

TO: Rectors of the Diocese of Atlanta

DATE: January 25, 2008

Enclosed you will find the revised booklet and application packet for the 2008 Vocational Discernment Program (VDP). A member of your parish has indicated an interest in applying to the program this year, and have completed or scheduled an interview with me as their first step in the application process.

Please review the enclosed "Member of the Clergy Letter of Recommendation" and give it your serious attention. If you have had members of your parish apply for this program before, you will see that the form is new. Please also make note that a Vestry leeter is now also required. Please answer the questions candidly so that we can make the best decisions possible. Also please keep in mind the following policies, which are included in the VDP booklet as well as in the letters to the applicants.

- Nominees should be active, confirmed members in good standing of your parish or worshipping community *for at least one year*. They should be familiar with the structures and ways of the Episcopal Church. Exceptions to this should be approved by the Bishop in advance if the application being submitted.

- Mobility is essential. If made a postulant, seminary and/or later work in the church will generally necessitate a move outside of the Diocese of Atlanta.

- Stability is essential. People should not participate in this year's program if they are in the middle of, or planning major life changes (i.e., Wedding plans).

- Diversity is essential. The Diocese of Atlanta is committed to making our Discernment Groups as reflective of the breadth and depth of our communities as possible. We will seek to put together a group for this year that is as diverse in terms of racial and ethnic background, home parish, and location in the diocese as we can.

We can accept eight – ten people for the 2008 program. Of necessity, this will mean a significant number of the people who have expressed an interest in the program will not be able to participate this year if they all apply.

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We need to have the Confidential Rector form and the Vestry Letter of Support in our office **NO LATER THAN February 22nd** . We will meet to evaluate applications early the next week, and we cannot complete the application without this form. You and the applicant will receive a notice as to whether or not he/she is accepted for this year's process by February 29th. We will also send you the guidelines for the Parish Lay Committee with that notification. If your applicant is accepted, the applicant, the Parish Lay Committee, and yourself will need to attend the program orientation on **Saturday, March 29, 2008**.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions. We are grateful for your leadership and ministry in the Church.

Faithfully,

Alicia Schuster Weltner (The Rev'd Canon)
Canon for Congregational Ministry