

# **General Ordination Examination 2015**

## **Set 1: The Holy Scriptures**

### **OPEN RESOURCES**

John's Gospel, as a whole, has been criticized because of its perceived attitude toward the Jewish people. Some believe that as the inspired and infallible Word of God, the Fourth Gospel condemns the Jewish people as those who rejected and ultimately put Jesus to death. Others believe that the language used to speak of the Jews in John is inherently anti-Semitic, and as such the use of John's Gospel by the modern church is at the least anachronistic.

Each year your parish reads John's Passion account (John 18:1-19:37) as part of the Good Friday Liturgy from The Book of Common Prayer. Now a member of your parish Worship Committee has questioned the lack of sensitivity toward the Jewish people in continuing the practice of reading John's Passion narrative on Good Friday, asking that John's Passion be eliminated and another Passion narrative be read in its place. You have chosen to address this in a major article in your parish newsletter.

Using your knowledge of Holy Scripture, grounded in an exegesis of John 19:14-16, in 1,000 words create your parish newsletter article, explaining the practice of reading John's Passion as part of the Good Friday Liturgy.

- Your article should be based on an exegesis of John 19:14-16.
- Your article should incorporate an understanding of John's use of the term "the Jews."
- Your article should be accessible to a lay person while demonstrating your ability to interpret Holy Scripture accurately. Your exegesis should utilize material from the Old and New Testaments.

Your article will be evaluated on the clarity and accuracy of your argument and its conciseness in providing Scripture-based resources for your congregation when addressing this situation.

## **Set 2: Christian Theology**

### **OPEN RESOURCES**

Several young parishioners return home after their first year in college and announce that their academic work has convinced them that belief in God is not reasonable. They ask how you justify your continued belief in God.

Offer your considered response in an essay of 1,000 words, providing at least three arguments for a reasoned belief in God, and then explaining how the Christian faith as you understand it accords with those arguments. In your answer make reference to at least two Christian theologians (one of whom must be Anglican) who have addressed the issue of belief in God. You need not agree with the theologians' arguments, but you must engage them.

## **Set 3: Christian Ethics and Moral Theology**

### **OPEN RESOURCES**

You observe two bumper stickers displayed together on a car in a university neighborhood. One says, "Save the Whales." The other says, "Keep Abortion Safe and Legal."

Choose one of the following ethical approaches: Virtue Ethics, Feminist Ethics, Teleological Ethics.

1. In your own words, provide a 250-word, working definition of the chosen ethical approach as practiced in a Christian theological context. The definition should be appropriate to what might be given at an adult education forum in a parish.
2. With direct reference to the definition given in 1.), provide a reasoned, 750-word argument for how the messages of these two bumper stickers, taken together, do or do not represent a morally coherent world view, consonant with your understanding of Christian responsibility.

## **Set 4: Liturgics and Church Music**

### **OPEN RESOURCES**

In the summer of 2015 you are hired to serve as vicar of two yoked mission congregations. The diocese plans that in two years these two congregations will be merged into one. You have been charged with preparing the congregations for the merger.

The missions are within twenty miles of each other, each with a steady average Sunday attendance of 30. One congregation is accustomed to a Prayer Book Rite II Eucharist and has volunteer song leaders, a guitarist, and a pianist. The second parish is accustomed to texts from *Enriching Our Worship* and has a part-time paid organist. All of the musicians are competent.

Liturgical planning and execution always need to build on a foundation of liturgical and sacramental theology.

In an essay of 1,000 words, develop a liturgy plan for your first Advent season with the intent of moving toward a single worship pattern, anticipating the merger. Giving a rationale for your choices and explaining the liturgical and theological reasons, present your choices for liturgy and music. Include specific selections in three areas. Choose one from the following: hymnody, service music, Eucharistic prayers and other variable texts; and choose one from the following: actions, non-verbal behaviors, and spatial arrangements. The third choice can come from either list.

## **Set 5: Church History**

### **OPEN RESOURCES**

The Enlightenment of the late 17th and 18th centuries produced effects that remain important today. Enlightenment thinking affected the Christian church as well as the Western world. Some of the hallmarks of Enlightenment thought include:

- The importance of individual autonomy rather than the authority of society and the state;
- The preference for human reason over received tradition;
- The importance of empirical observation rather than divine revelation;
- Progress as a result of human achievement;
- An optimistic view of the future.

1) Write an essay of about 750 words in which you discuss changes that occurred in the church as seen in the writings and ministries of Bishop William White of Pennsylvania or John Wesley as the result of the Enlightenment. Select three of the five hallmarks listed above and give one example for each hallmark as exemplified in White or Wesley (choose only one of the two).

2) Identify an issue confronting The Episcopal Church today and in approximately 250 words discuss how the influence of the Enlightenment contributes to the way in which TEC shapes discourse on this issue.

## **Set 6: Contemporary Society and Theory and Practice of Ministry**

### **OPEN RESOURCES**

You are a priest in a city that, like most cities, has both economically privileged and economically struggling neighborhoods. One group of your parishioners wants to raise funds for a trip to Haiti to support the building of a school there. Another group asks, “Why should we raise funds for Haiti when we have struggles right here in our own city?”

1. Write a 500-word essay that identifies and analyzes a tension present in this situation. Include in your analysis four key issues in contemporary society (such as political, economic, cultural or other social concerns) that could contribute to or exemplify the tension. Two of the issues should focus on the congregation and two should relate to the wider society.
2. Write a 500-word article for the parish newsletter that addresses the dilemma of this situation and provides a pastoral framework for the congregation to move forward. You may include thoughts or content from your first essay where relevant or important to your response.