

January 2, 2007

Dear friend in Christ,

The Society for the Increase of the Ministry is in its 150th year of providing financial and pastoral support for Episcopal seminarians. Since 1857 we have provided nearly \$7 million in scholarship aid to more than 4,800 seminarians. It is our fervent hope that at the end of this application process, we can be helpful to you as you continue your education and training for ordained leadership in ministry in the Episcopal Church.

We would ask you to help us give your application all the attention and care it deserves by taking great care in completing this application form. To be fair to all applicants, submissions lacking requested information, letters of reference, essays or résumés will not be considered. Please understand that the time line for acting on our applications does not provide time for late receipt of material. Neither will we have the time or the personnel to solicit missing components of your application. To expedite the process, we encourage you to use the attached check list to verify that your submission is complete.

Basic Criteria

1. Grants are made to full-time students (three-year ordination track) for the MDiv. degree who are postulants and candidates for holy orders in the Episcopal Church in the United States of America.
2. Applicants must demonstrate financial need. The applicant's bishop or ecclesiastical authority and the financial aid officer of the applicant's seminary must attest to this need.
3. The minimum grant is \$1,500. Grants generally do not exceed \$2,500.
4. A scholarship recipient whose canonical status changes, or who withdraws from seminary, or whose financial circumstances change significantly, or who decides to take an intern year or a leave of absence, after a grant has been made, must notify the SIM office promptly, in writing, to determine his/her continuing support.
5. Recipients of SIM scholarships must re-apply if they are Juniors or Middlers.
6. First time applicants who will be Middlers or Seniors will be given preference over incoming Juniors.
7. The Society's grants are made without regard to race, gender, age, nationality, or marital status of the applicant.

About your personal and financial information: The information you provide on the form is critical data for SIM as we make our scholarship decisions. Beyond the application process, while respecting every student's confidentiality, this data is also used by the Society to identify trends and emerging issues facing seminarians and seminaries. This information helps us to be better advocates for you, all seminarians and the enterprise of theological education in the church.

About your essay: The ability to communicate effectively both orally and in writing is absolutely essential to the formation of priests. Since it is impossible for SIM to conduct an interview with each postulant, we look to the essay both to demonstrate each applicant's competence in communication and to better understand them as future ordained leaders of the church. The essay should show a command of language (spelling, punctuation, grammar, and sentence structure). As to content, we seek evidence of the transforming power of God's Holy Spirit at work in the applicant's life. Such transformational power may be experienced in and through the postulant and shown forth to others *or* as received from others. It may be the account of an experience in which others are helped to find the love and presence of Christ amidst the challenging ambiguities of life.

We ask that you make the effort to write something new in response to the above description. Recycled sermons, essays prepared as a part of your diocesan discernment processes, CPE verbatims or the like will be inadequate to the task. Neither are we seeking statements about “why I feel called to be a priest,” or other issues of vocational discernment. These are the province of rectors, parish discernment committees, commissions on ministry and bishops. Our interest is in what has happened in the crucible of life that has transformed your life. Please remember that an essay is **required each time** you make application to SIM.

Please number the pages of your essay and place your name at the top of each page. Please do not exceed 1,000 words.

About your résumé: No matter what your age, your résumé will help us understand you, your journey, your talents and experience. Please do not forget to include it. The résumé is only required when applying for the first time (**Form A**), not with repeat applications (**Form B**).

About your letters of reference: Persons applying to us for the first time must attach to our application (**Form A**) four letters of reference, viz., one from the applicant’s bishop, one from the applicant’s rector, and two from lay persons from one’s sponsoring congregation. Each of the four letters should speak to the applicant’s (1) financial need, (2) character, (3) church involvement and (4) vocation to the ordained ministry in the Episcopal Church. Persons applying for a second grant (**Form B**) are not required to submit further references.

Additionally:

- As **our grants are limited to postulants and candidates attending one of the eleven accredited Episcopal seminaries on a full-time basis**, the bishop’s letter must indicate clearly that the applicant is a postulant or candidate for holy orders as of the date of application.
- Unless there is a compelling reason (clearly stated), the two lay persons should be members of the applicant’s congregation.
- Lay persons submitting letters of recommendation must be persons from outside the seminary community and not a member of the applicant’s household, or family.
- Applications lacking one or more of these letters will not be considered.
- Please use a **black pen** and **write clearly**.

Finally, scholarship applications must be submitted **through the office of financial aid** at your seminary and must bear the signature of your financial aid officer or dean. Applications are due in the financial aid office of your seminary by March 1, 2007. In turn, all applications are due to be received from your seminary in our office by March 15, 2007. It is our hope that you will know of our decision by May 1st.

The clearer the copy you send us, the more expeditiously we can process your application.

Grateful for your patience and looking forward to receiving your application, I remain

Yours faithfully,

The Rev. Canon Robert G. Carroon
Director of the Scholarship Program

Enclosures

