

GENERAL ORDINATION EXAMINATION 1976

SET I

Please answer the question in PART A, one of the questions in PART B, and one of the questions in PART C. DO NOT sign your name to your answers. Put your registration number at the top of each page. Here, and elsewhere in the examination, be sure to cite your sources if you make use of any quotations.

Candidate's
Registration
Number

PART A

The Bishop asks ordinands to respond to this question. "Will you be diligent to frame and fashion your own selves, and your families, according to the Doctrine of Christ; and to make both yourselves and them, as much as in you lieth, wholesome examples and patterns to the flock of Christ?" The following GOE question concerns how, in one facet of ministry, you might make yourself an example and a pattern.

You are being interviewed by the vestry of a parish seeking to fill a vacancy. The profile agreed upon by the vestry specifies that this person live a spiritual life and be able to lead the communicants in their own spiritual development. The vestry asks you to respond to the following questions:

- a) What do you find to be the sources of your own spiritual life?
- b) How do you express your spirituality in your own behavior?
- c) How do you see these characteristics in your life affecting your relations with those with whom you live and work?
- d) How would you develop in the communicants similar behavior in dealing with each other and people of the community?

How do you respond to the vestry's questions?

SET I

PART B

"Those whom God hath joined together let no man put asunder." But is a broken marriage literally the living end? Are Christians "new start" people, resurrection people? Answer one of the questions below.

1. There is an increasing number of broken marriages in your congregation, and many parishioners feel a growing concern and frustration on account of this. The institution of marriage and the family itself seem to be in jeopardy. You have been asked by the adult sponsors of the youth group to help the young people sort out their questions and anxieties over these problems in their lives.
 - a. What are the issues?
 - b. How do you respond?

2. An Episcopal couple in their mid-thirties indicate their desire to be married in your parish. Both have been previously married and divorced.

In fact their announcement some months ago that they planned to divorce their spouses and marry one another had caused shock waves of disbelief among their many friends and acquaintances. Attractive, popular, intelligent, attentive parents to their several children, their former marriages had been considered models of success.

- a. What questions would you explore with this couple and what concerns would you share with them?
- b. What factors bear upon your decision whether or not to officiate at their ceremony?

PART C

"So soon as Children are come to a competent age, and can say the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments, and are sufficiently instructed in the matter contained in these Offices, they shall be brought to the Bishop to be confirmed by him." In our day is this the aim and design for Christian Education? Confirmation for some persons means the end of instruction. What of commitment? Answer one of the two questions below.

1. You have just come to a congregation in which there is general dissatisfaction with the "Sunday School." For the most part, the long-time members and much of the vestry view Christian Education as Sunday morning classes for children based upon the Bible. Another group of parishioners, including several recent transfers, want an educational program which is more comprehensive.
 - a. What might be the theological and educational issues underlying this conflict, and how might it be resolved?
 - b. What is Christian Education and how does it happen?
 - c. Outline a program of Christian Education that you would like to see developed for this congregation. Describe the characteristics of the congregation.

2. In an ongoing ecumenical fellowship which includes Roman Catholics, Lutherans, Baptists, and Quakers, you are asked to explain our Church's view of Confirmation in the light of the Book of Common Prayer
Authorized Services 1973 and subsequent suggestions for revision
Your own experience of having been confirmed.

How would you respond?

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SET II

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PART A

St. Paul wrote, "We have this ministry . . .", but just what ministry do we have?

Some comments recently made on ministry in our day are:

"In the future, the ordained ministry may become a profession chiefly for women, like nursing."

"The renewal emphasis on the ministry of the laity, if taken seriously, raises the question, 'Why be ordained at all?'"

"In our churches of the catholic tradition, the charismatic movement has provided an opportunity for the continuation of clericalism in a new way. Authoritarian priests have become not only dispensers of sacraments but arbiters of spiritual experience."

"The overriding concern of every Christian and every church should be the evangelization of two billion persons who do not yet know Jesus Christ."

As you reflect on such statements as the above, how do you envisage your future role in the ordained ministry and the criteria by which its effectiveness may be judged?

PART B

"Grant us grace fearlessly to contend against evil, and to make no peace with oppression; and that we may reverently use our freedom, help us to employ it in the maintenance of justice among men and nations . . ." Answer one of these two questions.

1. You are working in a parish which is observing the nation's Bicentennial. It is in a rapidly changing inner city. Formerly an all white middle class parish it now has a racially and economically mixed congregation. You are to assist the Christian Education Committee in considering the implication of such an observance and in designing an adult course on the theme "Oppression/Deliverance/Freedom."

Your specific assignments are:

1. To provide biblical and historical background for the course.
2. To write a statement about "Oppression/Deliverance/Freedom" as an introduction to the course.
3. To plan a service for Sunday, July 4, 1976, selecting the musical and other liturgical elements you think are most appropriate and explaining your choices.
4. To suggest a project or action to conclude this study.

2. A major Latin American theologian has said that the church no longer sees Christ in the face of the poor and the poor no longer see Christ in the Church, but that Christ is always on the side of the oppressed and helper of the helpless.

What has this statement to say to the conditions of world hunger, Episcopal church priorities and strategy for mission education in a parish?

PART C

"Grant us, in all our doubts and uncertainties, the grace to ask what thou wouldest have us to do, that the Spirit of Wisdom may save us from all false choices, and that in thy light we may see light." Answer one of these controversial questions.

1. Several years ago the Supreme Court invalidated state laws authorizing capital punishment. Recently the legislatures of several states (California, North Carolina and Alabama are examples) have passed legislation re-instituting the death penalty for certain crimes. The proponents of this new legislation hope the phrasing is in terms which will survive the Supreme Court's eventual scrutiny.

In your own state similar legislation has been proposed, and the legislators are being pressured by various citizen groups to pass it or to defeat it. A member of the legislature is also on the vestry of your parish. He asks you to help him understand the pros and cons of capital punishment as seen from ethical and Christian perspectives.

To clarify and organize your own thinking you decide to marshall your thoughts and information in writing. What do you write?

2. A parishioner calls on the telephone: "In The Episcopalian an article says, 'It is no better to be gay than straight. It is no better to be straight than gay. But for the gay person it's best to be gay.' Is the Church really saying this?" (The quotation is from The Episcopalian, October 1975, p. 8).

How would you respond?

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SET III

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PART A

"Send, we beseech thee, Almighty God, thy Holy Spirit into our hearts, that he may direct and rule us according to thy will, comfort us in all our afflictions, defend us from all error, and lead us into all truth."

Introducing the agenda of the 1975 meeting of the House of Bishops, the Presiding Bishop said that the main questions to be faced could be summarized as follows:

How do we agree?

How do we sustain our agreements?

How do we agree to disagree or to change our agreements?

How do we proceed?

Write a sermon, dealing with the above questions utilizing biblical, historical and theological references, on one of the following subjects. This sermon is intended to open up the issues and to introduce one or more parish discussion meetings on the same subject.

Either a) The issue of the ordination of women

or b) Prayer Book revision

or c) The threat of schism in the Church which claims to be One, Holy and Catholic

PART B

"How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?" Answer one of the following three questions.

1. A former Seminary classmate is now vicar of a church 40 miles from you; you are his nearest neighbor in the Episcopal ministry. One morning he appears at your door - "Just to say Hello." Shortly he is speaking of his frustrations. His wife is upset because the vicarage is cold, and the mission committee won't do anything. His directives to the Altar Guild are ignored. The year is nearly half over and he hasn't been able to get anyone to take the youth group. His sermons get little response. Sometimes no one comes to the mid-week Eucharist he scheduled. He hears that some think he does not visit enough, but his days are already full.

He looks at you, expecting some response.

- a. How do you respond?
- b. Have you any suggestions for action?
- c. What factors are likely to be at work in this situation?

2. A Parishioner whom you have prepared for Confirmation has come from a Christian community that was fundamentalist. She is still worried by the problem of the "unpardonable sin" and fears she may have committed it. She brings forward the text of Mark 3:28-29:

Truly, I say to you, all sins will be forgiven the sons of men, and whatever blasphemies they utter; but whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin. (RSV)

How would you counsel this person?

3. You are visiting a parishioner and her husband who is a psychotherapist. He declares that he is not even neutral about the church. He thinks it is positively harmful psychologically for people to be nurtured in the values expressed in the New Testament. He specifically mentions the parable of the Pharisee and Publican praying in the temple. He claims that Jesus is condemning what health and self-esteem there is in the Pharisee, and that Christ puts a premium on grovelling, disesteem and masochism when he says the Publican went away justified. The therapist claims he works all week to undo the harm clergy do on Sunday undermining people's self-regard and thus inflicting more guilt upon them.

How would you respond?