

## VATICAN DOCUMENT

### Statement by bishop on new norms

This is a statement by Bishop Howard J. Hubbard regarding the new Vatican instruction on ordination:

The Diocese of Albany already has in place norms and criteria which address the important issues raised and meet the requirements stated in the Vatican instruction on the admission of homosexual candidates to the seminary and priesthood.

Our admission process includes an intense period of vocational discernment, extensive psychological testing, recommendations from people familiar with the individual, federal and state background checks, and interviews with the candidate by clergy and lay members of our Priesthood Formation Board.

Our seminary formation program seeks to ensure that candidates have the affective maturity to exercise the responsibilities of the priestly office, and the intellectual, spiritual, human and pastoral skills required for contemporary ministry.

Issues of sexual orientation and sexual history are addressed directly as part of the process of admission and on-going formation, and only those individuals who have integrated their sexual identity with all aspects of their personality and who have demonstrated a clear ability to live a celibate life are called to ordained ministry.

All prospective candidates for the priesthood are expected to be prepared intellectually, emotionally and spiritually to lead a celibate life, and to have demonstrated an ability to fulfill this commitment. Currently, we require a five-year period of celibate living prior to diaconal ordination (two more than the Instruction requires). Candidates are also expected to understand the moral, doctrinal and social teachings of the Church, and to communicate these faithfully and effectively.

In the past and currently, priests with a homosexual orientation have exercised their priestly ministry in a chaste, faithful, loving and pastorally effective manner. The Diocese of Albany will continue to assess each candidate on his ability to measure up to all the expectations of an affectively mature person and public minister of the Church.

(11/24/05)