2026 General Ordination Examination

Scale of General Criteria

Evaluators weigh GOE answers with the following in mind: *perception (and analysis)* of issues; *application* of resources; *demonstration* of knowledge; and *articulation* of views. These factors are implicit in all the two-level scales used for the entire GOE. Together with the two-level scales for each individual set, these factors give Evaluators clear criteria for deciding how well a paper addresses the questions. The two levels of these general criteria represent proficiency in the area being tested or a lack thereof, in accordance with Episcopal Church Canons III.15.2-4.

Proficient: The response gives evidence of a sound and perceptive understanding of the basic issues raised by the question(s) and how those issues relate to the canonical area being tested. Written presentation is clear and organized with apt use of source material.

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Set 1: The Holy Scriptures

Open Resources (but NOT Generative AI)

On Advent II, Year B, the Revised Common Lectionary readings include both Isaiah 40:1-11 and Mark 1:1-8. In preparation for an adult lectionary-based Bible study, you complete the following tasks:

Part A

In approximately 400 words, exegete Isaiah 40:1-11, paying particular attention to vv. 3-5, commenting on the literary, historical, and theological context.

Part B

Mark 1:1-8 incorporates Isaiah 40:3-5. In approximately 600 words, assess Mark's literary, historical, and theological use of the Isaiah passage.

Scoring Rubric

A Proficient answer must satisfy the requirements of the first criterion and two of the three remaining criteria.

Criteria	Proficient	Not Proficient
Exegesis of Isaiah	Accurately describes the literary, historical, and theological context of Isaiah 40:1-11	Includes inaccuracies in the literary, historical, or theological context or Does not discuss the literary, historical, or theological context
Literary assessment of use of Isaiah 40:3-5 in Mark	Accurately assesses the literary uses of the passage from Isaiah in Mark	Includes literary inaccuracies or Does not include a literary assessment
Historical assessment of use of Isaiah 40:3-5 in Mark	Accurately assesses the historical uses of the passage from Isaiah in Mark	Includes historical inaccuracies or Does not include a historical assessment
Theological assessment of use of Isaiah 40:3-5 in Mark	Appropriately assesses the theological uses of the passage from Isaiah in Mark	Includes inappropriate or irrelevant theological assessments or Does not include a theological assessment

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Set 2: Christian Worship

Open Resources (but NOT Generative AI)

A mass shooting event has taken place in your community. None of your parishioners, thankfully, is among the casualties. In an answer of about 1,000 words, identify how you would make choices for the regularly scheduled service of Holy Eucharist on the following Sunday, Proper 23A. Determine the following details for your liturgy plan that respond to this event, using authorized resources in the Episcopal Church:

- Select a hymn from an authorized hymnal that responds to this event and identify where it is being used in the service: for the opening hymn, a Communion hymn, or a concluding hymn. Why have you chosen this hymn and its placement?

- Write or adapt the Prayers of the People, as permitted in the rubrics of the Book of Common Prayer 1979 (BCP 359 reflected on p. 244 of El Libro de Oración Común 2022, p. 328 of Le Livre de la Prière Commune 2022, and p. 54 of Enriching Our Worship 1). You can adapt one of the six forms or write an entirely new set of prayers.

- Describe at least one action, movement, or other nonverbal option to use during the Sunday liturgy as a response to the incident.

Give a coherent rationale for your choices and explain the liturgical and theological reasons for each decision.

Scoring Rubric

A Proficient answer must satisfy the requirements of five of the six criteria.

Criteria	Proficient	Not Proficient
Hymn selection in response to mass shooting event	One hymn is selected from an authorized Episcopal Church hymnal and is used for the opening, Communion, or concluding hymn	Does not identify a hymn selection or Use/placement of the hymn (opening, Communion, concluding) is not specified or The hymn selected is not from authorized resources
Rationale for the hymn choice	Provides a clear liturgical and theological rationale for the choice of the hymn and its placement in the liturgy	Does not provide a clear liturgical rationale for the choice of the hymn and its placement in the liturgy or Does not provide a clear theological rationale for the choice of the hymn and its placement in the liturgy
Set of Prayers of the People in response to a mass shooting	Provides a full set of Prayers of the People that follows the listed rubrics (BCP 1979 p. 359, El Libro de Oración Común 2022 p. 244, Le Livre de la Prière Commune 2022 p. 328, or EOW 1 p. 54) and responds/refers to the presenting incident of a mass shooting	Does not provide Prayers of the People or Prayers of the People do not address the situation or are irrelevant or Prayers of the People do not follow the rubrics indicated
Rationale for the choices made in the Prayers of the People	Provides a clear liturgical and theological rationale for the prayers	Liturgical and/or theological rationale for the prayers are absent, incoherent, or irrelevant

Intended action, movement, or other nonverbal option in response to mass shooting	Describes at least one action, movement, or other nonverbal option that responds to or refers to the presenting incident of a mass shooting	Does not identify a nonverbal component in the liturgy or Nonverbal component is disconnected or irrelevant to the mass shooting
Rationale for the described action, movement, or other nonverbal option	Provides a clear liturgical and theological rationale for the action, movement, or other nonverbal option	Liturgical and/or theological rationale is absent, incoherent, or irrelevant for the action, movement, or other nonverbal option

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Set 3: History of the Christian Church

Open Resources (but NOT Generative AI)

Throughout the history of Christianity, tensions – some dramatic – have periodically arisen between spiritual and temporal authority. From the following lists, choose one event within **one** historical period from **each** section and explain how bishops have responded when matters of spiritual and temporal authority have conflicted. Each answer should be about 500 words.

A.

The Christianization of the Roman Empire in the Fourth Century

The English Reformation

The Salvadoran Civil War

B.

The US Civil War

US Engagement in World War I

The Civil Rights Movement in the US

Scoring Rubric

A Proficient answer must satisfy the requirements of three of the four criteria.

Criteria	Proficient	Not Proficient
Part A (World Event) Issues	Identifies at least one event from a historical period in Part A in which bishop(s) responded to a conflict between spiritual and temporal authority	Does not identify such a conflict in an event from Part A
Part A (World Event) Results	Explains how bishop(s) engaged with the conflict between spiritual and temporal authority in the Part A event	Explanation of bishop(s) engagement in the issues in the Part A event is missing, inadequate, or irrelevant
Part B (US Event) Issues	Identifies at least one event from a historical period in Part B in which bishop(s) responded to a conflict between spiritual and temporal authority	Does not identify a conflict in an event from Part B
Part B (US Event) Results	Explains how bishop(s) engaged with the conflict between spiritual and temporal authority in the Part B event	Explanation of bishop(s) engagement in the issues in the Part B event is missing, inadequate, or irrelevant

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Set 4: Practice of Ministry

Open Resources *(but NOT Generative AI)*

Public demonstrations and marches are a way for people to express their approval of or objection to policy and actions in political, social, or economic arenas. Religious leaders, including some Christian clergy across the political and social spectrum, have been vocal and visible actors in protesting, lending the weight of spiritual and moral authority to these movements. Other Christian clergy have taken a much more reserved stance toward such involvement. Answer the following question in approximately 1,000 words:

What are the conditions under which it is appropriate for clergy to take part in public demonstrations?

Your position must address the theological, pastoral, and practical considerations for identifying permissible demonstrations for clergy to take part. It should reference both appropriate forms of demonstration and potential causes to demonstrate for or against. Theological, pastoral, and practical considerations must be supported by historical precedent, the Baptismal Covenant, Canons, or ordination vows. Furthermore, state whether clergy can visibly identify themselves through marks of ordination, such as clericals or vestments.

Scoring Rubric

A Proficient answer must satisfy the first criterion and three of the remaining four criteria.

Criteria	Proficient	Not Proficient
Scope of permissible demonstration	Provides a clear statement affirming in what forms of demonstration clergy can take part and Provides a clear statement regarding what topics or causes such protests may be about	Statement about the forms of permissible demonstrations is missing or irrelevant to clergy participation or Statement about the topics or causes for permissible demonstrations is missing or irrelevant to clergy participation
Theological consideration	Offers at least one theological consideration for identifying permissible demonstrations and Grounds that theological consideration in historical precedent, the Baptismal Covenant, Canons, or ordination vows	Theological consideration is irrelevant to whether clergy may participate in demonstrations or is missing or Theological consideration is unsupported by at least one of the following: Historical precedent The Baptismal Covenant Canons Ordination vows
Pastoral consideration	Offers at least one pastoral consideration for identifying permissible demonstrations and Grounds that pastoral consideration in historical precedent, the Baptismal Covenant, Canons, or ordination vows	Pastoral consideration is irrelevant to whether clergy may participate in demonstrations or is missing or Pastoral consideration is unsupported by at least one of the following: Historical precedent The Baptismal Covenant Canons Ordination vows
Practical consideration	Offers at least one practical consideration for identifying appropriate demonstrations and	Practical consideration is missing or irrelevant to whether clergy may participate in demonstrations or

	Grounds that pastoral consideration in historical precedent, the Baptismal Covenant, Canons, or ordination vows	Pastoral consideration is unsupported by at least one of the following: Historical precedent The Baptismal Covenant Canons Ordination vows
Appropriateness of identifiable marks of ordination	Response takes a position on whether clergy who participate in demonstrations can identify themselves with visible signs of ordination and offers a rationale for the position	Response does not take any position on whether clergy can visibly identify themselves at demonstrations or Response offers a position without a rationale

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Set 5: Christian Theology

Open Resources (but NOT Generative AI)

During an adult formation class, a parishioner quotes Revelation 21:1, “Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth,” and asks: “If God promises to renew all things, what is our responsibility for the current creation, especially as we face the reality of climate change?”

In an answer of approximately 1,000 words, offer an account of eschatology that undergirds environmental stewardship. Explore how Christian theology informs our responsibility for creation care in the context of climate change. In your answer, cite at least one relevant passage of Scripture, a resource from the Book of Common Prayer or another Episcopal liturgical text, and the work of a Christian theologian who addresses creation care or environmental stewardship.

Scoring Rubric

A Proficient answer must satisfy the requirements of three of the four criteria.

Criteria	Proficient	Not Proficient
Theological understanding of eschatology that undergirds environmental stewardship	Clearly explains Christian eschatology and Connects eschatology to current responsibility	Misinterprets or omits key eschatological concepts or Does not connect eschatology to present-day creation care
Use of Scripture	Appropriately cites and interprets at least one relevant Scripture passage beyond Revelation 21:1 to support the argument	Omits or misuses Scripture or Does not meaningfully integrate biblical support
Liturgical reference	Cites and correctly applies a relevant passage from the Book of Common Prayer or another Episcopal text to support creation care	Does not include a liturgical reference or Includes a liturgical reference irrelevant to the question
Theological source	Accurately references and explains a Christian theologian's work on environmental stewardship or creation care	Omits a reference to a Christian theologian or Includes a Christian theological reference unrelated to creation care or eschatology

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Set 6: Christian Ethics and Moral Theology

Open Resources (but NOT Generative AI)

The vestry of your parish hopes to develop a policy on "conscious consumerism" for parish programs and seeks your guidance. Conscious consumerism refers to the practice of making purchasing decisions informed by ethical, environmental, and social considerations. In the context of Christian ethics, it raises questions about stewardship, justice, solidarity, and the moral dimensions of economic life. As you prepare your response to them, you note that the answer isn't as easy as the vestry had hoped. Complexity, nuance, and trade-offs -- such as costs, number of people served, and sustainability -- quickly come to mind.

In approximately 1,000 words, describe how you would empower the vestry to wrestle with competing goods using Scripture, Christian doctrine, and a theologian in the Anglican moral tradition to respond to the vestry's desire to "consume consciously." You are not being asked to develop the policy itself.

Scoring Rubric

A Proficient answer must satisfy the requirements of four of the five criteria.

Criteria	Proficient	Not Proficient
Identifies competing goods	Accurately identifies at least one example of competing goods	Does not address or misunderstands competing goods or Misunderstands conscious consumerism
Use of Scripture	Offers a relevant use of Scripture to frame competing goods and Explains the rationale for the choice of Scripture	Inaccurately or insufficiently applies Scripture or Does not refer to Scripture
Use of Christian doctrine	Offers a relevant use of Christian doctrine to frame competing goods and Explains the rationale for the use of Christian doctrine	Inaccurately or insufficiently applies Christian doctrine or Does not refer to Christian doctrine
Use of Anglican moral theology	Cites a relevant Anglican theologian to frame competing goods and Explains the rationale for the use of the theologian's work	Inaccurately or insufficiently applies the work of a relevant Anglican theologian or Does not cite a relevant Anglican theologian or Citation is from a theologian outside the Anglican tradition
Presentation to vestry	Presents guidance to help the vestry to create a policy for the parish informed by your discussion of competing goods	Does not offer ethical guidance for the vestry's deliberation or Guidance is cursory or superficial or Guidance is disconnected from the discussion of competing goods