



DEACON  
FORMATION PROGRAM  
ASPIRANCY AND CANDIDACY  
ARCHDIOCESE OF BALTIMORE  
CLASS OF 2015

**Deacon Information Session**

**Sunday, Jan. 23, 2011**

**Holy Cross Church  
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## **WHAT IS A DEACON?**

A deacon receives the Sacrament of Holy Orders and therefore is no longer a lay person. He is a member of the clergy of the Catholic Church. By his ordination, the deacon is the interpreter of the needs and the desires of the Christian communities and the sign or sacrament of Christ, who came not to be served but to serve. (Pope Paul VI)

## **WHAT ARE THE MINISTRIES OF A DEACON?**

From the very early Church, diaconal ministry has focused on Love and Justice, the Word of God, and the Liturgy. The Catechism of the Catholic Church (#1570) makes this point quite strongly by stating that deacons “share in Christ’s mission....as servant of all.”

### **The Ministry of Charity**

The deacon is an animator and promoter of the community’s active love. The deacon must bring Christ’s healing power to the needy, whether the need is physical, economic, or spiritual. The deacon must present Christ’s power in the Church and in the marketplace.

### **The Ministry of the Word**

Through the ministry of the Word of God, the deacon teaches and provides catechetical instruction and Christian counseling. The deacon can offer spiritual direction and conduct retreats. Most importantly, the deacon preaches and proclaims the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

### **The Ministry of the Liturgy**

The deacon assists at the Mass by proclaiming the Gospel, preaching, offering the general intercessions, preparing the gifts, and distributing Holy Communion. The deacon also administers the sacrament of Baptism; and the deacon witnesses the sacrament of Matrimony. The deacon may preside at the Rites of Christian burial, at Eucharistic Exposition and Benediction, at the Celebration of the Liturgy of the Hours (the Divine Office), novenas and other liturgical rites. In addition, the deacon has the ancient duty of bringing Viaticum to the dying.

## **DIMENSIONS OF FORMATION**

**There are four dimensions of Deacon Formation:**

- Human Formation is the *foundation* of the other three;
- Spiritual Formation *informs* the other three;
- Intellectual Formation enable the *understanding of* the other three;
- Pastoral Formation *expresses* the other three in practice.

### **Human Formation**

Human Formation aims for the fuller development of one’s humanity so that the deacon’s humanity can be a bridge for communicating Jesus. The capacity to relate to others which is fundamental for a person called to be in service for the community. The whole being is involved in formation including the body, mind and heart: psychological competence, communication skills, maintaining one’s physical well being, nurturing healthy relationships, and openness to the arts,

sciences and politics of human life. Integrating all of this and more is essential to become a complete and holy person.

- Flexibility and openness, demonstrated by the ability to adapt to change and by the ability to be at ease with oneself and others; coupled with a personal stamina which shows one to be a man of principles, conviction and empathy;
- Evidence of having made a personal decision to choose ordained ministry and the ability to renew the commitment;
- A developed good sense of one's self-esteem and self-confidence with the maturity needed to be ordained;
- The ability to manage time efficiently and to administer one's own life and the duties of ministry efficiently;
- The ability to set limits and goals in one's life and make plans both for oneself and for one's ministry;
- The ability to be self-critical as evidenced by an internal sense of measurement and non-reliance on external approval;
- An appreciation of the need for recreation and relaxation seen in the ability to take appropriate days off and vacation time;
- Have an awareness of one's own limitations and strengths and be willing to be formed;
- Have a healthy understanding of authority and obedience;
- Non-involvement in substance abuse, sexual addiction, or severe psychological problems, the absence of any definable pathology.

### **Spiritual Formation**

The spiritual formation dimension of the deacon formation program is rooted in the understanding that all people are made in the image and likeness of God. As Genesis 1:26 proclaims, God has spoken at creation, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness." Deacon spiritual formation is also rooted in the knowledge that God has formed all people. Again as Genesis 2:7-8 boldly proclaims, "The Lord God formed man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breadth of life." The spiritual life is a life drawing closer to God by always growing in awareness of God's creative intimacy.

This understanding is the foundational principle of the spiritual formation aspects in the Deacon Formation Program. The *National Directory for the Formation, Ministry, and Life of Permanent Deacons in the United States* (Washington, DC: USCCB) expresses this very eloquently: "The spiritual life is, therefore, dynamic and never static. The first goal of spiritual formation is the establishment and nourishment of attitude, habits, and practices that will set the foundation for a lifetime of ongoing spiritual discipline."

- A well-developed faith and an established relationship to Jesus Christ;
- An established devotion to Mary, the Mother of God;
- A regular routine of daily personal and communal prayer, demonstrated in recitation of the Liturgy of the Hours, regular attendance at Eucharist, regular reception of the Sacrament of Reconciliation, reflection time on Sacred Scripture, and personal reflection time;
- A understanding of "the spirituality of the deacon" rooted in active service;
- An established pattern of on-going spiritual renewal demonstrated by attendance at annual retreats, regular days of recollection and other forms of spiritual renewal;
- An established pattern of prayer surrounding the Church's liturgical calendar as evidenced by regular reflection on the readings of the liturgical year.

Spiritual Formation includes:

Recitation of the Liturgy of the Hours  
Assignment to a Spiritual Director

Annual weekend Retreats (spouses required)  
Six-day Canonical Retreat prior to Ordination

The theological program is predominantly taught by the faculty of Saint Mary's Seminary and University on 18 Saturdays during an academic year from 8:30 am—3 pm. A member of the faculty is the liaison with the Deacon Formation Team to facilitate the theological component of the formation program. The written work by the candidates is assigned, read, and evaluated by the Formation Team. This approach helps the team to assess more clearly each man's progress.

### **Intellectual Formation**

“The intellectual dimension of formation must be designed to communicate a knowledge of the faith and church tradition that is ‘complete and serious’ so that each participant will be prepared to carry out his vital ministry.” (National Directory, para. 118).

The courses included:

- Sacred Scripture
- Church Fathers and Church History
- Catholic Social Teaching
- Fundamental Theology Canon Law
- Dogmatic Theology Catholic Morality
- Spiritual Theology Liturgy
- Ecumenism and Inter-religious Dialogue
- Christian Evangelization
- Homiletics (theory and practice) - written monthly homily in later years
- Integrative - 10 page paper each semester

### **Pastoral Formation**

Pastoral Formation entails the development of skills and competencies that enable deacons to serve their people well. It is the practical side of theology. Deacons must keep themselves aware of the challenges of the people he serves. They should continue to enhance their pastoral skills by gathering new insights on how to minister and allowing themselves to be evaluated so that they can continue to be formed. They develop:

- Good listening skills and pastoral sensitivity;
- The ability to use various resources properly and to refer to others and to seek help from others who are experts in areas where one does not feel competent;
- A demonstrated sensitivity to ecumenical interfaith and social justice issues in the Church and in the world;
- A demonstrated ability to serve the needs of others;
- A demonstrated ability to make a commitment to diaconal ministry according to the tradition of the Roman Catholic Church;
- Competency in pastoral skills, especially in the proclamation of the Word of God and in leading worship;
- The ability to relate to a wide variety of people, e.g., adult women and men, teenagers, families, children, and peers;

- A demonstrated ability to work cooperatively and collegially with other ministers and to empower others to exercise their appropriate role;
- Competency to work effectively with large and small groups.

Pastoral Formation includes:

- One year supervised institutional internship in a hospital, prison, social outreach or nursing home, etc. (8-10 hours per week);
- One year supervised parish internship (not one's own home parish) (8-10 hours per week);
- Liturgical Practicum (reader, acolyte, funeral, marriage, baptism and diaconal ministry at mass);
- Theological Reflection;
- Pastoral Counseling;
- Professional Ethic Workshop (spouses required)
- Monthly written summary of internships

## **WHAT ARE THE ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS?\***

The following requirements must be achieved prior to acceptance into the four-year formation program.

### **Personal Requirements**

You must:

- be a Baptized man who is Confirmed;
- be a Roman Catholic for a minimum of 6 years;
- be an U.S. citizen or a legal, permanent resident at the time of admission with a working knowledge of English;
- be at least 31 years of age at the time of admission to the program;
- typically be less than 60 years of age at the time of ordination;
- enjoy good physical and mental health with no condition which would impede diaconal ministry;
- have successfully completed high school and be able to handle the college level course work;
- possess financial security with a history of steady employment in a position that does not require frequent travel or reassignment (deacons in the Archdiocese of Baltimore do not receive financial compensation for their ministry);
- be a registered parishioner within the Archdiocese of Baltimore;
- possess stability in your life regarding career, family relationships, etc., which is in concert with the Church's values.

### **Family Requirements**

- If married, he must be married at least six years and live in a stable and valid marriage, enjoying the full support of your spouse, and become celibate if your wife precedes you in death; if single, enjoy a stable settled life with a history of healthy relationships, and understand the implications of the charism of celibacy;
- enjoy with your family a good reputation within the community;
- be able to give the time required for study and service without detriment to your family.

## **Ministry Requirements**

- Typically, the successful completion of the CORE Curriculum of the *Church Leadership Institute* (CLI). The successor programs (Equip for Ministry) or comparable programs may be acceptable. This requirement may be concurrent with Aspirancy). Verification of completion is required.
- be willing and able to make a life-long commitment to serve the Church of Baltimore as determined by the Archbishop of Baltimore;
- be willing to promise obedience to the Archbishop of Baltimore and be willing to accept any pastoral assignment that may be given to you by the Archbishop;
- be presently active in the Church and be recognized and accepted as a leader within the community;
- be highly recommended by those who have worked with you in ministry and can attest to your potential to be an ordained minister in the Church.

*\* The Deacon Formation Team will consider equivalencies or exceptions for any of these requirements.*

## **APPLICATION, SCREENING AND ACCEPTANCE PROCESS**

- Application due by Feb. 28, 2011
- Interviews (Applicant and Spouse)
- Canonical freedom and impediments will also be conducted
- We contact your references
- Psychological Assessment (Applicant and Spouse)
- Criminal Background Check

# BASIC CALENDAR OF EVENTS

<b>Class 2015</b>	<b>Application/Aspirancy 1</b>	<b>Aspirancy 1 /Candidacy 2</b>	<b>Candidacy2/Candidacy3</b>	<b>Candidacy3/Candidacy4</b>	<b>Candidacy4/Deacon</b>	<b>Diaconal Assignment</b>
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
<b>Jan.</b>	Interview Applicants	Pastoral Formation	2 Academic Classes Begin Institutional Assignment	2 Academic Classes Begin Pastoral Assignment	2 Academic Classes Ordination Planning	
<b>Feb.</b>	Interview Applicants	Impact on Marriage Psychological Assessment	2 Academic Classes	2 Academic Classes	2 Academic Classes Liturgical Practicum	
<b>March</b>	Interview Applicants	Ministries of the Deacon	2 Academic Classes Practicum for Reader	2 Academic Classes Professional Ethics Workshop	2 Academic Classes Candidates meet with Placement Committee Liturgical Practicum	
<b>April</b>	Interview applicants	Boundaries and Protection of Children Psych Feedback	2 Academic Classes Installed as Reader	2 Academic Classes	2 Academic Classes	
<b>May</b>	Interview Applicants	Integration of the Year	2 Academic Classes Annual Evaluations	2 Academic Classes Annual Evaluations	2 Academic Classes Canonical Retreat Ordination	One Year Check Up
<b>June</b>	Interview Applicants Aspirancy Decision	Decision Letters for Candidacy	Annual Evaluation	Annual Evaluation		
<b>Summer</b>			Continue Institutional Assignment	Continue Pastoral Assignment	First Diaconal Assignment	
<b>Sept.</b>	Begin Aspirancy #1	Orientation to Academics 1 Academic Class	2 Academic Classes Funeral Practicum Petition for Acolyte	2 Academic Classes Retreat		

		Petition for Candidacy				
<b>Oct.</b>	Human Formation	2 Academic Classes Retreat	2 Academic Classes Retreat Acolyte Practicum	2 Academic Classes		
<b>Nov.</b>	Spiritual Formation	2 Academic Classes Receive Candidacy	2 Academic Classes Receive Acolyte	2 Academic Classes Readiness for Orders		
<b>Dec.</b>	Intellectual Formation	2 Academic Classes	2 Academic Classes Evaluation of internship	2 Academic Classes Evaluation of internship		

SUBJECT TO CHANGE