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### **TITLE III REVISIONS: Canons pointed in the right direction**

Forgive the pun. I couldn't resist. Last summer, during National Convention, a number of changes were made to the Title III Canons. Now I don't know what you have heard about them, but I think the changes were made, at least in part, so that individual Diocese could have fewer Canonical restrictions. The changes were also designed, in part, to allow different diocese more freedom to customize requirements for lay and ordained ministry. The changes have not at all hurt the local call option for ordination.

**As** a first effort in trying to unravel the new canons for our congregation, let me dwell on canons which deal with the Diaconate. In our new canon 6 the Ordination of Deacons, one of the first changes is that of congregation nomination, instead of a more private process of selection. The congregation nominates those who they sense are being called to the diaconal ministry. Now this does not eliminate good folks from self-identifying their call. It does, however, mean that whether one wants to initiate the process, or not, congregational nomination must take place.

**Next**, it is significant to know that a nominated person can be made a postulant by the bishop without a mandatory interview with the COM.

**Now**, the Bishop could choose an interview, but that is up to him, or her.

It is probably, also, good to remember that the time of postulancy is the time of discernment, and the time of candidacy is, now, the time of training and formation. The educational requirements for a deacon have been changed somewhat. The diaconal student is, now, required to have academic studies in: 1) Holy Scripture Theology, and the Traditions of the Church; 2) Diaconia and the diaconate; 3) Human awareness and understanding; 4) Spiritual Development and discipline; and, 5) Practical training and experience.

**Now**, Candidacy, which must be no less than a year, does require a recommendation from the COM. That means Postulants will be visiting with us, at least, at that time if not before. Candidates may be removed from Candidacy at the sole discretion of the Bishop.

The Candidate pursues the prescribed course of study.

**Ok**, that's a good start. Let's pick it up next time from this place and carry it through to ordination to the Diaconate. But, please remember, reading this article is still not nearly as good as having and reading the new canons. If you are interested, why not check with the me or George and we can help you.

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