

OCAC Ministry Overview

Ordination, Incardination & Minor Orders

Part I — Understanding Ministry in OCAC

1. Vocation

The Old Catholic Apostolic Church (OCAC) teaches that every person has a vocation. For some, this calling leads to ordained ministry; for others, it is expressed through practical service in the world.

This document assists individuals in discerning whether their vocation aligns with ministry within OCAC.

2. Eligibility for Ministry

OCAC maintains an open, inclusive, and non-discriminatory approach to ministry.

Core Principles

- Open to all who feel called
 - No discrimination based on sexuality, marital status, gender identity, or disability
 - No celibacy requirement
 - No upper age limit
 - Theological diversity permitted within OCAC's liberal ethos and Canons
 - All clergy are voluntary and self-supporting (no stipends or expenses paid)
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3. Reasons for Seeking Ordination in OCAC

OCAC offers:

- A recognised ecclesial framework with standards, accountability, and pastoral oversight
 - A legally registered structure with collegiality and peer support
 - Protection from isolation and lack of accountability often found in independent ministry
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4. Incardination

For Those Already Ordained Elsewhere

Who May Apply

Men and women previously ordained in another Christian tradition.

Application Process

1. Application form
2. Copies of ordination and academic certificates
3. Criminal record check
4. Proof of departure from previous church (or dual-ministry documentation)
5. Photographs
6. Verification of documents and apostolic succession
7. Interview/discussion with a bishop
8. Submission of a ministry plan
9. Issuance of OCAC clergy credentials
10. Oath of Allegiance

Special Considerations

- Ministers from non-apostolic-succession traditions (e.g., Methodist, Baptist) are welcomed pastorally; priesthood may later be conferred sub-conditionally.
 - OCAC does not recognise “instant ordination” credentials from online organisations.
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5. Ordination

For Those Not Previously Ordained

Application Process

1. Application form
2. Evidence of academic or theological study (formal or informal)
3. Criminal record check
4. Photographs
5. Description of prior church involvement
6. Interview with senior clergy

7. Assessment of training needs (free training and distance-learning available)
8. Oath of Allegiance

Formation Structure

OCAC uses both minor orders and major (Holy) Orders. Candidates:

- Progress step-by-step, exercising real ministry at each stage
 - May remain permanently in a minor order if that is their vocation
 - Are ordained publicly by a bishop through laying on of hands
 - Receive official authorisation documents
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6. Lay Ministry

Those not called to ordained ministry may still serve meaningfully.

Lay ministers:

- Follow a similar application process
 - Are admitted to a minor order (beginning with Cleric)
 - Exercise flexible, authorised ministry according to their gifts and calling
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Part II — Minor Orders

Duties, Expectations & Ministry

1. Overview of Minor Orders

OCAC recognises the following minor orders:

- Cleric
- Doorkeeper
- Reader (distinct from lay reader)
- Exorcist (actual exorcisms reserved to priests)
- Acolyte
- Sub-deacon (highest minor order; transitional before major orders)

All minor orders share equal dignity; higher grades reflect greater experience and responsibility.

2. General Expectations

Those in minor orders are expected to:

- Maintain a regular prayer life
 - Obey Christ, OCAC Canon Law, their mentor, and their Ordinary
 - Engage in evangelism
 - Pursue ongoing study and spiritual growth
 - Wear appropriate vestments (cassock & surplice, or alb & cincture)
 - Avoid clerical collars until sub-deacon (unless specially permitted)
 - Follow church codes of conduct
 - Maintain honesty, diligence, and personal integrity
 - Keep mentors informed of issues affecting ministry
 - Communicate regularly with their mentor or Ordinary
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3. Ministries Permitted in Minor Orders

A. Worship & Prayer

- Lead prayer meetings and vigils
- Lead Morning Prayer (Prime/Matins)
- Lead Evening Prayer (Compline; sub-deacons may lead Vespers)
- Lead healing services (prayer only; no oils)

B. Sacramental & Liturgical Roles

- Baptise in emergencies (if no deacon or priest is available)
- Serve at the altar
- Administer the reserved sacrament to the sick (with permission)
- Read the Epistle at Mass (highest minor order present reads)

C. Pastoral & Community Ministry

- Conduct school assemblies
- Undertake pastoral visits (referring complex cases)
- Represent OCAC at civic events
- Conduct funerals for friends/relatives (with permission)

- Lead dispersal of ashes
- Lead remembrance or memorial services

D. Teaching & Preaching

- Teach Bible classes
- Lead Sunday School or youth groups
- Preach when invited (OCAC or other churches)
- Lead intercessions

E. Other Services

- Lead musical or ceremonial events (concerts, carol services, naming ceremonies, blessing of animals, etc.)
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4. Status in the Church

- Minor clerics are full ministers of Christ and of OCAC.
 - Their ministry is real, valued, and supported.
 - Mentors and Ordinaries guide their development and discernment.
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5. Vestments

Minor Clerics May Wear

- Cassock (black, brown, or dark colour) with small wooden cross or badge
- Surplice
- Alb & cincture
- Geneva gown
- Habit of their religious order (if applicable)

Sub-deacons May Additionally Wear

- Amice
 - Maniple
 - Tunicle
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6. Titles

- No formal title is used until the sub-diaconate, when “Reverend” may be assumed.
 - Members of religious orders continue to use Brother/Sister.
 - “(Minor Orders)” may be added after one’s name in writing.
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