is to keep reminding the church about current, pressing needs in our society.

5. The placement of the Spring terms' Field Ed experience will be in a parish while the Summer between them will be at an agency. Postulants for the diaconate will have two Spring and one Summer placements; while postulants for the priesthood will have three Spring and two Summer placements. Some placements might be closer to the postulant's choice while others might be closer to the Director's.

6. The bishop, the School for Ministry and the Commission on Ministry, each has a unique contribution to the process of postulants discerning and preparing for their calling to ordained ministry. The Theological Field Education program is at the service of all four.

Field Education That Works

1. The bishop's stated vision is to assign a deacon to every congregation in every Mission Area in the diocese "... to interpret to the Church the needs, concerns, and hopes of the world." (BCP 543) To that end, efforts will be made to:

2. Identify exciting ministry among marginalized people in congregations across the diocese and then discern there who the supervisor could be. Usually it is the rector but it need not necessarily be. The supervisor is key to the success of a placement.



School For Ministry

Theological Field Education

3. Ask potential supervisors: Are you open to a placement given these expectations of: the supervisor, the postulant, and each individual who might be involved? Provide a template for how supervision will be carried out. Make sure they have the time and will commit to that for the duration.

4. Ask current deacons what would have been helpful for them in their journey to ordained ministry.

5. Recognize that priest postulants need to go through distinctive diaconal training.

6. The optimal approach is for the Field Ed Director to meet people one on one for recruitment to be sure that they could supervise the postulants.

7. Evaluations: on a form provided by the Director, ask the postulants to offer an assessment of the supervisor and the placement including what could be improved in this placement and what other placement could be a possibility for their own growth. Ask the supervisor to offer a final evaluation of the postulant's work and the program. Both the postulants and the supervisors would also evaluate the program and the role of the Director of Field Ed.

8. Develop a handbook both for supervisors and for postulants.

9. Provide supervisors' orientation above and beyond the handbook.

Pitfalls

1. Assuming rather than inquiring.

2. Not being clear on expectations and time commitments.

Summer Placement

1. The supervisors here are less experiential and more technical or professional in their field.

2. Possible placements: Episcopal Community Services, Episcopal Church Center, Scripps Hospice, Dorcas House, The Episcopal Refugee Network of San Diego, Prison, etc.



School For Ministry

Theological Field Education

3. Theological Field Education is the experience that best explores the diaconal vocation of all the postulants.

4. Deacon postulants' summer placement would be a contrasting experience; priest postulants' would follow more from their desire in the second summer of Field Education.

5. Time commitment will be negotiated 20 hours per week (200 hours overall) for 10 weeks during the 17 week period between the Spring and the Fall school semesters.

6. Each postulant will write a weekly blog on that week's theological reflection.

7. Postulants will produce an integrative project drawing from summer and previous academic year's learning that they will present at Diocesan Convention that really draws from the skills of a practitioner theologian.