



Becoming a Priest

**Canonical Discipline and Criteria
on Suitability for Candidates**

Szabolcs Anzelm Szuromi/
Nicolás Álvarez de las Asturias (eds.)

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Abbreviations

74T	<i>Diversorum Patrum sententie sive collectio in LXXIV titulos digesta</i>
AAS	<i>Acta Apostolicae Sedis</i> , Romae 1909ff.
AfkKR	<i>Archiv für katolisches Kirchenrecht</i> , (Innsbruck-), Mainz 1877ff.
Ans.	<i>Collectio canonum Anselmi Lucensis</i>
ASS	<i>Acta Sanctae Sedis</i> , Romae 1865-1908.
BAC	<i>Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos</i> , Madrid 1945ff.
BMCL	<i>Bulletin of Medieval Canon Law</i> , (Berkeley 1971-1991), Roma 1998ff.
BW	<i>Decretum Burchardi Wormatiensis</i>
CCCM	<i>Corpus Christianorum Continuatio Mediaevalis</i> , Turnholti 1967ff.
CCSL	<i>Corpus Christianorum. Series Latina</i> , Turnholti 1953ff.
CIC	<i>Codex iuris canonici</i> , 1983.
CIC (1917)	<i>Codex iuris canonici</i> , 1917.
COD	<i>Conciliorum Oecumenicorum Decreta</i> , ed. Alberigo, J. – Dossetti, J.A. – Joannou, P.-P. – Leonardi, C. – Prodi, P. Bologna 1973. ³
Cod.	<i>Codex Iustinianus</i>
CSEL	<i>Corpus scriptorum ecclesiasticorum Latinorum</i> , Vindobonae 1866ff.
C.Th.	<i>Codex Theodosianus</i>
D	<i>Collectio Dacheriana</i>
DDC	<i>Dictionnaire de droit canonique</i> , ed. R. Naz, I-VII, Paris 1924-1965.
DGDC	<i>Diccionario General de Derecho Canónico</i> , dir. J. Otaduy – A. Viana – J. Sedano, I-VII. Pamplona 2012.
DH	<i>Collectio Dionysio-Hadriana</i>
DHGE	<i>Dictionnaire d'histoire et de géographie ecclésiastiques</i> , ed. A. Baudrillart et al., Paris 1912ff.

Dig.	<i>Digesta</i>
DIP	<i>Dizionario degli Istituti di Perfezione</i> , a cura di G. Pelliccia – G. Rocca, Roma 1974ff.
DS	<i>Enchiridion symbolorum, definitionum et declarationum de rebus fidei et morum</i> , ed. H. Denzinger – A. Schönmetzer, Freiburg 1976. ³⁶
DSP	<i>Dictionnaire de Spiritualité. Ascétique et Mystique. Doctrine et Histoire</i> , sous la direction de M. Viller, Paris 1932ff.
DThC	<i>Dictionnaire de théologie catholique</i> , Paris 1903ff.
Friedberg I-II	<i>Corpus iuris canonici</i> , ed. A. Friedberg, Lipsiae 1879-1881 (Graz 1959).
HDIEO	<i>Histoire du droit et des institutions de l'Église en Occident</i> , sous la direction de G. Le Bras – J. Gaudemet, Paris 1955ff.
ID	<i>Panormia Ivonis Carnotensis</i>
IP	<i>Decretum Ivonis Carnotensis</i>
LMA	<i>Lexikon des Mittelalters</i> , München-Zürich 1977-1999.
LThK²	<i>Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche</i> , ed. J. Höfer – K. Rahner, Freiburg im Breisgau 1957-1968.
LThK³	<i>Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche</i> , ed. W. Kasper, Freiburg-Basel-Rom-Wien 1993-2001.
Mansi	<i>Sacrorum conciliorum nova et amplissima collectio</i> , ed. I.D. Mansi, I-XXXI, Florentinae-Venetii 1757-1798, new edition with continuation: L. Petit – J.M. Martin, I-LX, Paris-Leipzig-Arnheim 1899-1927.
MIC	<i>Monumenta iuris canonici</i> , Città del Vaticano 1965ff.
MGH	<i>Monumenta Germaniae Historica inde ab anno Christi 500 usque ad annum 1500</i> , Berolini-Hannoverae-Monaci 1826ff.
NCE	<i>New catholic enciclopedy</i> , New York 1967.
NCE²	<i>New catholic enciclopedy</i> , Washington D.C. 2004.
Nov.	<i>Novellae</i>
PG	<i>Patrologiae cursus completus. Series Graeca</i> , ed. I.-P. Migne, I-CCLXI, Lutetiae Parisiorum 1857-1866.
PL	<i>Patrologiae cursus completus. Series Latina</i> , ed. I.-P. Migne, I-CCXXI, Lutetiae Parisiorum 1844-1864.
RDC	<i>Revue de droit canonique</i> , Strasbourg 1951ff.
RHE	<i>Revue d'Histoire Ecclésiastique</i> , Louvain 1900ff.

RIDC	<i>Rivista internazionale di diritto comune</i> , Roma-Erice 1990ff.
SCh	<i>Sources chrétiennes</i> , Paris 1941ff.
Tr	<i>Tripartita Ivonis Carnotensis</i>
TRE	<i>Theologische Realenzyklopädie</i> , ed. G. Krause – G. Müller, Berlin-New York I-XXXVI. 1977-2004.
VG	<i>Vetus Gallica</i>
ZRG Kan. Abt.	<i>Zeitschrift der Savigny-Stiftung für Rechtsgeschichte. Kanonistische Abteilung</i> , Weimar 1911ff.

Introduction

Two new research centers were founded recently, with the aim to refine methods for researching and teaching history of the sources, institutions, and scholarship that form the basis of canon law. These centers intend to improve the ongoing research at various leading universities, and in particular at those research institutes which are most recognized in these particular fields, i.e., *Monumenta Germaniae Historica* (Munich); *Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies* (Toronto, Canada); *Stephan Kuttner Institute of Medieval Canon Law* (Munich, Germany – New Haven, CT, USA); *International Society for the Study of Medieval Canon Law* (Toronto, Canada) and its *International Congress of Medieval Canon Law*.

In 2013, after careful observation of the activities at other international research centers, and considering the Catholic universities' mission regarding the history of the discipline of the Church – based on the initiative of the President of the *Pázmány Péter Catholic University* (Budapest, Hungary) – a new *International Canon Law History Research Center* was established. The goals of this center are as follows: 1) analyzing the canonical historical heritage of the Church and defining central research topics to be investigated from different perspectives; 2) providing a modern interpretation of the original ecclesiastical texts; 3) presenting the religious attitude of the time when ecclesiastical daily routine was institutionalized; 4) expressing and interpreting as authentically as possible the goal of the Church while keeping in mind the primary intention of the ecclesiastical discipline: namely, the salvation of souls; 5) determining a proper methodology for detailed presentations, and demonstrating, through primary research of the sources and auxiliary materials, that theology and canon law are relevant disciplines that are not confined to the past; 6) interpreting those texts which emerged through the life and activity of the Church; 7) organizing annual meetings; 8) educating the next generation in methodology, paleography, and codicology, as well as drawing attention to the theologi-

cal meaning of the canonical texts; and finally, 9) conducting research projects, study days and academic training sessions to promote these goals.

In 2015, the *Studium Generale Marcianum – Facoltà di Diritto Canonico S. Pio X* arranged the first summer courses on canon law, as well as on theological or Roman law – including its sources, history, and interpretation (*Il diritto canonico nella storia: studio e ricerca sulle fonti*). As the two new initiatives shared common goals, it soon became clear that the two centers would work in close collaboration, particularly because they also share core commission members.

The present volume is the first extensive publication resulting from this co-operation. From October 3rd to 28th, 2018, the 15th Ordinary Synod, convoked by Pope Francis and held in the Vatican, was dedicated to contemporary questions about youth, faith, and the recognition of vocation. In August 2017, in Venice, an academic team of canon lawyers from the afore-mentioned two new research programs discussed the best way to explain – based on the original doctrinal and disciplinary sources – how the Church's authority determined whether an applicant was suitable for the priesthood – 'idoneità' – before admitting him for ordination. This meeting resulted in two volumes. The first was published in July 2018 in the series *Pontifical Commission for History: Atti e documenti 50*, edited by Nicolás Álvarez de las Asturias, Giuliano Brugnatto, and Simona Paolini, and is entitled *Discernimento vocazionale e idoneità al presbiterato nella tradizione canonica latina*, Città del Vaticano. It summarizes the development of canonical rules regarding suitability for the priesthood from the Apostolic Age up to the present.

The present, second volume focusses on the different sources and collections of the classical period of canon law (until 1140), and uses the original texts to illustrate the gradual development of criteria for receiving any degree of the Holy Order.

Following individual eras, beginning with the foundation of the Church by Christ up to the mid-12th century, a straight line can be constructed (a "chain" of canons and chapters) which preserves the original meaning, purpose, and necessary abilities of the sacred ministers. First, we will find the true and enduring vocation of the applicant, that is determined by the call of God, and reflects the spiritual relationship between the applicant and our Lord. This opening step allows us to understand how an applicant is educated in the doctrinal and disciplinary teachings of the Church, and how this teaching allows

him to mature in his mission to sanctify, teach and govern. The sources also reflect how a vocation and its high moral requirements – in combination with universal and particular law – guaranteed more and more assiduously the suitability of every degree of the Holy Order. It is clear that the legislators and composers of canonical collections had a very realistic picture of their own social environment, as well as the challenges their society was facing. Already Gratian's *Decretum* is in fact elaborate on the applicant, his formation, and the degrees of sacred ministry, – including the roles of bishops and priests, as representatives of the Church – how to recognize, select, and train those who have a vocation for the clerical state, and have been found suitable by the authority of the Church. Therefore, the *Decretum Gratiani* provides – even in subsequent centuries – the basis for identifying those who are “worthy” to receive the ministry of Christ.

The majority of the chapters in this volume are modified and enlarged – among others, by detailed technical footnotes – versions of chapters that appeared in the 2018 Italian edition (Libreria Editrice Vaticana). Here, we would like to express our gratitude and thanks to the authors, the translators – particularly to Gregory Pearson, OP, Sonja Rethy, and the Community of the St. Michael's Abbey of the Norbertine Fathers (Silverado, CA) – our colleagues at the *Universidad San Dámaso* (Madrid), the members of both research programs (Venice and Budapest), and to the KAP19-15004-1.8-KP project of the *Pázmány Péter Catholic University*. We hope that this volume contributes to a better understanding of the criteria and principles that were – and to a large extent still are – required by the Church of those called to the sacred ministry.

Budapest, August 30th, 2019

Suitability for Priesthood in the Early Canonical Discipline (An Overview based on the First Centuries)*

Introduction

“Most Reverend Father, the holy mother Church asks you to ordain these, our brothers, to the responsibility of priesthood.”

“Do you know that they are worthy?”

“After inquiring among the Christian people and based on the recommendations of those who are responsible, I testify that they are regarded worthy.”

“Relying on the help of the Lord God and our Savior Jesus Christ, we choose these, our brothers, for the Order of the Priesthood.”¹

We can read this conversation about the *ordinandi* in the current Latin Rite of Ordination of Priests. Within this liturgical text are recognizable the most important – and in the Church’s history continuously relevant – elements for receiving the Holy Service in the Church. The *ordinandi* are selected by the Church, considered before the faithful, found worthy, then recommended by those whose duty it is to deal with new vocations. The process expressively

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* This article was written in the *International Canon Law History Center* (Budapest), the *British Library* (London), and the *Bibliothèque Municipale de Toulouse* (Toulouse). It was presented at the *Gevorkian Theological Seminary* (Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin; March 27th, 2018), and was then combined with my analysis on ‘Idoneità per i santi servizi dal Nuovo Testamento alla fine del periodo romano,’ *Discernimento vocazionale e idoneità al presbiterato nella tradizione canonica latina*, eds. N. Álvarez de las Asturias – G. Brugnotta – S. Paolini (Pontificio Comitato di Scienze Storiche, Atti e documenti 50; Città del Vaticano 2018) 1-15.

1 *Rituale di ordinazione del vescovo, de presbiteri e dei diaconi* (Città del Vaticano 1979) 71.

indicates that it happens with reliance on the Lord God. Therefore, if we wish to describe the requirements for Holy Services in the first centuries, we must focus on the eligibility criteria that are found in the Bible.

Distinction Between the Priesthood of the Old Testament and the New Testament

In 1980, Albert Vanhoye produced a precise summary of the important features that distinguish the “ancient priests” (i.e., based on the teaching and meaning of the Old Testament) and the “new priests” (i.e., based on the divine authority based on the foundation of Jesus Christ as the first priest).² We can read already in Genesis (e.g., Gen. 8:20) about fathers of families who offered sacrifices to God, and about the duties of priests who did not have a family (e.g., Ex 19:22). Aaron is pointed out as High Priest (Ex 29:1-37). These functions were especially important during the Babylonian Captivity.³ The essential description of the Levitical priesthood and its characteristics is in Lev 21:1-24, particularly concerning the impediments to priesthood in Lev 21:17-23:

Speak to Aaron and tell him: None of your descendants, of whatever generation, who has any defect shall come forward to offer up the food of his God. Therefore, he who has any of the following defects may not come forward: he who is blind, or lame, or who has any disfigurement or malformation, or a crippled foot or hand, or who is hump-backed or weak or walleyed, or who is afflicted with eczema, ringworm or hernia. No descendant of Aaron the priest who has any such defect may draw near to offer up the oblations of the Lord; on account of his defect he may not draw near to offer up the food of his God. He may partake of the food of his God: of what is most sacred as well as of what is sacred. Only, he may not approach the veil nor go up to the altar on account of his defect; he shall not profane these things that are sacred to me, for it is I, the Lord, who make them sacred.

2 A. Vanhoye, *Sacerdotes antiguos, sacerdotes nuevo. Segun el Nuevo Testamento* (Salamanca 1992³) 35-54, 103-122.

3 Cf. R. De Vaux, *Le Istituzioni dell'Antico Testamento* (Torino 1977³) 105.