



***Diocese of***  
***Altoona-Johnstown***  
***Permanent Diaconate***  
**Formation Process**

Dear Friends in Christ,

Thank you for your interest in the Permanent Diaconate in the Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown. The Formation Process is an important part of the preparation that is required before anyone is ordained for service of the Church.

This process begins with guided discernment in which a man prayerfully discerns whether his interest in the diaconate is truly a vocation, a calling, from God. While the Holy Spirit is very much involved in stirring up the hearts of men to respond to a vocation as an ordained deacon, the response to this call must be directed and confirmed by the Church.

The majority of men who inquire and then decide to apply for acceptance into the Formation Program are married. Since marriage is their first vocation, it will be necessary to discern whether your wife is supportive of your desire and decision to be a deacon.

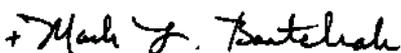
Pope Benedict XVI has noted that “by living and witnessing to God's infinite love, deacons are at the service of building the Church as communion; a communion that is strengthened by the affection and prayer of the deacon's spouse and family, and the deacon's vocation and ministry becomes a source of grace that strengthens the communion that exists in the deacon's marriage and family.” For those accepted into the Formation Process who are not married, they will find the support of the fraternity that exists among all the deacons and those who are in the Formation Process.

I encourage you to carefully read the pages of the Permanent Diaconate Formation Process manual. I also encourage you to approach the discernment of your possible vocation to the diaconate with an open mind, heart, and spirit. It requires constant prayer in which you ask the Holy Spirit to guide you.

Additional support may be found with your parish priest, confessor, or a permanent deacon in your parish or community. Most especially, the permanent deacons who work in our diocesan Office of Diaconate are available to answer questions and to offer guidance and support.

Whether you are just beginning to think about it or you are ready to apply for acceptance into the Permanent Diaconate Formation Process, please know that you are in my prayers.

Sincerely in Christ,



Most Rev. Mark L. Bartchak  
Bishop of Altoona-Johnstown

## A Rich History

**I**s God possibly calling you to a special role of service? Do you feel a “tug on your heart,” a yearning to be more involved in ministry to God’s people? Perhaps you have been influenced by the deacon in your parish to explore this vocation. Maybe you listened to an inspirational homily or experienced a deacon comforting someone in distress and your heart has been touched.

We are all introduced to the diaconate in chapter six of The Acts of the Apostles. The early Church was faced with the dilemma of caring for the poor. Specifically, the Greek speaking widows were being neglected. The situation was taken to the Apostles and after prayerful consideration they declared, “Brothers, select from among you seven reputable men, filled with the Spirit and wisdom, whom we shall appoint to this task (Acts 6:3).”<sup>1</sup> The community found this to be a workable solution and they selected Stephen, Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicholas of Antioch to serve.

The word (service) is derived from the Greek word *diakonos*.



The title (deacon ) is derived from this same Greek word. The diaconate is a ministry in the Roman Catholic Church and one of three ordained ministries in the sacrament of Holy Orders.

Although some believe the diaconate disappeared at some point, this is not true. References to the *permanent* form of the diaconate did disappear after the 5<sup>th</sup> century C.E. and in the Middle Ages, it was redefined. *The National Directory for the Formation, Ministry, and Life of Permanent Deacons* states the following:

“It had been transformed from a *permanent* form of official ministry and redefined into a *transitory* stage on the way to ultimate ordination into the presbyterate.” The discussion of the diaconate became an important topic for the Council of Trent (1545-1563). The council determined that it was important to identify the functions of the deacon to avoid confusion. The council decided that the deacon could assist at the altar, proclaim the Gospel, exhort the people, and care for the altar. The deacon could baptize and be permitted to preach providing permission was granted by the bishop. Vatican II took up the discussion of the restoration of the diaconate as a permanent state. After much prayerful debate and discussion, The Second Vatican Council decided to renew the diaconate. Pope Paul VI stressed that the Council was channeled on one direction and that direction was the service of humankind. “This vision of the church-as-servant finds a concrete sacramental expression in the renewed diaconate.”

## **The Diaconate in Altoona-Johnstown**

**T**he office of the Permanent Diaconate was established in 1981 by Most Rev. James J. Hogan with Rev. Robert J. Kelly as the director. The first class of deacon candidates, assembled in 1982 consisted of five men who had begun training separately at various stages over a period of about ten years. Following the completion of their formal formation process, Bishop Hogan ordained them to the Permanent Diaconate on June 1, 1985.

Shortly after his installation as bishop in 1987, Most Rev. Joseph V. Adamec, DD, STL, instructed Fr. Kelly, to develop an ongoing diaconate formation program for our diocese and take steps to identify those who would be discerning a vocation to the permanent diaconate. Rev. Leonard E. Voytek was subsequently appointed Vocation Director and under his direction, in September 1988, the second group of candidates began the diaconate formation process.

In 1990, Deacon John J. Concannon was appointed Director for the Formation, Ministry and Life of Permanent Deacons and assumed the responsibility for the formation of those called to the diaconate. During his thirteen-year tenure, nine more groups of men completed the formation process and were ordained. When he retired in 2003, Deacon Concannon directed 24 men through the formation process to ordination.

Upon the retirement of Deacon Concannon, Deacon Gene P. Neral accepted the appointment as Director for the Formation, Ministry and Life of Permanent Deacons. In seven years he directed the formation of five groups of candidates totaling eleven men.

In 2010, Deacon Michael L. Russo, was appointed Associate Director for the Formation of Permanent Deacons. In that position he is responsible for the final formation of candidates. Deacon Neral continues to focus on the ongoing formation of the ordained permanent deacons as well as assisting with the placement and monitoring of the ministries of deacons in the diocese.

Permanent Deacons serve in 31 out of 89 parishes in the diocese. Three deacons also serve as Catholic Chaplains at State Correctional Institutions, two serve on Catholic College Campuses, one is a Parochial Administrator for two additional parishes, one teaches at St. Vincent Seminary and one deacon is Secretary to the Bishop and serves as Episcopal Master of Ceremonies.



## Answering the Call

Since you are reviewing this booklet, you have felt the tug on your heart and you feel that the Holy Spirit may be calling you to a life of service as a deacon. This booklet provides an overview of the formation process and includes application instructions, as well as expectations if you are selected.

## Diaconate Formation

The goals and components of the Deacon Formation Process in the Altoona-Johnstown Diocese are based on the guidelines provided by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. The program goals are as follows:

- To provide the diaconal candidate with a program that is in conformity with the *National Directory for the Formation, Ministry, and Life of Permanent Deacons in the United States*
- To direct each candidate along the path of human and Christian development upon which the Lord has set him;
- To assist the candidate in discernment of his vocation;
- To provide a means for development along the four dimensions of diaconal formation: human, spiritual, intellectual, and pastoral;

- To nourish, guide, and assess each candidate as he progresses through the following activities: instructional conferences, spiritual direction, days of recollection, annual retreats, and service to others in need;
- To prepare each candidate to serve effectively in ministry of the Word, in ministry at the Altar, and in a ministry of caring for all God’s people, especially those in need.

The *National Directory for the Formation, Ministry, and Life of Permanent Deacons in the United States* proposes three separate but integral paths that constitute a unified diocesan formation program for Permanent Deacons. In the introduction to the chapter, “*Dimensions in the Formation of Deacons*,” we read: “There are three separate paths that constitute a unified diocesan formation program for deacons: aspirant, candidate, and post-ordination. Although this *Directory* addresses each path separately, they nevertheless become ‘one sole organic journey’ in diaconal formation. In each path, the four dimensions or specific areas of formation—human, spiritual, intellectual and pastoral—are always essential.”

In order to comply with these guidelines, the Formation Process for Permanent Deacons of the Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown includes the following phases:

- **Inquiry Year**
- **Aspirancy Period**
- **Candidacy Years**
- **Post-ordination**

The components of the first two of these phases are explained below. The Candidacy Period of Formal Formation involves three years of structured preparation, the details of which follow the explanation of the Formal Application and Selection process.

### **Inquiry Year**

**T**he Inquiry year is intended primarily for the purpose of assisting the individual to begin to discern his willingness – and that of his family – to make a full commitment to the formation process. This is a time for gathering information, speaking with the pastor, and obtaining practical advice about the diaconate vocation. During this period, confirmation of the applicant’s basic foundation for religious studies also occurs. This process requires the applicant’s participation in the following programs or the equivalent through the office of *Adult Enrichment / Lay Ecclesial Ministries*:

<b>Inquiry Year</b>	<b>Sessions</b>	<b>Class Hours</b>
Heart of Faith	8 Weeks	16
Old Testament	8 Weeks	16
Christian Prayer and Spirituality	8 Weeks	16
Living Your Strengths	8 Weeks	16
Discovering Your Spiritual Gifts	1 Day	6

## **Course Descriptions**

### **Heart of Faith**

**D**eacons must be well informed in the four pillars of the faith if they are to effectively catechize children, teens, and young adults. The *Heart of Faith* class focuses on these four pillars: the Creed, the Sacraments, a Moral Life, and Christian Prayer, as presented in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, and reflects the unity of the Catholic faith as well as the richness of its lived expression in American culture.

### **The Old Testament**

**T**his course will explore, in general terms, the books of the Old Testament and take a brief look at specific books. The purpose of the course is to provide valuable insight into how to study and learn from the books of the Old Testament. This is an overview of the narrative themes that under gird each major section of the Old Testament and will discuss how the Bible is viewed as the inspired word of God, literature, and history.

Surveying the canon of Scripture and reviewing its historical development will provide the basic tools necessary for understanding the Bible from a Catholic perspective.

### **Christian Prayer and Spirituality**

**T**his course is an introduction to the concepts of spirituality and the importance that prayer and spirituality play in daily life. It highlights the central concepts concerning spiritual life formation and focuses on the importance of prayer as well as the spiritual tradition of the life of the Church in an historical and synthetic way. Beginning with the Psalms and Jewish forms of prayer the course considers the emergence of prayer traditions, the Liturgy of the Hours, Lectio Divina, and spiritual programs in the Church. Attention is focused on the place of the Liturgy of the Hours as a significant prayer of the Church. Certain aspects of modern spirituality are also considered.

### **Living Your Strengths**

**N**early a decade ago, the Gallup Organization unveiled the results of a thirty-year research project that ignited a global conversation on the topic of strengths. More than three million people have participated in the StrengthsFinder<sup>®</sup> assessment program. Based on their discoveries, StrengthsFinder<sup>®</sup> identifies the keys to being a more effective leader through knowing your strengths and investing in others' strengths, getting people with the right strengths on

your team, and understanding and meeting the basic needs of those who look to people for leadership.

## **Discovering God's Vision for Your Life: You and Your Spiritual Gifts**

**T**he centerpiece of the *Discovering God's Vision for Your Life: You and Your Spiritual Gifts* process is a 6-hour course which serves three purposes: personal discovery, education about personal gifts and, motivation for ministry. Additional benefits include community building among participants and positive feelings that they develop toward their congregation.

## **Aspirancy Period**

**W**hen it has been confirmed that the applicant meets the basic foundation requirements for religious studies, the individual may be accepted into the Aspirancy period. The Aspirancy period is for those who wish to further discern a vocation to the diaconate. This period coordinates study and deeper experiences of the diaconate. If an applicant feels called to the diaconate and, if married and has his wife's support to proceed with the formation process, this is the time to submit a formal application to the diaconate formation program.

During the Aspirancy period, discernment of the individual's willingness and ability to make full commitment to the formation process continues.

In addition, the foundation for religious studies is completed during this time, which requires the individual's participation in the following programs or the equivalent through the office of *Adult Enrichment / Lay Ecclesial Ministries*:

<b>Aspirancy Period</b>	<b>Sessions</b>	<b>Class Hours</b>
Sacramental Theology	8 Weeks	16
Church History	10 Weeks	20
New Testament	8 Weeks	16
RCIA – Evangelization	5 Weeks	12.5
RCIA – Catechesis	5 Weeks	12.5
RCIA – Rituals for Christian Initiation	5 Weeks	12.5
RCIA – Mystagogy of Christian Initiation	5 Weeks	12.5
The Emerging Diaconate	1 Day	5.5

## **Course Descriptions**

### **Sacramental Theology**

**T**his course examines the theological basis of the sacramental system and presents an overview of the sacraments as celebrated in the Catholic Church. The study of symbols, rituals, and the psychosocial dynamics of sacramental celebration will be discussed. In addition, the course traces the theological, historical, pastoral, and practical development of,

adult and infant initiation in the Church along with the sacrament of healing. Topics to be considered include Baptism for infants, the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults, Confirmation, Reconciliation, and Anointing of the Sick. Special attention is given to the ministry of the permanent deacon in the sacramental life of the Church.

### **Church History**

**T**his course provides an overview of the history of the Catholic Church by tracing the roots of the Church from Pentecost through the Middle Ages, the Reformation, and the modern era up to the time of the Second Vatican Council. The course will examine the Church's structure, theological developments, important persons and movements, worship, Church councils and Fathers.

### **New Testament**

**T**his course presents a basic overview of New Testament theology and provides a basic understanding of the authors and enables the participants to be familiar with the practice and methods used in studying the New Testament. The individual writers are generally discussed to show how the New Testament is the fulfillment of the Old Testament. The candidates will be introduced to the content, composition, and theoretical emphases of the Synoptic Gospels as well as the Gospel of John. Attention will be given to major interpretive approaches and their presuppositions.

## **Evangelization**

**T**his course will explore the foundational understanding and practical dynamics of fostering faith growth through evangelization in ministry. Emphasis will be placed on (1) evangelization through outreach and invitation, (2) the nature, purposes and scope of Catholic evangelization, and its implications for ministry, and (3) skills for evangelization.

## **Catechesis**

**C**atechesis is that form of the ministry of the word that is intended to make people's faith become living, conscious, and active through the light of instruction. Since catechesis is directed to the baptized, it is life-long, calls for conversion, and is oriented to adults as well as children. This course explores catechetical principles stated in the *General Directory for Catechesis* and the *National Directory for Catechesis*.

## **Rituals of Christian Initiation**

**T**he sacraments of initiation (Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist) are examined and studied from the perspective of the reformed rites of the Church. The RCIA, its ritual, liturgical, and pastoral dimensions will be studied. Primary understanding will be given to a fundamental understanding of the Eucharist as the premier expression of what the Church is, and as the completion of the initiatory process.

## **Mystagogy of Christian Initiation**

**W**ith the celebration of the Paschal Mystery at Easter, a period of ongoing conversion should exemplify our lives. Traditionally, this period is called the mystagogia, a deepening of our understandings in the mysteries of our faith. For the newly initiated into the faith, this period is the final stage for the Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults. The early Church understood that the mysteries of faith that had been entrusted to the newly initiated needed time to "sink-in" and mature. This part of the course is meant to cultivate a dynamic appreciation of the Living Word, which speaks to all of us and enables us to share it with the newly initiated members of our faith community.

## **The Emerging Diaconate**

**B**ased on the Book *The Emerging Diaconate, Student Leaders in a Servant Church*, by Deacon William T.

Ditewig, Ph.D, this workshop offers a concise, insightful, historical, scriptural, and theological perspective on the diaconate and its practical pastoral impact in the contemporary church.



## **Candidacy Years**

**T**he goal of the candidacy period is to prepare the candidate for diaconal ordination. This period takes into consideration the four dimensions of the diaconate, Human Formation, Intellectual Formation, Spiritual Formation, and Pastoral Formation. Discernment continues through classroom instruction and practical ministry assignments. Candidacy is a period of three years.

## **Formal Application and the Selection Process**

**A**fter the aspirant has completed the equivalent of the foundation for religious studies as outlined for the Inquiry year and the Aspirancy period, he may submit an application request for candidacy. The application can be obtained from the diaconate office.

The formal selection process includes a review of the application materials, personal interviews with the applicant and his wife, psychological testing, and an interview by the Scrutinies and Evaluation Board.

The formal application, formal selection process, application materials, and the role of the applicant's wife in the application and selection process described as follows:

## Formal Application

**T**hree letters must be submitted as part of the application:

- A letter of recommendation from the applicant's pastor
- A personal, handwritten, and signed letter of consent from the applicant's wife (for the married applicant). A married applicant and his wife must arrange for a personal interview with the Associate Director of Formation
- A personal, handwritten, and signed letter prepared for the bishop requesting admission to the candidacy path of formation

The following **documentation** must also be submitted as part of the application:

- Completed Confidential Information Application
- Sacramental documentation:
  - ◊ Certificate of Baptism (copy not more than 6 months old)
  - ◊ Certificate of Confirmation
  - ◊ Certificate of Marriage from church where vows were exchanged (if married)
  - ◊ If applicable, Copy of Annulment and Civil Divorce papers
- Report of Physical Examination
- Recent photograph suitable for publication
- Criminal background check from the Pennsylvania State Police
- Pennsylvania Child Abuse History Clearance
- Academic transcripts from – High School, College and Post-Graduate Work

- If ex-religious, Letters of Recommendation and Release from Vows
- If former military, copy of Discharge/Retirement Orders

Following a review of the applicant's documentation materials by the Associate Director of Formation, the applicant (with his wife, as applicable) will be scheduled to participate in the required psychological evaluations. Those applicants who appear to meet the criteria as a result of the application materials and testing will be scheduled to meet with the Scrutiny and Evaluation Board. After the interview, a recommendation is made to the Bishop regarding acceptance. With the approval of the Bishop, the individual is formally accepted into the Candidacy Period of Formation in the Diaconal Formation Process.

After formal acceptance into the process, the Associate Director and the individual will discuss the process and the schedule for meeting all formation requirements.

### **The Screening and Selection Process**

**A**ll applications are reviewed by the Associate Director of Diaconal Formation and the members of the Scrutinies and Evaluation Board. The prospective candidate must be at least thirty-five (35) years of age at the time of ordination and no older than sixty (60) at the time of application. He must be recommended by the pastor of his parish.

If the prospective candidate is a convert to the Catholic faith, he must be professed at least 5 years and actively involved in his parish at that time. Married candidates must be married for at least 5 years and in a form recognized by the Church. He must be gainfully employed at least three (3) years.

At the time of ordination, an unmarried deacon commits to celibacy and a married man ordained to the diaconate may not remarry should his wife precede him in death. Whether married or single, a candidate must understand and commit to the celibacy requirement.

In addition to the canonical requirements outlined in this manual, the *National Directory for the Formation, Ministry, and Life of Permanent Deacons in the United States* directs that the applicants be screened with regard to their maturing Christian faith, personal integrity, holiness, regular participation in the sacramental life of the Church, evidence of commitment to the Church's life of service, and a stable marriage. There must not be any impediments to ordination.

## **Orientation**

**U**pon acceptance by the bishop, the candidate couples are invited to a diaconal retreat where they will meet the diaconal community, grow spiritually, and share fellowship.

## **Dimensions of Formation**

**E**ach phase of the formation process follows the guidelines of *National Directory for the Formation, Ministry, and Life of Permanent Deacons in the United States*. The guidelines focus on the four dimensions: human, spiritual, intellectual, and pastoral.

The **Human Dimension** focuses on cultivating human qualities that include the human virtues, the capacity to relate to other persons, and the formation of conscience through an understanding of Catholic morality.

The goals of the **Spiritual Dimension** are the deepening of prayer-life, the cultivation of a life of service, education in the Catholic spiritual tradition in classic spiritual writings of the Church Fathers, the lives of the saints, and contemporary developments in spirituality.

The **Intellectual Dimension** strives to provide an understanding of the essentials and practice of Christian doctrine and life so that the ministries of word, liturgy, and charity can be embraced. The education includes grounding in Sacred Scripture and other theological disciplines, liturgical studies, and homiletics. Special attention is given to the uniqueness of the Church in the United States, a focus on the

family, the multi-cultural aspects of the United States and an appreciation of ecumenism and interreligious dialogue.

Deacons must understand and strengthen the exercise of prophetic, priestly, and servant-leadership functions. In the **Pastoral Dimension** the Candidates are taught how to proclaim and teach the Christian message as well as lead others in communal celebrations of liturgical prayer. They must also learn how to witness to the Church in Christian service in ways that are marked by justice and charity. The Candidate builds confidence in his abilities and understands the importance of a realistic sense of his role and responsibilities.

### **The Role of the Wife**

Wives are encouraged to attend the formation classes and expected to attend the formation weekends. Whenever “wives only” events are scheduled as part of the formation weekend, it is important that they attend and participate in the event.

### **Ordination**

Assuming the candidate is selected for ordination, he and his wife (if married) are expected to make a four-day canonical retreat with other candidates who are to be ordained. Once the candidate is ordained he joins the ranks of the diaconal community. Following ordination, the bishop will assign him to a parish where he can begin his diaconal ministry.

## **Candidacy: Year 1 Courses**

### **Liturgical Principles**

**T**his course will explore the traditions of liturgical worship in the Catholic community and their relationship to catechesis. It will emphasize catechesis for and through liturgy and its application to parish life.

### **The Eucharistic Liturgy**

**T**his course examines the functions of the various elements of the Mass. Special attention is given to the structure of the Eucharist Prayer, the historical development of the Eucharist and its books, along with an appreciation for and understanding of the Church's teaching on the real presence of Christ in the sacrament.

### **Preparing Prayer Services in the Parish**

**T**his course examines the basic principles of preparing prayer services in the parish. Candidates will be expected to prepare and conduct a specialized prayer service as part of the course requirements.

### **Preparing Liturgies in the Parish**

**T**his course examines the basic liturgical principles of the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, Pope Benedict's *Sacramentum Caritatis*, and the U.S. Bishops newest document on liturgical music, among others. Candidates will learn ways to skillfully and creatively put these skills into practice as they prepare the sacred liturgy in parishes. In

addition, this course acquaints the permanent deacon candidate with the basic skills and level of comfort needed to perform liturgical ministry in different circumstances. The formation includes use of liturgical books, planning and executing liturgies, liturgical norms and guidelines for the diocese and use of vessels and vesture. Specific ritual actions addressed include liturgical proclamation, assisting at Eucharist, baptism, RCIA, marriage, vigil, and funeral services.

### **Moral Theology**

**M**oral theology is the study of God from a perspective of how man must live in order to attain the presence or favor of God. The goal or purpose of moral theology is to determine how man should live. Moral theology studies and examines such topics as freedom, conscience, love, responsibility, and law. Moral theology seeks to set forth general principles to help individuals make the right decisions and deal with the decisions of everyday life in a way that is in accordance with the Church's dogmatic theology. Moral theology attempts to define and set forth principles to help individuals live in accordance with the Roman Catholic Church. Moral theology deals with the broad questions in life, and attempts to define what it means to live as a Roman Catholic Christian. Moral theology seeks to define and address issues such as the different methods of moral discernment, the definitions of right and wrong, good and evil, sin and virtue,

etc. Special emphasis is given to the relationship of moral theology to other theological disciplines, the teaching of the Magisterium, and the centrality of conscience.

### **Paul, Rome and the Kingdom of God**

**T**his course explores fresh insights into Paul's message of the Kingdom of God, its challenge to Roman Imperial Theology, and the apostle's relevance for today. Participants will examine the growth of the early Church and the theological and cultural setting for Paul's writings in the early Church to gain insight into the reasons for his tremendous impact in the formation of Christian Doctrine.

### **Proclaiming Scripture**

**T**his course introduces students in pastoral ministry and diaconal formation to principles for effective preaching and includes a practicum for preaching at communion services, morning and evening prayer, vigil and funeral services, and other occasions.

### **Sacred Scripture Revisited**

**T**his course is a general introduction to the Scriptures through an analysis of their forms and content. Some emphasis will also be given to biblical scholarship, the nature of exegesis, hermeneutics and literary tools for biblical study.

## **Covenants of the Bible**

**O**ne of the most valuable "keys" for opening up the theological significance of the Bible -- of the whole of the story of the People of God – both Israel and the Church – is the concept of COVENANT. Recently, there has been a surge in the number of books and articles on the topic of the Biblical Covenants. J. Edward Owens, of St. John's Seminary, says: "In a modern world often governed by self-protective legal contracts, the theme of covenant remains an abiding reminder of the importance of loyalty and faithfulness in human relationships." Covenant does not equal contract. Covenant is a much broader, a much more inclusive, and a much richer term. After a brief General Introduction to the background and the phenomenon of biblical prophecy and its intimate relationship to the Theology of Salvation History, this course presents a survey of the following covenants:

- The Covenant with Adam and Eve (The Edenic and Adamic Covenants)
- The Covenant with Noah
- The Covenant with Abraham
- The Covenant with Moses
- The Covenant with David
- The "New Covenant"
- The New "Testament"

## **Exodus and the Paschal Event**

**S**alvation History is the backdrop against which this course is presented. The goal of the course is to introduce the students in a thematic way, to the biblical and theological concept of Exodus for Ancient Israel, the choice of the People of God for a specific function as God's "Chosen People" and the Paschal/Passover Events of the Old Testament as prefigurations of, and preparations for, the coming of the Messianic Savior, Jesus Christ. The parallels (figurative, thematic, liturgical, and theological) are highlighted between the Exodus and Passover Events of Israel in the Old Testament and the Paschal events of Jesus Christ (the Passion, Death and Resurrection) and the New Israel (the Church), which has been grafted onto and made a part of the old, through Him.

## **The Deacon's Wife**

**T**his course discusses the importance of the Deacon's wife from her initial letter of support to her ongoing acceptance and support of his diaconal ministry. As the wives of candidates prepare for the diaconal ministry, this program provides a variety of opportunities to nurture and enhance their spiritual and personal lives while they become more aware of the ministry of the permanent deacon.

## **Divisio Textus**

**D***ivisio textus* is an outline (or division) of an author's text. The purpose of the exercise is to read deeply and critically so as to determine the structure of an author's thought or argument. Typically, texts are divided into two or three parts, sub parts, etc., so the process entails breaking the text into its constitutive parts and grasping how the parts relate to the whole argument. *Divisio textus* is the ancient method of explicating theological text by identifying its division and order. Once the text is explicated, the student can formulate questions raised by the text and proceed to discuss key issues.

## **The Order of the Deacon Past and Present**

**T**his workshop is based on the book entitled, *The Order of Deacon Past & Present*, by LaRue H. Velott and the National Association of Diaconate Directors and provides a history of the diaconate and its evolution in the post-conciliar Church. It provides an historical background and base from which the permanent diaconate received its support throughout history.



## **Candidacy: Year 2 Courses**

### **Christian Bio-Ethics**

**T**his course examines contemporary issues and theological discussions about developments in medicine and biotechnology. The primary focus is on a study of magisterial teachings, but also includes discussion of the scientific, legal, and social dimensions of these issues.

### **Synoptic Gospels**

**T**his course assists the candidate in reading and understanding the Synoptic Gospels and their place in the development of the Church's faith tradition. The course considers each of the Synoptic Gospels in light of their particular theological and cultural setting as well as the relationship among them. Three basic themes are explored using the Synoptic Gospels as touchstones; faith in Jesus Christ, the identity of the Church, and ministry and service.

### **Church Social Teachings/Ministry I**

**T**his course entitled *Stephen Ministry* is a complete system for training and organizing people to provide one-to-one Christian care to hurting people in and around the congregation. Ministry I focuses on the basic skills needed to provide quality Christian care. The courses in Ministry I are as follows:

- *The Person of the Caregiver*
- *Feelings: Your, Mine, and Ours*
- *The Art of Listening*
- *Distinctively Christian Caring I*
- *Distinctively Christian Caring II*
- *Process versus Results in Caregiving*
- *Assertiveness: Relating Gently and Firmly I*
- *Assertiveness: Relating Gently and Firmly II*
- *Maintaining Boundaries in Caregiving.*
- *Crisis Theory and Practice: Danger versus Opportunity.*
- *Confidentiality*
- *Telecare: The Next Best Thing to Being There*
- *Using Mental Health Professionals and Other Community Resources*
- *Ministering to Those Experiencing Grief*
- *Dealing with Depression: The Stephen Minister's Role*
- *Helping Suicidal Persons Get the Help They Need*
- *Bringing the Caring Relationship to a Close*
- *Supervision: A Key to Quality Christian Care (Parts 1 and 2)*
- *How to Make a First Caring Visit*
- *Follow Me*

- *Ministry to the Dying, and Their Family and Friends*
- *Caring for People Before, During, and After Hospitalization.*
- *Ministering to Those Experiencing Losses Related to Aging, and Ministering to Persons Needing Long-Term Care,*
- *Ministering to Those Experiencing Divorce*
- *Crises of Pregnancy and Childbirth*
- *Providing Spiritual Care*

## **Wisdom Literature and Psalms**

**T**his course is a study of biblical Wisdom Literature and selected Psalms with a focus on their underlying message and the literary contribution of ancient Israel to world literature. The course will also present a careful study of the literary character and theological themes in the Book of Psalms.

## **Patrology**

**T**his course examines the lives and writings of the Fathers of the Church. It provides a study of major events of the internal and external history of the Church and the expansion of the Church. It also covers the topics of martyrdom, virginity, and monasticism, and early Christological and Trinitarian controversies.

## **Homiletics I**

**T**his course covers theoretical aspects of liturgical preaching including definitions of the homily, the place of the homily in the liturgical celebration, methods of preparation and sources for material. Candidates also learn to identify occasions for appropriate preaching, study the dynamics of preaching in these contexts and increase their skills for effective proclamation of the Gospel. It is designed for deacon candidates and stresses the theoretical and scriptural foundation for preaching. Using the principles enunciated in the American Bishops' document *Fulfilled in Your Hearing*, participants will deliver a series of homilies and seek the feedback and critique of the course instructor, their peers, and a group of observers selected by the instructor.

## **Ecclesiology**

**T**his course addresses the biblical, magisterial, and historical foundations of Church identity and leadership. Emphasis is placed on developing an understanding of the mission of the Church as evidenced at universal and local levels of Church life. The course also addresses the role of the deacon in the hierarchical structure of the Church.

## **Introduction to Canon Law**

**T**his course provides an introduction to the code of Canon Law in preparation for ministry in the Church. Areas of

consideration include the structure and history of canon law, general norms, sacramental law, diocesan and parish structures, marriage law, and the rights and obligations of the Christian faithful, with special emphasis on those related to the ministry of the permanent deacon.

## **Prophetic Literature**

**T**his course is designed to give the student a general introduction to the phenomenon of Biblical Prophecy and of the Biblical Prophets themselves. The first part of the course will be an overview of the phenomenon of biblical prophecy within its historical, social and cultural settings. We will then consider the various ways of categorizing prophets Christian traditions, true and false prophecy, prophets and prophetesses; how prophets were authenticated, revelation and prophecy, types or modalities of prophecy, the prophetic message, and the distinctive character of Israelite prophets. The course will focus briefly upon some of the Pre-literary Prophets and finally, select Literary Prophets who will be introduced and situated within their historical settings. Selected texts from the material attributed to these prophetic authors will be studied and their salient theological points will be highlighted.

## **Christian Anthropology and Grace**

**T**his course studies the human person in the light of Christian revelation and as open to the supernatural. It considers the human person as created, fallen, justified, and glorified. Included in this study are human experience, revelation, the dialectic between faith and reason, and *The Theology of the Body*.

## **The National Directory for the Formation, Ministry, and Life of Permanent Deacons in the United States**

**I**n June, 2003, the *National Directory for the Formation, Ministry, and Life of Permanent Deacons in the United States* was approved by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops and promulgated on December 26, 2004. Full implementation was granted on August 10, 2005 and it was renewed as of December, 26, 2009. The *National Directory* addresses the dimensions and perspectives in the formation of deacons and the model standards for the formation, ministry, and life of deacons in the United States. It is intended as a guideline for formation, ministry and life of permanent deacons and a directive to be utilized when preparing or updating a diaconate program formulating policies for the ministry and life of deacons. This workshop presents the details of the *National Directory* in order to enhance the understanding of the USCCB document.

## **Candidacy: Year 3 Courses**

### **Diaconal Liturgical Ministry I**

**T**his course is designed to develop the skills needed for permanent deacon candidates to assist at liturgical celebrations and to administer the sacraments that pertain to the Order of Deacon. The Order of the Mass, the various sacraments and rites, along with blessings and other prayer services will be studied in terms of their general instructions and prayers. Ample time is given for all the participants to experience presiding and assisting.

### **Diaconal Liturgical Ministry II**

**T**his course builds on and expands what has been learned in Diaconal Liturgical Ministry I with specific emphasis given to diocesan celebrations and functioning with the Bishop.

### **Homiletics II**

**T**his course builds on what was learned in Homiletics I by continuing to teach the candidate to identify occasions for appropriate preaching and studies the dynamics of preaching in these contexts to increase their skills for effective proclamation of the Gospel.

### **Church Social Teachings/Ministry II**

**B**uilding upon **Church Social Teachings/Ministry I**, this course applies the basic skills of Christian caregiving to specific life crises. Participants will learn the proper behavior for dealing with those experiencing a variety of life crises.

## **The Writings of John**

**T**his course considers the theology and spirituality of the Church as expressed in the Fourth Gospel. Attention is given to the theological and cultural setting of John's Gospel as well as the principle images and themes concerning Jesus and the Church found in the Gospel. The special vocabulary and spiritual program of John will be considered. Literary, structural, and theological topics will also be examined as will the position of the Johannine Church in the early Christian community.

## **Canonical Aspects of Marriage I & II**

**B**uilding upon the foundational understandings of the Code of Canon Law given in the **Introduction to Canon Law**, this course gives an in-depth treatment of the theology of marriage contained in the code. Canonical concerns about catechesis and preparation for marriage are addressed. The theoretical underpinnings and process for a declaration of nullity receives detailed concentration, as well as the forms and pastoral style needed to minister well to those who seek to have the status of their marriages reviewed by the Church.

## **Christology**

**I**t examines the topics of The Mystery of Christ in Sacred Scripture, Old Testament foundations and the Christ event in the New Testament and the early Christian community, the Mystery of Christ in the history of the Church, patristic and

conciliar Christology and Christology in the history of theology until Vatican II. It also discusses the hypostatic union, the pre-existence of the Word, the virginal conception, the freedom and sinlessness of Jesus, and the universality of the salvific work of Christ.

### **Trinity**

**T**his course is a systematic, historical, and theological study of the Church's confession in One God who is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Attention is given to the Trinitarian character of the Church's worship and theology as grounded in Sacred Scripture as well as the apostolic tradition of the ecumenical councils of Nicaea I and Constantinople I. Special attention is given to the developing Trinitarian theology of the second to the fifth centuries in Irenaeus, Hippolytus, Tertullian, the Cappadocian Fathers, and Augustine.

### **Mariology**

**T**his course presents a balanced exploration of the development of the role of Mariology in the Catholic tradition in a way that is respectful to both devotion and honest academic inquiry.

## **Building Parish Unity**

**T**his course discusses the various ways the permanent deacon can have a positive influence in the parish. The focus is on the many ways the deacon can fulfill his role of *diakonia* to the parishioners, the pastoral staff, and the pastor.

## **Caring Evangelism**

**T**his course is designed to help Christians share their faith with others naturally and comfortably. Beginning with a distinctive approach to "evangelizing the evangelist," the course strengthens participants' own relationship with Christ. As participants grow spiritually, they are equipped to share Christ's love in their daily lives by words and actions that others welcome.

## **Caring for Inactive Members**

**T**he workshop *Caring for Inactive Members: How to Make God's House a Home* has a threefold approach to dealing with the whole area of church inactivity. First, prevention of church inactivity is ideal. Second, many times, ministry to inactive members is necessary to help them sift through some of their feelings, attitudes, and struggles within the church, as well as to nurture them in their hurts. These ministry processes can often pave the way for their return. Third, the congregation must be prepared to welcome home

inactive members when they return. These three—prevention, ministry, and welcoming home—form a tripod of stability for many of the mission and ministry efforts in the church. This course is grounded in listening, focusing on needs, hurts, and feelings of inactive members. This is not a course in sales techniques or cunning ways to manipulate others. If individuals are going to come back to church—and a spark of commitment or interest often still exists—those individuals must first be nurtured.

### **The Deacon at Mass**

**T**his presentation reviews all of the aspects of the deacon's participation at Mass and is part of the four-presentation series developed that focuses on the various aspects of the permanent diaconate.

## Prayer To The Blessed Virgin Mary

**MARY,**

Who as teacher of faith, by your obedience to the word of God, has co-operated in a remarkable way with the work of redemption, make the ministry of deacons effective by teaching them to hear the Word and to proclaim it faithfully.



**MARY,**

Teacher of charity, who by your total openness to God's call, has co-operated in bringing to birth all the Church's faithful, make the ministry and the life of deacons fruitful by teaching them to give themselves totally to the service of the People of God.

**MARY,**

Teacher of prayer, who through your maternal intercession has supported and helped the Church from her beginnings, make deacons always attentive to the needs of the faithful by teaching them to come to know the value of prayer.

**MARY,**

Teacher of humility, by constantly knowing yourself to be the servant of the Lord you were filled with the Holy Spirit, make deacons docile instruments in Christ's work of redemption by teaching them the greatness of being the least of all.

**MARY,**

Teacher of that service which is hidden, who by your everyday and ordinary life filled with love, knew how to co-operate with the salvific plan of God in an exemplary fashion, make deacons good and faithful servants, by teaching them the joy of serving the Church with an ardent love.

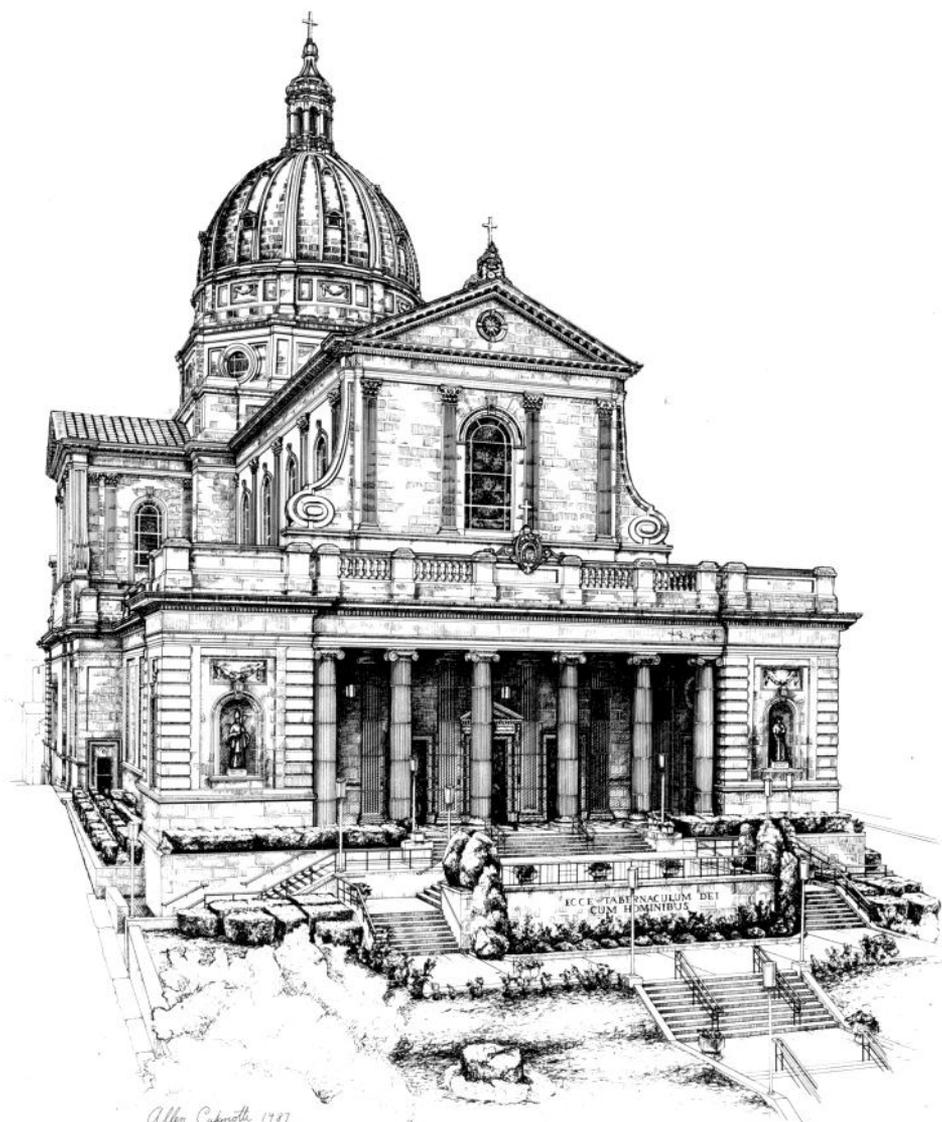
**AMEN**

The Office of Diaconate Formation, Ministry & Life oversees the candidates during their process toward ordination and helps coordinate ongoing formation and assignments after ordination. These ordained ministers are an increasingly crucial support to the liturgical and social life of the Diocesan Church.

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Allen Capinelli 1927