

REFORMED ETHIOPIAN CATHOLIC CHURCH OF SOUTHERN AFRICA

Incardinations

The Reformed Ethiopian Catholic Church of Southern Africa (RECCSA) welcomes interest and invites applications from mature men interested in discerning a vocation to the permanent diaconate or priesthood.

The RECCSA does not offer stipendiary positions, all our clergy are “non-stipendiary” meaning that they must be financially self-sufficient and are either (self) employed, retired or members of religious institutes (shared economy), unless Parishes are able to support their priest themselves. Expenses are sometimes covered by congregations, but applicants should be aware that no accommodation or salary will be provided by the Church to them.

Clergy are required to be married are welcome to apply. All clergy are required to be chaste i.e. faithful to their partner, or modest in the development of their personal relationships.

Formation: Eligibility

The following criteria are required in support of any application for Formation/ Incardination:

You must be Christian...

First and foremost, we expect our clergy (like the Apostles) to be followers of Jesus. Non-Christians, no matter how learned or eloquent, need not apply. We expect our clergy not only to believe in Jesus as the living Son of God, but also to have acted upon that belief by giving their lives to Christ.

That means a conscious effort to walk in the footsteps of Jesus, adopting his attitudes and (inasmuch as possible) following his example. All of us fall into sin occasionally, but those who are habitual, unrepentant, public sinners are not suited for ordination. Likewise we will not ordain those who are blatantly promiscuous, regardless of their sexual orientation. Similarly, those who are dishonest will not be accepted. There have been too many charlatans in too many churches parading as people of the cloth. To be ordained is

to be set apart to serve. This means following the example of Jesus as he washed the feet of the disciples at the last supper. It means at least trying to follow him in all things.

This in turn requires that one be as familiar as possible with the One we are to emulate. This requires familiarity with the Scriptures, especially the Gospels. Applicants should have gone beyond just reading the Gospels to a deep and prayerful study of them, absorbing the words of Christ and reflecting on their application to our lives and the lives of those to whom we minister. Whether this was done in a seminary setting, in weekly Bible study sessions, or in private is immaterial (although interaction with others studying the same passages can be extremely valuable). What's important is that our clergy have an insight into the mind of God through familiarity with the words and actions of Jesus.

You must be a Catholic...

Secondly, since we are an Independent Catholic Church, applicants should be "catholic" Christians. That means that in addition to the common Christian beliefs contained in (for example) the Nicene Creed, applicants should have an appreciation for the Apostolic Succession, should believe that the seven sacraments are a means used by God to impart grace, and should believe in the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist. (Note that this does NOT require acceptance of the legalistic formulations in the relatively recent Roman Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation.) Since one of the primary duties of Catholic clergy is the administration of the sacraments, there's no sense becoming a Catholic priest if one does not believe that sacraments can really "do" anything. Likewise, why become a priest if one believes that it doesn't make any difference and that it doesn't empower one to make Christ present for his people at the Mass? Likewise, it would be hypocritical to seek the sacrament of Holy Orders if one believes that this act cannot confer grace nor empower or change one.

You must be called...

The third requirement is that this Catholic Christian person has received and accepted a call to the ordained ministry. There are many wonderful ways for Catholic Christians to serve God's people in "un-ordained ministry." This includes teaching, volunteering at soup kitchens, counselling, even preaching. While opportunities for preaching are greatly expanded by ordination, they exist for others as well. A desire to preach, by itself, should not be considered a good reason for ordination beyond the Diaconate. The office of deacon is valued highly in the Church. It predates the Christian priesthood and should in no way be considered subordinate or inferior. It is different. Those who feel they are being called to

ministry must at some point decide if they are being called to ministry as a priest, a deacon, or a layperson. Just because some churches require you to be a priest in order to do almost anything in the church doesn't mean we have to follow that same practice ... and we don't. Being a counsellor, for example, requires lots of education, training, and experience. But it doesn't require Holy Orders.

The call to ordained ministry as a Sacred Minister is essentially a call to administer the sacraments and to evangelize. "Go therefore and make disciples of those in all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." Unless one has a desire to celebrate Mass for God's people, he should not seek the priesthood.

You must be educated...

The fourth requirement is education. In order to fulfil their duties as confessors, counsellors, and homilists, members of the clergy must be educated.

You must be trained...

The fifth requirement is sufficient training so that the candidate is equipped to properly, reverently, and inspirationally celebrate Mass, perform weddings and funerals, deliver outstanding homilies, and administer the sacraments. The Formation Course is designed to give both theological and liturgical training and to fully equip the candidate for Catholic ordination. No man will be ordained who has not completed academic Formation sufficient for the Formation Faculty and Examining Chaplains to recommend him to the Bishop for Ordination. Every candidate is expected to complete the programme of study set him by the Formation Faculty. Though a small denomination with limited resources, we intend all our Sacred Ministers to be competent and professional Clerics, fully conversant in theology and philosophy of religion, with sufficient knowledge of Canon Law and absolutely confident in Sacramental intention and liturgy as well as those disciplines necessary for effective pastoral ministry.

Incardination

Incardination is the process by which a Cleric or Sacred Minister becomes Canonically part of a Catholic Church or jurisdiction. Every Catholic cleric belongs to a particular church; this has been the case for centuries since the earliest Church Councils stipulated that every ordained man should belong to a particular church community and a particular Bishop. In every Catholic jurisdiction in the world, East or West, Sacred Ministers be they deacon, priest or bishop belong to a Church in this way.

In the RECCSA Ordination means “belonging to” and “obedience” i.e. the cleric is recognised as a member of the Church and is entitled to the privileges and rights that pertain to his status in Canon Law and at the same time is beholden to certain responsibilities and ultimately subject to his ecclesiastical superior, the Bishop. Catholic tradition and order dictates that a cleric and particularly a Sacred Minister can only act sacramentally on behalf of a Bishop, incardination provides this cover.

Why incardinate with The Reformed Ethiopian Catholic Church of Southern Africa (RECCSA)?

There are several reasons why a cleric may wish to incardinate with RECCSA. Through no fault of their own some clerics find in the development of their spiritual life and vocation that they no longer feel called to minister within the original church of their ordination. The RECCSA does not discriminate against clergy who left a celibate ministry to become married or who no longer feel called to a celibate expression of commitment; who no longer feels able in conscience to continue their ministry in the church of their ordination or who for whatever reason resigned their original ministry and wish to become active again.

The process of incardination in the RECCSA involves a period of discernment and communication in the first instance between the inquiring cleric and the nominated liaison for the Church. During this time, the candidate is invited to supply as much information as possible as to their reasons for seeking incardination, the circumstances of their leaving the church of their ordination and the liaising representative answers questions about ministry within RECCSA. All discussions at this stage are kept confidential. If after this initial period both parties feel that pursuing incardination would be the best step forward, on recommendation of the liaising representative an Application Form will be sent to the candidate from the Registry and the Review Committee who will oversee the Incardination Process.

Throughout the Incardination Process candidates will be invited to provide as much information as possible regarding their previous ministry, the circumstances of their leaving, their reasons for seeking incardination within RECCSA and what they feel they can contribute to the mission and ministry of the Church. A cleric will not be incardinated who does not have some plan of ministry for the future unless he is sufficiently prohibited from exercising a ministry through infirmity or advanced age.

Various documents will be required from clergy wishing to incardinate supporting their Application including Certificates of Ordination, Confirmation and Baptism as too any documents providing proof of professional training and academic qualifications. As well evidence of excardination or rescript from a candidate's previous jurisdiction or equivalent documents are desirable. In certain circumstances where it is not always possible or difficult to provide documentary evidence (e.g. the church of baptism no longer exists, documents/records destroyed or mislaid etc.), some alternatives of proof are accepted.

References too are required from people who have known personally, worked with or taught the candidate both in secular and church life and if relevant a letter of support for their application from the candidate's spouse. The RECCSA believes that incardination is an holistic process seeking to know the "whole person" and candidates are encouraged to be open about their life and experiences – the good and the bad. The RECCSA does not discriminate nor re-judge candidates for passed mistakes neither does it seek to inflict renewed condemnation however, severe legal sanctions whether secular or ecclesiastical will be taken into consideration sensitively.

The RECCSA hopes that whatever the outcome of an Application, the process will have been as painless and as spiritually rewarding for the candidate as possible.

The RECCSA is an independent jurisdiction possessed of sacramental validity through an unquestionable, authentic and recognised Apostolic Lineage.

- It is a recognised Christian denomination and enjoys membership and affiliation with the International Catholic Confederation (ICC) and other Christian bodies.
- It has fraternal relationships with other recognised independent churches of the Catholic Tradition both nationally and internationally and by Eastern and Western rite churches and has a reputation for stability and propriety..
- It is a Canonical jurisdiction where the rights and responsibilities of clerics and laity are provided and protected and it conducts its internal affairs appropriately, justly and charitably.
- It is a personable church meaning that due to its size its clergy and people are known to each other and know and are known by their Bishop(s) a real community of Christian fellowship and a living school of Christian discipleship.

Diaconate

Deacons in the Early Church were the assistants to the Bishop not just liturgically but assisting in the organisation and pastoral care of the Church Community to which they belonged. As the Order of Presbyter developed and the distinction between Priest and Bishop became clear, the Deacons remained the first vocation in service of the Church.

PERMANENT: Following the Apostolic example of the Early Church and historical and current developments in the exercise of the Sacred Ministry, The RECCSA offers Ordination to people desirous to serve the Church permanently in the Clerical State as Deacons. The Church recognises that not all people called to ministry are called to be Priests and recognises that over the centuries the Church as a whole has failed to give the respect and honour due to this Order as it was understood and practised in the Early Church.

Permanent Deacons are fully “Clerics” of the Church, which is they are Canonically bound in obedience to their Bishop and to the recitation of the Divine Office. They are “officers” of the Church and as such may hold positions of responsibility either locally within a Parish or generally within the Diocese.

TRANSITIONAL: Deacons ordained transitionally prior to Priestly Ordination. The RECCSA sees no distinction between the rights and duties of Transitional and Permanent Deacons except the desire of the former to receive Priestly Orders.

Transitional Deacons are expected to assist locally in the Parish to which they belong or are put to serve until their Priestly Ordination and may hold positions of authority locally in such circumstances. It is unusual for Transitional Deacons to hold positions with Diocesan responsibility prior to their Priestly Ordination

Priesthood

A Priest stands at the Altar on behalf of the Bishop – he is a Deacon still and yet also permitted, authorised and ordained to *share in the priesthood* of his Bishop. A man cannot become a Priest without a Bishop and he cannot exercise a Priestly ministry without belonging to a Bishop.

The vocation of a Priest is to serve but also to lead; he shares particularly in the Apostolic authority of the Bishop to teach, to forgive, to bless and to offer. The Priest is both Deacon –

server and Presbyter – *priest*; it is a dual vocation to serve the Bishop and to *share with* the Bishop in leading the people.

Too often people mistake or misunderstand the nature and vocation of Priesthood. It is not, as some people believe, to be “in charge”; a Priest’s authority *comes from* his Bishop, by *sharing* in the Bishop’s authority he has authority, but *not his own authority* only his Bishop’s.

A Priest is bound Canonically i.e. by the Church’s Law, in *obedience to* his Bishop; he cannot do anything without the Bishop’s permission as it is the *sharing in* his Bishop’s ministry that he is able to celebrate the Sacraments and most especially the Mass.

In The Reformed Ethiopian Catholic Church of Southern Africa this understanding of Priesthood (as explained above) forms the basis upon which we discern vocations to Priesthood. The length of time for discernment and seminary study reflects the ongoing and careful discernment of the Church and the Bishop as to the suitability of the candidate and his understanding of priesthood. Commitment and dedication to The RECCSA, to the Church and primarily the Bishop, is what will decide whether a candidate is Ordained or not to the Priesthood.

For request Ordination and Incardination please complete the [RECCSA Ordination and Incardination Application](#) and return the form to:

The Most Reverend Banele Christopher Mente, Bishop of The Reformed Ethiopian Catholic Church of Southern Africa (RECCSA), 54 Nokwe Street, Steve Tshwete Village, Motherwell, Port Elizabeth, Eastern Cape Province, South Africa 6211 or by email: bcmente10@gmail.com.

The Reformed Ethiopian Catholic Church of Southern Africa [RECCSA]

Application for Ordination and Incardination

Please complete all sections, answering all questions as honestly and thoroughly as possible. All information provided will be kept confidential, and made available only to Church Officials in considering your application. Please write or print clearly.

Part I - About you

First Name: _____ Middle Name: _____ Last Name: _____

Date of Birth: _____ Place of Birth: _____ Gender: _____

Marital Status: _____ Nationality: _____

Part II – Contact Details

Address1: _____ Home Tel: _____

Address 2: _____ Work Tel: _____

City: _____ Mobile Tel: _____

Country/State: _____

Zip/Postcode: _____

Personal Email: _____ Secondary Email: _____

Part III – Other Details

Have you the support of your partner (if applicable)? Yes/No _____

Describe your personal relationship as a partner with or without children giving details:

Have you ever been accused of, charged with, convicted of, or connected with any type of abuse, including Child Abuse, Sexual Abuse, Predatory Crimes, Emotional Abuse, Domestic Violence etc.? Yes/No _____

If “Yes” please explain giving the circumstances, dates, accusations, convictions, & penalties etc.

Excluding minor traffic violations, have you ever been charged with and / or convicted of any Criminal offence, Felony or Misdemeanor (including suspension or withdrawal of Driving Licence)? Yes/No

If “Yes” please provide a brief explanation concerning the circumstances, dates, charges, convictions, penalties:

Have you ever used, abused, or been addicted to illegal drugs or narcotics; abused over the-counter or prescribed drugs or medication; or been treated for drug or alcohol abuse and dependency? Yes/No

If “Yes” please provide a brief explanation, including dates, usage, and treatment received if any:

Part IV – Education and Qualifications

Name of Secondary or High School: _____ Nation: _____

Dates attended: _____ Did you Graduate? Yes/No _____

Certificates awarded or A Levels:

Dates attended: _____ Did you Graduate? Yes/No _____

Major: _____ Degree awarded: _____

Name of College: _____ Nation: _____

Dates attended: _____ Did you Graduate? Yes/No _____

Major: _____ Degree awarded: _____

Name of Seminary: _____ Nation: _____

Dates attended: _____ Did you Graduate? Yes/No _____

Major: _____ Degree awarded: _____

Please provide additional information concerning your formal and informal educational achievements, as well as your experience, suitability, and qualification for ministry:

Have you been Baptized? Yes/No _____ Date: _____

Have you been Confirmed? Yes/No _____ Date: _____

Part V – About your Faith & Practice

Do you consider yourself to be a “catholic” Christian? Yes/No _____

If “No” please explain:

Describe your faith and beliefs briefly:

Do you currently have a church connection (local parish or other church)? Yes/No _____

If “Yes” name and location of the local church:

If “No” please explain:

If you are ordained and seeking incardination, are you currently under the canonical authority or care of a church?
Yes/No _____

Please briefly state the reason(s) you wish to leave, or have already left your present jurisdiction:

Please list ALL official church positions you have held. Include denomination, location and dates.

Please give names of your superiors or ordaining bishop if applicable:

Part VI – Your Employment and Experience

Are you currently employed? Yes/No _____

If “No” please explain:

Please list ALL employment and/or paid church positions you have held during the past 10 years, beginning with current or most recent.

Please list professional skills you feel are of benefit to your ministry, including use of technology, languages spoken, professional certifications, licenses, or secular credentials etc.

Have you ever served with, or are you currently a member of the Armed or Civil Forces? Yes/No _____

If “Yes” Where Please list all military or civil awards and decorations:

Part VII – Holy Orders

Are you applying for: ☐ Ordination ☐ Incardination
 ☐ Diaconate ☐ Priesthood

Briefly explain your interest in joining the church and in which way you feel called to ministry.

- If accepted as a candidate for Holy Orders, or if you are received into RECCSA through incardination, do you hereby solemnly affirm that you will comply with and conform to the canons and codes of conduct? If Yes tick here ☐
- Do you hereby solemnly affirm that you will submit to the guidance, leadership and authority of your Bishop Ordinary and the College of Bishops? If Yes tick here ☐
- Do you hereby solemnly affirm that you will not engage in any activity that is or could be interpreted as, schismatic, scandalous, divisive, abusive, discriminatory, or disrespectful? If Yes tick here ☐
- Do you hereby solemnly affirm that you will respect the opinions and practices of other Christians, parishes, and clergy even though you may not personally agree; and that you will strive for unity, and respect the dignity of all God’s People? If Yes tick here ☐
- Do you understand that the RECCSA does not provide stipend, recompense or remuneration for its clergy and others, nor does it financially support such missions or churches; and that you will either need to hold secular employment, or live by the grace and generosity of your mission, church, or program? If Yes tick here ☐

All RECCSA clergy must have an active expression of ministry. Please describe, in as much detail as possible, the specific ministry you hope to exercise. Include information on how the church, mission, or serving will be organized; how it will be funded; what type of programs you hope for; and how you (and your family if applicable) will be supported and provided for as you exercise ministry.

VIII- Your Final Statement of Application

I understand and approve that the above information which I have supplied about myself will be used by RECCSA officials in determining the appropriateness of my future involvement as a candidate for ordination or incardination. I will supply additional information as requested in support of my statements and documentation. I make this application and request for RECCSA Holy Orders freely. I further understand and accept that application decisions are made by the Bishops of the RECCSA, and that the decision is final, without recourse or appeal.

I attest before God that the above information and all supportive information and documentation regarding my involvement in ministry which I have supplied is true and accurate to the best of my knowledge and ability. I promise to work closely with my brothers and sisters in the ministry and laity of RECCSA and all associated churches for the good of the church and the glory of God and our Lord Jesus Christ. I promise reverence and respect to the current and future bishops of this church. I understand that I am not an employee of the RECCSA and if accepted, that the church will grant faculties for my ministry, but that I am responsible to the congregation, local membership, Parish Council or Board of Directors of my ministry.

Finally, I promise with the help of God to fulfill my clerical rights, responsibilities and obligations as provided in the canons. By signing this application below, I herewith authorize the Bishops and appropriate officials of the RECCSA to investigate my background in any legal manner that they consider appropriate and to use any personal photographs of myself to advertise, or promote, or publicize, any materials, web sites, blogs, etc., produced by the Reformed Ethiopian Catholic Church of Southern Africa or associated Churches.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Part IX – Submitting Application

A. Please send this signed application form, along with copies of diplomas, transcripts, ordination certificates, and any other supporting documents to:

The Most Reverend Banele Christopher Mente

Diocesan Bishop

Reformed Ethiopian Catholic Church of Southern Africa

54 Nokwe Street, Steve Tshwete Village, Motherwell, Port Elizabeth, Eastern Cape Province, South Africa 6211

or by email: **bcmente10@gmail.com**