

Selection Criteria for Admission

From : National Directory for the Formation, Ministry, and Life of Permanent Deacons in the United States. United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2005

GENERAL CRITERIA – MYSTERY OF VOCATION

Behavioral patterns discerned among exemplary deacons:

- A “natural inclination of service to the ...Christian community” and to all in need
- Psychological integrity
- A capacity for dialogue, which implies a sense of docility and openness
- The ability to share one’s faith yet listen respectfully to other points of view
- The capacity to listen carefully and without prejudices—respecting people in the context of their religion, race, gender, ethnicity, and culture
- Good communication skills; public speaking ability; potential for preaching, catechizing and evangelization
- A sense of responsibility that includes the fulfilling of one’s word and completing one’s work
- Self-directed and collaborative accountability
- Balanced and prudent judgment
- Generosity in service
- The ability to lead, motivate, facilitate, and animate others into appropriate action and service

Spiritual and evangelical qualities of deacons include:

- A discernment of a call to the office of deacon
- A sound faith and a good Christian reputation
- Active involvement in the Church’s apostolate with demonstrated leadership in the area of social concerns and justice
- Personal integrity, maturity and holiness
- Regular participation in the Church’s sacramental life
- Evidence of recognized, ongoing love and commitment to the Church’s life and service (pastor, pastoral staff, parish council, family and friends)

- Participation in faith enrichment opportunities (retreat, days of reflection, adult education programming or lay ministry formation)

- Understanding and willingness to accept the demands of formation and subsequent lifelong learning and commitment to diaconal ministry

- A positive and stable marriage, if married, or a mature celibate state of life if single (understanding / approval of applicant’s spouse if married)

- Active membership in a Christian community for at least five years, with at least two years in the current parish

- Capacity for obedience and fraternal communion

- A deep spirituality and prayer life

Particular law in the Archdiocese of Milwaukee includes:

- At least 32 years at start of formation, and no older than 60 years of age at the time of ordination
- Written endorsement / ongoing support of the Pastor or Parish Director throughout the years of formation
- Sufficient economic security and job stability
- Demonstrated fidelity and love for all that the Church teaches

OTHER CRITERIA

- Good health, ability to handle college-level work and function in an adult learning environment

- Is capable of giving serious attention and time to theological study, spiritual growth, pastoral ministry and personal transformation in a multi-cultural setting

- Has a love for the Church and the ability to adapt to the future needs of the Church

- Demonstrates current active involvement in an apostolate at the parish in the following areas: charity, justice, advocacy, faith formation, liturgy, and parish life. Exhibits *servant leadership*

- Free of canonical impediments or irregularities (CIC, cc. 1040-1042)

- Proof of US citizenship or Permanent Resident status



Deacons, going the distance to serve the People of God

Permanent Diaconate in the Archdiocese of Milwaukee



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Why a Deacon?

Diaconal ministry works hand in hand with both priestly and lay ministry as a sacrament to bring about



the kingdom of God. Deacons are men with a charism and a calling to radical availability for service to the People of God, the Church. The deacon's vocation calls him to collaborate with the bishop and the priests in an exercise of a ministry which is not of their own but the

Word of God—calling all to conversion and holiness. It is a ministry of reconciliation, of outreach to the most marginalized and those most in need of care, of education and justice. The Diaconate was not re-instituted because we have a shortage of priests or lay ministers but to relieve the shortage of ordained deacons. It was restored as “a living icon of Christ the Servant within the Church...a visible sign or sacrament of the Lord Christ himself.”

What is Expected of Deacons?

The Deacon serves the Bishop who has certain expectations:

- An understanding that he has a diocesan responsibility; i.e., a calling to serve in a variety of settings.
- Competence in the ministry of the Word, as Evangelizer and Teacher; Liturgy as Sanctifier; and of Charity and Justice as Witness and Guide.
- A willingness to serve the diocesan Church wherever needed, even at the fringes of society.

The Service of a Deacon The Parish and Beyond

Deacons are ordained to assist the bishop in his pastoral service; he appoints them to their assigned ministry. Deacons are typically given a parish and encouraged to have diocesan (or “extra-parochial”) assignments, primarily in agencies such as hospitals or prisons.

In the parish, Deacons serve in a variety of ministries including Social Ministry, Outreach, Ministry of Care, RCIA, Christian Formation and Youth Ministry. Some deacons, whose ministry is primarily extra-parochial, have a “liturgical” assignment in a parish where they serve at the altar and preach.

Deacons are called to serve as ministers of the Word. They teach, preach and proclaim the Gospel.

Deacons are called to serve as ministers of Sacrament. They preside at funeral vigils, gravesides, baptisms, marriages and blessings. They are ordinary ministers of Holy Communion.

Deacons are also called to serve as ministers of Charity. They provide outreach to those who are forgotten on the fringe of society: the poor, the sick, the homeless, the outcast. They serve in the social arena, calling forth the gifts of the community in service to others.



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Admission Process Outline

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- Contact the Office for Diaconate Formation to schedule a personal meeting, obtain informational materials and to begin an initial assessment of your readiness for admissions.
- Discuss your interest in the diaconate with your spouse (if married) and family for their feedback and signs of support, encouragement, or resistance.
- Secure a spiritual director/faith companion (not your pastor or pastoral staff) to begin discerning a potential vocational calling to the diaconate.
- Review and prayerfully consider the criteria for a vocation to the diaconate.
- Attend the Inquiry for Discernment Program (this is required for both inquirer and his spouse if married).
- When applications are being accepted, seek your pastor's endorsement (this is a formal process) to be considered for selection.
- Complete the application/selection process.

Formation Process

From : National Directory for the Formation, Ministry, and Life of Permanent Deacons in the United States. United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2005

- 1st Year of Formation: **ASPIRANCY** spouses are required to attend. (at the end of the aspirant path, following a comprehensive assessment, the Bishop selects his candidates for continued diaconal formation; those selected celebrate the public, liturgical **Rite of Candidacy**.)
- 2nd—4th Year of Formation: **CANDIDACY** a three year period of intense formation.
 - 2nd Year Thematic Focus: **Lector**
 - 3rd Year Thematic Focus: **Acolyte**
 - 4th Year Thematic Focus: **Deacon**
- **POST-ORDINATION**: A 3 year process of continuing formational opportunities for newly ordained deacons (and their spouses if married).