

# THE DEACON MANUAL

Diocese of Pueblo

*Guidelines*

*September 1, 1999*

*Updated: February 2, 2009*



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

[Letter of Promulgation](#)

[Preface](#)

- A. [History and Role of the Deacon](#)
- B. [The Community of Deacons and the Diaconal Council](#)
- C. [Pastoral and Professional Relationships](#)
- D. [Recruitment and Formation](#)
- E. [Assignments and Faculties](#)
- F. [The Deacon and Liturgy](#)
- G. [Incardination and Excardination](#)
- H. [Finances](#)
- I. [Marital Problems](#)
- J. [Leaves of Absence and Retirement](#)
- K. [The Death and Funerals of Deacons](#)

[Appendix I. Job Description of the Deacon Director](#)

[Appendix II. Sample Ministry Agreement for Deacons](#)

[Appendix III. Aspirancy Handbook](#)

[Appendix IV. Candidate Handbook](#)

February 19, 2009

My brothers and sisters in Christ,

With this letter, I promulgate *The Deacon Manual* as a set of guidelines for the life and ministry of permanent deacons who are ministering in the Diocese of Pueblo.

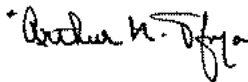
Over the past few years, we have been blessed with an increasing number of permanent deacons moving into our diocese. Coming from all over the country, they have brought with them a wealth of ministerial skills and experience. It is clear that the life and ministry of the deacons is different in many ways than the ministry of priests or the ministry of ecclesial lay ministers. Furthermore, we are seeing our own deacon candidates approaching ordination, and look forward to their ministry of service in the Diocese of Pueblo.

With this in mind, I asked the Deacon Formation Council to draw up a set of guidelines for the life and ministry of permanent deacons ministering in the Diocese of Pueblo.

In February of 1998, the Congregation for Catholic Education and the Congregation for the Clergy published two related documents: *Basic Norms for the Formation of Permanent Deacons* and *Directory for the Ministry and Life of Permanent Deacons*. These two documents are adapted to the guidelines of the bishops of the United States. This *Deacon Manual* can be adapted as a definitive set of guidelines.

May we all come to appreciate our baptismal call to service in the Kingdom of God.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Arthur N. Tafoya". The signature is written in a cursive style with a small cross at the beginning.

+Arthur N. Tafoya, D.D.  
Bishop of Pueblo

## **PREFACE**

The primary goal of this handbook is to assist each deacon in providing the best possible ministry to the People of God in the Diocese of Pueblo. If this goal is to be achieved, the deacon must be well informed and adequately trained, both spiritually and academically. Each deacon should also be able to expect and receive support, encouragement, and challenges from his bishop, as well as from his brother deacons and priests, as he performs the ministerial duties for which he was ordained.

To make the best possible use of the gifts and talents of the deacons ministering in the Diocese of Pueblo, this handbook is also intended to assist our Bishop, his Vicars, Pastors, Parish Directors, and all the Directors and personnel of the Catholic Pastoral Center.

## **ABBREVIATIONS**

*CIC*                *Code of Canon Law, 1983*

*GIRM*             *General Instruction of the Roman Missal, 1985 edition*

*PDUS*            *Permanent Deacons in the United States: Guidelines on Their Formation and Ministry, Bishops' Committee on the Permanent Diaconate, 1984 Revision (Washington, D.C.: National Council of Catholic Bishops, 1985)*

## A. HISTORY AND ROLE OF THE DEACON

### History

Every Christian is called to take part in the mission of the Church. That mission has its roots and origin in Baptism and in the call from Jesus to share the faith. Among those whom the Holy Spirit calls to serve the Church are those who receive the grace of permanent commitment to the ministry of service and Church leadership. On some of these, the Church bestows the sacrament of Holy Orders. This sign and sacrament distinguishes them as official public ministers of the Church. The recipients of this sacrament are the bishop, priest and deacon.

The order of deacon had its origins in apostolic times and flourished for the first four centuries.

*“In those days as the number of disciples grew,  
the ones who spoke Greek  
complained that their widows were being neglected  
in the daily distribution of food,  
as compared with the widows of those who spoke Hebrew.  
The twelve assembled the community of the disciples and said,  
‘It is not right for us to neglect the word of God in order to wait on tables.  
look around among your own number, brothers,  
for seven men acknowledged to be deeply spiritual and prudent,  
and we shall appoint them to this task.  
This will permit us to concentrate on prayer  
and the ministry of the word.’  
The proposal was unanimously accepted by the community.  
Following this they selected Stephen, a man filled with the Holy Spirit;  
Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas,  
and Nicholas of Antioch, who had been a convert to Judaism.  
They presented these men to the apostles,  
who first prayed over them,  
and then imposed hands on them.”  
(Acts 6:1-6)*

The next four centuries saw the rise and the fall of the diaconate as a permanent state of life and ministry within the Church. The end of this particular ministry came in 343 when the Council of Sardica declared that this order would become a traditional step toward the priesthood. It was not until Vatican II, In Article 29 of *Lumen Gentium* (The Dogmatic Constitution on the Church) that the restoration of the diaconate as a permanent order would be accomplished in the Roman Church.

On the feast of St. Ephrem the Deacon, June 18, 1967, Pope Paul VI, in accord with the will of Vatican II, restored the Order of Deacon as a permanent ministry in the Church in the *motu proprio*, “Sacrum Diaconatus Ordinem.” On April 23, 1968, the

American Bishops petitioned for the restoration of the Permanent Diaconate in the United States: “to complete the hierarchy of sacred orders and to enrich and strengthen the various diaconal ministries at work in the United States with the sacramental grace of the diaconate.” This request was granted in August of the same year.

In the Diocese of Pueblo, the permanent diaconate was not actively pursued in favor of lay ministry training. But after some years, it was apparent that the Order of Deacon could be a complement to the many other ministries already at work in the diocese. In the fall of 1995 the first recruitment program was begun and a Deacon Formation Council was appointed by Bishop Tafoya. Candidates who were accepted began their formation in September of 1996 – most in the program of the Archdiocese of Denver, and two in the program of the Diocese of Gallup. In September 2001, the Diocese of Pueblo began their deacon formation program at the Holy Cross Abbey in Canon City, Colorado.

### **The Role of the Deacon Today: A ministry of service.**

While service to God’s redemptive plan and taking an active part in society belongs to the baptismal mission of every Christian, the permanent deacon has a special witness to give. The deacon is a representative symbol of the inner connections of the three great areas of the church’s life: mercy and justice, Word, and sacraments.

#### The Ministry of Mercy and Justice.

From the very beginning, and particularly during the first centuries, the diaconate has been primarily a ministry of mercy and justice. Early deacons were concerned with the widow and orphan: the sick, the dead, and those who mourned; immigrants and exiles; the homeless and the hungry. In 1981, a survey of the ministries of deacons in the United States discovered that, among others, deacons serve abused children, the aged, battered women, the bereaved, the blind, the deaf, the divorced, the dying, the handicapped, the ill, prisoners, refugees, the rural poor, street people, victims of racial discrimination, etc. Deacons are serving these people in the name of the Church, representing the care of Jesus himself. “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.” [italics added] (PDUS #36 & #37).

#### The Ministry of the Word.

“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.” (PDUS # 39)

### The Ministry of the Sacraments.

“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 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 role the grounding of the Church’s life in the Eucharist and the mission of the Church in the loving service of the needy.” (PDUS #28)

## **B. THE COMMUNITY OF DEACONS AND THE DIACONAL COUNCIL**

“It is part of the meaning of ordination that a man is, by this sacrament, brought into the *ordo* or body of ordained ministers. A communal element is thus essential to ordination and to the exercise of ordained ministry. The mutual support and fraternity of deacons are not just sociologically or psychologically useful things; they are integral parts of the meaning of their vocation.” (PDUS #124)

“As the diaconal ministry matures in a diocese, it is only natural that deacons be brought into the process of planning, directing, and evaluating the program.” (PDUS #126)

The community of deacons should include those incardinated into the Diocese of Pueblo and those not incardinated, but ministering with faculties. It should also include representation of their wives, and perhaps at some time in the future, widows of deacons.

### **The Deacon Director**

The Deacon Director is appointed by the Bishop to coordinate the formation of deacon candidates and life and ministry of the deacons ministering within the Diocese of Pueblo. Ideally, this position will be held by a deacon. But if there are no deacons available and/or qualified to be Deacon Director, then the Bishop will appoint a priest, religious, or lay person as an interim director until such time as an available and/or qualified deacon can be found. Normally this will be a salaried position. A job description can be found in Appendix I.

### **The Diaconal Council**

The Diaconal Council is established to serve as an advisory body to the Bishop on matters concerning diaconal ministry and life in the Diocese of Pueblo. It constitutes the forum by which input from deacons and their families is communicated, discussed and acted upon by the deacon community at large. The Council shall represent the deacon community in its dealings with the Bishop, the Deacon Director, and other diocesan staff, councils, and agencies.

The Bishop of Pueblo is *ex officio* the president of the Diaconal Council. Ordinarily, the Bishop delegates a member of the council (usually the Deacon Director) to coordinate the meetings of the Council and its agenda, as well as to preside over its meetings. In matters of significant importance, the Bishop may choose to preside over the proceedings of the Council. The specific goals and objectives of the Council are determined by the Bishop, in most cases after listening to input from the Council itself.

The Bishop may appoint a Diaconal Council consisting of appointees of his own choosing with a minimum of one deacon from each deanery. Some of these need not be deacons (e.g. formation personnel, a deacon's wife).

The Diaconal Council has drawn up by-laws for its operation, based on the diaconal directory for the United States.

### **The Deacon Formation Council**

The Deacon Formation Council is a separate body established by the Bishop of Pueblo to advise him on matters pertaining to the formation of deacons and to coordinate the formation of future deacon classes.

## **C. PASTORAL AND PROFESSIONAL RELATIONSHIPS**

### **The Bishop**

“A deacon is ordained for service of a diocesan Church. Ordained by its bishop, the deacon stands in a direct relationship with his diocesan bishop, in communion with whom and under whose authority he exercises his ministry. By virtue of his ordination, a deacon is canonically incardinated into a specific diocese.” (PDUS #115)

The deacons of the Diocese of Pueblo are accountable to their Bishop for their ministry. Permanent deacons, localized because of their canonical assignments, are extensions of the Bishop’s pastoral care of the entire flock. Thus, there needs to be a close relationship between the Bishop and the deacons ordained for his service and bound to him by obedience. This relationship should be characterized by open and frequent communication about the respective needs of the Diocese on the one hand, and those of the Deacon Community on the other.

### **The Presbyterate**

Although deacons in the Diocese of Pueblo are assigned by the Bishop and remain ultimately accountable to him, their immediate supervision is most often a pastor or another priest in order to carry out the mission of the diocese.

“Deacons exercise their distinct ministry in communion not only with the bishop but also with priests. The priesthood and the diaconate are neither identical nor competitive, but rather, complementary ministries. The diaconate is not an abridged form of the priesthood, but a distinct and full order in its own right. Both priests and deacons should understand, then, that the diaconate is not to be thought of or exercised on the model of the priesthood. Deacons and priests should have a genuine respect for each other and for the integrity of the two distinct ministries. For the good of the Church, the two ministries must be exercised in communion with one another.” (PDUS #121)

Appropriate and adequate communication is indispensable for a fruitful relationship between priest and deacon. Mutual respect, fraternal unity, freedom, and honesty are of paramount importance. It would be wrong to foster a sense of identity between priests and deacons; what should be nurtured is the recognition of the real interdependence between the two orders as they strive to accomplish Christ’s mission through his Church.

### **The Laity**

The deacons of the Diocese of Pueblo must always remember that the same Second Vatican Council that restored the permanent diaconate also gave great impetus to the empowerment of the laity in the affairs of the Church. One major accomplishment of Vatican II must not impede another.

Deacons should consider it an important part of their ministries to facilitate the active participation of the laity in all aspects of Church life. This collaborative ministry is the right of the laity by virtue of their baptism, confirmation, and individual charisms. The deacon holds a position from which he can most appropriately serve as liaison, promoter, and integrator of all the varied activities within the Church – but most especially in the ministries of charity and justice.

### **Brother Deacons**

Each deacon of the Diocese of Pueblo should maintain a loving, fraternal relationship with every other deacon. Together, they should exemplify diaconal service to one another. Whether active in ministry on a part-time or full-time basis, whether assigned at the parish or diocesan level, whether urban or rural, whether newly ordained or with many years of service to the diocese – all are deacons, servants of the People of God in the Diocese of Pueblo.

### **Family**

For centuries, the Latin Church has had the experience of only celibate ordained ministers. Experience of ordained ministers who are married is recent. Special attention must be given to the mutual relationship between the sacrament of marriage and the sacrament of order. It is apparent that self-giving love is at the heart of both the sacrament of marriage and the sacrament of orders. Deacons and their wives need to appreciate the potential for an integrated spirituality that relates the two sacraments.

“A married deacon must never lose sight of a practical order of priorities: the sacrament of matrimony precedes the sacrament of orders, and thus established a practical priority in the deacon’s life. Consequently, he must be able to support his wife and family before he can be acceptable as an ordained minister. The marriage bond should be enriched by the sacrament of orders, just as public ministry is enriched by married ordained ministers of the Gospel.” (PDUS #107)

“The wife of the deacon may become involved in a type of team ministry with her deacon husband. On the other hand, she may already be involved in a distinct ministry apart from the diaconal ministry of her husband. Having experienced the formation process of her husband, she may now wish to consider a type of ministry she had not foreseen but for which she is now significantly qualified.” (PDUS #111) Pastors and other ministry supervisors in the Diocese of Pueblo should recognize the ministerial potential present in the wives of ordained deacons. Should they choose to offer themselves in ministry, this potential should be utilized in an appropriate manner.

“Insofar as possible, depending upon their ages, the children should be informed and involved in the formation of their candidate father. This should be to the extent that they are interested and appreciate to what degree their lives will be affected by his ordination.” (PDUS #112)

The Code of Canon Law preserves the ancient tradition whereby a married deacon who has been widowed may not marry again. However, for the good of the Church or the family of the deacon, the Holy See may grant a dispensation.

Widows of permanent deacons should be offered consolation, understanding, and emotional support from the Deacon Community and the diocese as a whole. They are still considered a part of that Community, and their gifts and wisdom should be considered a treasure.

## **Conflict Resolution**

Virtually all human experience suggests that the best avenue for conflict resolution is to attempt reconciliation at the lowest level possible. The application of this principle of subsidiarity has roots not only in Scripture, but also in the documents of Vatican II and in the Code of Canon Law.

Because the deacon is a public figure in the Church, and is therefore regarded by many as one of its official spokesman, he must exercise extraordinary discretion in situations when conflicts arise, whether he is a principle party in the dispute, or an advocate for one side or another.

Perhaps the most common and vexing example of a conflict involving a deacon is one between a deacon and his pastor or supervisor. The lowest level at which this particular conflict can and should be resolved is between the deacon and the pastor/supervisor. This means, among other things, that the deacon should not escalate his grievance to a higher level of supervision without first having sat down in charity with his pastor/supervisor first. However, should this not bring a mutually acceptable conclusion, then the deacon should prayerfully consider whether the matter is of such importance as to demand bringing it to the Deacon Director. The deacon Director then will attempt to resolve the conflict between the deacon and the pastor/supervisor. In the event that the Deacon Director is unable to resolve the conflict, he will then bring the issue to the Bishop, who will seek a final resolution of the conflict.

## D. RECRUITMENT FOR THE DIACONATE

### Timeline for the Recruitment Process

The recruitment process begins approximately one year before a new deacon class begins formation.

- **September:** “Deacon Sunday” materials are sent to all pastors, parish directors and Parish Pastoral Councils. The date will have been set and promoted the previous spring. Those individuals who have already expressed an interest in the diaconate are contacted.
- **November:** “Deacon Sunday” takes place throughout the diocese.
- **November-January:** Information nights are held in each deanery regarding training, formation and commitment. Parish interviews begin with applicants. Names of suitable applicants are forwarded to the Director of Deacon Formation, who sends them application forms and other materials.
- **January-May:** Applications are received and processed by the Deacon Formation Council. Recommendations are sent to the Bishop.
- **September:** Candidates begin formation.

### Admission Requirements

The Order of Deacon is open to qualified married or single men. To help assure that a permanent deacon can fulfill his responsibilities and meet the demands of ministry, the Diocese of Pueblo requires the following qualities in a prospective candidate:

- Demonstrates a solid faith in God.
- Clear understanding of the Church its current teaching and role in today’s world.
- Sense of call to serve the People of God as a deacon.
- Understanding and willingness to accept the demands of a lifelong commitment to diaconal ministry in the Church.

A prospective candidate is expected to give evidence, through various materials submitted in the application process, of the following:

- At least 31 years of age and no older than 60 years of age at the start of formation.
- Active participation in the Catholic faith.\*
- Received the sacrament of Baptism, Confirmation, and Matrimony (if married), all within the Catholic Church. \*\*
- Record of service in the Church, with some demonstrated leadership roles
- Active service in their parish.\*\*\*
- Approval and support of the parish (e.g. pastor, parish pastoral council)
- Sufficient economic security and job stability

- Good physical and psychological health
- Personal and psychological stability
- Ability to work well with others
- Openness to ongoing personal and spiritual growth
- Must have at least minimal, a high school education or GED Equivalent with the ability to handle college level work
- If the applicant is single – the commitment to a celibate life
- If the applicant is married – evidence of a stable and growing marriage; the understanding, approval, and support of his wife of the diaconal commitment; and the understanding that if the wife dies, the deacon will remain celibate

\* Those who were baptized or received into the Church as adults must show active participation in the Church for a period of no less than five years before making application.

\*\* Those previously married outside the Church must be living in a valid (i.e. sacramental) marriage for a period of no less than five years before making application.

\*\*\* Recorded service in active ministry for at least a minimum of two (2) years.

### **Application Process**

Prospective candidates take part in the application process by completing the following:

- Interview with the pastor and a parish council member. If they make a positive recommendation, the prospect continues with the process.
- Both the prospective candidate and his wife will fill out application forms. He will also be required to have at least four other recommendations.
- Both the prospective candidate and his wife must attach all required documents to include resolution of any irregularities and impediments.
- Both the prospective candidate and his wife are required to take a psychological examination designated by a diocesan provider. This is paid by the diocese.
- The candidate will also take a physical examination with their physician. Cost to be paid by the applicant.
- Interview with the Director of Deacon Formation.
- Interview with a deacon and his wife.

The Deacon Formation Council reviews all the materials and makes a recommendation (positive or negative) to the Bishop regarding the prospect's suitability for acceptance. The prospective candidate is informed of the decision.

N.B. If at any time during the application process, it becomes apparent that the applicant does not meet the requirements, he will be informed as soon as possible.

## **FORMATION FOR THE DIACONATE**

### **Place of Formation**

At this time, formation for the diaconate takes place at the Holy Cross Abbey in Canon City, Colorado . This may change in the future.

### **General Remarks about Diaconate Formation**

Formation for the diaconate in the Diocese of Pueblo has four important characteristics:

- it is primarily pastoral in orientation
- it is theologically sound and well integrated
- is adapted to the needs and resources of the Diocese of Pueblo.
- it is grounded in a spirituality of service, as particularly reflected in the works of charity and justice

Deacons are ordained for **service**. Just as the ability to serve is an important part of the admission process, so will the needs of the Church for service direct the formation of deacon candidates.

The formation must be well integrated. The pastoral, theological, and spiritual elements of formation do not exist as separate departments. These three elements must be so interrelated that they promote a living integration in the exercise of diaconal ministry.

The wife and family of the candidate will be involved in the various aspects of the formation program. Familial relationships are bound to be influenced by the commitments that the deacon makes. By having his wife and family involved from the very beginning of formation, diaconal commitments and family relationships will enrich and confirm one another.

Formation for the diaconate for the Diocese of Pueblo will be a four year program, which include pastoral and non-pastoral training. Non-pastoral training will begin at the end of the second year of formation and continue through the end of the third year. Pastoral Training will take place at the end of the third year and continue through the fourth year leading to possible ordination. Only the bishop may dispense from any of these requirements.

### **INQUIRY LEVEL**

#### **DEMONSTRATED STANDARDS OF READINESS**

As a result of the Application, Inquiry and Discernment experiences the successful Inquirer will be able to demonstrate the following minimum abilities or skills:

### **Human Dimension**

1. Speak appropriately of his personal limitations and known boundaries with a sense of how these affect his life, family, employment, and present service ministry.
2. Balance and prioritize his commitments to family, work, leisure, and ministry, to be self disciplined.

### **Spiritual Dimension**

3. Reflect/Meditate in faith on his life with a sense of discovering God's will.
4. Convey examples of God's presence in his life.
5. Commit to serve his parish community, especially in charity and outreach to the needy to be responsible and confident.
6. Be both a leader and a follower.
7. Fulfill a commitment to a pattern of prayer; to participate frequently in the Eucharist and the Sacrament of Reconciliation; to participate in retreat experiences.
8. Support others' growth in prayer, to show interest in sharing and serving with others.

### **Intellectual Dimension**

9. Demonstrate familiarity with the Catechism of the Catholic Church

### **Pastoral Dimension**

10. Connect the teachings of the Church to daily living and his personal/communal (family, church, civic) responsibilities.
11. Be flexible in attitude and behavior; to be open to change; to analyze situations in light of the Gospel and the Church's teaching.

### **Diaconal Ministry**

12. Witness to gospel values in ways that are life-giving, to articulate his sense of a call to the Diaconate primarily because of the needs of the Church, as well as for personal growth, and to articulate reasons that support his desire to be a Deacon
13. Be interested in and attracted to the Diaconal *munera* of word, liturgy, and charity.
14. Be of service, beyond liturgical ministries, through church or civic involvement
15. Support and encourage his pastor, as a representative for the parish community and staff.
16. Be docile to the presence of the Holy Spirit throughout the application and screening processes, acknowledging that ultimately it is the Church that verifies the call.

### **Pastoral Formation**

The formation process has a pastoral focus. Its immediate concern is to provide the necessary knowledge, sensitivities, and skills for the special ministries of service. The program recognizes that the candidate has already had some involvement in service ministries, and builds upon those previously displayed talents and skills.

In addition, the formation process aims at helping the candidate continue discovering their talents and developing new skills necessary for ministry. At the end of the formation process, the candidate should have both a genuine confidence in his abilities and a realistic sense of his own limitations.

During formation, the candidate will exercise any pastoral ministry open to the laity, but he is cautioned not to take on additional ministries for which he has not been properly trained, nor which give the appearance of his having a special role in his community. During formation, the candidate will be involved in parochial and non-parochial supervised ministry. This will give the candidate not only a sense of the needs and mission of the local church, but will also help him discern his particular talents and skills. These experiences will include theological reflection as a means of integrating theory and practice. A supervisor assigned to the candidate will do monthly evaluations and meet on a monthly basis with feedback given to the candidate .

In addition to the theological courses being offered, courses directed to skillful pastoral practice will be developed and implemented by the Deacon Director. Areas of focus will include the following:

- Self-knowledge and inter-relational skills appropriate to effective ministry.
- Liturgical practice
- Skills for effective preaching
- Principles of Christian social justice and works of mercy.
- An introduction to the principles of counseling, parish social ministry, and community organization, as they apply to the situation of the local Church.
- Canonical and pastoral administration principles, especially for those who anticipate having the pastoral care of parish communities.
- Multi-cultural awareness, especially as experienced within the Diocese of Pueblo.
- Mentorship Program

The demonstration of pastoral skills by the candidate is a crucial element in the evaluation of his fitness for ordination. This will be done during the pastoral year and reviewed by their supervisor and Deacon Director and his Associate Director.

### **Theological Formation**

Theology will be oriented toward ministry, providing the candidate with the knowledge and appreciation of the faith that he needs in order to be able to carry out his ministry of Word, sacrament, and service. It will also promote the deacons' lifelong effort to reflect on his ministry in the light of faith.

It will make use of the methods and processes of adult education. The candidate will be invited to draw and reflect upon his adult life and faith experiences.

Theological formation will take into account the general needs of diaconal service in the communities for which a man is to be ordained. It also will be constructed in such a way that a candidate can evaluate his society and culture in the light of the Gospel and understand the Gospel in light of the particular society and culture in which he will be serving.

Theology is designed to communicate a knowledge of the faith and church traditions in such a way that the candidate will become a knowledgeable and reliable witness to the faith and spokesman for the Church's teaching. Among the specific areas covered are:

- Sacred Scripture
- Basic Dogmas and Doctrines
- Moral Theology
- Ecclesiology
- Sacramental and Liturgical Theology
- Church History
- Christology

Particular course requirements are published by the director of the formation program, and are in compliance with the guidelines issued by the National Conference of Catholic Bishops. Candidates are held accountable for their performance in their theological formation. How this is accomplished is left up to the judgment of those responsible for the program.

### **Spiritual Formation**

The spiritual formation program is conceived and designed as the element that integrates pastoral and theological formation dimensions. The candidate is prepared in such a way that his life as the Church's minister forms an integration of skills, commitment, and devotion to Christ and the Church. Founded on his baptism, and centered on the Paschal Mystery, his faith constantly will be nourished by reading and meditation of Scripture, and regular participation in the sacraments of Eucharist and Reconciliation.

Spiritual formation will build the candidate's previous adult Christian experience and commitments, especially, in the case of married deacons, their commitment to wife and family. The program is intended to form the candidate in such a way that, as the Church's minister, his life reflects an integrated whole of skills, commitment and devotion to Christ, the Church, and the people of God. A man will not be admitted to the program who has not demonstrated the personal integrity and maturity, as well as the Christian commitment and generosity that make him a likely candidate for ministry. The program presumes his Christian adulthood and seriousness. The varying quality and depth of these characteristics are taken into account in helping the candidate grow in self-knowledge, commitment, and dedication to service.

One of the chief aims of the spiritual formation program will be to assist the candidate to achieve a spiritual integration of his life and ministry. As most candidates are married men with secular occupations, a spiritual life in which ministry, family, and occupation enrich and confirm one another, are necessary and of paramount concern. For this reason, the wife of the candidate will be closely involved in the activities of spiritual formation. This common participation is intended to strengthen and enrich their marriage.

The spiritual program will cover the following areas:

- Prayer experiences covering traditional and contemporary spiritualities
  - Weekend retreats and days of recollection
  - Diaconal vocation and the spirituality of service
  - Spirituality of marriage
- 
- Eucharistic and sacramental spirituality
  - The practice of spiritual direction.
  - Mariology
  - Celibacy

Candidates will be introduced to and expected to pray the Liturgy of the Hours. Deacons are expected to know the nature and structure of the Hours and be able to lead it publicly.

At their ordination, deacons make a lifelong promise of respect and obedience to their diocesan bishop and his successors. The spiritual formation program will explore with the candidate the nature and extent of this obligation and its implication for their ministry, marriage, and personal spiritual life.

From the beginning of formation, the candidate is required to secure the assistance of a personal spiritual director as an aid to spiritual reflection and growth. The director must be qualified, in the sense of having the training or experience necessary for guiding another in spiritual matters. The director may not be the candidate's pastor or pastoral supervisor, in order to insure the separation between the internal and external forum. Exceptions to this will be handled on a case by case basis.

During formation, at times determined by the formation program, the candidates will petition the bishop for, and upon his approval, will: 1) make an official declaration of their Candidacy, 2) be installed into the Ministry of Lector, and 3) be installed into the Ministry of Acolyte. These are official steps toward ministry and will not be taken unless the candidate has shown sufficient progress in his formation. The spiritual formation program will explore the meaning of these steps with the candidates.

Unmarried men, upon ordination, make a lifetime commitment to celibacy. Special provisions will be made in the program to prepare them for the celibate life.

## **Evaluations**

Each semester, evaluations of the candidate will be made and communicated to him and the bishop each year during the formation program. These evaluations will review the candidates performance in the area dimensions of human, spiritual,

intellectual, pastoral, and are carried out by those responsible for the formation program. These evaluations are also communicated to the Director of Deacon Formation.

These evaluation are intended to be valuable occasions for the candidate's development and discernment of a vocation.

Areas of the candidate's formation needing special attention or have become a cause for serious concern will be communicated to the candidate by the Diocesan Director after being brought to his attention. After consultation with the Deacon Formation Committee and those responsible for the program, a plan to address the areas of concern will be discussed with the candidate and implemented.

Should it become necessary to dismiss a candidate from the formation program, this decision will be communicated to him, in person, as soon as possible. A candidate may appeal this decision to the bishop of the Diocese of Pueblo.

### **Ministries and Candidacy**

At a time determined by the formation program, the candidates will be recommended for the ministries of Reader and Acolyte, as well as for the formal declaration of Candidacy for Orders. When recommendations for these important steps are received by the Deacon Formation Council, they will be reviewed by the Council and forwarded to the Bishop with the Council's own recommendation for approval or disapproval. It is the Bishop of Pueblo who calls the candidates to Ministries and Candidacy. The liturgies for these steps are usually celebrated at the place of formation, but may, in some instances, be celebrated in the candidates' home parishes.

### **Ordination**

At the completion of the formation period, a final evaluation of the candidate's suitability for ordination with an appropriate recommendation will be made to the bishop. This evaluation will evaluate his faith and theological development, his moral and spiritual maturity, his fidelity to marriage (or celibacy), and his ability to minister. A positive evaluation will lead to a recommendation by those in charge of the formation program, as well as the Deacon Formation Council, that the candidate be called to the Order of Deacon.

Before a candidate can be ordained, the following documents must be submitted:

- a declaration that the course of studies has been completed with a cumulative grade point average of 2.5 or better.
- baptismal, confirmation, and, for a married candidate, marriage certificates;
- a declaration that the ministries of lector and acolyte have been received and exercised, that interstices have been observed, and that a profession of faith has been made and signed;

- a handwritten declaration by the candidate of his free and lifelong commitment to the ecclesiastical ministry, and of his petition to receive the order of deacon;
- a written statement of consent from the wife of a married candidate.

All other canonical requirements, possible irregularities, and impediments must be considered, unless legitimately modified or dispensed by law or competent authority, as well as other requirements, such as dimissorial letters, which may apply in particular cases.

## **E.ASSIGNMENTS, AGREEMENTS, AND FACULTIES**

### **General Remarks**

The deacon is ordained for service in the local Church through the sacrament of Holy Orders. Thus, he shares in this sacrament with the bishops and priests. However, the lifestyle of the deacon is more like that of a layman. The deacon does not live in a rectory, nor does he leave his job, nor does he assume a different identity. It cannot be over-stressed that the primary obligations of a permanent deacon who is married remain to his family and his job. So important is this condition and the understanding of it, that no one can be accepted as a candidate if his family or livelihood are in any way jeopardized. Furthermore, the approval and support of spouse and children are essential to candidacy and ordination.

Precisely because of his primary obligations, the deacon will usually be limited in his ministry. No one is expected to be competent in all fields, nor is there ever sufficient time to devote oneself to the wide variety of service ministries available. Though there are full-time, paid deacons, their cases are exceptions. The majority of deacons serve voluntarily and without financial compensation, continuing to rely upon their jobs for their livelihood.

### **ASSIGNMENTS**

Permanent deacons are ordained by the Bishop of Pueblo for service to the entire Diocese of Pueblo. "It is the bishop who assigns a deacon to a particular ministry. The principal criteria for this assignment are the pastoral need of the diocese, the needs of the local communities, and the personal qualifications and abilities of the deacons, as these have been discerned in his previous experience and the course of his formation." (PDUS #116)

The scope of a deacon's ministry is determined by the universal law of the Church, by the faculties granted him by the Bishop, and by the terms of the letter of appointment given him by the Bishop. The usual norm for diaconal assignments in the Diocese of Pueblo will include a basic parish assignment. Assignments involving specific ministries or ministries for other institutions may be developed. All diaconal assignments are made at the discretion of the Bishop of Pueblo and are made by letter personally signed by him. The Bishop, or someone delegate by him, is responsible for coordinating and recommending all deacon assignments.

Initial assignment of newly ordained deacons will normally be to the parish/agency which sponsored the candidate and will be for a period of three years, and is renewable upon review.

The possibility of reassignment of a deacon from one parish/institution to another parish/institution may be initiated by either the Bishop or someone delegated by the Bishop, or the deacon himself. Reassignment will take into account input from all concerned: the deacon, the pastor/parish director/pastoral supervisor to which the deacon is presently

assigned and the respective personnel of the proposed assignment. In no case will reassignment action take place without communication with all concerned.

Deacons who have moved into the Diocese of Pueblo and have established permanent residency should contact the pastor/parish director/pastoral supervisor as well as the diocese to apply for faculties (see below) and assignment. No assignment will be made without prior consultation of the pastor/parish director/pastoral supervisor. Initial assignments for deacons moving into the Diocese of Pueblo will be for three years, and are renewable upon review.

## **AGREEMENTS**

The importance of an annual written agreement between a deacon and his pastor/pastoral supervisor cannot be overemphasized.

“It is very important that the particular ministry assignment to a deacon by his bishop be very clearly spelled out, preferably in a written document of mission. It should always contain a clear delineation of responsibilities, that is, of the expectations of the diocese, of the particular community in and for which the deacon serves, and of the deacon himself. Such job descriptions will go far to prevent misunderstandings and disappointments arising among either the deacons themselves or other members of the Church. This mission should be regularly evaluated and reviewed and may be revised when changes in church needs or in the development of the deacon himself suggest it.” (PDUS #117)

**Every deacon ministering in the Diocese of Pueblo MUST have a current Ministry Agreement in effect.** This agreement must be effected with the parish or institution to which the deacon is assigned. This agreement should also spell out the amount and type of reimbursements and/or compensation the deacon may expect from the parish/institution (see Section H of this manual). Please see Appendix II for specific items to be included in Ministry Agreements.

## **FACULTIES (as published by the Diocese of Pueblo in 1984)**

### **In General**

Deacons with canonical assignment within the Diocese of Pueblo enjoy the following faculties: to solemnly proclaim the gospel at Mass and at other liturgical functions, to baptize, to witness Marriages, to conduct the Rites of Christians Burial apart from Mass, and to celebrate Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament.

### **Marriage**

Deacons with canonical assignment within the Diocese of Pueblo enjoy the faculties:

1. To assist at marriages within the boundaries of the parish to which they are assigned. (CIC 1111)
2. To assist at the marriage of both parishioners and non-parishioners within their parochial jurisdiction, provided that one of the parties is of the Latin rite. (CIC1109)
3. To delegate the faculty, in individual instances, to assist at marriages within their own parochial jurisdiction, to other priests and deacons. (CIC 1111) This delegation is to be given to a particular priest or deacon for a specific marriage.

### **Liturgy**

Deacons with canonical assignment within the Diocese of Pueblo enjoy the faculty to preach, providing that this faculty has been granted specifically to the individual deacon in writing by the Bishop.

### **Sacraments**

Deacons do not have the faculty to confirm converts whom they have received into the Church, nor to administer the sacrament of Anointing of the Sick. (CIC 1103)

### **Dispensations**

Deacons with canonical assignment within the Diocese of Pueblo enjoy the following faculties:

1. To dispense, in individual cases and for a just cause, from the observance of a Holy Day of Obligation of day or penance (Ash Wednesday, Good Friday), or to commute the obligation into some other pious work. This faculty may be exercised on behalf of a person belonging to the parish to which the deacon is assigned, or of a person visiting within the boundaries of the parish. (CIC 1245)
2. To dispense from a private vow made by a person belonging to the parish to which the deacon is assigned, and also from a private vow made by a visitor within the parish if no injury is done to the acquired rights of others. Likewise, a deacon may commute to a lesser good what has been promised in a private vow made by a person belonging to the parish to which the deacon is assigned, or by a visitor with the territory. (CIC 1196, 1197)
3. To suspend, dispense or commute a promissory oath. This faculty may not be exercised if the dispensation from the oath would harm those who refuse to remit its obligation. (CIC 1203)

### **Faculties for Non-incardinated Resident Deacons**

1. The fact of residence and/or employment within the Diocese of Pueblo as, e.g. student, hospital chaplain, counselor, does not *de jure* confer the right to exercise sacramental

ministry within the Diocese of Pueblo. Ordinarily, faculties are granted to non-incardinated resident deacons for the duration of their assignment within the Diocese of Pueblo by the Bishop, through his Vicar General or Chancellor.

2. Requests for faculties must be made in writing with appropriate documentation (e.g. explanatory letters from the Bishop or Religious Superior) to the Bishop of Pueblo. Questions concerning this procedure may be referred to the Chancellor, or to the Vicar(s) General.

3. In case of emergency, non-incardinated resident deacons desiring faculties may contact the Bishop, the Vicar General, or the Chancellor for information and guidance.

## F. THE DEACON AND LITURGY

### General Remarks

“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 other 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 the 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 sacramental’s. . . . In those instances where a deacon may wish to be a minister at a liturgical celebration in a parish or institution other than his own (e.g. marriage, baptism, funeral), he should first obtain the proper delegation.” (PDUS #42)

### Ministry of the Deacon at Liturgy

#### Before Mass begins.

Of major importance to a clear understanding of how the deacon is to function at Mass are the norms set forth in the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* (GIRM), and the *Sacramentary*, (1985 revised edition). The deacon should be thoroughly familiar with the *Sacramentary* and its *Supplement* (1994), so that he can readily find the correct presidential prayers, including the appropriate Preface, for the Mass at which he is going to assist, and place the ribbon markers in the most useful manner for the presider.

The *Lectionary for Mass, Volume I: Sundays, Solemnities, Feasts of the Lord and the Saints* revised in 1998 and the *Lectionary for Mass*, revised in 1981, both include a comprehensive *Introduction* of nearly equal importance to the GIRM for the deacon who is seeking the official statement of his proper function in the Liturgy of the Word at Mass. The *Book of the Gospels* is an optional liturgical book, containing only the Gospel readings for the three-year cycle of Sundays and Solemnities. The deacon must know his way around both of these books, as well as he knows the *Sacramentary*, so that he can readily locate the Gospel reading he is to proclaim, and assist lay lectors in finding their place in the *Lectionary*.

The proper vestments for the deacon who is assisting at Sacred Liturgy should vest worthily and with dignity in accordance with the prescribed liturgical norms. The dalmatic, in its appropriate liturgical colors, together with the alb, cincture, and stole, which is worn over the left shoulder, drawn across the chest, fastened at the right side, constitutes the liturgical dress proper to deacons. It is desirable, but not necessary, that that hue and design of the deacon’s vestments match those of the presiders. In the case where a parish does not have a dalmatic available, it is permissible to wear an alb, cincture and stole.

Functions may be distributed among several deacons who are present and vested. The participating deacons work out among themselves the particular distribution of diaconal functions for that Mass; but the presider must give his approval of the final arrangements.

### **Introductory Rites**

The deacon's exact place in the entrance procession or leave-taking recession may vary, depending upon the type and number of other ministers participating in the Mass, upon local custom, and upon the desires of the presider. As a general rule, however, if the deacon carries the *Book of the Gospels*, he precedes the presider; otherwise, he walks at the presider's right side. (GIRM #128)

Unless the deacon is carrying the *Book of the Gospels*, the presider and the deacon together make a profound bow toward the altar before they enter the sanctuary. After the *Book of the Gospels* (if used) has been placed on the altar, the presider and the deacon together kiss the altar. (GIRM #129) If incense is used, the deacon assists the presider, who puts incense into the censer and then incenses the altar.

When Form A of the Penitential Rite is used, the deacon must learn from the presider before Mass begins whether the deacon or the presider will lead the assembly in the recitation of the Confiteor. The rubrics imply that Form B of the Penitential Rite is reserved to the presider. In Form C, it is preferred that the deacon announce the invocations; however, the presider or another minister (e.g. the cantor) may do so.

If the Rite of Blessing and Sprinkling Holy Water is used in place of the Penitential Rite, the deacon may assist the presider.

### **Liturgy of the Word**

The proclamation of the Gospel is a ministerial function that properly belongs to the deacon. (GIRM #34) however, in instances where the deacon either does not read or proclaim well, or else is ill prepared; the assembly is better served if the deacon defers to the presider, who then proclaims the Gospel.

If incense is used, the deacon assists the presider, who puts incense into the censer during the singing of the gospel acclamation. The deacon then bows before the presider and asks for his blessing. The presider blesses the deacon, and the deacon makes the sign of the cross. If the *Book of the Gospels* is being used, the deacon takes it from the altar, holds it high, and follows the altar servers (if any) to the ambo. From the ambo, the deacon greets the assembly in the usual way, then incenses the *Book* (or *Lectionary*) with three swings of the censer before proceeding with the text of the Gospel. After the closing proclamation, the deacon kisses the book. He then returns to his chair, unless it is more appropriate for him to remain at the ambo to give the homily or to announce the intentions of the General Intercessions. (GIRM #131)

The homily is ordinarily given by the presider, although the deacon, if he has the gift for preaching **and** has received the necessary faculty, may do so. (GIRM #42)

After the General Intercessions have been introduced by the presider with a brief invitation to prayer, the deacon announces the intentions from the ambo, his chair, or another suitable place (but never from the altar). The cantor or another suitable minister may announce the intentions in place of the deacon, if this is the local custom. The presider then prays the concluding prayer. (GIRM #132)

### **Liturgy of the Eucharist**

At the Presentation of the Gifts, while the presider remains at his chair, the deacon prepares the altar (assisted by other ministers, if available) with corporal, Sacramentary, chalice and purificator.

The deacon assists the presider in receiving the gifts from the assembly, although this may be done by the deacon alone or by the presider alone. (GIRM #133)

At the altar, the deacon prepares the chalice by pouring a small amount of water into the wine, saying **quietly**, “By the mystery of the water and wine.....” The deacon then hands the chalice to the presider. If some type of flagon is used, the deacon pours a small amount of water into the wine in the flagon only, then pours some wine into the chalice. If incense is used, the deacon assists the presider, who puts incense into the censer and then incenses the offerings and altar. Afterward, the deacon (or another minister, if desired) incenses first the presider, then the other ministers, then the assembly. (GIRM #133)

During the Eucharistic Prayer, the deacon stands silently, with hands joined, beside and slightly behind the presider. This is true even when there are concelebrating priests. The proper position of the deacon is always beside the presider. (GIRM #134 & #167)

**N.B. The presider alone gives the invitation to the Memorial Acclamation.** However, this may change in the new revision of the *Sacramentary*.

At the Final Doxology, the deacon silently elevates the chalice, while the presider elevates the paten, until the assembly has responded, “Amen!” (GIRM #135)

At the Sign of Peace, the presider says the prayer for peace and greets the assembly. The deacon then invites all to exchange a sign of peace. The deacon receives the sign of peace from the presider, and may give it to other ministers near him. (GIRM #136)

The deacon assist in the Fraction rite by breaking and dividing the Eucharistic bread and by pouring the Precious Blood into the communion cups, if communion under both kinds is being offered.

After the presider's communion, the deacon normally receives under both kinds, and then assists the presider in distributing communion to the assembly. If communion under both kinds is offered to the assembly, then the deacon **ministers the cup**. (GIRM # 137)

After communion, the deacon sees to the proper disposition of the remaining consecrated bread and wine, and to the purification of the vessels used. The purification may be deferred until after the Mass is ended. (GIRM #138)

### **Concluding Rite**

Announcements, following the Prayer after Communion may be made by the deacon, the presider, or another minister.

If the Solemn blessing or Prayer over the People is used, the deacon says, "Bow your heads and pray for God's blessing."

Immediately following the blessing, the deacon gives the dismissal.

### **When Deacons Participate as an Order at Mass.**

Normally, those deacons who are present for a Mass, but are not called upon to function as a minister in the celebration of the Mass, do not vest or occupy a specific place in the liturgy. This will prevent the development of a practice that might easily appear to be an imitation of concelebration. (*Newsletter*, Bishop's Committee on the Liturgy, NCCB, October, 1981)

There **are** times, however, when the deacons of the diocese gather **as an order**, in which case they **do** vest and are seated either together, or with the concelebrating priests. Examples of this would be: the ordination of new deacons, funeral mass for a bishop, priest, deacon or member of a deacon's family, the annual Chrism Mass, and silver or golden jubilees. Even in these cases the deacons (other than those formally assisting the presider) remain in their places during the entire liturgy.

### **When the Deacon Presides at a Sunday Celebration in Absence of a Priest Or at a Communion Service.**

As primary assistants of priests, deacons are called in a special way to lead Sunday assemblies that are conducted for the faithful in the absence of a priest. Since the deacon has been ordained to nurture the People of God, it belongs to him to lead the prayers, to proclaim the Gospel, to preach the homily, and to give Communion. (*Sunday Celebrations in the Absence of a Priest*, #18) Of greatest importance is the avoidance, insofar as possible, of words or actions that might lead some in the assembly into thinking that the rite in which they are participating **is** a Mass, when in fact it is not.

When a deacon presides at the Sunday celebration in the absence of a priest, he acts in accord with his ministry in regard to the greetings, prayers, Gospel, etc. He wears the vestments proper to his ministry, that is, the alb with stole, and as circumstances suggest, the dalmatic. The presidential chair will not be used by the deacon. (Ibid. #19)

These guidelines apply equally well to weekday communion services conducted by a deacon, and Saturday evening communion services that anticipate the Sunday liturgy, when it is reasonably clear that there can be no Sunday Mass celebrated in that place.

The liturgical ritual book to be followed is either *Sunday Celebrations in the Absence of a Priest*, March 2007 Edition (mandatory for Sundays), or *Holy Communion and Worship of the Eucharist Outside Mass*, 1976 edition. Under no circumstances should the *Sacramentary* be used at any liturgical celebration, except at a mass at which a priest (or a bishop) presides. A ritual book for weekday services does not currently exist, therefore the *Sacramentary* may be used for weekday Liturgy of the Word/ Communion Services.

### **Liturgy of the Hours**

Permanent deacons in the United States are not obliged to pray the Liturgy of the Hours in its entirety on a daily basis. However, this practice is recommended as a most salutary and effective form of prayer. (CIC 276.3) Deacons in the Diocese of Pueblo are required to pray at least Morning Prayer and Evening Prayer. When the opportunity arises, these Hours should be celebrated in community.

### **Baptism**

Deacons are ordinary ministers of baptism. However, lawful exercise of this ministry outside the deacon's parish or institution of assignment requires the consent of the pastor of the parish where the baptism is to take place.

The proper liturgical book to be used is: *Rite of Baptism for Children*, 1970 edition.

### **Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament and Benediction**

Deacons are ordinary ministers of exposition of the Blessed Sacrament and of the Eucharistic blessing. (CIC 943) The proper liturgical book to be used is: *Rite of Holy Communion and Worship of the Eucharist Outside Mass*, 1976 edition.

### **Marriage**

Delegation is given to each deacon canonically assigned to a parish or institution within the Diocese of Pueblo to assist at marriages within that parish or institution (see section on Faculties).

Although the *Rite of Marriage* misleadingly implies that the deacon is to be the official witness at a marriage only “when a priest cannot be present,” (Rite of Marriage #53) a deacon may properly assist at a marriage celebrated during a nuptial Mass *as well as* a marriage outside the Mass. This sacramental ministry is particularly appropriate when the deacon is related to the bride or groom. (The Liturgical Ministry of Deacons, Rev. Michael Kwatera, OSB (Collegetown, Minn., Liturgical Press, 1984), p. 63)

A retired deacon may not validly assist at a marriage, even within his own parish or institution of assignment, without the express delegation of the pastor or another person with delegation.

The proper liturgical book is: *Rite of Marriage*, 1970 edition.

### **Christian Burial**

Deacons are authorized to preside at all the rites of Christian burial, except of course, for the Funeral Mass. With respect to any rite of Christian burial celebrated in a church, the lawful exercise of this faculty requires the permission of the pastor in whose church the rite is to be celebrated. The proper liturgical ritual book to be used is: *Order of Christian Funerals*, 1989 edition.

### **Blessings**

A deacon may impart only those blessings that are expressly permitted to him by law. (CIC 1169.3) A deacon may give all the blessings in the rites of which he is the minister: baptism, Holy Communion and worship of the Eucharist outside Mass, marriage outside Mass, and Christian burial. A deacon may also lawfully give any of the blessings, **except those specifically reserved to bishops or priests**, which are found in the 1989 edition of the *Book of Blessings*. The list of blessings thus permitted to deacons is extensive, by contrast with the few blessings that are reserved to priests or bishops. The proper liturgical book to be used is: *Book of Blessings*, 1989 edition.

### **Clerical Attire**

The Code of Canon Law does not oblige permanent deacons to wear ecclesiastical garb. Each diocesan bishop should, however, determine and promulgate exceptions to this law as well as to specify the appropriate clerical attire if it is to be worn. (ccl # 288) In the Diocese of Pueblo, when clerics are worn, the specified color shall be grey with either an embroidered deacon cross or pin above the left pocket. If a suit jacket is worn, then a nametag or deacon lapel pin must also be worn.

A deacon who identifies an occasion or ministerial situation that he believes warrants an exception to this policy should make a careful and prudent decision, such as: prison ministry, hospital visits, nursing homes, funerals, weddings, baptisms, or situations representing the Catholic Church within the Diocesan boundaries. Clerical garb will not be worn in secular non-ministerial situations. This policy is not to be put aside lightly. (see also PDUS #130)

A name tag or other device, such as a pendant or pin, in the form of a cross on which is superimposed a deacon stole, may be used to identify the deacon exercising his ministry, when he judges such identification to be pastorally helpful.

### **Titles**

The title “Deacon” is the official and proper way to address the deacon in both written and spoken address. The title “Reverend Mister” is reserved for those in the transitional diaconate.

## **G. INCARDINATION AND EXCARDINATION**

### **General Remarks**

In March 1995, the Bishop's Committee on the Permanent Diaconate published specific protocols to be used for incardination and excardination. What follows are excerpts taken directly from that document.

Incardination specifies the relationships of clerics to the Church and the service which they render in it. Incardination is traditionally used to refer to the attachment of the priest or deacon to a particular local church headed by the diocesan bishop. Theologically it underscores the close, permanent association of bishops, presbyters and deacons in the church's ordained ministry and hierarchical structure.

From the time of the Council of Trent, incardination was understood ecclesiologically as referring to the bond between a priest and the local church for which he is ordained and as an expression of the bishop's solicitude for the local diocese. Canonically the term referred both to one's diocese of ordination as well as the practice of transferring one's allegiance from one local church to another, and hence from one bishop to another. The ordained priest or deacon may thus be excardinated from one diocese and incardinated into another, but only at the judgment of the local ordinaries.

In light of the teaching of Vatican II on the ordained ministry, the restoration of the diaconate as a permanent order in the church and the revised rites of ordination, the notion of incardination is grounded theologically in the call to ordination in and for a local church and the way priests and deacons function for the service of a local church. Deacons and priests are ministers of the community and as such are representative of the bishop.

One of the effects of ordination to the diaconate (either transitional or permanent) is first incardination. It is lost only by death, loss of the clerical state, or a process of excardination and incardination.

Permanent deacons are bound by the obligations and enjoy the rights that come with incardination, the same as any clergy. They are exempted from some of the obligations (see c. 288), but they are obliged to reverence and obey their ordinary of incardination (c. 273), to accept a duty entrusted to them by their ordinary unless excused by a legitimate impediment (c. 274.2), not to be absent from their diocese of incardination for a notable period of time without at least the presumed permission of their ordinary (c. 283.1), etc.

### **Protocols for Incardination**

A transfer of a permanent deacon from his own diocese to the Diocese of Pueblo will follow these protocols:

1. When the decision has been made to move to the Diocese of Pueblo, the deacon will

inform the diocesan director of (or vicar for) the permanent diaconate, or the diocesan bishop in his home diocese of the impending move. In like manner, the deacon will write to the Bishop of Pueblo to inform the bishop of his pending arrival, stating his intention to call on the bishop or his delegate in person after his arrival.

2. The deacon will request that the director of (or vicar for) the permanent diaconate of his home diocese forward to the Bishop of the Diocese of Pueblo a letter from his bishop providing information regarding the new move, together with appropriate letters of recommendation and evaluation.
3. The diocesan bishop will send (or cause to have sent) to the Bishop of Pueblo the following:
  - A letter informing the Bishop of Pueblo of the impending move with a statement of the just cause of the deacon's move (e.g. employment, retirement, and health conditions) together with letters of recommendation and evaluation.
  - A résumé of the deacon's personal history, which will be the basis for a character reference together with the recently adopted protocol between bishops and religious superiors testifying to the deacon's record of conduct and moral integrity.
  - A written record of the deacon's academic, spiritual and pastoral formation, to include notation of academic degrees awarded or citations earned.
  - An evaluation of the deacon's ministry.
4. Upon arrival in the Diocese of Pueblo, the deacon will call upon the Bishop to make his presence known, as well as his desire for diaconal faculties and a diaconal assignment. Background and personal reference checks will be required.
5. The Bishop of Pueblo (or Deacon Director) will evaluate the deacon's résumé and examine the needs of the diocese. After favorable review and approval of background checks and reference checks, the Bishop will give the deacon faculties and an assignment. The Bishop will appoint a pastoral supervisor and indicate that evaluations will take place at six and twelve month intervals.
6. After due and prayerful consideration, the deacon will write to the bishop of his previous diocese and advise him of his intent to seek incardination in the Diocese of Pueblo, and excardination from his diocese of incardination.
7. After the deacon has served in the Diocese of Pueblo for three years, and after suitable evaluation, the deacon may petition the Bishop for incardination assuming it is his intent to remain permanently within the diocese.
8. After receiving letters of suitable evaluation and the recommendation of the Deacon Director, and having weighed the relative merits of the deacons' petition and the needs of the Diocese of Pueblo, the Bishop will respond to the petition and indicate his willingness regarding incardination.

9. If the Bishop indicates a willingness to incardinate the deacon, the deacon will write to his bishop of incardination for a letter of excardination which will include an explanation of the just cause(s) for the request.
10. The excardinating bishop executes a document to the effect that the deacon is granted a permanent and unconditional excardination. In accord with Canon 267, the letter must be signed by the diocesan bishop, and in view of Canon 270, included the declaration that the excardination is being given for a just cause.
11. After receiving the legitimately executed document of excardination, the Bishop of Pueblo will issue a decree of incardination within one month and will notifies the diocese of excardination of the incardination of the deacon. Incardination to the Diocese of Pueblo is not completed until both documents have been executed and the bishops (*a quo* and *ad quem*) have been duly notified.

Deacons of the Diocese of Pueblo who wish to transfer to another diocese will follow much the same procedures. They should, however, contact the diocese they are moving to for specific information and policies.

Remember the Bishop will give approval only after all background and reference checks are completed. The usual assignment given is for (3) three years, and at the discretion of the bishop.

Sample letters for all these maneuvers are available from the Diaconate Office at the Catholic Pastoral Center.

## H. FINANCES

### **Formation**

At the time of this writing, tuition for the formation programs is paid by the Diocese of Pueblo. This includes the annual retreat sponsored by the formation programs as well as the day of recollection sponsored by the Diocese of Pueblo.

Books, travel, and other occasional expenses are the responsibility of the candidate. Some grants for books are available through the Director of Deacon Formation.

### **Compensation of Permanent Deacons**

“Married deacons who devote themselves completely to the ecclesiastical ministry deserve a remuneration by which they can provide for their own support and that of their families. However, married deacons who receive remuneration by reason of a civil profession that they exercise or have exercised are to take care of their own and their family’s needs from the incomes derived from their profession.” (CIC 281.3)

“Expenses incurred by deacons in the exercise of their ministry should be recompensed by the agency, institution, parish or diocese for which the ministry is undertaken.” (PDUS #119)

Application for and subsequent ordination to the Permanent Diaconate of the Diocese of Pueblo presupposes that the individual is in a financially stable position which will enable him to perform diaconal ministry on a volunteer (non-paying) basis. Accordingly, it must be understood that the Bishop of Pueblo does not normally assign permanent deacons to positions requiring or authorizing pay for ministerial services. Any person entering the permanent diaconate cannot expect to receive pay for his ministry, and so must rely on his secular employment for his livelihood.

However, there may be some circumstances where it is just and proper for a deacon to be paid a salary and benefits by a parish or institution for full or part-time ministerial service. Such arrangements are made on an individual basis, and follow all the norms outlined in the “Diocese of Pueblo: Salary Structure and Policy” (1993). Such arrangements are made between the deacon and the pastor of the parish and/or institutional supervisor. Ordination infers no financial commitment by the Diocese of Pueblo to provide a salary to any individual for his services as a permanent deacon.

It is important that pastors or pastoral/institutional supervisors recognize the financial constraints that ministry may impose on some deacons. It is necessary, appropriate, and just that deacons be reimbursed for out-of-pocket expenses incurred in performing their ministry. These expenses may include, but are not limited to:

automobile mileage, books/publications, vestments, etc. Specific items and methods for reimbursements should be clearly spelled out in the deacon's Ministry Agreement.

Deacons in the Diocese of Pueblo have the same funding for continuing education and retreats as do priests of the diocese.

Deacons who are employed for full-time by a parish or other agency are eligible for sabbatical benefits.

Deacons who do not have health insurance may join the diocesan plan at their own expense. Deacons employed full-time by the diocese are eligible to be covered by the diocesan health plan as part of their benefits, as stated in their Ministry Agreement.

## I. MARITAL PROBLEMS

### **Separation while the bond endures.**

“Spouses have the duty and the right to preserve conjugal living unless a legitimate cause excuses them.” (CIC #1151)

The actual living together of the spouses in a marriage is essential if the purposes of marriage are to be attained. The “partnership of the whole of life” (CIC #1055) that defines marriage and sets it apart from the single state depends on the couples’ actually being together. The common life (*convictus conjugalis*) is a fundamental obligation of marriage; the spouses must be present to each other in order to bring about the union. The gravity of the obligation, therefore, is related to the nature of marriage itself.

Nevertheless, marital problems are a reality, and the reception of holy orders does not confer immunity to this pervasive human phenomenon. Situations may arise which make the harmonious living of married life impossible. While the spouses have a serious obligation to do all in their power to foster the common life, a separation may be the only prudent way of dealing with a relationship that has deteriorated to a point that is opposite of what a marriage should be.

Because of the indissoluble nature of marriage, the Church give practical witness to the seriousness of the marital covenant by requiring couples to submit their case to the Church when separation is contemplated. (CIC #1152.3) This step, too often ignored by the partners in a difficult marriage, is particularly important when the deacon and his wife are struggling to balance their marriage commitment against the demands of diaconal ministry. They should not agree to separation without first taking advantage of the best available counseling. They have an responsibility to do whatever is possible to avoid civil divorce and to build a healthy marriage. When both are willing to honestly work at conflicts and build a relationship, there is a good chance divorce can be prevented.

When a deacon and his wife separate without ecclesiastical permission, neither may be deprived of the sacraments unless one or the other enters a subsequent marriage without ecclesiastical approval.

### **Civil Divorce**

All Catholic couples, and especially deacon couples, should obtain ecclesiastical permission before initiating a civil divorce action. Written notification should be sent to the Bishop that divorce has become the last option available. Whether or not this prior permission is obtained, a final decree of civil divorce is not, in and of itself, cause for the imposition of any ecclesiastical penalties. The Bishop may decide whether the faculties of a deacon who is party to a divorce should be withdrawn, suspended, or left in effect without interruption. The Deacon Community has, in these circumstances, a particular demand placed upon its charitable and fraternal support of the persons involved.

## **J. LEAVES OF ABSENCE AND RETIREMENT**

### **Leaves of Absence**

When a deacon finds it necessary to take a leave of absence from active ministry, he must first inform the pastor or pastoral supervisor at his parish/institution of assignment, and then submit a **written** request to the Bishop. The request is to include the period of time for which the leaves is requested, and a statement indicating the reason for requesting such leave. If the deacon is granted a leave of absence, the following conditions apply:

- The deacon does not enjoy the faculties to baptize, to witness marriages, to preach, or to function as an ordinary minister of the Eucharist.
- The deacon may not participate in any liturgical function or in any official diaconal ministry during his leave of absence.
- The Bishop's Newsletter will indicate that the deacon is on a leave of absence.
- The Diocesan Directory will indicate that the deacon is on a leave of absence.
- If the deacon so desires, he may request that he remain on the various diocesan mailing lists to receive communications pertaining to the Diocese and the Deacon Community.

Before the end of an approved leave of absence, the deacon must submit a **written** request for reinstatement to active ministry. This request is to be sent to the Bishop for approval or disapproval. The request should indicate the parish or institution to which the deacon would like to be assigned if his request is accepted. If the deacon seeks an assignment other than the one he held before his taking leave, his request must be accompanied by letters from both the pastor/supervisor of his previously held assignment and the pastor/supervisor of the parish or institution to which he seeks assignment. Both of these letters must recommend to the Bishop that the deacon's request for return to active ministry is approved.

### **Retirement**

A deacon may request retirement whenever illness prevents him from functioning in active ministry, or when he completes his seventieth year of age, whichever comes first. After informing his appropriate pastor/supervisor at his parish/institution of assignment, he must submit a **written** request to the Bishop. If the deacon's request for retirement is accepted, he is relieved of his assignment and his Ministry Agreement with the parish/institution becomes void. During retirement the following conditions apply:

- The retired deacon may continue, if he so wishes, to exercise his ministry. Unless otherwise stated, all his faculties remain as long as he continues to reside in the Diocese of Pueblo. However, these faculties will be exercised with the consent of the local pastor and/or supervisor where the ministerial faculties are to be exercised. Furthermore, he must now have specific delegation to assist at a marriage.

- The retired deacon (and his wife, if appropriate), may continue to participate in diocesan events for the clergy and/or specifically for deacons.
- The Chancellors Office will announce the retirement of the deacon, and he will be listed in the Diocesan Directory as retired.
- He will continue, if he wishes, to receive diocesan mailings that pertain to diocesan events, news, and clergy/deacon gatherings.
- A deacon who retires from salaried employment from a parish or other diocesan institution comes under the guidelines stated in the Employment and Salary Policies for the Diocese of Pueblo.

In all this, the Diocese of Pueblo will strive to show its appreciation for the faithful service given by the retired deacon over the course of his ministry.

## K. THE DEATH AND FUNERALS OF DEACONS

### Death of a Deacon

The death of a deacon is significant, not only in the life of his family, but also in the diocese and in his parish. His life, by its very nature, assumed a public dimension. It is the policy of the Diocese of Pueblo to give the highest priority to the wishes of the family of the deacon within the boundaries set by liturgical norms. Every deacon in the Diocese of Pueblo is **strongly** encouraged to maintain written funeral and burial instructions, in order to avoid any confusion.

In the event of the death of a deacon, the family (or pastor) of the deacon should immediately inform the Bishop's office. Notice of his death will be sent out through the usual means of communication within the diocese.

### Funerals of Deacons

The wake (vigil) service should be celebrated for a deceased deacon. It is recommended that this be conducted by other deacons from the parish or the surrounding area. The usual celebrant and homilist of the funeral Mass is the Bishop. In his absence, the Vicar Forane (Dean), or another priest requested by the family may preside. The funeral prayers for a deacon, as found in the *Order of Christian Funerals*, should be used.

The following options are open to the family of a deceased deacon in the preparation of the wake service, funeral Mass, and burial:

- The deceased may be vested in alb and deacon stole (and dalmatic, if the deacon owned one), or in secular clothes.
- The deceased may be waked at a funeral home, or at the church where the funeral Mass will be celebrated.
- An evening Mass with a burial the following morning may allow more deacons to support the family through their attendance and participation.
- Deacons who attend the funeral Mass may vest in alb and stole and sit as a group, and may do so with their wives, if they too are present.
- It is most appropriate that the deacon for the Mass of Christian Burial be chosen by the family.

The death of a wife or widow of a deacon is also of great concern to the Diocese of Pueblo. The diocese will provide any assistance the family may desire in planning the liturgy, and communicating her death to the rest of the diocese. Unless the family would desire otherwise, it is most appropriate for attending deacons (and their wives) to vest and sit as a body at the funeral liturgy of a deacon's wife.

Again, the guiding concern in all of the above will be the wishes of the deacon's

family. It would be of great help to the family if the deacon takes the time to explain the above guidelines and suggestions with his family, and to indicate those areas where the family needs to make decisions. It is hoped that each deacon has given thought to his death – both by providing a will for his family and any desires he has concerning his funeral. This is particularly important, as the family is responsible for any costs arising from a funeral.

## **APPENDIX I.**

### **JOB DESCRIPTION**

#### **Deacon Director - Diocese of Pueblo**

The purpose of the position of the Deacon Director, as recommended by the U.S. Bishop's Committee on the Diaconate (PDUS #53), is to:

- Provide leadership for the community of deacons,
- Serve as a liaison between the Bishop and individual deacons,
- Serve as a liaison between the community of deacons and the presbyterate,
- Serve as a resource on the diaconate to the Diocese of Pueblo, and
- Direct the recruitment and formation of deacons.

The Deacon Director is appointed by the Bishop and is ultimately responsible to him. Organizationally, the Deacon Director serves under the Vicar for Clergy in matters pertaining to deacons ministering in the Diocese of Pueblo, and serves under the Director of Pastoral Life in matters pertaining to the recruitment and formation of deacons.

#### **Specific Responsibilities – Life and Ministry of Deacons:**

1. Provide guidance and supervision of diaconal ministry in general, and when needed, assist individual deacons identify and develop their own ministries.
2. Assist, collect, and evaluate the Ministry Agreements between deacons and the parish/institution to which they are assigned. Intervene in particular situations as needed or requested.
3. Utilize diocesan and national resources to provide programs of continuing formation and spiritual growth.
4. Assist the families (especially the wives of deacons) to support the ministry of their husbands/fathers, and grow in their own formation.
5. Assist deacons who move into the diocese to obtain faculties.
6. Assist non-incardinated deacons, ministering in the diocese, who choose to undertake the process of incardination.
7. Coordinate and preside over the Diaconal Council.
8. Assist pastors and parishes in understanding and appreciating the identity and role of the deacon.
9. Manage the budget for the diaconate office.

#### **Specific Responsibilities – Deacon Formation**

1. Recruit for, plan, and coordinate the formation of deacon candidates.
2. Coordinate and preside over the Deacon Formation Council
3. Manage the budget for deacon formation.

**APPENDIX II**

**DEACON MINISTRY AGREEMENT  
DIOCESE OF PUEBLO**

The permanent deacon is an ordained minister who has received the Sacrament of Holy Orders. The appointment of the Permanent Deacon is a direct appointment by the Bishop. The deacon has a three-fold ministry and this agreement form sets forth the specific service that he has accepted in the parish and wider community under the direction and guidance of the pastor. He is thus empowered to carry on diaconal ministry in all its aspects, according to the faculties granted him by the Bishop of Pueblo. The deacon is normally a part-time non-salaried minister. As such, his specific ministerial duties are to be delineated in this Ministry agreement. If he is hired by his parish/institution as a part or full time salaried minister, then his ministry is delineated in his job description and contract, as spelled out in the “*Diocese of Pueblo Salary Structure and Policy, 1993.*”

This Ministry Agreement is effected between Deacon \_\_\_\_\_ and the parish/institution of \_\_\_\_\_ for the purpose of specifying diaconal ministry from \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_ to \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_.

1. In the *Ministry of Charity and Justice*, the Deacon will assume the following duties:  
Hrs/week

Ministry outside the Parish Community:

2. In the *Ministry of the Word of God*, the Deacon will assume the following duties:

Preaching:

Teaching:

Other:

3. In the *Ministry of Sacraments and Liturgy*, the Deacon will assume the following duties:

Sunday Liturgy:

Other Liturgies:

4. Other roles requested by the Pastor (i.e., attendance at councils, staff, and other meetings, etc.):

5. Comments about previous year ministry and performance:

Pastors comments:

Deacon's comments:

Wife's comments:

***Parish Commitment to the Deacon:***

The parish agrees to reimburse the deacon for any out-of-pocket expenses, including mileage, incurred in the performance of his ministry. The parish also agrees to provide funds, not to exceed \$\_\_\_\_\_ for the purpose of continuing education and development. The terms of this reimbursement shall follow such guidelines as are mutually acceptable to the deacon and his pastor/pastoral supervisor.

The parish agrees to provide office facilities and secretarial services for the deacon.

The parish agrees to provide vestments, ritual books, and other items the deacon will need to perform his sacramental duties.

THE ABOVE AGREEMENT IS HEREBY ACCEPTED:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Pastor/Pastoral Supervisor

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Deacon

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Deacon's Wife

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Deacon Director

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**This Agreement shall be reviewed, adjusted (if needed) and submitted annually to the Diaconate Office in order to maintain faculties for the Diocese of Pueblo.**

APPENDIX III

OFFICE FOR THE  
PERMANENT DIACONATE

ASPIRANCY HANDBOOK



DIOCESE OF PUEBLO

**OFFICE OF THE BISHOP**

1001 N. Grand Avenue  
Pueblo, Colorado 81003-2948  
Ph: (719) 544-9861  
Fax: (719) 544-1220



September 1, 1999

Dear Pastors, Administrators and Deacons,

With this letter, I am announcing a new formation program for the diaconate which is in line with the new norms awaiting final approval from Rome. They reflect the national trend to enhance diaconate formation programs, academically, spiritually and pastorally with the hope of producing deacons equipped to accept the challenges facing the ministry in the new millennium.

The program will consist of one year Aspirancy to enable the aspirants to gain sufficient knowledge in spirituality in order to make well informed choices as they discern their call in their commitment to serve their Church as ordained deacons. Candidacy, required to be three years by the new norms, will focus on deeper theological study, pastoral training, and personal spiritual development specific to the life of a deacon. It is with hope that this program will offer a disciplined and comprehensive education.

May we all come to appreciate our baptismal call to service in the Kingdom of God.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

+ Arthur N. Tafoya, D.D.  
Bishop of Pueblo

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Aspirancy: A Time of Investigation .....	2
A. Overview of Responsibilities.....	3
B. Discernment .....	4
C. Diaconal Character.....	5
D. Readiness and the Selection Process .....	5
E. Academic Prerequisites .....	6
F. The Application.....	6
G. Criteria.....	7
H. Purpose of Aspirancy .....	8
I. The Dimensions and Convent of Aspirancy.....	9
J. Time Commitment .....	10
K. Wives Participation .....	11
Bibliography .....	11

**Office for the Permanent Diaconate  
1001 N. Grand Avenue  
Pueblo, CO 81005  
(719) 544-9861**

# **ASPIRANCY:** **A TIME OF INVESTIGATION, LEARNING GROWTH AND DISCERNMENT**

This handbook provides the basic information necessary to understand and to apply to Aspirancy, the first formal element of Diaconal Formation Program. The descriptions, guidelines and schedules contained in this handbook are taken from the final draft copy of *The National Directory for Formation, Ministry, and Life of Permanent Deacons in the United States (The National Directory)* and Bishop Arthur N. Tafoya's letter and attachments announcing the new Formation Program dated September 1, 1999 and revised February 2, 2009.

While this handbook will include some details about the nature of the diaconate and character of those called to serve, the primary purpose of this publication is to provide information on the application process, requirements, time demands and selection process directly related to the Aspirancy portion of the Diaconate Formation Program. *The Basic Norms for the Formation of Permanent Deacons / Directory for the Ministry and Life of Permanent Deacons* (BNFPD) published in 1998 provides a general overview of the diaconate. For more information on the spirituality and life of a deacon please refer to the bibliography at the end of this handbook.

## **A. Overview of Responsibilities:**

It is the responsibility of the Formation Director and those chosen to teach in the Diaconal Formation Program to provide a healthy and challenging program for the formation of deacons to serve the needs of the Diocese. In accordance with Bishop's directive, the Formation Director and those involved in the Diaconal Formation Program are charged with providing a practical and relevant education infused with the proper spirituality for forming deacons. In addition, the Formation Director, working with the Diaconate Formation Committee and the program instructor's, has the responsibility of recommending to the Bishop aspirants for admission to candidacy and candidates for promotion to the order of deacon. (BNFPD, #21) While participants in the Diaconal Formation Program can expect quality formation, guidance, support and education from their faith community and the staff involved in their formation, each man must also take personal responsibility for his individual spiritual and academic development. Formation involves education, training, spiritual growth and, most importantly, ongoing conversion. Change takes effort and emotional energy, and learning and training take time. Those applying for diaconal formation must realize that the preparation and training necessary for becoming a deacon demands significant time, self-discipline and real effort. While the program is designed with a "family perspective," it is the job of the participant to plan and organize his life to avoid conflicts, minimize stress on himself and his family and continue to meet his responsibilities as a husband, parent and employee while in the program. Simply put, preparation for serving the needs of a parish involves serious academic study and the development of skill through direct experience of a variety of ministries.

Those asking the Church to recognize their call as deacons must be willing to actively pursue the knowledge, skills and depth of faith necessary to fulfill the deacon's call to the ministries of word, charity and liturgy. Along with the academic work and training for various ministries, those pursuing the diaconate are expected to actively pursue their own spiritual growth. Spiritual maturity is a requirement of serving the Church as an ordained minister. Being a deacon is a life long commitment requiring a strong underpinning of faith to keep it alive and dynamic. Daily prayer and participation in the sacraments are necessary parts of formation and post-formation. Those involved in the diaconate are also asked to work with a spiritual director to help guide their growth. (The National Directory, #194) Some expenses for the program are for the most part covered by the diocese. There are some expenses incurred by the participant such as travel, books, room and board.

Before entering Aspirancy, applicants are required to have a psychological assessment with a psychiatrist. The cost of this exam and consultation is covered by the diocese. Participants will be responsible to pay for their required Medical Examination.

### **B. Discernment:**

Discernment for the diaconate begins on a personal level and then quickly moves to a family level for the majority of permanent deacons since most permanent deacons are married. The Church puts so much value on the input of the wife and family in the discernment process that a married applicant cannot be considered without his wife's informed, written consent at each step.

The pastor and parish community also participates in the early stages of discernment. The pastor must see a need for diaconal service in the parish or in the Diocese at large and the probability that the applicant can fulfill the identified need in order to recommend a particular applicant from his parish.

Finally, the Bishop and those he appoints to select and form diaconate candidates for ordination, must also determine the presence of a call, the capacity to fulfill it, personal readiness, and the willingness to serve the Church in an applicant. Along with the applicant's family, the Church must also agree that the time is right for the applicant given his family and work circumstance and the needs of the diocese. While an individual may feel a strong personal call, it is important to keep in mind the ecclesial nature of the call to ordained ministry.

*All ministry flows out of the gifts of the Holy Spirit. These gifts are given to the People of God not for the benefit of the individual minister but for the benefit of the Church. As a result, any discernment of gifts and charisms must involve the ecclesial community... This is especially true for ordained ministries of the Church. An individual who presents himself for ordination to the diaconate is accountable to the Church, who mediates— confirms—his vocation.*  
(The National Directory,#152)

### **C. Diaconal Character:**

While becoming a deacon does involve training and the gaining of new knowledge, men pursuing the diaconate share some common pre-existing traits. As St. Thomas Aquinas said, “Grace builds on nature.” Certainly, concern for others, especially the marginalized, is paramount, but there are others as well. The following list is not exhaustive, but it does provide food for thought for those considering the call to diaconal service.

- A call to serve
- Deep faith and love for the Church
- A love for the Word
- Psychological and Spiritual Maturity
- An interest in theological reflection
- Financial Stability
- Ability to maintain commitments
- Strong Interpersonal and Communication Skills
- Share faith with tolerance
- Respect for others
- Prudent
- Capacity for obedience and fraternal communion
- Stable married life or mature celibate state
- Leadership Skills
- Ability to collaborate
- Ability to motivate others
- Public Speaking Skills
- Generous
- Good Christian reputation
- Active in service ministries
- Active in one’s own faith and spiritual development
- Punctual in matters of importance

### **D. Readiness and The Selection Process:**

Readiness takes on two aspects: preparedness and timeliness. In both cases as is stated above there are many people involved in the assessment of readiness. Prior to entering Aspirancy and throughout the program, the applicant will need to work with his wife, family, pastor, and formation staff to determine if he is ready and the real circumstances of his life are right for becoming a deacon.

First, the applicant, working with his wife and family must determine if this is the appropriate time to “answer the call to serve.”

A careful consideration of one's current commitments must be made to determine if the necessary time for studying, preparing and ultimately serving is available.

It is the responsibility of those charged by the Bishop with selecting applicants to determine that the required amount of preparedness is present at the time of application. The first determination of readiness is established by a thorough review of the material provided in an individual's application. This review will be done prior to inviting applicants to attend the Pre-Aspirancy period of Period of Inquiry comprised of a monthly informational meeting on the diaconate and the formation program. After this, if an applicant is chosen to be considered for Aspirancy, six additional assessments will be made:

**The Deacon Perceiver, MATE Marriage Inventory, Psychological Exam, IFG-Inventory of basic Catholic teachings and beliefs, and personal interviews with a Deacon Couple and the Diaconate Director and his Associate Director.**

Those who are determined to be ready for Aspirancy will be asked to join the Aspirancy Class by the Bishop. This presently is a one year process which in the future may be developed into a two year period of further discernment and exploration involving both self-examination and further assessment by the Diocese. It is possible that during or even after finishing Aspirancy, a man may either self-select to delay or discontinue his pursuit of the diaconate or be asked to do so by the Diocese at any time during the entire formation process.

Both those responsible for the selection of men to be formed as deacons and those seeking formation must keep in mind Paul's advice to Timothy, "deacons should be tested first: then if there is nothing against them, let them serve as deacons." (1 Timothy 3:10) Beyond testing, it is also the job of Church to determine if there is a viable need to be met.

#### **E. Academic Prerequisites:**

An applicant must have at least completed a high school level education, but more preferably a Bachelors Degree for admittance to the Diaconal Formation Program.

#### **F. The Application**

First, the applicant must receive his pastor's recommendation. Once the Permanent Diaconate office has received the pastor's initial

recommendation and has been notified in writing by the applicant of his interest in entering the Aspirancy program, he will receive an application packet. It is the applicant's responsibility to insure that the following documents are received by the Permanent Diaconate Office ahead of the application deadline.

- Record of Sacraments in the form of a Parish issued Baptismal Certificate issued in the last six months
- Copies of US Naturalization Certificate if applicable
- Proof of legal residence in the resident Diocese
- Completed General Application Form (husband and wife)
- Signed Consent and Release Form
- Autobiography
- Recent Photograph of you and your spouse
- Wife's personal handwritten consent and support letter
- Pastor's Recommendation Form
- 4 Non-related Parishioners' Recommendations
- Parish Council Member's Recommendation
- Police Background check (The office will order this.)
- Physical Examination by your doctor dated within 3 months
- Record of Annulment(s) if applicable
- Statement by the proper authority for those who have participated previously in deacon formation program or other religious formation program

On the basis of the recommendations, information contained in the application and consideration of Diocesan and parochial needs, a group from the applicants will be chosen by the Bishop with assistance from the Director of Deacon Formation, Associate Director and the Deacon Formation Committee. This is how the Aspirancy class will be chosen. In addition to these documents, those selected for consideration for the Aspirancy program will be directed on how and when they will complete the six assessment tools listed in section D that are required to complete their file for admission to Aspirancy.

## **G. Criteria**

The selection of Aspirants is based on a number of factors. It is unlikely that each man selected will meet all of the criteria, but there are obvious similarities among the members of any particular class. Generally, aspirants are men who have provided service to their parishes and to the community at large, especially in the area of social justice and direct services (Corporal Works of Mercy). They are men who have a love for

the Word and the Church. In addition, they are men:

- of faith and compassion who strive to live the Beatitudes
- who have a call to be deacons
- who have been practicing Catholics for at least five years
- who have a mature, well integrated spirituality
- who are willing to meet the demands of a serious formation program
- who are willing to make a life-long commitment to service in the Church
- who are able to work collaboratively with men and women of all races
- who, if married, have been in a stable marriage for five years and have their wife's support
- who, if single, are capable of living a celibate life
- who have received the appropriate sacraments for their station in life
- who are either retired or employed, but have economic stability
- who are at least 30 years of age before applying
- who have the endorsement and support of their pastor
- who are capable and willing to give serious attention to theological study, spiritual formation, and ministry
- who are willing to actively pursue their studies and take personal responsibility for their academic and spiritual development
- who are willing to be obedient and flexible enough to meet the changing needs of the Diocese and their parish

## **H. Purpose of Aspirancy**

Aspirancy is primarily a time of investigation and discernment on the part of the aspirant and his wife and a time of assessment and discernment on the part of the Diocesan Church. During this period of discernment, the aspirant is introduced to a more thorough study of theology and to a deeper knowledge of the spirituality and ministry of the deacon in order to provide a basis for meaningful and informed discernment to occur. Although some aspects of Aspirancy may be linked to other ministerial formation, Aspirancy must be a separate program that provides for a thorough discernment of a diaconal vocation. In the end, the purpose of Aspirancy is for the aspirant and those charged with the responsibility of selecting men for Candidacy to identify if he is truly called and ready to serve the Church as a deacon.

## **I. The Dimensions and Content of Aspirancy**

There are three distinct but integral parts in the formation of a deacon: Aspirancy, Candidacy and Post-ordination training. Each of these periods of formation can be broken into four elements: Human Dimension, Spiritual Dimension, Intellectual Dimension, and Pastoral Dimension. Through these four paths, the following academic, spiritual and inter-personal topics will be covered during the first year dedicated to Aspirancy: Diaconal Ministry and Life, Marriage and Diaconate, Diaconal Spirituality, Discernment (personal and ecclesial), Theology, Christology, History of Christian Religion, The Creed, and Ecclesiology.

### **I. Human Dimension:**

The human dimension during Aspirancy will focus on developing a high degree of self-knowledge and self esteem to help the aspirant to develop his confidence for diaconal ministry and understanding of his call. Time spent on analyzing the dynamic relationship between family and diaconal life as well as other interpersonal and relationship matters will provide ample opportunity for the aspirant and his wife to assess the current state of their marriage, family life and the ramifications of his possible ordination to the diaconate on their family life. Ample attention will also be spent on helping the single aspirant discern his capacity for celibacy.

### **II. The Spiritual Dimension**

The spiritual dimension of Aspirancy will assist the aspirant in the ongoing process of configuring oneself to Christ. The very goal of spiritual formation is “putting on the mind of Christ;” (The National Directory, #191) therefore, this aspect of the program will nurture attitudes, habits and practices that provide opportunity for this type of growth. To enhance this growth, this portion of formation will involve classes on understanding diaconal vocation, the meaning of obedience, celibacy and simplicity, matrimonial spirituality, and spiritual writings from the Catholic tradition. Along with community activities facilitated by the Formation Program staff, individuals are expected to actively participate in the following:

- Daily Mass (when possible)
- Sacrament of Reconciliation
- Liturgy of the Hours, meditation and private prayer
- Lectio Devina
- Spiritual Direction

### **III. Intellectual Dimension**

The intellectual dimension is not isolated from the other elements of Aspirancy. In fact, it draws the other dimension together and helps to clarify and increase their purpose by providing a deeper understanding of the spirituality and human aspects of formation while also providing practical knowledge to support the development of pastoral skills. Classes during Aspirancy include doctrinal study of the diaconate and its particular charism, ministries and tradition, application of the Church's social teachings, and traditional Catholic spirituality.

Beyond the goal of providing a common base for the class to work from in Candidacy, the intellectual aspect of Aspirancy helps the aspirant to develop his understanding of his own call and the necessary vocabulary to discuss it. Because teaching aspirants the fundamentals of theological reflection improves their ability to discuss their call, it makes evaluating their readiness all the more possible for those charged with discerning its presence. The aspirant's performance in these basic classes also provides a strong indication as to whether the aspirant is prepared (and willing to make the effort) for the academic rigors of candidate formation. (The National Directory, #196)

### **IV. Pastoral Dimension**

This dimension's focus is ultimately the discernment of the aspirant's gifts for the threefold ministry of Word, Liturgy and Charity and his capacity to make a lifelong commitment to these ministries. This is also a time to learn about appropriate tolerance and the need to apply all the Church's teaching on social justice. Classes in this area will concentrate on developing the necessary interpersonal skills for ministerial work in a multicultural Church. By introducing the aspirant to the realities of the ministerial life, the pastoral dimension provides the information and time for the aspirant and his spouse to consider carefully the impact of having diaconal ministry as part of their family's priorities. This insures that the aspirant's wife can give informed consent and support to his desire to pursue being a deacon. Likewise, this aspect of formation also allows for the external assessment of the readiness of the aspirant's wife and family to give their full consent and support.

### **J. Time Commitment**

The Aspirancy program as outlined in the Bishop's letter is currently one year in length.

Aspirancy runs from September to June with no more than one weekend per month (Friday evening, All day Saturday, 1/2 day Sunday). The schedule is designed to avoid conflicts hopefully with employment schedules.

Candidacy classes likewise run from September to June and are also constructed of one weekend per month. Each summer of Candidacy, candidates are required to do internship in ministry and participate in liturgical practicum for the entire year.

### **K. Wife's Participation**

It is requested that wives be present during the entire Aspirancy program. Participation is requested and encouraged during Aspirancy to insure that spouses have ample opportunity to ask questions and gain a clear understanding of the diaconate before being asked to give their informed consent for the husband's continued participation.

Participation in Candidacy is encouraged and at times required. During the course of both Aspirancy and Candidacy, specific seminars will be offered for wives to provide a forum for discussion and support. The material of these seminars will be decided by the wives to make sure it is relevant, timely and helpful.

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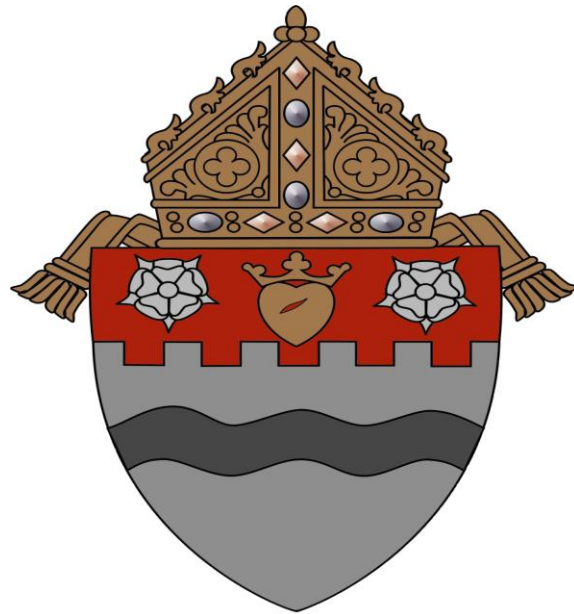
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APPENDIX IV

OFFICE FOR THE  
PERMANENT DIACONATE

CANDIDACY HANDBOOK



DIOCESE OF PUEBLO

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September 1, 1999

Dear Pastors, Administrators and Deacons,

With this letter, I am announcing a new formation program for the diaconate which is in line with the new norms awaiting final approval from Rome. They reflect the national trend to enhance diaconate formation programs, academically, spiritually and pastorally with the hope of producing deacons equipped to accept the challenges facing the ministry in the new millennium.

The program will consist of one year Aspirancy to enable the aspirants to gain sufficient knowledge in spirituality in order to make well informed choices as they discern their call in their commitment to serve their Church as ordained deacons. Candidacy, required to be three years by the new norms, will focus on deeper theological study, pastoral training, and personal spiritual development specific to the life of a deacon. It is with hope that this program will offer a disciplined and comprehensive education.

May we all come to appreciate our baptismal call to service in the Kingdom of God.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Arthur N. Tafoya".

+ Arthur N. Tafoya, D.D.  
Bishop of Pueblo

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Candidacy: A Time of Preparation .....	2
A. Overview of Responsibilities.....	2
B. Discernment .....	3
C. Process and Criteria for Selecting Candidates .....	4
D. Purpose of Candidacy .....	5
E. The Dimensions and Content of Candidacy.....	5
F. Time Commitment .....	7
G. Wife’s Participation.....	7
H. Selection Process and Criteria for Promotion to Ordination .....	8

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# **CANDIDACY:**

## **A TIME OF PREPARATION AND FINAL DISCERNMENT**

This handbook outlines the purpose, content and expectations of the final portion of the Diaconal Formation Program. The descriptions, guidelines and schedules contained in this handbook are taken from the final draft copy of *The National Directory for Formation, Ministry, and Life of Permanent Deacons in the United States (The National Directory)* and Bishop Arthur N. Tafoya's letter and attachments announcing the new Formation Program on September 1, 1999 and revised on February 2, 2009. While this handbook will include some details about the nature of the diaconate and character of those called to serve, the primary purpose of this publication is to provide information on the requirements, time demands and selection process directly related to the Candidacy portion of the Diaconal Formation Program. For more information on the charism and nature of the diaconate, please refer to the bibliography included in the Diocesan handbook for Aspirancy.

### **A. Overview of Responsibilities:**

In moving from Aspirancy to Candidacy, candidates transition from a period dedicated to personal reflection into a period of preparation and training for public ministry. Therefore, while much of Aspirancy was focused on meeting the individual applicant's needs as he discerned if indeed he was called and ready, Candidacy is focused on making sure the individual is equipped to meet the needs of those he will serve. This change will make a material difference in the pace, intensity, subject matter and nature of the classes. While fraternal spirituality and prayer will continue to be a priority, the development of proficiencies and the gaining of knowledge will become of greater importance. Due to the truly academic nature of some of the material, a significant portion of the classes will be done in standard classroom form and include reflection and research papers. (The National Directory, # 224) The candidate, who has always been expected to take an active role in his formation, will now be expected to discipline himself to not only acquire knowledge and capabilities he finds interesting or relevant to his immediate plans, but acquire understanding and proficiency in all the areas required of a deacon. Although evaluation continues in this portion of formation, the

candidate himself assumes the primary role for his discernment and development in Candidacy (The National Directory, #204). During Candidacy, the Formation Director, Associate Director and those chosen to teach in the Candidacy portion of the Diaconal Formation Program are responsible for providing appropriate theological education and practical training to insure candidates have adequate opportunity to acquire the necessary level of competency in the areas of direct service, liturgy (sacraments) and preaching to serve as deacons as well as construct “real opportunities” for the candidates to demonstrate they have clearly mastered these areas.

Each year during Candidacy, the Formation Director and Associate Director working with the Diaconate formation committee and the program instructors, have the responsibility of providing a written assessment of each candidate describing his achievements and limitations in the areas of human, spiritual, intellectual and pastoral development during the past year. This information, which is shared verbally with the candidate, is used to determine the candidate’s level of preparedness and, ultimately, be nominated for ordination. (The National Directory, #227)

During Candidacy, each candidate and his wife will be matched with an experienced deacon and his wife, who will act as a mentor couple. The mentor couple will meet with the candidate and their wife once a month to share personal experiences and to transfer practical information learned in the “field.” These monthly conversations are a collaborative effort and participation is required.

As during Aspirancy, candidates are expected to actively pursue their own spiritual growth. More than ever, the candidate must truly reflect on the reality that being a deacon is a life long commitment. (During this period, participation in the sacraments, prayer and work with a spiritual director becomes even more important.)

As with Aspirancy, tuition for the program are for the most part covered by the Diocese. Books, Room and Board and travel are the responsibility of the candidate. As ordination becomes a reality, there will be the added expense of purchasing proper liturgical vestments. However, financial considerations should not be an impediment to being ordained. If a candidate has concerns in this area, he should contact his pastor or the Permanent Diaconate Office.

## **B. Discernment**

While personal discernment continues throughout the formation process to

be focused largely on the questions “am I called and am I ready?”, ecclesial discernment takes on a new dimension in Candidacy. In addition to the questions “Is this person called and ready?”, the Formation Director, Associate Director and the Diaconate Formation Committee is now charged with assessing annually the practical abilities of the candidate to fulfill the various roles of a deacon. This assessment involves traditional evaluations, peer evaluations, observation of candidate’s performance in real and “role playing” ministerial activities, testing the candidate’s ability to apply the gospels to real life and evaluating his ability to reflect theologically about the human, spiritual, intellectual aspects and pastoral dimensions of his service work. (The National Directory, #222)

Along with the classroom and field observations, bi-annual interviews will be conducted with each candidate, his spouse, and if possible, his pastor and pastoral supervisor, and his teachers. The culmination of the direct observations and interviews will be the basis for an bi-annual report that will be discussed verbally with the candidate and be added to his file. In the end, these reports will aid the Diaconate Formation Committee in making their recommendation to the Bishop as to whether a candidate should be presented for ordination.

### **C. Process and Criteria for Selecting Candidates**

Potential Candidates are selected from the members of the Aspirancy program by the Formation Director, Associate Director and discussed with the Diaconate Formation Committee for recommendation to the Bishop.

The Formation Director, Associate Director along with Diaconate Formation committee thoroughly review the files of the potential candidates and their wives. Once the committee gives their recommendation, the potential candidate may petition in writing the Bishop for admission to Candidacy.

Along with the criteria for the selection for Aspirancy, the following are important indications of readiness for Candidacy:

- Capable of reflecting theologically on his faith experience, his call and his ministry
- Have an obvious love for the Word and the Church
- Able to articulate the primary teachings of the Catholic Church and discuss knowledgeably the contemporary issues impacted by these teachings
- Capable of being both a leader and a follower and working as a team
- Willingness in developing fraternal support and community with fellow clergy and others

- Self-aware, self-reflective and willing to share in an appropriate manner his faith experience
- Have a deepening spirituality in response to the study of the diaconal charism
- Commitment to the appreciation of the sacraments
- Participates often in the Eucharist and communal prayer
- Tolerant and generous with time, talent and treasure
- A good listener
- Effective communicator
- Trustworthy and willing to teach only what the Church teaches
- Self-motivated and disciplined in completing assignments
- Able to discuss intelligently, in personal and general terms, Christian vocations, ordained ministry, and especially, the Order of Deacon
- Be a willing evangelizer
- Able to describe the process of discernment
- Able to speak in theological terms about one's call

These criteria are not only recognized through direct observation by the Formation Director, Associate Director and program instructors, but are proven to be present in the aspirant seeking to enter Candidacy by the quality of his interaction with the other members of the formation community and his ministerial work with the greater community.

#### **D. Purpose of Candidacy**

The purpose of Candidacy is to prepare men called to be deacons for the service to which they are called as well as provide them enough exposure to diaconal ministries to insure their discernment is based both on a spiritual and an experiential understanding of the diaconate as a whole. It is a time of training and acute assessment aimed at insuring that the men called by the Holy Spirit, their faith communities and the Church to serve as deacons acquire the necessary competencies to meet the changing and diverse needs of the people of God.

#### **E. The Dimensions and Content of Candidacy**

There are three distinct but integral parts in the formation of a deacon: Aspirancy, Candidacy and Post-ordination training. Each of these periods of formation can be broken into four elements: Human Dimension, Spiritual Dimension, Intellectual Dimension, and Pastoral Dimension. Through these four paths, the following academic, spiritual and inter-personal topics will be covered during the three years dedicated to Candidacy:

## **I. Human Dimension:**

The human dimension of Candidacy is aimed at further development and enrichment of the interpersonal skills and spirituality necessary for effective and responsible diaconal ministry. Emphasis is placed on developing social maturity and the ability to work collaboratively with diverse groups of people. Exercises in peer criticism and self-criticism are included to help candidates develop a habit of authentic self-criticism in light of the Gospel as well as to increase one's ability to treat others with compassion and candor. The overall objective of this portion of the Diaconal Formation path is creating deacons who can balance family, ministry and work while responding charitably and flexibly to the shifting circumstances of parish ministry. This requires both practical experience (internships) and classes on time management and priority identification.

## **II. The Spiritual Dimension**

In Candidacy, the focus of the spiritual dimension evolves from discriminate practices to integration. By introducing the candidate to the theology and spirituality of work, this portion of the formation program helps the candidate learn how to sanctify, through spiritual integration, all aspects of his life: prayer, family, ministry, work, and play. This is an important pre-ordination step, without this a candidate lacks a personal understanding that diaconal life is a "state" not just an "action." Spiritual work at this time will also provide ample opportunity for candidates to discern their vocation and gain the foundational habits, such as daily prayer, frequent participation in the sacraments, and theological reflection, to sustain their vocation after ordination.

## **III. Intellectual Dimension**

In Candidacy, the intellectual dimension has two important goals: building Church related knowledge and developing competency in areas of diaconal service. This creates the need for serious classroom work and meaningful internships and practicum in social and liturgical services. The course of study intensifies at this time due to the volume of information that a deacon needs to know in order to preach, teach, minister and lead God's people in prayer and action. Developing more than a "user knowledge" of Theology, Christology, Canon Law, the doctrinal and social teachings of the Church, Ecclesiology and Sacramental ministry requires serious study and research. The overall goal of the intellectual dimension is equipping the future deacon with the knowledge, experience and confidence to be a reliable witness of faith in word and action for the Gospel and the Church.

#### **IV. Pastoral Dimension**

By engaging candidates in a diverse set of social and liturgical services, at least on a limited basis, Candidacy provides those seeking ordination time to widen their experience in Church work and to develop competency and confidence in each of the three areas of diaconal ministry, word, liturgy, and charity. Working beyond the classroom, this portion of formation relies on the collaboration of veteran deacons, parish priests and staff to provide meaningful and constructive internships in service and the administration of sacraments. Service internships and the exposure to leading liturgical services provide real opportunities for theological reflection and the occasion to translate into practical ministry what one has learned in the classroom. The internships also provide an opportunity to learn how to motivate, organize, and lead God's people within the context of parish action and service. Finally, time spent in actual ministry will help the candidate discern the veracity of his call and his true readiness to serve.

#### **F. Time Commitment**

Candidacy, as outlined in the Bishop's letter dated September 1, 1999 and as required by the Norms, is three years in length. Much like Aspirancy, Candidacy is constructed of weekend classes (Friday evening, All Day Saturday, 1/2 day on Sunday) which will run from September to June. During Candidacy classes will meet monthly. The year will end with a three day weekend retreat for the candidates and their spouses. There is also a five (5) day long canonical retreat prior to ordination.

Each year during candidacy, candidates are required to do internships in the community setting and also at their parishes for the year. There will also be liturgical practicum requirements to fulfill during your internship; however, at least one month should be free each summer and there will not be any classes or formal activity from the end of December until the second week of February each year.

#### **G. Wife's Participation**

Participation of spouses in Candidacy is encouraged and at times required. During the course of Candidacy, specific seminars are offered for wives to provide a forum for discussion and support. The material of these seminars is decided by the wives to make sure it is relevant, timely and helpful.

## H. Selection Process and Criteria for Promotion to Ordination

Possibly the most easily defined list of criteria is the one for ordination.

Simply put, the men chosen for ordination must be a deacon—not potentially a deacon or possibly a deacon. The criteria for ordination is a culmination of that used in the selection of aspirants and candidates, with the additional requirement of being able to competently do the following:

- Set healthy and responsible goals and maintain a balance between family and personal life
- Define priorities in shifting and varied circumstances
- Serve and communicate with a wide variety of people
- Identify the pastoral and physical needs of the community
- Have an inclusive approach and work actively to dispel prejudice
- Bridge factions and bring groups together and work against injustice
- Develop a life-long commitment to leadership in Christian Ministry
- Integrate a wide spectrum of moral and human issues into his spiritual consciousness, prayer and ministry
- Lead prayer in informal and formal settings
- Develop and commit to a plan of continued spiritual, personal and professional growth post-ordination
- Be obedient and attentive to Diocesan policies
- Prepare and deliver homilies which infuse peace and justice issues
- Interpret the Scriptures in harmony with the magisterium and Catholic biblical scholarship
- Perform exegesis as a part of homiletic preparation
- Prepare and teach classes on the sacraments and know their Scriptural, historical and doctrinal foundation
- Teach Church doctrine, Church history and fundamental elements of our faith, such as the Trinity, Christology, Creed and the place of Mary and the saints in the Church
- Explain and teach the fundamentals of Catholic moral thought and apply them to the social issues of our times
- Explain the major Church teaching and their foundation in Scripture
- Manifest an increased holiness of life

- Willingly preach the Gospel to the communities in which he lives, works, and ministers through actions and, when necessary, with words
- Motivate and organize lay action in the area of social justice and the Corporal Works of Mercy.
- Perform weddings, baptisms, wakes, funeral services and communion services
- Apply and teach Church doctrines on the dignity and sacredness of human life
- Preach, Evangelize and Catechize about the foundations of the Catholic faith and doctrine
- Fundamental understanding of Canon Law and its importance in the correct dispensing of sacraments and general Parish operation as well as how they apply to the Permanent Diaconate