

# PERMANENT DIACONATE FORMATION PROGRAM



*Diocese of Scranton*



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# PERMANENT DIACONATE FORMATION PROGRAM

## *Diocese of Scranton*

The diaconate had its origins in the time of the apostles and flourished during the first four centuries of the Church's history. For various reasons the diaconate then went into decline and in the Western Church became little more than a step on the way to the priesthood. It was the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) that reestablished the Order of Deacon as "a proper and permanent rank of the hierarchy" (LG 29).

With the permission of the Holy See the permanent diaconate was restored in this country in 1968. Today some 18,000 deacons are serving in U.S. dioceses. In June 1988, Bishop James C. Timlin, D.D., established an Office for the Permanent Diaconate in the Diocese of Scranton at St. Pius X Seminary, Dalton. At that time, he appointed Monsignor David Bohr, S.T.D. as its first Director. On November 27, 1993, the first class of twenty-four permanent deacons was ordained. Another seventeen were ordained in 1999 and fifteen in 2004. In 2010, the Most Reverend Joseph C. Bambera, D.D., J.C.L., was ordained and installed as the tenth bishop of the Diocese of Scranton. His analysis of diocesan chancery operations led to the reorganization of several diocesan offices and in July 2011, Bishop Bambera appointed Monsignor Bohr to once again lead this important ministry as Secretary for Clergy Formation, which includes directing the Permanent Diaconate Formation Program. In November 2011, seven deacons were ordained. Sixty deacons now actively serve our diocese, some having transferred from other dioceses.

In November 1995, Pope John Paul II met with the members of the Congregation of the Clergy and their consultants and presented an address, *The Permanent Deacon's Ordination*. He focused his comments on the identity, mission, and ministry of the deacon in the Church "in view of the new evangelization on the threshold of the third millennium."<sup>(1)</sup> The Congregation for the Clergy and the Congregation for Education held *plenary assemblies* to study the diaconate. In turn, they subsequently published a *Directory for the Ministry and Life of Permanent Deacons* and *Basic Norms for the Formation of Permanent Deacons*. Both these documents were promulgated as a joint text by Pope John Paul II on February 22, 1998. Here in the U.S., the National Conference of Catholic Bishops in 2005 promulgated a new *National Directory for the Formation, Ministry and Life of Permanent Deacons in the United States*, which is based on the Vatican guidelines.

### ***What the Permanent Diaconate is NOT***

The deacon is not a "mini-priest". Nor is he a stand-in for the priest, nor an available approximation thereof in a time of a shortage of vocations to the ordained priesthood. The deacon is not an all-purpose assistant to the pastor or priests, although he will render much assistance in the performance of duties or functions which are common to both priests and deacons. The deacon is not to be distinguished mainly by what he cannot do (celebrate Mass, hear Confession, anoint the sick, etc.) nor by his status as a married man (with marriage seen almost as the reason disqualifying him from more vital roles). He is not a "lay deacon" either. A layperson is someone who is not ordained. A permanent deacon, even if he is married and has twelve children and forty-five grandchildren, is no longer a layperson. He is in Sacred Orders. He is a member of the clergy as a result of the permanent, sacramental character received on the day of his ordination.

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1 Pope John Paul II, *The Permanent Deacon's Ordination*, An Address to the *Plenarium* of the Congregation for the Clergy (November 30, 1995).

## ***The Deacon within the Renewed Understanding of "Church"***

The Second Vatican Council gave us a renewed "ecclesiology," that is, a more vibrant way of viewing the Church based upon a rediscovery of our ancient traditions, as found in Sacred Scripture and the writings of the Fathers of the Church. Vatican II spoke of the Church as "mystery," "sacrament," "communion," and "mission" (2): "The Church is in Christ like a sacrament or as a sign and instrument both of a very closely knit union with God and the unity of the whole human race" (LG 1). Through faith and baptism, each and every one of us becomes a member of the Body of Christ and shares in the continuation of Jesus' mission and ministry. Christ himself, in and through his Church, actually continues to give voice to his saving work and mission. The Church exists to evangelize, to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ in word and deed. The Church is the seed and herald of the kingdom of God; it is that dynamic principle which makes visible what God is doing in and for the world.

The Council's Decree on the Lay Apostolate tells us that "the laity, too, share in the priestly, prophetic and royal office of Christ; and, therefore, have their own role to play in the mission of the whole People of God in the Church and in the world" (AA2). Yet, over and above the baptismal vocation to holiness and ministry given to each of us, the Church has a need to define designated ministries as part of its official ministry. To this end, the Church "ordains" certain persons or groups from among the baptized to offer the service of leadership and sacramental nourishment, thereby, empowering the whole community of the faithful to realize its mission in the world.

Vatican II points out, first of all, that "The order of Bishop is the successor to the College of the Apostles in teaching authority and pastoral rule" (CD 4). Through their union with each other and the successor of Peter, the College of Bishops is called to ensure the worldwide unity of the Church, and they jointly bear responsibility for its fidelity to the mission and teaching of Jesus. The Bishop, then, is both the focal point of the fullness of the ordained priesthood and the head of the College of Presbyters. Together, the Bishop and his priests constitute the College of Ministers who bring the ordained priestly ministry of Christ to his people. Within a diocese, priests assist the Bishop as his representatives in and to the local communities of faith. They do so through the ministry of Word and sacrament and through their leadership role in guiding the communities in fidelity and charity.

"In communion with the Bishop and priests, deacons are ordained for a distinct ministry, which is indicated by their name: they are ordained, says the ancient tradition (repeated at Vatican II), for *service*."(3) They are thus ordained, Vatican II tells us, "not unto the priesthood, but unto a ministry of service".... they serve the People of God in the ministry of the liturgy, of the word, and of charity" (LG29). The permanent diaconate is a sacramental sign of Jesus Christ who came among us "as one who serves the needs of all". As Pope John Paul II told the Permanent Deacons, whom he addressed in Detroit: "the service of the deacon is the Church's service sacramentalized ... By your ordination you are configured to Christ in his servant role. You are also meant to be living signs of the servanthood of his church."

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2 Extraordinary Synod of Bishops, Final Report, *Ecclesia Sub Verbo Dei Mysteria Christi Celebrans Pro Salute Mundi* (December 7, 1995).

3 National Conference of Catholic Bishops, Permanent Deacons in the United States: Guidelines on Their Formation and Ministry (1984 Revised), no. 24.

## ***The Diaconate: A Ministry of Servant Leadership***

In his Pastoral Letter, *Wounded and Loved, Regathering the Scattered*, Bishop Bambera shares his vision and hope for the local church in Scranton. Through this work, he reminds us that by our Baptism each of us is called to servant leadership, which helps us to transform our hurting world through compassion, solidarity, justice and love. Service to God's redemptive plan and taking an active part in society belongs to the baptismal mission of every Christian; however the permanent deacon has a special witness to give.

In explaining this special witness and in putting the role of the deacon within the Church into perspective, Bishop Bambera reflected upon the words of the Second Vatican Council and explained: "Strengthened by sacramental grace, you are called 'to serve' the People of God, in the diakonia of liturgy, word and charity, in communion with the Bishop and his presbyterate. As such, you are ordained to be a sign and instrument of Christ, who came 'not to be served but to serve,' and to give his life for the sake of the many. Your service to the People of God is three fold: service to the Word of God – service at the altar of the Lord – and service to the poor."

To this end, the deacon is a representative symbol of the inner connections of the three great areas of the Church's life: Word, sacrament, and service.

- a) ***The Ministry of Charity and Justice*** -- "From its beginnings, and particularly during the first centuries, the diaconate has been primarily a ministry of love and justice ... Early descriptions of the duties of deacons place them among widows and orphans, with the sick and at the graves of the dead, and serving immigrants and exiles .... The 1981 survey found deacons (in the United States) serving abused children, the aged, battered women, the bereaved, the blind, the deaf, the divorced, drug addicts, the dying, the handicapped, the homeless, the ill, prisoners, refugees, the rural poor, street people, victims of racial discrimination, etc. Deacons are meeting these people, in the name of the Church, and among them are representing the care of Jesus the Servant."<sup>(4)</sup> "As by ordination, particularly and officially committed to service, the deacon is to inspire, promote and help coordinate the service that the whole Church must undertake in imitation of Christ."<sup>(5)</sup>
- b) ***The Ministry of the Word of God*** -- "The deacon's ministry of the Word is also a very far-ranging one. It may include proclaiming the Gospel at the liturgy, preaching, catechetical instruction and other forms of teaching, counseling, instruction of catechumens, giving retreats, outreach to alienated Catholics, parish renewal programs, etc... Besides these more or less formal occasions, deacons may also have many opportunities to speak about Jesus Christ more informally, especially as they carry out their ministries of love and justice. Deacons who have secular occupations also are able to witness to the Gospel in the marketplace, where they meet the demands of their work both as committed Catholics and as ordained ministers and use the opportunities their work provides to bring the gospel to bear on the concrete circumstances of everyday individual and social life." <sup>(6)</sup>
- c) ***The Ministry of Liturgy*** -- "The ancient tradition appears to indicate that it was because the deacon was the servant at the table of the poor that he had his distinctive liturgical roles of gathering the gifts and distributing communion at the Table of the Lord. Similarly, there is a reciprocal correspondence between his role as a proclaimer of the Gospel and his role as an

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4 Ibid., nos. 35-36.

5 Ibid., no. 37.

6 Ibid., no. 39.

articulator of the needs of the Church in the general intercessions. In his formal liturgical roles, the deacon brings the poor to the Church and the church to the poor. He thus symbolizes in his roles, the grounding of the Church's life in the Eucharist and the mission of the Church in the loving service of the needy." (7) "At the Eucharist, the deacon may proclaim the Gospel, preach, voice the needs of the people in the general intercessions, assist in the presentation of the gifts, and distribute communion. The deacon can also perform liturgical roles, such as solemnly baptizing, witnessing marriages, bringing Viaticum to the dying, and presiding over funerals and burials. In addition to these roles, he can also preside over liturgies of the Word, the Liturgy of Hours, exposition and benediction of the Blessed Sacrament, lead non-sacramental reconciliation services, conduct prayer services for the sick and dying, and administer certain of the Church's sacramentals." (8)

Through ordination, the Church publicly recognizes men whose lives of service at home, work, in the neighborhood and in the parish are already signs of *diakonia*. Training and ordination never make a deacon out of a non-deacon. Grace builds on nature, and the purpose of the Permanent Diaconate Formation Program described herein is to call forth men with natural diaconal talent and to allow grace to build upon their already demonstrated talent and charism for Christian *service*.

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7 Ibid., no. 28.

8 Ibid., no. 42.

## REQUIREMENTS FOR ACCEPTANCE

- 1) **CANDIDATE:** A male who has been baptized and confirmed.
- 2) **AGE:** He is at least thirty-one (31) years of age and normally less than sixty (60) years of age at the time of his admission to the program.
- 3) **STATUS:** Married or single

*If married*, he has been married at least five years and lives in a valid, stable marriage. He has the expressed consent and support of his wife who will participate actively in the formation program. He can give the time for study and service without detriment to young children in his family. *He understands that if widowed, he cannot marry again.*

*If single*, he enjoys a stable, settled life with a history of healthy relationships. He understands the implications of the charism of celibacy.

- 4) **NATURAL GIFTS:** He enjoys good health with no debilitating conditions. He is a man of proven maturity and balance, recognized among his peers as one having a genuine desire to serve the needs of others. He is very generous with his time and energy and is highly flexible to the needs and wishes of others.
- 5) **SPIRITUALITY:** He is a man of prayer willing to make personal sacrifices to be a sacramental sign of Christ's self-giving love. He is a man of faith who professes what the Church teaches, and participates faithfully in the Church's sacramental life. He manifests Gospel values in his lifestyles, and is a man of integrity in family life, in business and work, and in all his relationships with others.
- 6) **EDUCATION:** An undergraduate university or college-level degree is preferable. Graduation from high school or its equivalent, however, is required along with the evident ability to complete the necessary studies during the formation period. Credit for theological studies previously completed will not be given except after personal evaluation by the Director, and then only for courses pertinent to the diaconate and recently completed.
- 7) **EMPLOYMENT:** He possesses financial security with a history of steady employment. It is expected that the diaconate will be a part-time, volunteer ministry for most deacons, so that each must have a regular source of income for supporting self and family. His employment, furthermore, should not require frequent travel or reassignments.
- 8) **CHURCH/COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT:** The applicant should have a history of active, service-oriented involvement in the parish or community. He is able to work in a cooperative spirit with the pastor and other parish leaders.
- 9) **FORMATION:** Upon acceptance into the Permanent Diaconate Formation Program he will first complete a Year of Aspirancy and be successfully evaluated prior to being officially received as a Candidate for the Order of Deacon. He will then complete four more years of formation with ongoing evaluation before being called to ordination by the Bishop.
- 10) **DIACONAL MINISTRY:** The applicant should be able to discuss intelligently the deacon's role in

parish life. He sees self-giving service as the priority of diaconal ministry and is sensitive to social justice issues and the plight of the poor. In addition to the time spent in liturgical celebrations, he must be willing to serve twelve hours each week in pastoral ministry without financial remuneration, in an assignment determined by the Bishop.

- 11) **COMMITMENT:** He is willing to make a life-long commitment to serve the Church and to promise obedience to the Bishop.
- 12) **CONTINUED GROWTH:** As an ordained deacon, he will be willing to develop his pastoral skills and knowledge of the faith through further study and participation in programs designated by the diocesan Secretary for Clergy Formation.



## ADMISSION PROCEDURE

- 1) Approximately six months prior to the start of each new formation class, pastors will be requested to nominate men whom they believe would be worthy applicants for the permanent diaconate. Those nominated will be invited to attend information sessions, which will explain the various aspects of the program. The participants will be instructed to take time to discern prayerfully God's call to them, and to include in this process their wife and children where applicable.
- 2) Only those men, who have been first nominated by their pastor and who feel they meet all the requirements, may request from the diocesan Secretary for Clergy Formation an application form which is to be completed and returned along with the following items:
  - a) an original, official college transcript (*or high school if applicant did not attend college*);
  - b) an official baptismal record (*dated within the past six months*);
  - c) copy of confirmation record;
  - d) copy of marriage record (*where applicable*);
  - e) letter from wife (*where applicable*) indicating her initial consent for her husband's application to the Permanent Diaconate Formation Program;
  - e) two recent passport-sized photographs; and
  - f) typewritten essay (*200-300 words*) on "What Is My Understanding of Diaconate Ministry?"
- 3) After reception of the application and the return of the pastor's and other recommendation forms (*which will be sent out by the Office for the Permanent Diaconate upon the receipt of the application*), the applicant and his wife will be interviewed by a designated representative of the Secretary of Clergy Formation. The Admissions Committee will review each applicant's file and decide whether he should continue the process, wait until a future time or terminate the process. The decision of the Admission Committee upon approval of the Bishop of Scranton will be sent to the applicant.
- 4) For those who continue the process:
  - a) a psychologist will meet with the applicant and his wife to administer a battery of standard psychological and personality-profile tests;
  - b) the applicant will also submit the results of a physical examination to the Director.
- 5) The Admissions Committee will again review the applications and make a final consensus recommendation to the Bishop, who makes a final determination on admissions based on all the available information. The entire body of information is held in strict confidence and will become the property of the Diocese of Scranton, and will not be accessible to the applicant.
- 6) The Director will inform the applicant and his pastor of the final decision.

## **ADMINISTRATION**

The Secretary for Clergy Formation is appointed by the Bishop of Scranton and serves as the Director of the Permanent Diaconate Formation Program and Director of Ongoing Clergy Formation. The Secretary for Clergy Formation is also responsible to oversee the Diocesan Vocations Office and Seminarian Formation program.

With specific regard to the Permanent Diaconate Formation Program, the Secretary for Clergy Formation is responsible to consult with the coordinators of the spiritual, pastoral, liturgical formation, and candidates' wives and families programs.

Responsibilities for the various roles which comprise the Program are as follows:

### **A) The Secretary for Clergy Formation as Director of the Permanent Diaconate Formation Program**

- 1) Is appointed by the Diocesan Bishop and serves as a member of the Diocesan Curia.
- 2) Is accountable to the Bishop in matters pertaining to particular aspirants/candidates and with regard to the nature and structure of the Permanent Diaconate Formation Program.
- 3) Reports directly to the Chancellor and Chief Operating Officer and is accountable to the Chief Operating Officer and the Vicars General (V.G and Moderator of the Curia and V.G. and Director of Clergy Personnel) in all temporal matters pertaining to the Permanent Diaconate Formation Program and in matters related to all inter-Secretarial efforts.
- 4) Is ultimately responsible for the coordination of the Permanent Diaconate Formation Program.
- 5) Serves as the Coordinator of Academic Formation for the Permanent Diaconate Formation Program:
  - a. Designs and schedules academic courses for candidates.
  - b. Gathers and reviews the instructors' evaluation of the candidates' participation in the courses.
  - c. Counsels the candidates in regard to academic matters.
  - d. Keeps a file for each candidate concerning his academic formation.
- 6) Participates in the evaluation of candidates and presents the recommendations of the Admission/Candidate Evaluation Committee to the Bishop.
- 7) Interviews candidates yearly to assess their progress and accepts recommendations and observations regarding the program.
- 8) Coordinates the continuing education and spiritual formation programs for permanent deacons after their ordination.
- 9) Keeps priests and laity aware of the restoration and significance of the permanent diaconate.

- 10) Maintains contact with the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' Committee on Clergy, Consecrated Life and Vocations, as well as the National Association of Diaconate Directors.

**B) Coordinator of Spiritual Formation**

- 1) Is a person with appropriate qualifications and experience, recommended by the Director and appointed by the Bishop, who is willing to serve in this capacity for the benefit and success of the Permanent Diaconate Program.
- 2) The Coordinator of Spiritual Formation is accountable to the Director and is responsible to:
  - a. Plan and implement retreats, days of reflection, and other spiritual exercises for candidates.
  - b. Ensure that each candidate chooses an appropriate spiritual director and meets with each candidate once a year to discuss his participation in the Spiritual Formation Program.
  - c. Counsel candidates concerning their spiritual life and meets with their spiritual directors on a regular basis in order to insure that this element serves to integrate both the theological and pastoral dimensions of the formation program
  - d. Participate as a member of the Admissions/Evaluation Committee, but absents himself from the evaluation of candidates with whom he has met on matters that pertain to the internal forum.

**C) Coordinator of the Candidate Advisor and Pastoral Formation Programs**

- 1) Is a person with appropriate qualifications and experience, recommended by the Director and appointed by the Bishop, who is willing to serve in this capacity for the benefit and success of the Permanent Diaconate Program.
- 2) In collaboration with the Director, the Coordinator is responsible to
  - a. Assign a Formation Advisor for every candidate and supervises this element of the program.
  - b. Assign and coordinate the field education experiences of the candidate during his third and fourth years of formation.
  - c. Meet with each candidate at least once a year to discuss his participation in this part of the Diaconate Formation Program.
  - d. Meet annually with the Formation Advisors to evaluate this element of the program.
  - e. Participate as a member of the Admissions/Evaluation Committee.

**E) Coordinator of Liturgical Formation**

- 1) Is a person with appropriate qualifications and experience, recommended by the Director and appointed by the Bishop, who is willing to serve in this capacity for the benefit and success of the Permanent Diaconate Program.
- 2) The Coordinator of Liturgical Formation works in collaboration with the Director and is responsible to
  - a. Schedule courses and practicums pertaining to the candidates' liturgical training.
  - b. Attest to each candidate's readiness to assume his proper liturgical roles, including his preparedness to be given the faculty to preach.
  - c. Supervise the planning of all liturgical and para-liturgical celebrations of the formation program, including communal celebration of the Liturgy of the Hours, Days of Reflection, retreats, etc.
  - d. Participate as a member of the Admissions/Evaluation Committee.

**F) Coordinator of the Candidates' Wives and Families Program**

- 1) Is a person with appropriate qualifications and experience, recommended by the Director and appointed by the Bishop, who is willing to serve in this capacity for the benefit and success of the Permanent Diaconate Program.
- 2) The Coordinator of the Candidates' Wives and Families Program is accountable to the Director and is responsible to:
  - a. Plan and coordinate special programs for the candidate's wives and families.
  - b. Meet with each candidate's wife once a year to discuss the effects of the formation program upon their marriage and family.
  - c. Participate as a member of the Admissions/Evaluation Committee.

**G) Admissions/Evaluation Committee**

*The Admissions/Evaluation Committee* consists of the Secretary for Clergy Formation, coordinators and other committee members appointed by the Bishop of Scranton. It will review each candidate in keeping with the "Requirements for Acceptance" and the "Admissions Procedure" and make recommendations regarding acceptance to the Bishop. It will also review each candidate's progress biannually in consultation with his formation advisor, pastor, instructors and other pastoral supervisors and in keeping with the Formation Standards recommended by the *National Directory*. The Committee will make recommendations to the Bishop regarding each candidate's promotion to candidacy, ministries of reader and acolyte, and ordination.

## ACADEMIC FORMATION

The course of studies is designed to prepare candidates to exercise pastoral ministry. They are part-time students who come from a wide variety of educational backgrounds. Most of them are married men with primary responsibilities to their families and professions and/or employers. The purpose of the academic formation component, therefore, is to provide the candidate with a living and workable knowledge of the faith that will serve him well in his ministry of word, sacrament, and charity.

To this end, the candidate will be expected to complete 270 hours of formal courses over a five year period. These courses will provide him with a sound theological overview of the Church and its teachings. Another 200 hours of spiritual, pastoral and liturgical formation courses, including liturgical and homiletic practicums, will be offered specifically for the candidates, on six Saturdays per year, at Fatima Center, Dalton. Another 60 hours will be comprised of "Summer Readers" discussed and completed in Regional Cluster meetings.

### A) *Core Courses*

Each candidate will complete the following courses offered by the diocesan Permanent Diaconate Formation Program. He is expected to earn a minimum of three (3) credits each Fall and Spring. The curriculum should be pursued, as far as possible, in keeping with this preferred sequence:

- 1) ***Introduction to Sacred Scripture (3 credits)***  
Inspiration and Inerrancy. Canonicity. Texts and versions. Hermeneutics. Modern Biblical Criticism and Exegetical Methods. Church Pronouncements. History of Israel.
- 2) ***The Catholic Church Through the Centuries (3 credits)***  
Christian Antiquity: The Apostolic Era. The Church Fathers. Schisms and heresies, persecutions. The Constantinian Era. The Church of the Middle Ages. Cluny and the monastic reform. The Great Eastern Schism. The Crusades. Mission to the Western Hemisphere. The Inquisition. The Western Schism. The Reformation and Catholic Reform. The French Revolution to the First World War. The Catholic Church in the Twentieth Century.
- 3) ***The Fundamental Teachings of the Church (3 credits)***  
Revelation and Faith. The Creeds. Tradition and Scripture. The Triune God. Creation, the Human Person and the World. Original Justice and the Fall. Jesus Christ the Savior. Mary, the Mother of God. The Church. The Last Things.
- 4) ***Sacraments in General (3 credits)***  
The Meaning of "Sacrament" and Sacramentality. The Sacraments in the Early Church. St. Thomas Aquinas and Medieval Church. The Reformation and the Council of Trent. Vatican II. Effects of the Seven Sacraments.
- 5) ***Introduction to the Theology of Christian Living (3 credits)***  
The Spiritual-Moral Vision of the Scriptures. Christian Existence in the Writings of the Church Fathers. Prayer and Discernment. Fundamental Principles of Roman Catholic Moral Theology. *Veritatis splendor*. An Introduction to Special Questions: Sexual Ethics, Bio-ethics, and Catholic Social Teaching.

- 6) ***Catholic Social Teaching (3 credits)***  
The Biblical and Moral Foundations. Social Ministry within the Mission of the Church. Overview of the First Nineteen Centuries. Major Concepts: Social Justice, Social Consequences of Sin, Relationship of Justice and Charity. The modern Papal Social Encyclicals. Pastoral Letters of U.S. Bishops. Ecology and Care for the Environment.
- 7) ***Introduction to Liturgy (3 credits)***  
Fundamental Documents of the Roman Liturgy. The History and Development of the Mass and other Rites. The Proper Celebration of each Rite with special attention to the Deacon's Role. Rite of Baptism for Children. Holy Communion and Worship of the Eucharist outside Mass. Rite of Marriage. Rite of Funerals.
- 8) ***Catholic Sexual and Medical Ethics (1.5 credits)***  
Significance of Male and Female. Theology of the Body. The Equal Dignity of Women. Celibacy. Christian Marriage: Unity and Fidelity, the Generous Fruitfulness of the Spouses. Extra-marital Sexuality. Chastity. The Sanctity of Human Life. *Evangelium vitae*. Health Care. Abortion, sterilization, and artificial intervention in human reproduction. Prolonging Life: ordinary and extraordinary means. Euthanasia. The Christian Meaning of Death.
- 9) ***Introduction to the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA) (1.5 credits)***  
Historical, Liturgical and Theological Foundations of the Sacraments of Christian Initiation. The Catechumenate in the Early Church. The New RCIA. Setting up a Parish Catechumenate: some practical considerations. Lectionary Catechesis.
- 10) ***Canon Law, Marriage Preparation and Annulments (1.5 credits)***  
Canon Law. Pastoral Aspects and Applications. Diocesan Policies and Procedures. Marriages involving Catholics in the Eastern Churches. Pastoral Care of Divorced and Remarried Catholics.
- 11) ***Catholic Identity, Ecumenism, and Interreligious Dialogue (1.5 credits)***  
The History of Ecumenism. Catholic Ecumenical Documentation. Catholic Identity and the Theology of Ecumenism. Ecumenical Principles and Formation. The Nature, Goal, and Reception of Dialogues. The Contribution of the World Council of Churches. Ecumenical Developments with the Eastern Churches. Anglican, Lutheran, and Catholic Relations. Relations with the Classical Protestant Churches. Evangelical and Pentecostal Communities. The Future of Ecumenism. Interreligious Dialogue.

Each credit represents ten hours of formal instruction. Candidates will be expected to maintain a "B" average (80% or above). In addition to the tests and assignments required of all for-credit students, the instructors are asked to administer an additional fifteen-minute oral exam to diaconal candidates (*in all 3-credit courses*) and to submit to the Secretary for Clergy Formation a special "Instructor's Evaluation Form" on each candidate.

#### ***B) Spiritual, Pastoral and Liturgical Formation Courses***

In addition to the Core Courses listed above, special spiritual, pastoral, and liturgical formation courses will be scheduled for all the candidates at Fatima Center, Dalton, on Saturday, three times each semester. A broad selection of topics is covered during these courses, providing a sound

theoretical basis for their spiritual life, liturgical and pastoral practice. These courses will be presented as follows:

*YEAR OF ASPIRANCY (FIRST YEAR):*

- 1) **Introduction to Spiritual Formation** (1.5 credits)  
Spiritual Direction (October)  
The Liturgy of the Hours (November)  
Prayer and Meditation (December)
- 2) **Ministry of the Deacon** (1.5 credits)  
History and Identity of the Diaconate (February)  
Ministries of Word and Sacrament (March)  
Ministry of Charity/Justice (April)

*SECOND YEAR:*

- 3) **Pastoral Theology I** (1.5 credits)  
Role of Theological Reflection in Pastoral Ministry (October)  
Social Ministry: To the Poor, Migrants and Prisoners (November)  
Ministry to the Sick and Dying (December)
- 4) **Proclaiming the Word** (1.5 credits)  
Theology of the Word (February)  
Lector Practicum I (March)  
Lector Practicum II (April)

*THIRD YEAR:*

- 5) **Pastoral Theology II** (1.5 credits)  
Communication: Group dynamics, Conflict Management and Confrontation (October)  
Pastoral Care, Assessment and Intervention (November)  
Relational Dynamics in the Family (December)
- 6) **The Ministry of Acolyte** (1.5 credits)  
The Role and Institution of Acolytes (February)  
Acolyte Practicum I (March)  
Acolyte Practicum II (April)

*FOURTH YEAR:*

- 7) **Pastoral Theology III** (1.5 credits)  
The Parish: Mission, Community, Structure (October)  
The New Evangelization and Catechesis  
Parish Social Concerns Committee (December)
- 8) **Liturgical Practicums** (1.5 credits)  
Baptism of Children (February)  
Marriage and Funerals (March)  
The Deacon's Role in the Eucharist (April)
- 9) **The Deacon at Mass: Liturgical Practicum Weekend** (May/2 credits)

*FIFTH YEAR: Preaching Preparation Courses*

- 10) **Introduction to Liturgical Preaching** (1.5 credits)  
Theology of Preaching (October)  
Oral Interpretation (November)  
Elements of Homily Preparation (December)

11) **New Testament Exegesis and Preaching** (1.5 credits)

Synoptic Gospels (*February*)

Pauline Corpus (*March*)

Johannine Literature (*April*)

12) **Preaching Lab** (3 credits; one night per week/ Spring semester)

Writing and delivery of four homilies. Video-ing of each student delivering a homily, with critique of body movement, gestures, delivery. Preaching at Rites. Preparation for evaluation by Homiletics Board.

**C) Summer Readers**

While no formal courses will be scheduled during the summer months, the Candidates will be assigned to Regional Clusters which will meet at least three times in the course of the summer to discuss an assigned book. By September 15 each candidate will submit a 500 word reflection on the book and discussions to the Coordinator of Academics (6 credits / 1.5 credits each summer).

**Aspirancy Year (First Year):** *Catechism of the Catholic Church*

**Second Year:** History of the Catholic Church in the United States

**Third Year:** Ethics in Pastoral Ministry

**Fourth Year:** Selected Church Documents

**D) Continuing Education**

Reflecting upon his ministry in the light of faith is a lifelong task for the deacon. After ordination, therefore, he is expected to continue his theological and pastoral formation by attending courses, workshops, seminars and conferences as designated by the Secretary for Clergy Formation.



## SPIRITUAL FORMATION

The spiritual formation component is the element that integrates all the other aspects of the Permanent Diaconate Formation Program. As with all other Christians, the deacon's spiritual life is rooted in his baptismal vocation and, thus, his ever growing participation in Jesus Christ's paschal mystery. Through his spiritual life he is to unite himself ever more closely with the Servant Christ, building upon his prior commitments to wife, family, and occupation where applicable.

According to the *National Directory for the Formation, Ministry, and Life of Permanent Deacons in the United States (2005)*, the objectives of the spiritual formation program are as follows:

- a) to deepen his prayer life – personal, familial, communal, and liturgical – with special emphasis upon participation in the Eucharist, daily if possible; daily celebration of the Liturgy of the Hours, especially morning and evening prayer; *Lectio Divina*, devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary and the saints; and regular reception of the Sacrament of Reconciliation;
- b) to assist the participant, with the help of his spiritual director and those responsible for formation, to deepen and cultivate a service commitment to God's word, the Church, and the world;
- c) to acquaint him with the Catholic spiritual tradition reflected in classical spiritual writings and in the lives of the saints, and with contemporary developments in spirituality – a faith seeking to be expressed and celebrated;
- d) to affirm the Christian witness of matrimonial and celibate spirituality;
- e) to incarnate his spirituality in the real life and history of the people whom he encounters each day in places where he lives, works, and serves. (*no. 113*)

### **A) *Spiritual Direction***

Each candidate should meet regularly, at least monthly, with a priest spiritual director. Spiritual directors must be chosen from a list prepared by the Coordinator of Spiritual Formation and approved by the Bishop. The candidate is also encouraged to keep a "Journal" of personal reflections upon his academic course work and other formation experiences, which he shares with his spiritual director.

### **B) *Days of Reflection***

Candidates and their wives must attend two Days of Reflection during each year of formation. They will be held at Fatima Center, Dalton, on a Saturday in September and January. The themes for each of these Days will be as follows:

#### *ASPIRANCY YEAR (FIRST YEAR):*

- The Universal Call to Holiness (*September*)
- Discernment of a Diaconal Vocation (*January*)

#### *SECOND YEAR:*

- Spirituality of Marriage (*September*)
- The Eucharist (*January*)

**THIRD YEAR:**

Reconciliation (*September*)  
The Mystery of Suffering (*January*)

**FOURTH YEAR:**

Charism of Celibacy (*September*)  
Rejoicing in the Lord (*January*)

**FIFTH YEAR:**

Jesus Washes His Disciples Feet (*September*)

**C) Retreats**

Candidates and their wives must attend an annual weekend retreat (*from Friday evening to Sunday afternoon*) each May during the first three years of formation. A five-day pre-ordination, canonical retreat will be scheduled during the fall of the fifth year. These retreats will develop the following themes:

*ASPIRANCY YEAR:* Jesus Christ: The Servant of God

*SECOND YEAR:* Mary: Model of Discipleship

*THIRD YEAR:* The Mystery of the Church

*PRE-ORDINATION:* The Sacrament of Holy Orders: The Relationship of Bishop, Priest & Deacon

**D) Continuing Spiritual Formation**

After ordination, the deacon will be expected to continue to meet with his spiritual director on a regular basis and to be faithful to his personal prayer life, which includes morning prayer and evening prayer from the Liturgy of Hours, and to spiritual reading. He will participate in a day of reflection and a make a weekend retreat each year. His wife, where applicable, will be strongly encouraged to participate in these days of reflection and annual retreats as well.

## **PASTORAL FORMATION**

While the entire Permanent Diaconate Formation Program has a pastoral focus, including the academic component which in a systematic way provides both theory and skills for pastoral practice, actual engagement in a wide range of pastoral activities during his years of formation is essential for the candidate. Indeed, the demonstration of pastoral skills is a crucial element in the evaluation of his fitness for ordination.

### ***A) Formation Advisor***

Each candidate will be assigned a formation advisor with whom he will meet at least every eight weeks to review and discuss:

- 1) his physical well-being and that of his family;
- 2) the integration of his responsibilities to his wife, family, and occupation with his participation in the formation program;
- 3) his own attitudes toward the Church and diaconal ministry;
- 4) his academic progress and his fidelity to spiritual direction;
- 5) his experiences in pastoral ministry; and
- 6) all other areas of his formation that pertain to the external forum.

The candidates' formation advisor serves as his mentor and ministerial supervisor, and reports to the Permanent Diaconate Admissions/Evaluation Committee to make recommendations regarding his promotion to ministry, candidacy and ordination.

### ***B) Pastoral Service***

Each candidate is expected to engage in a wide diversity of pastoral service during the course of his four years of formation for the permanent diaconate.

#### ***ASPIRANCY YEAR:***

It is expected that the candidate will enter the formation program already involved in a number of service activities. During this first year he will review and discuss with his formation advisor his continuing participation in these activities.

#### ***SECOND YEAR:***

The candidate during this year will arrange with his pastor to be involved at least two hours per week in various areas of parochial service (e.g. pastoral care of sick in hospitals or at home; nursing home ministry; ministry to the disabled, the aged, youth and young adults; sacramental preparation programs, etc.).

#### ***THIRD YEAR:***

Having received the Ministry of Reader, he will actively carry out the responsibilities of this ministry

either in his home parish, or in one to which he is assigned by the Director. The candidate during this year will also choose to concentrate his pastoral preparation in one area of particular service (e.g., soup kitchen and shelter work; hospital or prison ministry; bereavement counseling; hospice work with the terminally ill; ministry with troubled youth, with persons suffering various addictions, with the separated and divorced, etc.). He will be expected to undertake at least one hundred hours of supervised ministry in this apostolate.

*FOURTH YEAR:*

Having received the Ministry of Acolyte, he will actively carry out the responsibilities of this ministry either in his home parish, or in one to which he is assigned by the Director. The candidate during this year will be assigned to a parish where he will receive at least one hundred hours of pastoral supervision in the various general areas of parochial service (e.g. pastoral care of sick in hospitals or at home; nursing home ministry; ministry to the disabled, the aged, youth and young adults; sacramental preparation programs, etc.). He will also choose a second area of particular service, as he did in his third year, for another one hundred hours of supervised ministry preparation.

## CANDIDATES' WIVES AND FAMILIES

For married deacons, their wives and families come first not only superficially in terms of time, but in terms of diaconal ministry. The *National Directory for the Formation, Ministry, and Life of Permanent Deacons in the United States (2005)* tells us:

“In particular the deacon and his wife must be a living example of fidelity and indissolubility in Christian marriage before a world which is in dire need of such signs. By facing in a spirit of faith the challenges of married life and the demands of daily living, they strengthen the family life not only of the Church community but of the whole of society. They also show how the obligations of family life, work and ministry can be harmonized in the service of the Church’s mission. Deacons and their wives and children can be a great encouragement to others who are working to promote family life.” (no. 67)

### A) *Candidates' Wives*

In order that she may better understand her husband's ministry, her participation in it, and how it will affect their relationship and family life, the candidate's wife is strongly encouraged to participate as fully as possible in the entire program of formation.

- 1) She must attend the Orientation Weekend (September of the first year), and all days of reflection and retreats.
- 2) The candidate’s wife must give written consent to her husband's promotion into candidate formation.
- 3) A day-long Saturday program for the candidates' wives will be held twice each year.
- 4) She is strongly encouraged to attend all classes with her husband.\*

### B) *Candidates' Families*

The children of the deacon also are uniquely affected by their father's ordination and diaconal ministry. To help them better understand and relate to this new reality that will deeply touch their lives, depending upon their ages, special family programs of a social-spiritual nature will be held. They will provide the children of the candidates an opportunity to come to know and share with one another.

### **\*Diocesan Certificate in "Pastoral Studies"**

Wives of diaconate candidates who themselves take "for credit" and successfully complete all the course work (not including practicums and homiletic courses) required of their husbands will receive a Certificate in Pastoral Studies from the Diocese of Scranton.

## STEPS TO ORDINATION

### ***A) Admission to Candidacy***

At the completion of the Year of Aspirancy, this public ceremony celebrates a time of important decision-making for the candidate. He now declares his formal intention to pursue ordination to the diaconate; and the Church, in the person of the presiding Bishop, accepts and recognizes this man as a suitable candidate for the Order of Deacon.

### ***B) Installation to the Ministry of Reader***

Candidates for the permanent diaconate are installed as lectors at the beginning of their third year in the formation program. This ceremony is the Church's public commissioning of the candidate to serve the people as a reader of the Word of God.

### ***C) Installation to the Ministry of Acolyte***

At the beginning of his fourth year in the formation program, the candidate is called to be a minister of the Eucharist. The Acolyte is commissioned to assist in the distribution of Holy Communion during Mass, and to bring the Blessed Sacrament to the sick and elderly. He may instruct others who assist in the liturgical celebration.

### ***D) Ordination to the Diaconate***

During his fifth year in the formation program the candidate is called by the Bishop to the Order of Deacon. The candidate declares that he is now "ready and willing" to become a visible, faithful, and effective sign of the Servant Christ to the people of God.

## THE EVALUATION PROCESS

### ***A) Program Evaluation***

The total Permanent Diaconate Formation Program will be subject to continuing evaluation by the staff, (director, coordinators, formation advisors, instructors), and by the candidates themselves. Constructive criticism will be sought concerning the nature and content of the courses, the pastoral formation program, the wives' involvement, and the overall procedures and policies of the program.

### ***B) Candidate Evaluation***

Candidates will be periodically evaluated in all areas -- spiritual, academic, pastoral, and liturgical. Staff, formation advisors, instructors, pastors, apostolic supervisors and the Evaluation Committee will all share in the process of evaluation. There will be provision for candidate self-evaluation and the candidates' evaluation of each other. Participation in all aspects of the formation program, as well as attitude and personal growth, will be subject to review and evaluation.

Formation advisors will submit a progress report twice a year. All evaluations, reports and other data, with the exception of confidential "classified" material, will be reviewed and evaluated by the Evaluation Committee at the end of each semester in keeping with the Standards for Formation found in the *National Directory*, and a report sent to the Bishop.

## **FINANCIAL PROVISIONS**

The Diocese of Scranton itself will defray the costs of the screening and formation of aspirants and candidates, and the following arrangements will normally apply:

- 1) The Diocese of Scranton will assume the basic program costs; namely, course fees, registration, room and board (for overnight sessions), and other administrative fees.
- 2) Textbook, course material, and out-of-pocket expenses will be absorbed by the candidate.
- 3) Beginning with ordination, all mandated experiences and out-of-pocket expenses will be reimbursed by the parish or institution of assignment.
- 4) Where necessary, special arrangements will be explored.



## Addenda

### FACULTIES GRANTED TO DEACONS BY THE BISHOP OF SCRANTON

#### I. BAPTISM

- A. Administer Baptism and preside at the Rite of Bringing a Baptized Child to the Church ("supplying ceremonies").
- B. Preside or assist at the rites contained in the R.C.I.A.
- C. Preach according to the norms of the Rite of Baptism.

#### II. EUCHARIST

- A. Function as deacon at Mass in accordance with the Roman Missal.
- B. Distribute Holy Communion at Mass as an ordinary minister.
- C. Preside at the Rite of Distributing Holy Communion outside Mass.
- D. Minister Holy Communion and Viaticum to the sick. (Care must be taken that the sick are given every opportunity to see a priest to receive the Sacrament of Penance and the Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick, if they so desire. In the case of Viaticum, the Pastor, Chaplain or Superior must be notified when this sacrament has been administered. The Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick is not the function of a Deacon.)
- E. Preside at the Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament, giving the Eucharistic blessing to the faithful.

#### III. MINISTRY OF THE WORD

- A. Proclaim the Gospel at Mass.
- B. Preside at the Liturgy of the Word and the Liturgy of the Hours on appropriate occasions.
- C. When specifically granted the faculty by the Bishop, preach the homily at Mass with permission of the local pastor.

#### IV. CHRISTIAN FUNERALS

- A. Preside at vigils (wakes), funeral liturgies and rites of committal (burials) according to the currently approved rituals.
- B. The Bishop of Scranton (cf. Can. 1183.2), grants permission for a deacon, with at least the presumed consent of the pastor, to provide ecclesiastical funeral rites to un-baptized children if their parents intended to baptize them, but they died before their baptism.
- C. The deacon must provide the required information for notation in the appropriate death register.

#### V. MARRIAGE

- A. Administer the oath and complete the pre-marital investigation.
- B. Initiate the process for the convalidation of marriage, for declarations of nullity and/or dissolution of the bond.
- C. Only when given clear and explicit delegation on each occasion by the pastor of the parish in which the marriage is to take place, celebrate the rite of the Sacrament of Matrimony, either during or outside of Mass. (In such an instance, the deacon may administer the Nuptial Blessing outside the Mass; however, the Nuptial Blessing is always given by the celebrant of the Mass, even if the deacon witnesses the exchange of vows.)

#### VI. SACRAMENTALS

- Give those blessings designated for deacons in the Book of Blessings, e.g., blessings of the sick, throats, religious articles, homes, holy water, etc.