

Apostolic Guardian Church of Grace and Blessing



© Copyright 2004 Apostolic Guardian Church of Grace and Blessing

PREPARATION FOR THE DIACONATE

Paper #1



In the Apostolic Guardian Church of Grace and Blessing, those men and women who undertake and complete training in the Priesthood, will receive Holy Orders (ordination into Apostolic Succession as a Deacon or Priest) and authorization to offer the Sacraments. This is a great service

responsibility and requires much study and practice. As Peter Roche de Coppens writes in *Divine Light and Fire*;

"By his/her calling, training, and ordination, a Priest becomes a vehicle by which Christ can manifest in the world. During ordination, by the prayer, by the laying on of hands, and by the hand of God, centers within the higher bodies of the Priest are activated so that Grace may flow through him/her into the world. The central function of the Priest is to act as a channel for the Light, Fire, and Life of the Divine Spark and the Holy Spirit. Holy Ordination are genuine forms of Initiation. The Priest becomes a great and living channel for the 7 Sacraments, for the spiritual energies flowing through them, and for the powers of the Holy Spirit to be poured forth into the world. Ordination opens up and activates centers around the right shoulder through which spiritual Light, Fire, and Life can streak forth and be released as he/she projects them through his/her right hand."

After ordination, Priests and Priestesses are expected to operate their ministries in alignment and compliance with the Apostolic Guardian Church Charter and Code of Ethics (copies will be provided). Select individuals who develop effective ministries may later be invited for advancement into the Episcopate (consecrated as Bishop).

When a Postulant for Holy Orders has completed their prescribed studies, he or she then attends a retreat facilitated by the Arch Bishop or a local Bishop of the Church and is then ordained as a Deacon or Priest. Candidates for ordination make their own travel arrangements (at their own expense) to meet with the Arch Bishop (or an available Bishop of the Church) for this retreat and ordination.

Required Areas of Study

The first level of study helps one to prepare for ordination as a Deacon and is referred to as Preparation for the Diaconate. The second level of study helps one to prepare for ordination as a Priest/Priestess and is referred to as Preparation for the Priesthood. The final level of study helps one to prepare for consecration as a Bishop and is referred to as the Preparation for the Episcopate.

Candidates for Ordination study in the various subject areas listed below and others that may be individually assigned depending on the background of the candidate.

Preparing for the Service of Priesthood

Master Jesus

Apostolic Succession

Early Church Scripture and History

The Sacraments and Liturgies

Individual Spiritual Practice

As stated in the ‘Welcome Letter’ the path to priesthood involves much mutual discernment and prolonged spiritual formation via study, meditation, and service.

Clergy of the Apostolic Church of the Guardians of Grace are worker clergy—that is they must be self-sustaining in the tentmaker style of the Apostle Paul. This is a very ancient model of spiritual service and leadership, in which the clergy earns a living in "secular" employment in her/his community, and serves as a non-paid itinerant minister. The Apostolic Church of the Guardians of Grace has no paid positions, and clergy may not charge for services or require tithing from any member.

Required Reading for the Diaconate

Please begin the required readings for the Diaconate by securing a copy of the book [Meeting Jesus Again for the First Time](#) by Marcus Borg. It is available in bookstores or online at the Church web site (click on suggested readings link).

<http://www.apostolicguardianchurch.org>

After completion of each selection, write a 1-2 page Personal Reflection Paper and email it to Bishop Storlie within 30 days. This paper is a very important part of the priesthood formation process. In this paper please share your *personal* reflections on what you have read. What did you learn from this author? How will the information in this book support you in your spiritual walking? How do you imagine your learning’s from this book will assist you in your service to others as a deacon or priest?

Again, please try to complete this first Personal Reflection Paper within 30 days.

With Peace and Blessings we welcome you to the Preparation for the Diaconate!

+Timothy A. Storlie—Primate of the Apostolic Church of the Guardians of Grace