This check-list is offered to assist the novice in completing the basic requirements needed to become a Professed Member. We would stress that this is “basic.” It’s your starting place. We hope the practices noted here will provide you with a base to grow from.

By the time you present yourself to take the Promise as a Professed Member all these items should have been completed. We realize that this will take some novices longer than others. Our target is three years; four or five years will be common for many.

In a process of training, mentoring, and implementation the member moves forward in three broad areas of formation.

1. Parish development grounded in a catholic Anglican approach to ascetical/pastoral theology and practice.
2. Growth in the spiritual life and emotional intelligence
3. Incorporation into the Order’s Life and Ethos

There are two overarching goals

First, the Order wants to provide the novice with a foundation for a stable and solid future as a Professed Member.

Second, we want this to be a process that allows the novice and the Order the basis for sound vocational discernment.

This document is in one sense a list of hoops to jump through. In the future we’ll develop a second document that lists the competencies we want the novice to develop.

The process is also dependent on the novice’s good judgment and ability to self-initiate. Elements of the process may be adapted to fit the member’s needs and desires. How the member goes about such adaptation is an important indicator of commitment and competence.

Beginning in the discernment period before First Taking of the Promise – Those in discernment may find it useful to go beyond the process directly related to discernment and begin to engage some of the items on this list. For example, in ”Putting on the Habit” items 1 c through h could be taken on. Obviously, a and b would be inappropriate until after the Promise is taken. Training, reading and shaping the parish work done during this period “counts” in completing the requirements.

When the form is being used as part of a progress report or your application for Professed Membership – Next to each item write “Completed” (C) or “Not Completed” (NC). Add any comments in the sections provided.
Putting on the Habit

1. For a three-year period the novice has taken on the Order’s habits of reflection and reverence. Each practice is to begin within one month of your first taking of the Promise. Our assumption is that you need to live “in-the-habit” for at least three years before you’re ready to take the Promise as a life-long vow and become a Professed Member.

   a. Used “OA” after their name on the parish web site, parish e-newsletter, Sunday bulletin, email signature, and stationary. And, in any description of the novice’s history their relationship with the Order is noted. A link to the Order’s web site is on the parish web site either among other resource links or in the priest’s personal story.

   b. Worn the full habit (cassock and cross) on a routine basis. For example, at quiet days or parish retreats, when officiating at the Daily Office, possibly at coffee hour, possibly along with a stole when hearing confessions, when teaching, at social gatherings after major feast day celebrations, etc.

   c. Lived within the Threefold Rule of Prayer – including Eucharist on all Sundays and Principle Feasts, Fasting on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday; Daily Office at least five days/week; personal devotions that helps you be reflective. Including participation in your parish’s public daily office.

   d. Engaged in daily intercession for the Order. At least weekly for each Professed Member and novice. Used one of the Ascension collects each week when saying the Office.

   e. Maintain a practice of regular and frequent spiritual reading – “Time needs to be provided for the prayerful reading of the Scriptures, the Rule, and other spiritual works.” (The Rule)

   f. Celebrated these feast days on their day – Feast of the Ascension (with a Eucharist), January 8 and 30 (at an Office or Eucharist that day), Feast of Saint Benedict, July 11 (with a Eucharist).

   g. Participated in each yearly retreat/chapter

   h. Participated in the yearly email book conversation

Comments:

2. Learning some of the foundation stories

b. Scott Benhase – Inner city and interracial work. Ohio Convention. How he connected to OA

c. Bob Gallagher – founding of the Church Development Institute and establishing the core elements of all the major training programs in parish development. Interview

d. Interview three members about their efforts for parish development. The relationship of their spiritual discipline and those efforts. For example -- Bishop of Georgia. Creating a total system for parish development. His roots in urban ministry and interracial congregation’s. Lowell Grisham – the challenge of a university parish with a troubled history. Michelle Heyne – from laity perspective in her parishes and as consultant. Susan Latimer, Lowell Grisham, Gawain de Leeun, David Andrews – Overall development in several parishes.

e. Be familiar with the history of parish development – see on line “Understanding from Within” (Heyne & Gallagher), the History of Parish development – Episcopal Church (Heyne & Gallagher), and History of Organization Development (Alban, Bunker & Axlerod) - https://managementhelp.org/misc/OD-timeline.pdf

Comments:

Shaping the Parish

As you know the assumption is that the parish of a member of the Order of the Ascension will show the fruits of an effort to shape it as a healthy and faithful Eucharistic community. That people will experience the very best of Anglicanism’s ethos and practice.

The novice needs to reflect on the document “The marks of parish development we seek in our parishes.” Some of the items below will offer specific actions to take.

This section applies to novices who are the priest-in-charge of a parish (rector, vicar, etc.). Laity, deacons, bishops, or assisting parish priests will be provided with a comparable list that fits their situation.

The core

1. Establishing a pattern of Eucharist, Office, and Reflection/Personal Devotions in your parish. Begin a public Office on at least four days of the week (5 is better), at the same time each day, within the first two months of beginning the novitiate. Participate in the parish’s public Office to the extent that your absence is rare.

Communicate within the parish and community the living of the threefold rule, e.g., website, e-newsletter, Sunday bulletin.

Routinely offer training and coaching to help people say the Office on their own, more fully participate in the Eucharist, and engage in personal devotions that fits their temperament, circumstances and need for spiritual growth.
2. Establish ways of training and coaching parishioners for living the threefold rule of prayer -- with an initial focus on saying the Office on their own and a program that helps them with Reflection/Personal Devotions (in first year focused on 1) Reflection and 2) Self-examination & Confession. Establishing a process in which parishioners are helped to accept more responsibility for their spiritual lives -- a first year focus on developing a Rule of Life. Place the efforts on the parish's calendar in the first two months of the novitiate. Maintain the pattern in the future.

3. Supporting #1 & 2 -- Most of the Sacramental Faith rung are familiar with several ascetical models and practices. At least 15% are very familiar

Models to understand: The Threefold Rule of Prayer; The Renewal-Apostolate Cycle; Benedictine Promise, marks of an Anglican Ethos; In Your Holy Spirit model, Shaping the Parish, Christian Life Model

Practices to train and coach people in:

Common Prayer – Participation in the Holy Eucharist (three ways of participating – see IYHS Gallagher), Saying the Daily Office on your own

Personal devotions – Lectio; Spiritual Reading; silence & stillness, other forms of personal devotions. All with respect for the uniqueness of the individual's spiritual life – attract: The inclination for particular forms of spiritual life consistent with the individual's temperament, circumstances and needs for growth and balance. The ability to be reflective in a manner that assists responsible living

4. Process of shaping the parish -- In shaping the parish the novice does so in a manner that shows an understanding of the change process (for example, see chapter 7 in IYHS Gallagher) and that shows a longing and openness to the virtues and gifts needed in living the Christian life and the pastoral oversight of the Body of Christ -- humility, gentleness, patience, forbearance born of love, eagerness to maintain unity in the bond of peace, truthfulness mediated in love, mutual kindness, tenderheartedness and forgiveness; love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control; awe, piety, an acceptance of paradox, courage, counsel, understanding, wisdom; prudence, justice, fortitude, Self-awareness and self-control See F.A.T. Pages 161 - 163

NOTE: What you are doing in shaping the parish is creating a dense parish culture grounded in Anglican spirituality. This is about the Prayer Book Pattern and the Anglican ethos. Just to be clear – this is not about making the parish Anglo Catholic or evangelical, etc. It is about guiding the parish into the depth of its own tradition. Pay attention to the basics of development: 1) Appreciate the given strengths, gifts, and charism of the parish – build upon them, expand them. 2) Using standard models of assessment notice what's central to a parish's fullness and health; what's weak or confused in the parish – address those needs. 3) Avoid getting caught up in your own
“vision”, the imposition of your temperament and needs for comfort upon the parish, or obsessing about the a few individuals you wish were different. 4) Think in terms of 7 years not 7 months.

Comments:

**Other possible developmental initiatives**

The novice needs to make progress on these areas in some manner. It may be a bit around each or it may show more in a couple of areas.

1. **Shape a Listening Parish**

Routine processes that help the priest understand the spiritual life of individual parishioners within the context of the person’s daily life of work, citizenship, friendships and family life. And, cause the parishioners to see the priest as interested in their whole life. The most direct way to do this is for the priest to interview everyone in the parish willing to be interviewed. Do that mostly face-to-face, one-on-one. Interview new people in the early months of their arrival. If you have gone through the entire list – begin again; possibly using another set of questions based on a model such as Benedictine Promise, IYHS, the Christian Life.

The routine use of group listening processes in the parish.

A stance regarding listening on the part of the priest grounded in Anglican ascetical theology and practice, especially Benedictine spirituality and the Episcopal/Anglican ethos.

2. **Shape a parish in which the daily life and ministry of the baptized is at the center of parish energies.**

Respect for the vocation and life of the laity.

In written materials and on the web page clarity that the primary ministry of the baptized person is in the routines and places of their daily life.

A routine practice in preaching and education of connecting with the daily life and ministry of the laity.

3. **Shape a parish that is an effective community of formation**

4. **Shape a parish that is grounded in, and expresses, an Episcopal/Anglican ethos**

The Anglican tradition offers tremendous opportunities for individual choice and innovation, while also providing the stretch and challenge that each of us needs to grow
up into the full stature of Christ. Anglicanism has a culture, an ethos. The descriptions of that ethos will vary in emphasis and working but they tend to all point in a common direction. We hear of comprehensiveness, personal holiness, worldly holiness, of being rooted in communal daily prayer; sacramental, pastoral and incarnational. For a fuller description see this page on Anglican Ethos.

5. Shape a parish that has an emotionally healthy climate

There is a critical mass of members with the skills of self-awareness, empathy, self-control and the exercise of leadership.

6. Shape a parish with a vibrant life. With an energy that creates a “buzz” that excites the congregation and spills over to the wider community. It is an attractive energy and impacts participation and membership growth. The Sunday morning Eucharist and community time is consistently wonderful. Caution: clergy need to take care with this objective. There’s a danger that we will import our view of vibrant onto the parish when what’s needed is to have that emerge out of the gifts and strength of the parish and its grounding in our tradition’s life of prayer (see “The Core” above).

7. Parish leaders have the skills they need to effectively manage the polarity of adaptation to address the contemporary society while maintaining institutional integrity, identity and integration.

8. The parish is addressing areas that are barriers to health. Things that are “out of whack” are acknowledged and dealt with. The elements of parish life are mostly in alignment: income-expenses, the energy and funds to carry out the vision we have; liturgical space or number of services to match the number of attendees, and so on

Comments:

Training

This amounts to about 9 weeks of training. If you take more than three years in the novitiate there will be a Clinic each year so the numbers increase in year 4 to 10 weeks, in year 5 to 11 weeks. You need to complete that number – 9, or 10, or 11, or 12 - of workshop weeks during your process. If you have already done some of the workshops before becoming a novice – you can work with the formation director in selecting workshops. Note – people have found that doing CDI or the experiential workshops a second, even a third time, can be beneficial.
1. Completing the Church Development Institute with a certificate (or approved substitute) – amounts to about 4 weeks of training time. [NOTE: In some cases participation in a CDI may be waved and the number of week-long experiential workshops increased. If CDI was completed some years previously it may make sense to do it again.]

2. Participate in the Parish Development Clinic each year you are in the novitiate (the one arranged for novices).

3. Participation in two experiential education type workshops
   - A week-long workshop -- Human Interaction Workshop (5 days or more).
   - Conflict Management Workshop (5 days or more)

Comments:

Reading
3. *Fill All Things: The Dynamics of Spirituality in the Parish Church*, Robert A. Gallagher 2008, Ascension Press (read all with focus on memorizing and understanding the four core frameworks and material on Pages 15 – 16, 50 – 51, 107 – 121, 142 – 156, 205 - 206
4. *Shaping the Parish: A Pastoral Theology of the Parish Church*, Michelle Heyne & Robert Gallagher
5. *Congregational Leadership in Anxious Times*, Alban, 2006, Peter L. Steinke
7. *Christian Proficiency*, Martin Thornton
10. Two books from – *Shaping the Parish series*, Heyne & Gallagher Will be available in PDF draft form before being published.
11. Read the “History of Parish Development in the Episcopal Church” (available on the web)
12. Read on the OA web site – All primary sections of the site (see headings at top and links along right side). This needs to include Emmett Jarrett’s sermon on January 30, 1988. Also, in the Members Only sections – 10 Members - read material in Newsletters & Updates and Other historical Docs; 2) Members parish development resources (a work in progress); 3) Pictures. The link can be gotten from the Formation Director or the Presiding Sister.

Not required:

Two books that may tell you something of the sensibilities of the Order in its early years.

*Canticle for Liebowitz*, Walter Miller
*All Hallows Eve*, Charles Williams

Also, nay of the earlier AP books

Comments:

**Making use of coaching**

Coaching is available around making overall progress in the formation process and specifically in regard to the developmental initiatives. This may include attention to the process of change and emerging issues and dynamics in the parish. Novices must self-initiate regarding coaching.

Learning from a process of parishioner feedback and your own self-assessment; relate to learning done in the human interaction lab (or other). The novice needs to take the initiative to see that this happens.

Coaching is primarily around:
- The DI’s and the related learning process
- Emerging issues and dynamics
- Processes of feedback and self-assessment

The member also engages a process of self-assessment, receiving feedback, and reflection in expanding his/her emotional and social intelligence—Self-awareness (of own emotions, accurate self-assessment of strengths, weaknesses, blindside), Social Awareness (empathy), relationship management (leadership), and Self-management (self control).

Comments: