ROMAN CATHOLIC
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OF CHARLESTON

MANUAL OF FORMATION
for the
PERMANENT DIACONATE

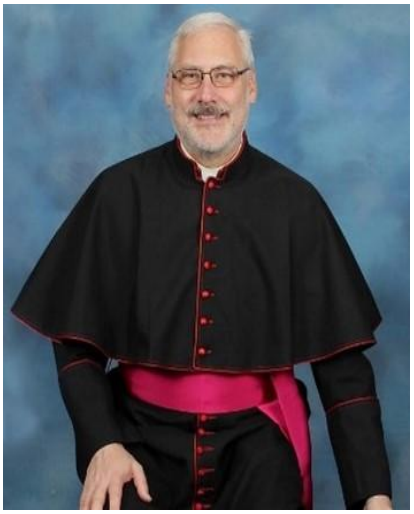
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OFFICE OF THE PERMANENT DIACONATE



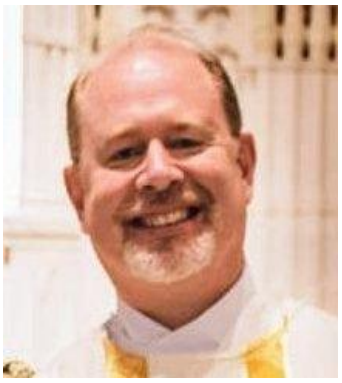
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Mission Statement

Under the direction of the Bishop of Charleston and in fidelity to Vatican and National Norms, the Office of the Permanent Diaconate Invites, Forms, and supports Deacons who are called to serve the Church in South Carolina through the Ministry of the Word, the Altar, and the Ministry of Charity.

"For the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many."

Mark 10:45

"You represent a great and visible sign of the working of the Holy Spirit in the wake of the Second Vatican Council, which provided for the restoration of the Permanent Diaconate in the Church. The wisdom of that provision is evident in your presence in such numbers today and in the fruitfulness of your ministries. With the whole Church I give thanks to God for the call you have received and for your generous response."

St. John Paul II, address to 3,000 deacons and wives, Detroit, Michigan (1987)

"It is clear that for [a deacon program] to be successful there has to be a careful selection process, solid formation and continuous attention to the suitability of the candidates, as well as constant concern for them once they are ordained, and in the case of married deacons, concern as well for their families, wives, and children."

St. John Paul II, The Church in America, No. 42 (1999)

Preface

Purpose of this Manual

The purpose of this manual is to set forth the program of formation for candidates to the Permanent Diaconate in the Diocese of Charleston. In its preparation, careful adherence has been given to the norms and standards promulgated in the *National Directory for the Formation, Ministry, and Life of Permanent Deacons in the United States* (2004). This Directory embodies the authoritative teaching of the bishops of the United States concerning the nature and mission of the ordained ministry of deacons.

It presents a doctrinal synthesis on the sacramentality of the Diaconate, offers theological and pastoral insights into the ministry and life proper to deacons, and articulates particular law governing the Diaconate within the United States. Furthermore, it provides comprehensive guidance for the integral human, spiritual, intellectual, and pastoral formation of candidates for Holy Orders, as well as directives for the continuing formation of deacons, so that their ministry may always remain faithful to the mind of the Church and fruitful in service to the People of God.

This information governs the formation program as it has been developed for the Diocese of Charleston; however, it is not to be interpreted as constituting a contractual agreement between the Diocese, the Office of the Permanent Diaconate, and those engaged in discernment or formation for the Permanent Diaconate. In accordance with the provisions of canon law, the diocesan bishop retains full authority over all aspects of diaconal formation and admission to Holy Orders (cf. canons 236, 1025, 1029). Accordingly, the contents of this manual are subject to modification or revision at any time, whether through adaptations deemed necessary for the program, by mandate of the bishop, or through adjustments to national norms as they may be further developed or refined.

The Diaconate, as a sacramental order, permeates the entirety of the deacon's life, shaping his vocation within marriage (if married), his family life, and the duties of his labor. By sacred ordination, the deacon is configured to Christ the Servant and becomes a public minister of the Church at all times, bearing constant witness to the presence of Christ in the world (*cf. Lumen Gentium*, 29). His ministry is not confined to liturgical service alone but extends to the Word of God and to works of charity, thus manifesting the very nature of the Church as servant.

The call of this order is to integrate this sacramental state of life with the covenant of marriage and the responsibilities of work, so that every aspect of life is ordered toward the building up of the Body of Christ. As the Apostolic Letter *Sacrum Diaconatus Ordinem* affirms, the deacon is to be "dedicated to the duties entrusted to him, in union with his bishop and priests, and with a spirit of humble service." In this way, the deacon's entire existence becomes a sacramental sign of Christ the Servant, lived out in fidelity to God, in service to the Church, and in witness before the world.

The Diaconate stands today as a vibrant and indispensable force for ministry within the Church. In the Diocese of Charleston, the first deacons were ordained to this sacred order in 1971. Since that time, the Diocese has been blessed with many faithful deacons and their families who, with generous self-giving, have embraced the call to diaconal ministry in service of Christ and His Church.

The ongoing task of fostering vocations and discerning the call to the Permanent Diaconate remains essential to the life and mission of the Church. As the Lord reminds us, *"The harvest is abundant, but the laborers are few"* (Mt 9:37). In this same spirit, the Church in Charleston continues to invite, accompany, and form new laborers for the Lord's vineyard — men who, through the Sacrament of Holy Orders, are

sacramentally configured to Christ the Servant. Strengthened by this grace, they assist the bishop in his apostolic ministry, support the presbyterate, and dedicate themselves to the service of the People of God (cf. *Lumen Gentium*, 29).

As the Apostolic Letter *Sacrum Diaconatus Ordinem* teaches, the deacon is ordained not unto the priesthood but unto a distinct ministry of service — of the Word, of the altar, and of charity — so that the Church may ever more faithfully embody her mission as servant in the midst of the world. In this way, the diaconal vocation stands as a living and sacramental witness to the words of the Lord: *"Whoever wishes to be great among you must be your servant"* (Mt 20:26).

This manual is intended to serve as a guide to the many dimensions of discernment, acceptance, and formation for the Permanent Diaconate. It is our earnest hope that all who make use of this resource will be strengthened in their journey of faith and encouraged to grow in a deeper understanding of the Diaconate as a sacred ministry of service, charity, and hope, entrusted by Christ to His Church for the sanctification of God's people and the building up of the Body of Christ.

May it inspire those in formation — together with their wives, families, and parish communities — to embrace ever more fully the call to serve in the likeness of Christ the Servant, who "came not to be served but to serve" (Mt 20:28).

Brief History of the Diaconate

In its *Dogmatic Constitution on the Church*, the Second Vatican Council restored the Permanent Diaconate as a proper and stable order within the hierarchy of the Church. In *Lumen Gentium*, 29, the Council teaches:

> "At a lower level of the hierarchy are deacons, upon whom hands are imposed 'not unto the priesthood, but unto a ministry of service.' Strengthened by sacramental grace, they are dedicated to the People of God, in conjunction with the bishop and his body of priests, in the service of the liturgy, of the Gospel, and of works of charity."

In this same paragraph, the Council also affirmed the pastoral needs of the Church which this ministry is uniquely suited to address, particularly the manifestation of Christ the Servant in the life of the Church.

Finally, the Council decreed that it belonged to individual Episcopal Conferences, with the approval of the Supreme Pontiff, to determine whether the Permanent Diaconate should be restored in their respective territories, according to the needs of the local Church.

In June 1967, Pope St. Paul VI, in fidelity to the mandate of the Second Vatican Council, promulgated the Apostolic Letter *Sacrum Diaconatus Ordinem*, thereby restoring the sacred order of the Permanent Diaconate in those countries where episcopal conferences, with papal approval, discerned its necessity for the life of the Church. For several centuries prior to this restoration, the diaconate had ordinarily been conferred only upon those preparing for priesthood. While this practice continues, the restoration of the Permanent Diaconate opened the way for suitable men to be ordained as deacons permanently, without intention of priestly ordination, to fulfill a stable ministry of Word, liturgy, and charity.

In the United States, then-National Conference of Catholic Bishops (now U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, USCCB) formally petitioned the Holy See for the restoration of the Permanent Diaconate, desiring, in their words, "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 received papal approval in August 1968, thereby inaugurating the renewal of the diaconal order in the life of the Church in the United States.

The *Code of Canon Law* provides the juridical framework for the Diaconate as a distinct and permanent order. Canon 1008 affirms that by sacred ordination, deacons, priests, and bishops are constituted ministers of the Word, liturgy, and governance. Canon 1009 §1 further specifies that "the orders are the episcopate, the presbyterate, and the diaconate," and §3 clarifies that deacons are ordained unto a ministry of service rather than priesthood. Canon 1031 establishes the minimum age for ordination to the permanent diaconate (35 years, with spousal consent if married), while canons 1034–1037 set forth the requirements for candidacy, formation, and the assumption of celibacy when applicable. Together, these canons ensure that the restored Permanent Diaconate is exercised faithfully in accord with the mind of the Church and in service to the People of God.

In 1971, the Bishop's Committee on the Permanent Diaconate, under the leadership of the Most Reverend Ernest L. Unterkoefler, Bishop of Charleston, issued the first national guidelines for the formation and ministry of permanent deacons in the United States. These guidelines reflected both the initial experience of dioceses implementing diaconal programs and the theological insights articulated in the report of the Catholic Theological Society of America on the theology of the diaconate. Written in a spirit of creativity and openness, these guidelines provided a foundational framework for the American Church as she began to receive and assimilate the restored ministry of the Permanent Diaconate.

In February of 1978, the committee was authorized to commission a comprehensive study of the permanent diaconate in the United States. A work ensued, entitled *A National Study of the Permanent Diaconate in the United States*, and it explained the strengths and weaknesses of the diaconate in the United States.

The leadership of Bishop John J. Snyder, bishop of the Diocese of St. Augustine, and later of Bishop John F. Kinney, brought a revision in these guidelines in November of 1984. The new guidelines were published in July of 1985.

In 2005 the USCCB published The National Directory for the Formation, Ministry, and Life of Permanent Deacons. The Second Edition was published in 2021.

Overview of the Permanent Diaconate in the Diocese of Charleston

The Permanent Diaconate in the Diocese of Charleston was inaugurated under the leadership of Bishop Ernest L. Unterkoefler and entrusted to the supervision of Rev. Msgr. Thomas R. Duffy, Vicar General, who was appointed as the first Director of the Permanent Diaconate. Under Msgr. Duffy's guidance, the program matured from its earliest stages and steadily developed into a period of growth and stability.

In 1971, the first deacons were ordained for service in the Diocese of Charleston, and they were sent forth to minister throughout the diocese in both parochial and diocesan assignments. Over the course of his many years of leadership, Msgr. Duffy implemented ongoing improvements in the formation program, ensuring that candidates were well prepared for the ministry entrusted to them. A particular strength of the program was the continual updating of academic training, made possible in no small measure through the generous and selfless contributions of the priests of the diocese, who offered their time and expertise in service to the formation of deacons.

In 1990, during the episcopacy of Bishop David B. Thompson, Rev. Msgr. Joseph R. Roth was appointed Chairman and Director of the Office of the Permanent Diaconate for the Diocese of Charleston. Under his

leadership, the program continued to develop and adapt in response to the pastoral needs of the Church and the evolving vision of diaconal ministry.

In 1999, Bishop Robert J. Baker reaffirmed the importance of continuity in this ministry by reappointing Msgr. Roth as Director of the Permanent Diaconate. To strengthen the program further, he was assisted by Rev. Edward W. Fitzgerald, who served as Spiritual Director, and Rev. Jay Scott Newman, who assumed the role of Academic Director with responsibility for guiding the Aspirancy and Candidate stages of formation. Their collaboration contributed to a more comprehensive approach to diaconal preparation, integrating spiritual, pastoral, and intellectual formation for those discerning the call to ordained service.

Msgr. Roth faithfully guided the Diaconate Program for the Diocese of Charleston until his death in 2011. His leadership was marked by his pastoral dedication within the diocese, and by his significant contributions to the wider Church. In addition to authoring *The Deacon in Church Ministry*, a text that offered clarity and direction on the vocation and ministry of deacons, Msgr. Roth served on the Executive Board of the National Association of Diaconate Directors (NADD) from 1995–1998 and as President of the Association from 1996–1997.

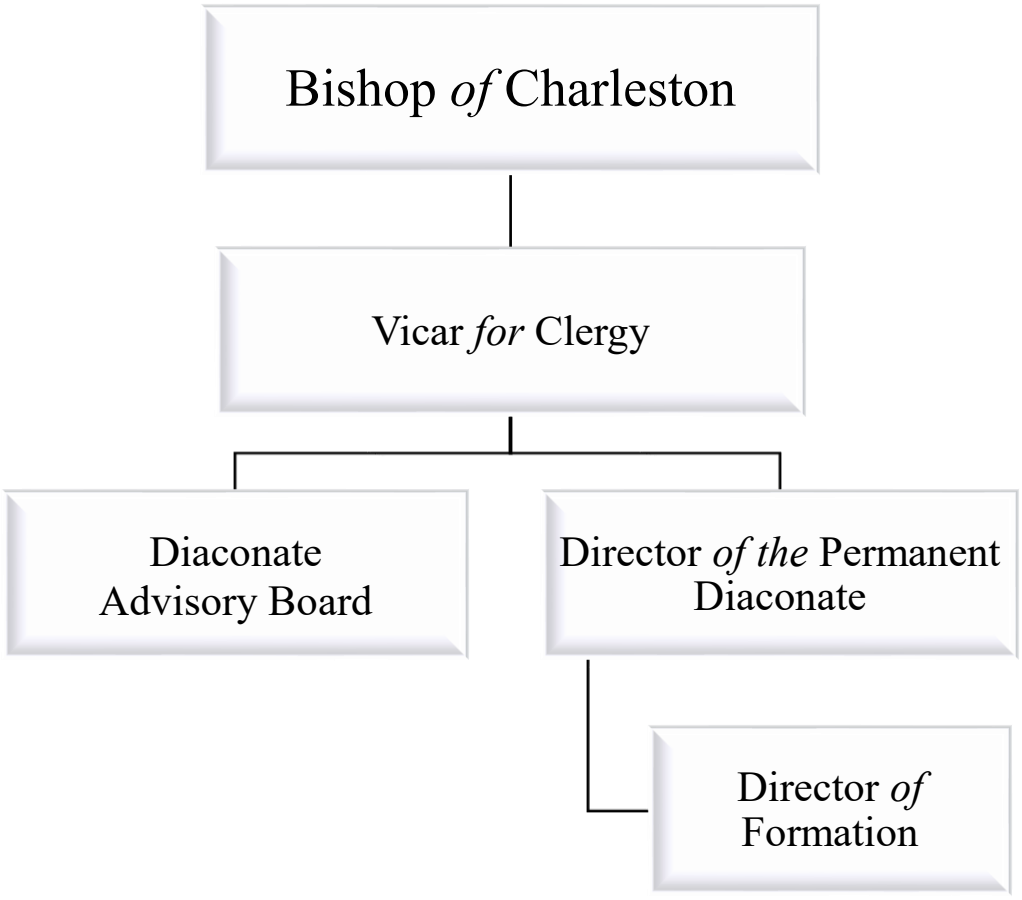
In his diocesan ministry, Msgr. Roth was assisted by Deacons George Tierney and Walt Pezanowski, whose service and collaboration supported the ongoing growth and stability of the program. Together, they fostered an environment of faithful discernment and formation that prepared many men and their families to embrace the diaconal call to serve Christ and his Church.

In 2011, under the leadership of Bishop Robert E. Guglielmone, Father Fitzgerald was appointed Director of the Permanent Diaconate. He was assisted in this ministry by Deacon André J.P. Guillet, who served as Director of Diaconate Formation, together with Deacons George Tierney and Gabriel Cuervo, who provided regional support. Their collaborative efforts ensured both continuity and growth in the formation and service of deacons throughout the diocese.

In 2014, Deacon Guillet was named Director of the Diaconate, the first deacon to hold this position. He was assisted at various times by Deacons Cuervo, Ron Anderson, Regi Armstrong, John Tempesco, and Tom Whalen. Deacon Guillet retired in 2022, having formed almost 90 men during his tenure. Deacon Tempesco succeeded him as Director of Deacons in 2022, with Deacon Armstrong as Director of Formation.

In July 2023, Most Rev. Jacques Fabre-Jeune, CS, Bishop, appointed Deacon Armstrong as Director of the Permanent Diaconate, and in November that year, he appointed Deacon Brian Justice as Director of Formation.

Organizational Structure of the Office of the Permanent Diaconate



Discernment of a Vocation to the Permanent Diaconate

The Call to Diaconate Ministry Rooted in Baptism

The vocation to Christian discipleship is first revealed in the sacrament of Baptism. In this sacrament of initiation — the gateway to the sacraments — the Church calls each of the faithful into the threefold office of priest, prophet, and king. The primordial vocation of all the baptized is rooted in the lay state, which precedes any subsequent call to consecrated life or to the sacrament of Holy Orders. Through Baptism, the Christian becomes an adopted child of God, an heir with Christ, and a member of the holy People of God, receiving thereby the full dignity, rights, privileges, and responsibilities proper to the faithful, brought to completion through Confirmation and the Holy Eucharist.

Accordingly, the vocation to the diaconate must not be understood as an ascent to higher status or a deeper sanctity in itself. Ordination is not a passageway to personal holiness, but rather a sacramental configuration to Christ the Servant, which demands greater self-emptying and a radical availability for service. No one ought to seek ordination as a means of drawing nearer to God. Rather, it is those who already live in intimate communion with God, and who embody a life of selfless service, whom the Lord may call — through the discernment of His Church — to the distinctive path of diaconal ministry.

Called and Chosen: Vocational Discernment

The beginning of a vocation, or vocational discernment, is rooted in personal reflection. The remark of a pastor or parishioner, the witness of one already ordained to the diaconate, or an experience of serving may move an individual to begin thinking about the diaconate as a personal vocation, a calling. The individual begins to reflect, question himself and gather information on the diaconate. A genuine vocation always comes about as the result of God's specific calling for a deeper awareness of God's presence and sense of peace about responding positively to this call. The Church accompanies the individual on this journey and offers the final affirmation of a vocation by means of the call of the bishop to the clerical state for the glory of God and the sanctification of the world.

This vocational discernment moves to the next steps when the individual enters dialogue with spouse and family. The consent of wife and children is essential for the formation process. Without the consent of the wife, vocational discernment comes to an end.

It should be noted that the support of wives takes many forms — from measured acceptance to outright enthusiasm. There is no single right form of response to this familial vocational discernment. At the same time, it should be acknowledged that the support of the spouse will move through phases as the spouse comes to terms with the changes brought into their marriage and family through the process of formation. While enthusiasm may rise and fall, the essential point of discernment is the willingness of the wife and family to say "yes" to this vocation.

The third dimension of vocational discernment is that of the Church. Vocations are not individual acts, that is, God calling one individual to a new way of life. Vocations are validated and expressed through the Church. This vocational discernment takes place in the parish and among those charged by the bishop with the responsibility of diaconate formation.

The sponsorship of the pastor is required along with the support of the formation team for continuance in formation. Ultimately, it is the bishop and those charged with leadership in the formation program who will judge and determine if the candidate has the requisite skills, character, and spiritual gifts to serve well

in ordained ministry. There is no certitude that the man has a vocation until the bishop in the name of the Church calls him to this Sacred Order.

Ordination is a Calling, not a Right

The decisive and authentic sign of the diocesan Church's role in discernment is found in the call of the bishop and his recommendation, manifested in the Rite of Ordination (*CIC*, can. 1015; 1021). Without this call, there exists no vocation to the diaconate at that time. Ordination is not a personal right, but a grace, a gift, and a calling forth by and from the Church. Thus, ordination to the diaconate is never owed to a candidate, even to one who has faithfully completed the formation process (*CIC*, can. 1026).

As the Church teaches, no one has a right to sacred ordination; rather, it is always conferred for the good of the Church and according to the judgment of the bishop, who acts in fidelity to the discernment of the Church and in cooperation with the Holy Spirit (*CIC*, can. 1025 §2; 1030). The fulfillment of academic, pastoral, human, and spiritual formation requirements, while necessary for discernment, does not establish a claim to ordination. Ordination remains a free and sovereign act of the Church, exercised through the bishop, for the sanctification of the People of God and the building up of the Body of Christ (*Lumen Gentium*, 29).

Discernment and Formation

Throughout the period of formation, the candidate, together with his wife and family, is expected to remain faithfully committed to the ongoing work of discernment — that is, to listening attentively to the voice of God and to seeking confirmation of whether the call to ordained ministry is authentic, continuous, and deepening. As *Pastores Dabo Vobis* reminds us, discernment is a gradual process requiring openness to the Spirit and docility to the Church, who alone has the responsibility to judge the authenticity of a vocation (*cf.* PDV, 38).

At times, for reasons known only to God, a man and his wife may be called to enter the process of formation, yet the call may not extend to ordination. The *National Directory for the Formation, Ministry, and Life of Permanent Deacons in the United States* (2004) likewise emphasizes that admission to candidacy, continuation in formation, and eventual ordination are not automatic stages, but distinct moments of discernment requiring prayer, evaluation, and the judgment of the Church.

Accordingly, it is wise for the candidate to understand the call to apply, the call to participate in formation, and the call to ordination as three related yet distinct invitations from the Lord. Each represents a grace-filled opportunity by which God draws the candidate and his family into deeper communion with Christ the Servant and into fuller maturity in Christian discipleship.

Selection Criteria

Those in formation for the Permanent Diaconate are expected to embody fundamental human and social qualities that enable both healthy personal relationships and effective ministerial service. As the *National Directory for the Formation, Ministry, and Life of Permanent Deacons* teaches, the diaconal vocation requires a strong human foundation upon which spiritual, intellectual, and pastoral formation may be built. These qualities dispose the candidate to live in communion with the Church and to serve God's people with humility and maturity.

Among these essential skills and values are the following:

- A natural inclination toward service

- Psychological integrity and emotional well-being
- Capacity for genuine dialogue
- Docility of heart and openness to ongoing formation
- Ability to share one's faith and to listen to others with respect and tolerance
- Effective communication skills
- A sense of responsibility and fidelity to one's commitments
- Capacity to be both self-directing and collaborative
- Balanced and prudent judgment
- Generosity in service
- The ability to lead, motivate, and animate others toward appropriate action

These human and relational dispositions, cultivated in the candidate and confirmed by the Church, ensure that the deacon may carry out his ministry of Word, liturgy, and charity with authenticity, integrity, and pastoral charity.

In addition to the foundational human qualities required of all candidates, the Church also looks for further signs of maturity and integration that will sustain the candidate in his vocation. These characteristics, while often refined and deepened during the period of formation, should already be present in some measure to provide a firm basis for growth.

Among these desirable human characteristics are:
- A positive self-image and healthy self-esteem
- The ability to accept personal limitations, mistakes, and weaknesses with humility
- The capacity to relate respectfully and appropriately with others, both men and women
- The ability to express and integrate emotions — such as compassion, affection, joy, hurt, fear, and anger — in a healthy and constructive manner
- The ability to establish and maintain proper interpersonal and sexual boundaries
- The courage and prudence to say "no" when circumstances warrant
- Honesty and a willingness to apologize when necessary
- The capacity to confront issues directly and appropriately
- The openness to receive and accept constructive feedback from others

These human dispositions reflect not only natural maturity but also an openness to the grace of God at work in the candidate's life. When rooted in prayer and strengthened by formation, such qualities allow the deacon to live his vocation with integrity, to minister with authenticity, and to witness to Christ the Servant with humility and joy.

The Life of Christian Virtues

Those in formation for the permanent diaconate are expected to possess certain spiritual and theological qualities. In addition, they should be men who are committed to fostering a continuous development of human and theological virtues.

Those identified in the *National Directory for the Formation, Ministry, and Life of Permanent Deacons* include:
- Sound faith
- Good Christian reputation
- Active involvement in the Church's apostolate
- Personal integrity, maturity, and holiness
- The virtue of chastity appropriate to the man's state in life, married or single

- Regular participation in the Church's sacramental life
- Evidence of recognized, ongoing commitment to the Church's life and service
- Participation in faith-enriched opportunities
- A positive and stable marriage, if married
- A mature celibate life, if single
- Active membership in a Christian community
- Capacity for obedience and fraternal communion
- A deep spirituality and prayer life
- Kindness and humility
- Readiness and timeliness of the response to this vocation given commitments to family, career, employment, community, and church service
- Prudence, justice, courage, and temperance
- Compassion, tolerance, and mercy
- Generosity, hospitality, graciousness, and gratitude
- Humility, humor, and joy

Ecclesial Values

As an ordained minister of the Church, the deacon is called to embody and represent orthodox and sound ecclesial values. His words, attitudes, and actions must consistently reflect a faithful adherence to the teaching of the Church and a deep appreciation for her mission of evangelization in the contemporary world. The deacon, in his very person, becomes a living icon of the Church's identity as servant, continuing the saving mission of Christ among the People of God.

Among the ecclesial values sought in the deacon, or in one preparing for diaconal ministry, are:

- A joyful proclamation of the Kingdom of God
- A life marked by ongoing conversion of heart
- A readiness to bear and extend the mercy of God
- Humility expressed in the willingness to apologize and to seek reconciliation
- A capacity to accept responsibility and to acknowledge personal faults and failures
- Abiding reverence for the dignity of every person
- A spirit of loving and selfless service
- A steadfast commitment to a life of prayer

The deacon is, above all, a herald of the Gospel and a servant of Christ's joy. His liturgical role of proclaiming the Gospel is but the visible expression of his lifelong vocation to live and bear witness to the Good News with gladness of heart. This joy is not superficial, but the fruit of the Spirit, arising from intimacy with Christ and strengthened by sacramental grace.

The diaconal vocation is expressed in the threefold *munera* (Latin: duty/obligation) of Word, Liturgy, and Charity:

- **In the Ministry of the Word**, the deacon proclaims the Gospel, preaches, and teaches with conviction and joy, so that the message of Christ may resound not only in the liturgy but also in the daily lives of the faithful. His very life must be a homily of joy, lived as Good News for others.
- **In the Ministry of the Liturgy**, the deacon assists at the altar as servant of the sacred mysteries, embodying humility and reverence. His service in the liturgy is a visible sign of Christ who "came not to be served but to serve" (Mt 20:28).

- **In the Ministry of Charity**, the deacon extends the love of Christ into the world, especially toward the poor, the suffering, and the marginalized. In this way, he manifests the mercy of God and calls the entire Church to live in solidarity with those in need.

Thus, the deacon's vocation permeates every aspect of his life — personal, familial, professional, and ministerial. He is not merely one who "performs functions" in the parish, but a sacramental presence of Christ the Servant amid the People of God. Wherever he is found — home, community, or workplace — the deacon is to be recognized as one who embodies the joy of the Gospel and who, by word and deed, builds up the Body of Christ in love.

Other Important Selection Criteria

AVAILABILITY AND TIME

Central to the discernment of a call to the diaconate is the question of availability — the freedom of heart and schedule to respond fully to God's invitation. Because candidates for the diaconate are typically men already deeply engaged in family life, career, employment, and service within their communities and parishes, it is essential to weigh carefully how these responsibilities can be balanced with the demands of formation and, eventually, ordained ministry.

Discerning a vocation to the diaconate requires not only a sincere openness to the Holy Spirit, but also a prudent assessment of one's readiness and ability to respond. A true call from God will never contradict or undermine the primary responsibilities of one's state in life, especially to one's wife, children, or family.

Throughout the formation process, the Formation Team and its collaborators will assist candidates in evaluating whether the timing is right to continue on this path. Particular attention will be given to how formation impacts family life, employment, and personal well-being. Signs of disproportionate stress in marriage, in relationships with children, or in one's professional obligations may indicate that a man is not, at this moment, able to respond fruitfully to the demands of a diaconal vocation.

At times, candidates may be asked to discontinue formation, either permanently or temporarily, until the circumstances of their lives allow them to embrace the diaconal call with the necessary freedom and stability. Such decisions are always made with pastoral care and with the understanding that the call to serve God and the Church may be lived in many ways, even outside of ordained ministry.

AGE AND HEALTH CONSIDERATIONS

Among the essential criteria for admission to the diaconate formation program are the questions of age and health. In accordance with established policy, applicants must be at least 35 years of age and no older than 60 at the time of acceptance into formation. This range reflects both the maturity expected of candidates and the practical need for sufficient years of active ministry following ordination.

Health, while evaluated on an individual basis, is likewise a significant factor in discernment and admission. Candidates must demonstrate that they are physically, mentally, and emotionally capable of withstanding the demands and stresses that often accompany the rigors of formation and the responsibilities of ordained ministry. Chronic or frequent illness, or a pattern of

neglecting one's health, may be considered signs that a man would not possess the stamina required for consistent and reliable service as a deacon.

Because the diaconate is a vocation of service, self-care itself is a ministerial responsibility. Those in formation are expected to give proper attention to their physical and emotional well-being, recognizing that personal health enables one to serve the People of God with generosity, stability, and endurance. Reluctance or failure to do so will be addressed within the evaluation process, always with a view to safeguarding both the individual candidate and the community he is called to serve.

MARRIAGE AND FAMILY STABILITY

For married applicants, a stable and healthy marriage is an essential prerequisite for entry into diaconate formation. Candidates must be in a valid sacramental marriage of **at least five years' duration** at the time of application. Newly married men, or those whose marriages have been recently validated for less than five years, are not eligible for acceptance into the program.

Because the diaconate is a ministry that places unique demands on both the candidate and his family, the health and integrity of the marriage and household are carefully discerned. Applicants with a history of significant marital or family dysfunctions such as repeated or extended separations, domestic abuse, public confrontation, or ongoing serious conflict — will not be admitted to formation. Likewise, men with an unresolved Decree of Nullity petition before the diocesan Tribunal are ineligible to apply until such matters are fully settled.

During formation, any emerging patterns of instability, disproportionate tension, or evidence of dysfunction within the marriage or family life may be grounds for discontinuation. The Church recognizes that a man cannot serve fruitfully as a deacon unless his vocation to marriage and family life is itself healthy, faithful, and secure. In this way, a candidate's home becomes the first and most vital witness of the diaconal call to service.

BASIC RESPONSIBILITIES

For any applicant, it is essential they have made the proper preparations in their life concerning themselves and their family to properly and effectively serve in the ministry of deacon. Examples of items candidates should have planned for include but are not limited to the following: Health insurance, life insurance, disability insurance, sound financial footing currently and in retirement, and end of life arrangements such as wills and powers of attorney. Likewise, candidates should prioritize their personal health, avoid problematic professional or personal associations, and maintain a proper social media presence.

A quality candidate for the diaconate will demonstrate all of these as part their ability to accept additional responsibilities outside their normal family life.

AVAILABLE FOR SPECIAL MINISTRIES

All those who enter diaconate formation should do so with the understanding that they are offering themselves in service to the Diocese of Charleston, under the direction and appointment of the bishop. While a candidate may begin formation with the support of his sponsoring parish, ordination commits him to a ministry that belongs not solely to the parish, but to the whole diocesan Church.

The bishop, in consultation with diocesan leadership, will assign each deacon according to the pastoral needs of the diocese and the individual's gifts and skills. This may include specialized ministries such as hospital chaplaincy, prison ministry, or diocesan offices, in addition to parish-based assignments.

Although it is often the case that a newly ordained deacon remains in his sponsoring parish for a period of time, this cannot be presumed or guaranteed. As the needs of the Church evolve, the bishop may reassign a deacon to other communities or ministries. Such availability and willingness to serve wherever the Church calls are integral to the diaconal vocation and a sign of the deacon's configuration to Christ the Servant.

AVAILABILITY FOR TRANSFERS TO OTHER PAROCHIAL ASSIGNMENTS

In some cases, a candidate's ethnic background, language proficiency, professional expertise, or ministerial competencies may indicate that his gifts could best serve the broader needs of the Diocese of Charleston in a parish or ministry other than his sponsoring community. The bishop, as the ordinary minister of assignments, discerns these needs considering the good of the entire diocesan Church.

Therefore, while the sponsoring parish plays a vital role in supporting the candidate during formation, it should not be presumed that the deacon will necessarily continue serving there following ordination. His availability to the bishop's assignment — whether in a parish, hospital, prison, school, or diocesan ministry — is a concrete expression of the deacon's promise of obedience and his commitment to serve the People of God wherever the Spirit, through the Church, may call him.

BASIC REQUIREMENTS FOR APPLICATION TO THE DIACONATE IN THE DIOCESE OF CHARLESTON

The Code of Canon Law establishes the requisites for admission to formation and for ordination to the clerical state. Canons 1026–1039 provide a comprehensive list of the requirements and impediments to Holy Orders. These canons ensure that candidates are properly disposed, free from canonical impediments, and capable of assuming the obligations of ordained ministry.

Throughout the application and formation processes, careful steps are taken — through questionnaires, psychological evaluations, and ongoing meetings with spiritual directors and confessors — to discern a candidate's readiness and to verify that no impediment to ordination exists. This diligence reflects the Church's responsibility to safeguard the sacrament and to confirm that each man presented to the bishop is truly called and prepared for Holy Orders.

Summary of Canons 1026–1039

CANON	REQUIREMENT / IMPEDIMENT	SUMMARY
1026	Freedom of consent	No one may be compelled to receive Orders; the candidate must freely accept.
1027	Formation	Candidates must receive appropriate preparation for ministry.
1028	Instruction	Proper instruction must be given on the sacrament and its responsibilities.
1029	Suitability	Only those with sound faith, good morals, piety, sufficient knowledge, and physical and psychological health may be ordained.
1030	Bishop's call	The diocesan bishop (or competent superior) alone decides whether a candidate is to be called to Orders.
1031	Age & marriage	Transitional deacons: minimum 23 years; priests: 25 years; permanent deacons: 35 years if married, 25 if celibate (dispensations possible).
1032	Completion of prior stages	Must complete diaconal service before priesthood; theological studies and pastoral formation are required.
1033	Confirmation	Candidate must be confirmed prior to ordination.
1034	Admission to candidacy	Formal admission as a candidate is required before ordination.
1035	Ministries of lector & acolyte	Must serve suitably as lector and acolyte prior to the diaconate.
1036	Written petition	A freely signed, handwritten petition for ordination must be submitted.
1037	Celibacy or marriage commitment	Unmarried candidates must publicly promise celibacy before diaconal ordination.
1038	Freedom to withdraw	A candidate may withdraw freely before ordination.
1039	Retreat	A retreat of at least five days is required immediately prior to ordination.

Reference: *Code of Canon Law*, canons 1026–1039

In addition to the requirements of universal law (cf. *CIC* cc. 1026–1039), the Diocese of Charleston has established particular norms for admission to the Permanent Diaconate formation program. These norms ensure that applicants are suitably prepared in faith, life, and human maturity to undertake the responsibilities of discernment and eventual ordination.

Applicants must meet the following minimum criteria at the time of application:

- No younger than 35
- No older than 60
- May be married, widowed, or single. If married, must be in a sacramental union of at least five (5) years.

- Lifelong Catholics must have received all three sacraments of initiation at least three years prior to applying
- If a convert or newly entered into Full Communion with the Catholic Church, must have been Catholic for at least five (5) years.
- If widowed or separated, must express willingness to remain celibate if returning to the single state.
- Be a U.S. citizen or permanent resident.
- Be financially secure, capable of providing for one's family and obligations without dependence on stipends.
- Be in good mental and physical health, able to bear the rigors of formation and ministry.
- Have completed at least a high school diploma or GED.
- Be proficient in speaking and writing English.
- Must be in good standing with the Church
- Must be actively involved in parish ministry for at least three (3) years.

Applicants and candidates should reside within the boundaries of the Diocese of Charleston. Moving outside the state of South Carolina to a bordering state while maintaining parishioner status within the Diocese of Charleston needs to be discussed with and approved by the Director of Formation prior to any relocation.

Finally, applicants and candidates are forbidden from membership in any fraternal or other organization in conflict with or opposed to the Roman Catholic Church. Such an example would be any of the various Freemasonry organizations.

Information Sessions

Men discerning a vocation to the Permanent Diaconate are encouraged to share this stirring of the Spirit with their families and with their pastor when they feel the time is appropriate.
Discernment is never undertaken in isolation; it grows and deepens through dialogue with one's loved ones and with the wider Church community.

Those who wish to learn more may contact the Diaconate Office and speak with the Director of Formation for guidance and information. Periodically, informational sessions are scheduled when the application process is open and the need is seen.

These sessions provide:

- An overview of the application and admission process.
- An introduction to the formation program and its expectations.
- Guidance in the spiritual steps of discernment.
- An opportunity to ask questions in a supportive environment.

Participation in these sessions is an important step for men who are prayerfully considering a vocation to the Diaconate and who seek to grow in clarity about God's call.

Application Process

The application process consists of several steps as outlined below.

Application Windows

The Diocese of Charleston forms new diaconate cohorts every two (2) years. Applications are accepted during open windows which are publicized on the diocesan website at charlestondiocese.org/diaconate/are-you-called-to-the-diaconate/process-of-becoming-a-deacon/.

Application windows are open for seven (7) months prior to application review and potential interviews. Late applicants will be invited to submit their application at the next open application window.

Initial Steps

A man who feels he may have a vocation to the permanent diaconate in the Diocese of Charleston should first start with his own pastor to discuss the feasibility and realities of such a vocation.

The initial process involves the following:

1. Meet with your pastor to express your interest in the formation program.
2. If your pastor supports your desire to apply, email the Director of Formation to let him know of your interest and your pastor's support.
3. The pastor must then do the following:
    - Call the Director of Formation to discuss why he believes you may be called to be a deacon. The Director, if he concurs, will then send the pastor Form A (Pastor's Recommendation) of the application.
    - Pastor fills out Form A and submits to the Office of the Permanent Diaconate.
4. Once the Director of Formation has reviewed Form A, he will then inform you as to whether you should apply.

Application

Once the Director of Formation has reviewed Form A from the inquirer's pastor, and decided an application is called for, an application will be forwarded to the individual.

The application itself consists of gathering documents and interviews. It should be completed thoroughly and carefully. Portions of the application are to be completed by the applicant's wife, if married. Proper applications can take weeks to complete.

DOCUMENTATION TO BE SUBMITTED WITH EVERY APPLICATION

- Pastor Recommendation
- General Application form
- Updated Baptismal certificate with sacramental notations (i.e. Holy Communion, Confirmation, Marriage) dated within 6 months
- A marriage certificate verifying a valid Catholic marriage
- If divorced, the Decree of Nullity
- Signed release for psychological exam
- Four reference letters
- Written autobiography by both applicant and spouse, if applicable

- Wife's statement of consent, if applicable
- High school and college (if applicable) transcripts
- Medical statement
- Full background screening (Criminal, Financial & Driving), as required by the Diocese of Charleston
- Completion of Diocesan safe environment curriculum

Post Application Process

Once submitted, all applications will be reviewed by the Director of Formation for completeness and to identify any issues which may require clarification or further investigation.

1. The Director of Formation will then invite qualified applicants to schedule an interview with the Diaconate Advisory Board.
2. Qualified applicants will then undergo a psychological evaluation.
3. The Diaconate Advisory Board will recommend qualified applicants to the Vicar for Clergy, and then to the bishop for a decision.

Psychological Evaluations

All applicants must consent to and complete a psychological evaluation conducted by a licensed professional appointed by the Diocese. This screening is an essential part of the application process, intended to assist in discerning an applicant's readiness for diaconal formation.

- The results of the evaluation are submitted directly to the Director of Formation.
- The report is confidential and will not be shared with the applicant.
- The cost of the evaluation is covered by the Diocese of Charleston, and the report is the property of the Diocese.
- The psychologist provides a summary report for review by the Director of Formation and the Diaconate Advisory Board if necessary.
- The report will indicate one of three possible recommendations:
    - Accept
    - Accept with Caution
    - Do Not Accept

The evaluation is used exclusively for the purpose of admission to diaconal formation and remains a confidential document within the Diocese.

Diaconate Advisory Board

In the admissions process for formation, the Diaconate Advisory Board plays a key role in advising the bishop on an applicant's readiness to enter the formation program.

- The Board is composed of:
    - Two priests
    - One religious
    - Three deacons and their wives
    - Ex officio members:
        - Secretary of Clergy
        - Director of the Permanent Diaconate
        - Director of Formation

- The Director of the Permanent Diaconate serves as chair of the Board and presents both his own recommendation and the collective recommendation of the Board to the bishop for the final decision.
- Interview process:
    - Each available Board member receives from the Diaconate Office a list of applicants.
    - Interviews are scheduled for each applicant and their spouse.
    - Prior to the interviews, Board members receive and review a copy of both the applicant's and the spouse's spiritual autobiography.
    - At the interview, the applicant's file is available for review to any Board member as necessary.
    - Following the interviews, each Board member provides a written recommendation regarding the applicant.
- These recommendations are reviewed by the Director of the Permanent Diaconate and the Director of Formation, then submitted to the bishop.
- At the discretion of the Director of the Permanent Diaconate and the Director of Formation, other deacons and their wives may be part of the interview process, particularly when members of the Diaconate Advisory Board are not available or when a deacon may have a unique insight into an applicant.

Ultimately, the bishop alone makes the decision regarding admission to the diaconal formation program, taking into account the recommendations of the Director, the Board, and the psychologist.

Determination of Application

The Director, the Director of Formation, and the Diaconate Advisory Board shall present one of four recommendations to the bishop regarding an applicant's admission to formation: acceptance, acceptance with caution (probationary admission), deferment, or denial.

ACCEPTANCE
Signifies that the applicant is judged ready to begin formation with the next Aspirant class. The applicant and his pastor are notified electronically and via regular mail. Pastors of accepted applicants additionally receive a Candidate Ministerial Understanding and Pastor Letter of Understanding to assist the pastor in understanding the obligations on him and his parish.

ACCEPTANCE WITH CAUTION (PROBATIONARY ADMISSION)
Allows the applicant to begin formation for a period of one year, after which a formal review will be conducted. At that time, a definitive judgment of acceptance or denial will be rendered.

DEFERMENT
Indicates that admission to formation is postponed, ordinarily to allow for further growth, clarification, or resolution of particular concerns before reapplication. Deferment may happen for those applicants who, while meeting all requirements, may still be judged too new to the faith.

DENIAL
Constitutes a final decision that the applicant is not to be admitted to formation.

Confidentiality

All documents submitted and gathered during the application process shall be maintained in strict confidence and secured within the Office of the Permanent Diaconate. Access to these materials is

restricted solely to members of the Diaconate Advisory Board in the exercise of their duties. The entirety of the application, together with all supporting documentation, becomes the property of the Office of the Permanent Diaconate and shall neither be copied nor returned to the applicant.

Since the ultimate decision regarding admission to formation rests with the diocesan bishop (*cf.* can. 236, can. 1029), he may request from the Director all information deemed necessary to render a prudent and just judgment concerning the applicant.

Implementation of the *National Directory's* Norms in the Formation Program of the Diocese of Charleston

Those Responsible for Formation

ORDINARY (DIOCESAN BISHOP)
The Bishop of Charleston oversees every aspect of the discernment and formation of those pursuing Holy Orders. He makes use of the Director and the Director of Formation to ensure that all the facets of formation indicated in the *National Directory for the Formation, Ministry, and Life of Permanent Deacons* and other pertinent ecclesial documents are included in the diocesan plan of formation for permanent deacons. All recommendations for admittance to formation, continuance in the program and ultimately the call to Holy Orders are personally reviewed and approved by him.

DIRECTOR OF THE PERMANENT DIACONATE
The Director of the Diaconate Formation Program is appointed by the diocesan bishop, reports to the Vicar for Clergy, and bears ultimate responsibility to the bishop for the proper implementation and oversight of the formation program.

DIRECTOR OF FORMATION
The Director of Formation is responsible for overseeing and implementing the various dimensions of the diaconal formation program, ensuring an integrated approach that addresses the human, spiritual, intellectual, and pastoral dimensions of formation. He serves both the aspirants and candidates as well as the needs of the local Church.

In particular, the Director of Formation is responsible for:

- **Recruitment and Discernment**: Assisting in the promotion of vocations, meeting with inquirers, and guiding them through the early stages of discernment.
- **Program Oversight**: Designing, coordinating, and evaluating the formation curriculum in consultation with the bishop, the Director of the Permanent Diaconate, and formation faculty.
- **Faculty and Mentor Coordination**: Recruiting and supervising instructors, spiritual directors, pastoral supervisors, and mentors to ensure consistency in formation.
- **Assessment and Evaluation**: Monitoring the progress of aspirants and candidates through regular reviews, interviews, and evaluations, and making recommendations to the Director of the Permanent Diaconate regarding readiness to advance in formation.
- **Spiritual and Pastoral Development**: Ensuring that candidates are provided with opportunities for spiritual growth, pastoral experience, and theological education consistent with the *National Directory for the Formation, Ministry, and Life of Permanent Deacons in the United States*.
- **Collaboration**: Working closely with the Diaconate Advisory Board, the Director of the Permanent Diaconate, parish pastors, and families of candidates to support the formation journey.

The Director of Formation reports directly to the Director of the Permanent Diaconate and, through him, to the Bishop of Charleston.

SPIRITUAL DIRECTORS

Each aspirant and candidate is expected to have a spiritual director either at the time of application or shortly thereafter. The spiritual director should not be the individual's pastor, to maintain appropriate separation between parish responsibilities and personal discernment.

If an aspirant or candidate does not already have a spiritual director, the Diaconate Office will assist in providing suitable recommendations.

ACADEMIC INSTRUCTORS

The academic dimension of formation is overseen in collaboration with the diocese's academic partner and its faculty. Professors provide theological, scriptural, liturgical, and moral instruction to ensure that aspirants and candidates receive a solid intellectual foundation appropriate to ordained ministry. Professors typically have terminal degrees (PhDs) in theology or a suitably related field.

Pastoral formation is entrusted to a team composed of priests, deacons, subject matter experts, and diocesan employees. This dimension focuses on the practical integration of theological learning with pastoral application, preparing candidates to serve effectively in parish life, diocesan ministries, and specialized pastoral settings.

PASTORAL SUPERVISORS

Throughout the formation process, candidates will be provided with multiple opportunities to observe, participate in, and assist within a variety of pastoral settings. These experiences are designed to foster growth in pastoral identity and competency.

The candidate's pastor ordinarily serves as the primary pastoral supervisor, offering guidance, evaluation, and support. In addition, candidates will be expected to fulfill specific requirements that include participation in and observation of designated ministries as determined by the formation program. These experiences ensure that candidates develop both practical skills and a deeper understanding of pastoral service in the life of the Church.

ROLE OF WIVES IN DIACONAL FORMATION

For a married man, the discernment of a call to the diaconate must take place within the context of his marriage and family life. Sacramental theology teaches that marriage unites husband and wife in a covenant that is faithful, exclusive, and fruitful. Because the two have become "one," it is essential that the couple together reflect, pray, and discuss such a profound calling to the diaconate.

The formation process and ordination inevitably impact and transform family life, giving rise to the expressions "diaconal couple" and "diaconal family." These terms recognize that the vocation of the husband and father touches the life of his spouse and children in a unique way, shaping how marriage and family are lived in the context of diaconal ministry. However, it must be emphasized that ordination itself is conferred only upon the man who has completed the requirements of formation and been judged by the bishop as called to the vocation of deacon; the terms should never be taken to imply ordination of the spouse or family.

Wives are expected to take an active role in the diaconate formation process. Their presence is required during the nine-month discernment period, as this stage of formation is intended to be a shared journey of prayer and reflection.

While attendance at academic formation sessions is not mandatory for wives, the bishop strongly encourages their participation. To this end, spouses are asked to attend at least four weekends each year during the academic formation process. This involvement supports the couple's shared discernment, strengthens the marital bond, and provides wives with a deeper understanding of the vocation to which their husbands are being called.

Overview of the Phases of Formation

ASPIRANCY
The aspirant path is primarily a time to discern the readiness of the aspirant to be nominated to the diocesan Ordinary for acceptance into the candidate path in diaconal formation. Information is available to aspirants detailing the components of the program, rationale, and guidance for assessment, and the expectations and responsibilities of the aspirants, including the wife of a married aspirant. The aspirant phase, which includes the Discernment Period and the first year of academics, involves discernment with emphasis on spiritual readiness, intellectual capacity, and basic pastoral abilities. Aspirancy lasts 2 years.

The aspirant path must create an environment in which the wife of a married aspirant can give her consent to her husband's continuance in formation. More essentially, it must ascertain her compatibility with her husband's diaconal vocation and eventual ministry.

The objectives and content for intellectual formation at the aspirant level should communicate a deeper knowledge of the faith and church tradition, as well as diaconal theology and spirituality, should include meetings for prayer, instructions, and moments of reflection that will ensure the objective nature of vocational discernment.

The conclusion of the aspirant path in formation is determined through a formal assessment conducted by the Director, the Director of Formation, and Diaconate Advisory Board with recommendations for continuance to Candidacy to the bishop. After acceptance by the bishop, the aspirant then begins the candidate path in formation with the Rite of Admission to Candidacy, which is to be celebrated after the first year of formation and in a proper manner.

A certificate showing the reception, date, place and the name of the presiding prelate must be prepared and signed by the Chancellor and officially sealed. This document is to be maintained in the candidate's personal file and recorded in the diocesan book on ministries and ordinations.

CANDIDACY
Candidacy is the three-year period in which one continues the fourfold formation with a view to continuing discernment and possible ordination to the diaconate. Candidacy lasts 3 years.

It should be noted here that admission and continuance in formation do not constitute a call to ordination. Often it is better to think of having been called to diaconal formation as a distinct step in evolution of a formal diaconal vocation. The call to ordination may, or may not, follow the call to formation, depending upon a variety of circumstances, from changing life or work circumstances to the candidate's election to continue to ordination.

During Candidacy, prior to institution as lector, the candidate's pastor will have a formal opportunity to provide feedback and share any thoughts or concerns with the Director of Formation by means of a Midway Evaluation by the pastor at the invitation of the Director of Formation. This evaluation consists of a series of questions with the opportunity for pastor to request a meeting to discuss the candidate if he feels it necessary.

Instituted Lector (Reader)
The ministry of Reader (Lector) is a formal and stable ministry of the Church, conferred upon candidates for the diaconate by the bishop through the prescribed liturgical rite. While the lector remains a lay minister, he is entrusted with a sacred responsibility: to serve as an ordinary minister of the Word of God in the Church's liturgy and life.

The lector's principal ministry includes the proclamation of the first and second readings at Mass (except for the Gospel, which is reserved to the deacon or priest), as well as the proclamation of Scripture at other rites of the Church. The lector may also assist in the catechetical mission of the Church, for example in the Order of Christian Initiation of Adults (OCIA) or in the Children's Liturgy of the Word, where the Word of God is proclaimed and explained.

Installation into the ministry of lector ordinarily takes place at the end of the first year of candidacy.

Beyond the liturgical functions, the lector's ministry carries a profound spiritual dimension. The lector is called to a deep love for Sacred Scripture, to study it faithfully, to live according to its message, and to proclaim it with reverence and conviction. This ministry forms the candidate to become not only a skilled and prayerful proclaimer of God's Word, but also a living witness to the Word made flesh, Jesus Christ.

In receiving this ministry, the lector commits to letting the Word of God shape his heart and guide his life, so that what he proclaims with his lips, he also embodies in his daily witness.

Instituted Acolyte
The ministry of Acolyte is a formal and stable ministry of the Church, conferred upon candidates for the diaconate by the bishop through the prescribed liturgical rite. While the acolyte remains a lay minister, he is entrusted with a particular responsibility in the Church's worship: to assist the priest and deacon at the altar during the celebration of the Mass.

Installation to the ministry of acolyte ordinarily takes place at the conclusion of the second year of candidacy. In addition to assisting at the altar, the acolyte serves as an Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion, exercising this ministry with reverence and fidelity.

Beyond its practical functions, the institution of an acolyte carries deep spiritual significance. As one entrusted with service at the altar, the acolyte's ministry is intimately connected to the Eucharist, the source and summit of Christian life. This ministry is a profound preparation for Holy Orders, forming the candidate in a deeper love for Christ's Real Presence and a more intimate union with the mystery of the sacrifice of the Mass.

The acolyte is thus called to grow in a Eucharistic spirituality, witnessing through his life and service the Church's faith in Christ who gives Himself as the Bread of Life.

PRE-ORDINATION
Pre-ordination is not a formal stage but is the period at the end of candidacy in the months preceding potential ordination. In this period, the candidate's pastor will have another formal opportunity to provide feedback and share any thoughts or concerns with the Director of Formation by means of a Pre-Ordination Questionnaire by the pastor at the invitation of the Director of Formation. This evaluation consists of a panel of questions with the opportunity for

pastor to request a meeting to discuss the candidate if he feels it necessary. This is the final formal opportunity for the candidate's pastor to provide feedback to the Diaconate Office.

Additionally, prior to ordination, a final background and social media check is performed on all candidates by the diocese.

POST-ORDINATION FORMATION

Formation does not end with ordination. The grace of Holy Orders is meant to be lived out through a lifetime of growth, prayer, and service. For this reason, the *National Directory for the Formation, Ministry, and Life of Permanent Deacons in the United States* recommends a structured program of ongoing formation during the first five years after ordination. In this diocese, the program includes the following components: Annual Spiritual Renewal, Continuing Education, Accompaniment and Supervision, Accountability and Feedback, and Mentorship

Annual Spiritual Renewal

- Required attendance at the Annual Retreat and the Diocesan Day of Prayer (for all active deacons).

Continuing Education

- Twenty-five (25) hours of post-formation education yearly during the first five years.
- After five years of service, the requirement becomes fifteen (15) hours annually.

Accompaniment and Supervision

- Meet with Director and Formation Director at Day of Prayer for first two years after formation.
- Annual Ministry Report for first three years. This would coincide with ordination anniversary.
- Annual FN survey in June/July for first five years.

Accountability and Feedback

- Each year, the deacon submits an assessment of his ministry to the Director of the Permanent Diaconate.
- Each year, pastors are invited to provide feedback to the Office of the Permanent Diaconate regarding the ministry of their new deacon.
- Every deacon who actively ministers in the diocese is to have a 3-year Ministry Agreement on file with the Office of the Permanent Diaconate.

Mentorship

- More senior deacons in the parish are expected to provide guidance, encouragement, and mentoring to newly ordained deacons during this period.

Post-ordination formation fosters fidelity, accountability, and deeper integration of the diaconal identity into daily life. It ensures that the newly ordained are not only supported but also challenged to grow in the threefold mission of Word, Liturgy, and Charity.

The Dimensions of Formation

HUMAN FORMATION
The goal of Human Formation is a fuller development of one's humanity so that the person of the deacon can be a bridge for communicating Jesus to his people. The capacity to relate to others is fundamental for a person called to be in service for the community.

The whole being (body, mind, heart and spirit) is involved in formation: 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 becoming a complete and holy person.

The Director of Formation will look for growth in basic human, virtuous behavior, including:

- Flexibility and openness, demonstrated by the ability to adapt to change and by the ability to be at ease with himself and others, coupled with a personal stamina which shows him to be a man of principles, conviction and empathy
- Evidence of having made a personal decision to choose ordained ministry
- A developed good sense of one's self-esteem and self-confidence with the maturity needed to be ordained
- The ability to manage time and to administer one's own life and the duties of ministry with efficiency
- The ability to set limits and goals in one's life and make plans both for himself and for his 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
- An awareness of one's own limitations and strengths and willingness to be formed
- Having a healthy understanding of authority and obedience
- Non-involvement in substance abuse, sexual addiction, or severe psychological problems, and the absence of any definable pathology

SPIRITUAL FORMATION
Spiritual growth is a vital dimension of diaconal formation. Deacons are called to be living witnesses of Christ's love and compassion, and this requires a life firmly rooted in prayer, reflection, and discernment of God's work in their lives. The practice of **spiritual direction** is fundamental to the life of all clergy and is therefore integral to the formation process.

During formation, special attention must be given to:

- The development of a deep and consistent life of prayer.
- The practice of *lectio divina* and personal devotions.
- Engagement with the rich spiritual patrimony of the Church.
- Growth in virtue, including both the theological and cardinal virtues, as well as chastity and integrity of life.

Each aspirant and candidate is required to meet regularly with a Spiritual Director. This is considered indispensable for preparation for Holy Orders. If an aspirant or candidate is already seeing a Spiritual Director, he may inform the Director of Formation to ensure that the arrangement fulfills diocesan requirements.

An important aspect of spiritual growth is the practice of retreat. Retreats provide the opportunity to step back from ordinary responsibilities, enter into extended prayer, and listen attentively to God's plan. In accordance with Canon Law, Third-Year Candidates preparing for ordination are required to make a five-day canonical retreat.

INTELLECTUAL (ACADEMIC) FORMATION

The ministry of the deacon requires a solid theological foundation rooted in the Church's teaching and tradition. Academic formation equips candidates with the knowledge and skills needed to faithfully proclaim the Word of God, preach effectively, and serve as catechists and ministers of charity. Through formal study, candidates not only gain intellectual understanding but also deepen their spiritual lives and grow in their ability to serve the People of God with confidence and fidelity.

Proper education and instruction are therefore essential elements of the formation process and must be taken very seriously. More information about the academic courses is available from the Diaconate Office. Candidates are expected to maintain a "B" average or higher in order to remain in the program.

The formation program is conducted at the graduate level in theology. Recognition is given to the fact that most aspirants and candidates remain engaged in employment, have parish responsibilities, and are part of a family. Open and honest communication with instructors is encouraged to alleviate undue stress that may arise. Academic studies are meant to be an opportunity for growth, understanding, and enlightenment — never a source of excessive burden or anxiety.

In general, coursework should not demand more than 15 to 20 hours of homework per week. Additional time may occasionally be needed in preparation for exams or research papers, but such cases should be the exception rather than the norm. If the workload becomes overwhelming, the student should notify the Director of Formation promptly to address the issue before it places undue strain on the candidate or his family.

OVERVIEW OF ACADEMIC COURSES

The following section details potential courses and their descriptions for each phase of the formation process. These classes may be changed based on course availability or other factors at the discretion of the Director of Formation or the Director of the Permanent Diaconate.

Aspirancy Year 1

Introduction to Catholicism

The Introduction to Catholicism course presents students with a comprehensive overview of the teachings of the Roman Catholic faith. It offers students a theological foundation and builds upon the basic tenets of the faith offered in the Catechism of the Catholic Church. The course aims to empower students for future catechetical and ministerial service.

The Call, Mission, and Spirituality of the Permanent Deacon

This course offers the students an opportunity to examine the diaconate by examining its biblical, patristic, and canonical roots, its decline and ultimate renewal authorized by the Second Vatican Council. The emergence of contemporary theologies of the diaconate will also be explored, based on a spirituality of the diaconate which is grounded in the deacon's sacramental initiation and ordination, coupled with an approach to diaconal ministry which is at once similar yet distinct from the sacerdotal orders of the episcopate and presbyterate.

Introduction to Sacred Scriptures
Introduction to the Sacred Scriptures introduces students to the Canon of Sacred Scripture and an overview of each of the major sections of the bible, including selected readings from Sacred Scripture. There are no prerequisites for this course; the instructor will presume that students have little to no academic knowledge of the Bible. The course will include a study of the ecclesial documents that help guide Catholic scriptural scholarship and the faithful who want to study and pray the sacred scriptures.

The Pentateuch and Historical Books: Introduction to the Old Testament
This course introduces and surveys the Pentateuch, the first five books of the Old Testament (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy). Through a close reading of this foundational narrative, we will gain fresh insight into the multiple perspectives it offers on the nature of God, the destiny of humanity, and the history of salvation. By studying and applying the Documentary Hypothesis, the dominant modern theory concerning the formation of the Pentateuch, we will sharpen our ability to appreciate both the individual authorial voices that inhabit the Pentateuch as well as the theological effect of their combination.

Candidacy Year 1

The Spiritual Life: The Practice of Discernment in Prayer
The course leads the student on a spiritual journey of intimacy with God that can bring healing to the minister and those who are being cared for. The journey of this course involves both the head and heart. The course focuses on the theological and Biblical background and some of the basic ways to pray and discern the spiritual life. Included are step-by-step meditations and devotional guides for prayer experiences that help to internalize and adopt the basics of spirituality.

Philosophy for Understanding Theology
This course presents students with an introductory overview of the major historical figures in the discipline of philosophy and their principal ideas. The goal is to make later theological concepts more intelligible by revealing their association with the great philosophical traditions that influenced the writings of the Church Fathers, Doctors of the Church, and theologians through the ages and into the contemporary world.

Introduction to Pastoral Theology and Pastoral Care
Pastoral theology examines the relationship between the doctrine of the Church and its practice, especially in the context of the local Church and parish. The course looks at pastoral theology and praxis as it developed from Vatican II, with a special focus on the role of pastoral ministers in pastoral care.

The Prophets
The contribution of the prophets of Israel to the biblical corpus and therefore to the beliefs and practices of Jews and Christians who have inherited its implications for faith is unquestioned. The course considers Amos, Hosea, Micah, Isaiah (I, II, and III), Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Jonah.

Fundamental Theology
This course in fundamental theology will introduce students to the complex issues surrounding the interchange between faith and reason. The goal of this course is to help

students to solidify their intellectual foundation and prepare them for the work of theological study.

Candidacy Year 2

The Church: A Study in Ecclesiology
Within the framework of systematic theology, ecclesiology examines the nature of the Church and its emerging challenges. This course considers both classic insights and new directions in ecclesiology, including reflections on the nature and exercise of ministry in the Church. Central to the course is a critical examination of two documents of the Second Vatican Council: The Dogmatic Constitution on the Church (Lumen Gentium) and The Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World (Gaudium et Spes).

Synoptic Gospels and Acts of the Apostles: Introduction to the New Testament
The Gospels of Mark, Matthew, and Luke are called the synoptic Gospels due to their interdependence and similarities. This course will study the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke as foundational witnesses to Jesus' life, death, and Resurrection by looking at both their independence and interdependence. The book of Acts is included and studied as the companion volume to Luke's Gospel.

Church History
This survey course in the history of the Church investigates theological, political, and social developments from the apostolic age through the Second Vatican Council. This range of topics in the course is organized according to the "six ages" of the Church as divided by the historian Christopher Dawson.

Foundations of Catholic Moral Theology
An introduction to Catholic moral teaching including natural law; character, virtue, acts and object of acts; scriptural basis for moral teaching; and an introduction to Veritatis splendor and Magisterial teaching.

Introduction to Homiletics and Exegesis
This course provides students with the foundations for Catholic preaching. As a general introduction, we will examine contemporary magisterial teaching on homiletics while also affording students the opportunity to prepare homilies which will be shared among participants for feedback. Emphasis will be given to the liturgical and sacramental context within which Catholic preaching takes place.

Candidacy Year 3

Christology
The Son of God became human while remaining divine. He suffered death on the cross to redeem humanity and rose from the dead in glory. The early Church grappled with the question of who was and who is Jesus. The early Councils proclaimed doctrine held to this day, and the Church Fathers wrote cogently about Him. The course addresses the fundamental questions about Jesus and reviews the heresies about Jesus and their resolution by the Church.

Pauline Literature
Students explore selected letters of Paul. Topics include authorship, audience, and secular and religious contexts. The study of Paul's writing style brings additional insight to the texts. Students are prepared for teaching and preaching in the parish and similar settings.

Sacramental Theology
A comprehensive study of the theology and rites for administering the Sacraments. The course examines biblical foundations for each sacrament, and the way in which the Church has understood and practiced its life of prayer and sanctification throughout history using the sacraments. The primary focus of this study is on the way that the Church currently celebrates the Sacraments.

Liturgical Theology
This course introduces the history, theology, and praxis of the liturgy of the Catholic Church, and explores the function of the liturgy as an integral component of the Christian life and mission.

Intermediate Homiletics
This course focuses on practical dimensions of preparing homilies through a critical and prayerful reading of the Scriptures associated with the various seasons of the liturgical year, as well as using the liturgical year itself as a valuable resource in preaching. Student homilies will be recorded and viewed by the rest of the class, giving an opportunity for constructive feedback. Included will be opportunities for preaching at seasonal celebrations such as the sacred Triduum, Christmas Midnight Mass, Pentecost, and selected Sundays of Ordinary Time.

OVERVIEW OF FORMATION CONFERENCES (IN PERSON SESSIONS)
These courses are under the auspices of the diaconate office and are not offered by the diocese's academic partner. They are overseen by the Director of Formation and instructed by those appointed by the Director of Formation and Diaconate Advisory Board, with a noted preference for priests, deacons, or subject matter experts. These courses will vary in length from a single session to an entire semester, depending on the complexity of the topic. These courses are always done in person, unless the situation requires otherwise.

Human Formation
These sessions address psychological typology/temperament for personal growth, increase self-awareness and understanding of others, and shows how to use these results to enhance worship, prayer life, spirituality, and ministry.

The Liturgy of the Hours
The most common request a deacon or priest will receive is to pray for someone. Prayer is an essential component of the ordained life: interceding to God on behalf of his people. For those who are in the clerical state, the rubric for this prayer is the Liturgy of the Hours. Aspirants are introduced to the rich history and development of the Liturgy of the Hours and aids in navigating this prayer through the liturgical season so that, as St. Paul exhorts, we may "pray without ceasing."

Sacramental Theology
These sessions will identify what a Sacrament is, the types of Sacraments, and how it pertains to the Mass and ministers in the Catholic Church with an emphasis on sacraments that deacons

Life of Prayer
These sessions will focus on maintaining a vibrant and quality prayer life while balancing family life with the demands of diaconate formation.

Order of Christian Initiation of Adults
These sessions will focus on the Order of Christian Initiation of Adults. Topics will include the proper execution of the Rite, the proper vocabulary for those participating, and items deacons are frequently expected to participate in related to the Rite.

Liturgical Spanish
These sessions will offer a basic primer of Spanish which is used at Mass. Emphasis will be placed on those responses and portions of Mass the deacon participates in verbally.

Catholic Vocabulary
These sessions will offer a basic introduction to the proper names of items used at Mass as well as those found in a church.

The Gospel in the Life and Ministry of the Deacon
This session helps men in formation grow closer to Christ the Servant through daily Gospel reading, lectio divina, and study rooted in the Church's understanding of Scripture. Men will explore what each Gospel teaches about Christ and discipleship, along with practical ways to prepare for preaching long before sitting down to write a homily—whether for Mass, a baptism, a wedding, or a funeral. At the heart of the class is a simple conviction: to preach and teach the Gospel faithfully, we must first let it shape our own lives.

Essential Life Skills
These sessions will offer an introduction to the proper financial, estate, and life planning all deacons should have under control as part of being husbands and fathers as well as having these items properly handled so their ministry is able to flourish.

Catechism of the Catholic Church
A synopsis of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* as it pertains to those in diaconate formation.

Social Justice
Catholic social teaching is a central and essential element of our faith. Its roots are in the Hebrew prophets who announced God's special love for the poor and called God's people to a covenant of love and justice. Catholic social teaching is based on and inseparable from our understanding of human life and human dignity. This course will cover all aspects of social justice and teaching.

Liturgy
Introduces Liturgy and sacraments through a study of Church documents, principles of ritual process and symbolic mediation, and a brief overview of the historical evolution of the Roman Rite.

Instituted Lector
Provides instruction on how to read in public, with a focus on the Lectionary/Book of the Gospels. The document *Ministeria Quaedam*, the GIRM, and the Introduction to the Lectionary are reviewed. The liturgical assembly is the chief place wherein God's people hear his Word proclaimed. Therefore, it is paramount that those charged with such a duty carry it out with great care. This goal is to instruct candidates how to serve as lectors at Mass, the

Liturgy of the Hours and other liturgical assemblies to facilitate a prayerful reception by the assembly of sacred scripture.

Pastoral Care of the Sick, Dying, and Grieving
These sessions will provide an introduction and basic foundations of Christian Anthropology, Confronting a Culture of "Death", Suffering, Moral Medical Care, Ministry to the Sick, End of Life Decisions, and the Ethical and Religious Directives for Catholic Health Care Services.

Instituted Acolyte
Introduce the men to the history and definition of the Ministry of Acolyte. This includes a brief history of minor orders and the lay ministry of acolyte, including an overview of Pope Paul VI's *Ministeria Quaedam* and the definition of Acolyte in the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* (GIRM).

The roles of the Acolyte during the Mass, including as a Special Minister of Holy Communion, are explained. The importance of vigilance with respect to the security of the Blessed Sacrament during the distribution of Holy Communion and with respect to the handling of the tabernacle key is emphasized. An overview of the organization of the Roman Missal, the identification of the space and instruments used for the celebration of the Mass, the Order of Procession, and the Order of Mass are also covered.

Candidates will walk through preparing for the celebration of Mass by setting up the space, vessels, and elements for the Mass. An overview of the vestments used at Mass is provided. A walk-through of the various acolyte roles (e.g. cross bearer, book bearer, candle bearers) at various parts of the Mass (i.e. procession, collect, gospel procession, preparation of altar, offertory, Eucharistic Prayer and use of bells, distribution of Holy Communion, and purification of vessels, prayer after communion, and recessional) takes place.

Homiletics
This course aims to hone the participant's ability to convey the Gospel effectively in the liturgical assembly, i.e. the homily. The overall objective of this course is to increase students' competency in the preparation and delivery of homilies. Those preparing for Holy Orders will understand the two essential parts of the homily: content, the speaker's awareness of people's life experience in conjunction with the Gospel; and delivery, the homilist's ability to effectively convey this message with proper speaking technique including volume, pace, length, eye contact, gestures, clarity and focus.

Canon Law
Examines the development of Church law, current pastoral approaches to Church law and ministry, law and sacraments, structures in the Church community, rights of ministers and due process.

Liturgical Practicum: Mass
This gives hands on practice to serve as a Deacon at Mass as prescribed in the *GIRMS* and the USCCB's *The Deacon at Mass*. Instruction includes presentations, discussion, and execution of the various liturgical duties of the Deacon at Mass. A test is administered to each candidate to determine their understanding of their responsibilities and the material presented.

Liturgical Practicum: Mass with a Bishop
This gives hands on practice to serving as a Deacon at Mass, specifically including serving with a bishop as prescribed in the *GIRM* and the USCCB's *The Deacon at Mass*. Instruction

includes presentations, discussion, and execution of the various liturgical duties of the deacon at Mass. A test is administered to each candidate to determine their understanding of their responsibilities and the material presented.

Liturgical Practicum: Baptisms
This gives hands on practice to perform baptisms as an ordinary minister of the sacrament as called out in the *Order of Baptism*. Instruction includes presentations, discussion, and execution of the various liturgical duties of the deacon at Mass. A test is administered to each candidate to determine their understanding of their responsibilities and the material presented. Each candidate receives a copy of the *Order of Baptism*, either in English or English/Spanish (bilingual).

Liturgical Practicum: Weddings
This gives hands-on practice to perform weddings as an ordinary minister of the sacrament as called for in the *Order of Matrimony*. Instruction includes presentations, discussion, and execution of the various liturgical duties of the deacon at Mass. A test is administered to each candidate to determine their understanding of their responsibilities and the material presented. Each candidate receives a copy of the *Order of Matrimony*, either in English or English/Spanish (bilingual).

Liturgical Practicum: Funerals
This gives hands on practice to perform rites related to funerals as called out in the *Order of Christian Funerals*. Instruction includes presentations, discussion, and execution of the various liturgical duties of the deacon at Mass. A test is administered to each candidate to determine their understanding of their responsibilities and the material presented. Each candidate receives a copy of the *Order of Christian Funerals*.

Liturgical Practicum: Exposition/Benediction
This gives hands on practice on the liturgy related to Eucharistic Exposition and Benediction. Instruction includes presentations, discussion, and execution of the various instances involving the deacon and these Rites. The proper Rite book, *Holy Communion and Worship of the Eucharistic Mystery Outside of Mass* is provided and discussed.

Liturgical Practicum: Incense
This gives hands on practice on the use of incense, especially at Mass as specified by the GIRM and the Ceremonial of Bishops (CB). Instruction includes presentations, discussion, and execution of the various instances involving the deacon and incense at Mass.

The Diaconal Promise of Prayer
Prayer is an essential component of the life of a deacon. At his ordination, he solemnly resolves to pray constantly for the building up of the Church. Being faithful to reading at a minimum morning and evening Liturgy of the Hours in addition to other forms of worship are discussed to ensure that Aspirants begin to integrate this form of prayer into their formation experience and daily lives.

Spiritual Direction
The Aspirants are taught the role of a Spiritual Director and enlightened as to the importance and requirement of meeting with one regularly. A brief history of the tradition of spiritual direction is offered, and the men are informed as to the assets of a qualified Spiritual Director ministering to a man who is in diaconal formation.

The Diaconal Promise of Respect and Obedience to the Bishop
A deacon's ministry is not his own. All ministry flows from the mission of the whole Church under the direction of her pastors. Locally, the bishop has the responsibility to ensure the needs of his flock are met, and he uses the resources of those in the clerical state to do so. Discuss the spiritual and practical consequences of a life of obedience pledged by a deacon. Special consideration is given to respect of the office and person of the bishop as well as broader implications of obedience such as to canon law, liturgical law and proper collaboration with one's superiors (e.g. pastor).

The Diaconal Promise to Conform One's Life to Christ
The goal of the entire formation process is to deepen one's baptismal call to discipleship and hone the spirituality, pastoral practice, and doctrinal soundness necessary to the ordained state for the good of the People of God. In short, deacons are meant to make their lives a reflection of Christ the Servant who always showed a particular interest for those on the margins of society and bring them the Good News (what it means to live in the image of Christ in all facets of life).

Conflict Resolution with Other Clergy and Religious
Intended to provide those in their fourth and final year of formation the necessary conflict resolution skills when encountering other clergy and religious in a parish setting. Practical guidelines and methods are provided to help avoid and disarm conflict situations.

Integrating Celibacy into Diaconal Ministry
Celibacy affects every deacon, married or unmarried. This helps those approaching ordination to understand the nature of celibacy, its value and its practice. Celibacy is the companion to chastity, which is the virtue that binds all Christians to each other in a life of love with the sense of justice towards one another. The Candidate will be encouraged to reflect on the fact that celibacy will help strengthen and nurture his existing marriage but also prepare him for the possibility of living celibate chastity should his wife predecease him. The intended goal is that candidates will see that in their eventual ministry as ordained deacon, they will need to appreciate the impact that celibacy can have on their lives and ministry.

Looking Toward Ordained Ministry: Policies of Deacon Personnel
The objective is to examine the expectations and responsibilities of a deacon in the Diocese of Charleston. It will present a detailed look at various policies regarding deacons, i.e., assignment, transfer and retirement policy, leaves of absence, continuing education, etc. Explain the canonical requirements of diaconal ministry and review a deacon's relationship to the bishop, pastor, and Office of Deacon Personnel. There will be reinforcement of the need for constant communication between various diocesan and parish offices. Students will explore and discuss areas of common misunderstanding and conflict between various diocesan and parish personnel.

Additionally, starting with the 2031 Cohort, human, spiritual, and pastoral development is augmented using JC Connect!, an online platform providing computer-based training provided by the Josephinum Diaconate Institute. Although available online, these sessions are done and discussed as a group.

PASTORAL FORMATION
Since it is the responsibility of those charged with the formation of candidates for Holy Orders to ensure they have as much pastoral training and experience as possible prior to ordination, this program aims to provide a wide range of experiences that are specifically geared for future

diaconal ministry — service, preaching, and liturgy. The plan is designed to be a flexible one that provides candidates with necessary pastoral formation experiences but still allows for adequate time for aspirants and candidates to rest, vacation, and spend time with their families.

A Ministry Checklist is provided to all men to demonstrate their observance of various liturgical and practical Church matters at the parish level. The Ministry Checklist exists to provide a comprehensive list of those items which should be observed in a parish setting both as a matter of practical knowledge as well as a means for the candidate to determine which areas of ministry appeal or best match his skills. This checklist is submitted to the Director of Formation every 6 months beginning with the 2nd year of formation.

EVALUATION PROCESS

To assess an Aspirant/Candidate's progress in the formation program, there are periodic meetings between the Director, the Director of Formation, Professors, and Pastors to discuss the academic and pastoral development of each person. The results of those conversations will be relayed to the aspirant/candidate as necessary.

During discernment, multiple small papers will be requested of the aspirants. These papers will help the Director of Formation in determining if the aspirant should continue in the program. The criteria for advancement are spelled out clearly in the *National Directory for the Formation, Ministry, and Life of Permanent Deacons*. These are the standards by which those in formation will be evaluated.

At the end of the academic year, the Director of Formation sends each pastor the grades for his respective candidate(s) as well as a list of the human, pastoral, and spiritual topics covered outside of academic formation.

If at any point during the year an Aspirant or Candidate would like to discuss for consideration any matter related to formation, he is free to speak with the Director of Formation.

TEMPORARY LEAVE OF ABSENCE

An aspirant or candidate may request a temporary leave of absence for legitimate reasons such as family obligations, medical concerns, or other serious circumstances. Leaves of absence are granted for a defined and limited period. During this period, the man ordinarily does not participate in formation activities.

A request for a leave of absence must be submitted in writing to the Director of Formation, clearly stating the reason for the request. If a leave is granted, the aspirant or candidate is expected to maintain regular communication with the Office of the Diaconate throughout the duration of his absence.

At the conclusion of the leave, the aspirant or candidate must write to the Director of Formation formally requesting to return to formation. In most cases, he will join a new formation class and resume formation at the point where he left off. On occasion, depending on the circumstances, he may be permitted to rejoin his original class, with any missed formation content completed through online or directed study.

ADMINISTRATIVE LEAVE OF ABSENCE

An aspirant or candidate may be placed on administrative leave of absence by the Director of Formation for serious reasons, such as alleged misconduct, marital or family difficulties, or other

significant concerns. While on administrative leave, the aspirant or candidate is relieved of all facets of formation and is prohibited from participating in any formation activities.

This temporary withdrawal from formation remains in effect until the matter which prompted the administrative leave is resolved. Only upon a positive resolution of the situation will the Director of Formation determine whether the aspirant or candidate may return to the formation program.

STANDARDS OF READINESS FOR ADVANCEMENT IN FORMATION

It is the responsibility of the Director and Diaconate Advisory Board to assess the progress of those in formation to ensure their proper development toward readiness for Holy Orders. During their individual meetings, the Director of Formation can raise questions with candidates about their growth and challenge them in areas where they may need development. The standards for readiness to be advanced in the program are the same ones indicated by the *National Directory for the Formation, Ministry, and Life of Permanent Deacons* and can be found at the conclusion of this document.

DIOCESAN POLICY COMPLIANCE

Aspirants/Candidates in diaconate formation are expected to maintain compliance with all guidelines and policies as required by the Diocese of Charleston. This especially applies to Safe Environment/VIRTUS compliance but also includes compliance with periodic background checks, the Code of Conduct, Child Protection Policy, and the Social Media Policy.

Once ordained, all Active and Senior Active Deacons must use official diocesan or parish-issued email addresses for all official communications. Using personal email addresses for all official and ministerial communications is forbidden. Diaconate applicants, aspirants, and candidates may use personal email while in formation for communication with the Office of the Permanent Diaconate and its formation partners. Parishes may provide an official email address if desired, but diocesan email addresses will not be issued until at or near ordination.

Failure to keep compliance with these policies will be addressed by the Director of Formation with the offending individual. Repeated failure to maintain compliance may result in dismissal from the formation program.

CHRISTIAN CONDUCT IN FORMATION

Ordination makes a man a public witness of the Christian faith and a leader in the Church community. For this reason, formation is intended to assist each man in gradually assuming this responsibility over several years. While no one is perfect, it is essential that those in formation strive to live in full accord with the Gospel and the teachings of the Church.

Expectations of Conduct

Those in formation are called to:

- Live with integrity, honesty, and fidelity to the promises of their state in life
- Cultivate habits of prayer, charity, and service
- Treat others with respect and dignity in all settings
- Maintain healthy relationships in family, work, and parish life
- Demonstrate accountability and transparency in personal and financial matters
- Reflect the values of humility, compassion, and obedience to the Church

Men in formation should remember that, because they are preparing for public ministry, their private life is never entirely private. How they conduct themselves always reflects on their vocation and on the Church.

Serious Breaches of Conduct
Any serious breach of Christian conduct, particularly those of a public nature or in direct contradiction to the faith, must be reported to the formation faculty immediately. Failure to disclose such matters may result in deferment or dismissal from the formation program.

Examples of serious breaches include, but are not limited to:

- Public scandal or behavior inconsistent with Church teaching
- Grave moral misconduct
- Abuse of alcohol or drugs
- Marital infidelity or serious family neglect
- Financial dishonesty or unethical practices
- Open disregard for ecclesial authority or doctrine

Such grounds for deferment or dismissal from the program may include, but are not limited to:

- Academic fraud of any kind (including the use of AI for assignments)
- Habitual lateness on assignments or attendance
- Missing class or other required events without asking for permission
- Conviction of a crime
- Public drunkenness or other lewd behavior
- Membership in a group whose aim is blatantly against the Church or her teachings
- If an Aspirant/Candidate or his spouse were to file for divorce

Additionally, in accordance with diocesan policy, all those in formation must adhere strictly to guidelines regarding appropriate conduct with adults and minors. All those in formation must be Virtus trained and keep up to date with ongoing training.

Social Media Conduct
Aspirants and candidates are encouraged to exercise prudence with their use of social media. The posting of items which are in opposition to Church teaching is prohibited. The posting of items of an incendiary or politically charged nature should be avoided. Partisan politics are to be avoided. This policy most strictly applies to men in formation, however wives should also avoid any social media posts which invite scandal.

Practical Considerations for the Program

Calendar of Formation Weekend Schedule

DISCERNMENT PERIOD
Location: Our Lady of the Hills, 120 Marydale Ln., Columbia, SC 29210

September - April

Saturday	8:30 am	Morning Prayer
	9:00 am – 11:00 am	Session 1
	11:00 am – 12:00 pm	Prayer/Reflection
	12:00 pm – 1:00 pm	Lunch (lunch provided)
	1:00 pm – 3:00 pm	Session 2
	3:00 pm – 4:00 pm	Prayer/Reflection
	4:00 pm – 4:30 pm	Wrap-up/Dismissal
	5:00 pm	(Optional) Holy Mass at OLH

May

Saturday	07:40 am	Morning Prayer
	8:00 am – 11:00 am	Interviews
	11:00 am – 12:00 am	Prayer/Reflection
	12:00 pm – 1:00 pm	Lunch
	1:00 pm – 2:00 pm	Wrap-up/Q&A/Dismissal

June

Saturday	All Day Retreat	Mepkin Abbey, Moncks Corner, SC

ACADEMIC YEARS
Location: Our Lady of the Hills, 120 Marydale Ln., Columbia, SC 29210

The annual calendar is published well in advance of the beginning of the formation year, and updates are communicated in a timely fashion. It is imperative that those in the program read the calendar carefully and note when events are taking place and make every effort to avoid absences. Each class receives the calendar for the five years of formation, noting that location, classes, etc. are subject to change.

Saturday

8:30 am	Morning Prayer
9:00 am – 12:00pm	Morning Session(s)
Noon	Lunch Break (lunch provided)
1:00 – 4:45 pm	Afternoon Session(s)
5:00 pm	(Optional) Holy Mass at OLH

There may be occasions, especially near the end of training, where Sunday sessions may be included as well.

Expenses

Men in the formation program share responsibility for the cost of their formation. These expenses are divided among the diocese, the sponsoring parish, and the individual. Formation costs include tuition, facility fees, speaker stipends, meals, and related program expenses.

In addition, each aspirant/candidate is responsible for personal expenses, which include:

- Books and materials assigned by instructors
- Liturgy of the Hours (4-volume set)
- Lodging for formation weekends, as necessary

If an aspirant/candidate is unable to meet the financial requirements, he should consult with the Director of Formation to explore possible accommodations.

At no time may an aspirant/candidate be more than two semesters behind on tuition payments.

Appearance and Dress

As representatives of the Church, the Diocese of Charleston, and their assigned parish or ministry, aspirants, candidates, and deacons are expected to maintain proper appearance, grooming, and hygiene always. Personal presentation should reflect the dignity of the vocation and avoid drawing unnecessary attention or causing scandal among the faithful.

DRESS CODE FOR FORMATION DAYS

- Business casual attire is required.
- Acceptable: neat pants with a collared shirt or turtleneck and closed-toe shoes.
- Inappropriate: T-shirts, jerseys, shorts, sneakers, sandals, and flip-flops.

GROOMING AND PERSONAL APPEARANCE

- Hair and facial hair must be kept neat, clean, and groomed.
- Earrings and other facial piercings are not permitted.
- Tattoos should be covered, including those extending to the hands. Tattoos that cannot be concealed must not be problematic (e.g., satanic, sexual, or contrary to Christian values).

By following these expectations, aspirants, candidates, and deacons demonstrate respect for their vocation, their community, and the sacred trust placed in them by the Church.

Attendance Policy

Attendance at all formation sessions is required. Because formation is a serious commitment of the Church, parish, and individual, attendance is treated as a vital part of discernment and preparation.

REQUIRED ATTENDANCE

- All academic classes, pastoral sessions, and formation weekends.
- All retreats, Days of Prayer, and special liturgical events designated as part of formation.

EXCUSED ABSENCES

An absence may be excused only in the following circumstances:

- Significant personal illness or medical emergency.
- Serious family emergency.
- Unavoidable professional obligation, approved in advance.

Excused absences must be reported to the Director of Formation by phone call or text before or while they are occurring, not after.

UNEXCUSED ABSENCES

- Missing a formation event without prior communication.
- Absences for social or recreational reasons.
- Unexcused absences will be documented and may result in review of the aspirant/candidate's suitability for continuation in formation.

PATTERN OF ABSENCES

- Multiple excused absences may still indicate difficulty in fulfilling the demands of formation.
- Consistent absences, whether excused or unexcused, may lead to probation, deferment, or dismissal from the program.

Lunches and Breaks

Refreshments for class breaks and all lunches are provided at no additional cost. It is policy that food and beverages will follow the guidelines set by the hosting facility.

Weekend Cancellation

Severe weather conditions may occasionally disrupt the formation schedule. In such cases, cancellations, postponements, or delays will be communicated as soon as possible through Flocknote (email). Aspirants and candidates are responsible for checking their messages regularly and making necessary adjustments to their schedules.

Cell Phone Usage

Cell phones must be silent and stored away during class. Making or receiving phone calls or text messages during class time is forbidden.

During formation weekends, cell phones and iPads are not to be used for Morning Prayer or retreats unless permission is granted by the Director of Formation. While these devices can be helpful in supporting one's daily prayer life, it is essential that candidates for ordination develop familiarity with the Church's liturgical books for public prayer. Exceptions may be made when new editions of the Breviary are pending.

Additionally, courses or lectures are not to be recorded or photographed without advanced permission of the presenter.

St. Stephen's Fund

PURPOSE

The St. Stephen's Fund was established to aid deacons and men in the Diaconate Formation Program of the Diocese of Charleston who are facing financial hardship. The fund is sustained through the generous contributions of deacons, candidates in formation, the Ancient Order of Hibernians, the Knights of Columbus, and other benefactors.

CONTRIBUTIONS

All donations solicited for the St. Stephen's Fund are made out to the Diocese of Charleston with "St. Stephen's Fund" written in the memo line of the check and mailed directly to the Office of

the Permanent Diaconate to ensure that they are not mixed with general contributions to the diocese.

PROCEDURES
Deacons and men enrolled in the Diaconate Formation Program may submit a "Request for Emergency Financial Assistance" form when needed.

TYPES OF REQUESTS

Educational Assistance

- Books and tuition

Financial Hardship

- Loss of work or income; Medical expenses

Each request is limited to $3,000 per fiscal year, unless extenuating circumstances exist. In such cases, the Director of the Office of the Permanent Diaconate will convene the Diaconate Advisory Board to review the situation and provide recommendations based on the applicant's needs. Any recommendation exceeding $3,000 must be submitted to the Secretary for Clergy for approval.

On receiving a request, the Director will review the application and personally contact the deacon to discuss the circumstances. Once the details are clarified, the Director forwards the information to the Diaconate Advisory Board for review and approval.

If a request is approved, the **Director will coordinate with the Office of Finance to pay the bills associated with the request directly to the vendor or service provider**. No funds will be issued directly to the deacon, ensuring proper use of resources and maintaining a clear audit trail.

If a request is not approved, the Director will notify the applicant and provide an explanation.

Student Directory, Flocknote, and Website

All aspirants and candidates will be provided a directory, by class, of all men who are participating in the formation program, and their wives. These are provided for personal use and information only. The directory is proprietary and may not be disseminated without the permission of the Director of Formation.

The Diocese uses Flocknote to disseminate communications; it will be used in formation as well.
The formation program makes use of the diocesan website to communicate and update information about its offerings and information session.

Basic Standard for Readiness in Permanent Diaconate Formation

The USCCB's "Basic Standards for Readiness" refers to the foundational requirements for individuals seeking admission into formation for Catholic ministries, particularly the Permanent Diaconate Program.

These standards, outlined in the *National Directory for the Formation, Ministry, and Life of Permanent Deacons*, assess candidates' spiritual maturity, intellectual knowledge (including the *Catechism*), and pastoral approach to living the Gospel in daily life, home, and work.

The standards are:

- Model Standards for Readiness for Admission into the Aspirant Path
- Model Standards for Readiness for Admission into the Candidate Path
- Model Standards for Readiness for the Ordination and Post-Ordination Path

Model Standards for Readiness for Admission into the ASPIRANT Path

"Model Standards for Readiness for Admission into the Aspirant Path," for diaconal formation in the Catholic Church, assess an aspirant's readiness across human, spiritual, intellectual, and pastoral dimensions. Key components include psychological integrity and maturity, a strong personal and prayerful relationship with Christ, a growing knowledge of the faith, and demonstrated generosity and skills for serving others within the community and parish life.

For married aspirants, the quality of their spousal relationship and the wife's consent to the vocation are also critical factors.

	Appreciation / knowledge of	**Demonstrated ability / skill**
Human Dimension	*His emotional, intellectual, physical, and personal limitations*	• To speak appropriately of his personal limitations and known boundaries with a sense of how these affect his life, family, employment, and present service ministry
	A family perspective in his life	• To balance and prioritize his commitments to family, work, leisure, and ministry; to be self-disciplined
Spiritual Dimension	*God's redeeming activity in his state of life, experience, and ministry*	• To reflect/meditate in faith on his life with a sense of discovering God's will
	The importance of a both personal and communal prayer life	• To reflect/meditate in faith on his life with a sense of discovering God's will • To convey examples of God's presence in his life • To commit as a reader or extraordinary minister of the Eucharist; to serve his parish community, especially in charity and outreach to the needy; to be responsible and confident • To be both a leader and follower • To fulfill a commitment to a pattern of prayer; to participate frequently in the Eucharist and the Sacrament of Reconciliation; to participate in retreat experiences or a renewal group • To support others' growth in prayer; to show interest in sharing and serving with others
Intellectual Dimension	*The basic teachings of the Church*	• To demonstrate familiarity with the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*
Pastoral Dimension	*Living the Gospel in his life, home, place of employment, and neighborhood*	• To connect the teachings of the Church to daily living and his personal/communal (family, church, civic) responsibilities • To 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 Vocation & Ministry	*A personal call to diaconal ministry with the Church and a sense of his capacity to commit himself to it in fidelity to his state in life and employment, with sufficient time for formation*	• To 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 • To be interested in and attracted to the diaconal *munera* of word, liturgy, and charity

	Appreciation / knowledge of	Demonstrated ability / skill
		• To be of service, beyond liturgical ministries, through church or civic involvement • To support and encourage his pastor, as a representative for the parish community and staff • To 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

Model Standards for Readiness for Admission into the CANDIDATE Path

"Model Standards for Readiness for Admission into the Candidate Path" refers to a set of requirements and qualities an individual must possess to continue a formal path towards a vocation to the diaconate, often involving human, spiritual, intellectual, and professional dimensions, as exemplified by standards for Permanent Diaconate formation. These standards are specific to the diaconate and are a conceptual framework for evaluating readiness.

	Appreciation / knowledge of	**Demonstrated ability / skill**
Human Dimension	*His personality (strengths and limitations), appropriate boundaries, and his talents and gifts; collaboration*	• To be self-reflective; to reveal himself appropriately, sharing his experiences and attitudes with others as verified in the formation community, mentor group, pastoral ministry placement, and self-evaluation; to be both a leader and follower
	Models of faith and moral development through discussion and action	• To use his knowledge to encourage others to reflect and share their experiences in dialogue and action
	The necessity for ongoing spiritual and academic development	• To demonstrate the use of appropriate resources for his physical, emotional, and spiritual development; to take initiative in self-study and in completing home assignments
	The role of respectful listening and tolerance in dialogue with others whose point of view may differ from his	• To be a good listener, respect each person, and be accepted as a trusted participant who keeps confidences; to be open to change through reflective growth in understanding; to express his position candidly in sharing for study and dialogue, neither intimidating nor being intimidated in doing so • To integrate and prioritize his personal boundaries relating to family, recreation, work, ministry, and time alone • To contribute to and utilize a support system
Spiritual Dimension	*God's redeeming activity in his lifestyle, experiences, and ministries*	• To foster an appreciation of baptismal ministry among others, enabling others to reflect upon their faith journey in relationship to this call
	The lectio divina in the formation of a strong Christian spirituality	• To reflect theologically on his faith experience through regular spiritual direction
	His commitment to Christian ministry as rooted in the baptismal call	• To pray the Scriptures, meditating on the mystery of God as our Father, Son, and Holy Spirit
	A personal and communal prayer life	• To fulfill a regular commitment to a pattern of personal and communal prayer through frequent praying of the Liturgy of the Hours, especially morning and evening prayer; to participate frequently in the Eucharist and the Sacrament of Reconciliation, personal prayer and reading of the Bible, and devotion to Mary and to the saints; to plan and lead communal prayer
	His state in life, responsibilities, and role in diaconal discernment;	• To ascertain, if married, the quality of his relationship with his wife and children and the need

	Appreciation / knowledge of	Demonstrated ability / skill
	diaconal celibacy and other commitments; an ecumenical perspective in formation	for dialogue and mutual consent to continue in formation and move forward toward ordination; to make, if unmarried, a commitment to perpetual celibacy and live a single lifestyle in an appropriate manner • To practice in prayer and action an attitude of discipleship to Christian unity, desiring to know more about other Christian denominations and other faith experiences and finding ways for mutual action in serving human needs
Intellectual Dimension	*The Catechism of the Catholic Church*	• To articulate the primary teachings of the Church and discuss contemporary issues in light of this teaching
	The Sacraments of Christian Initiation and the Sacrament of Holy Orders, especially the Order of Deacon	• To speak informally on Christian vocations and ordained ministry, particularly the Order of Deacon and its threefold ministries of Word, liturgy, and charity; to relate this knowledge to personal and communal vocation discernment
	The Eucharist as the summit and center of Christian communal life, especially in his formation community	• To actively participate in the Eucharist as a lector or extraordinary minister of the Eucharist and in ministry to the sick
	The Church's spiritual tradition, including its various paths of spirituality	• To experience and invite others into meaningful expressions of prayer and forms of Christian spirituality
	Pastoral resources	• To refer others to appropriate pastoral resources as needed
Pastoral Dimension	*Theological sources that ground, interpret, and guide the activity that constitutes the pastoral life of the Church*	• To name appropriate theological resources useful to ministerial study and service
	Effective communication skills	• To communicate effectively in spoken and written word
	A multicultural perspective in formation; cultural communication patterns and their impact on goals and programming; resources for ethnic, racial, and cultural groups	• To effectively use different cultural communication patterns whenever appropriate, and to use and guide others to appropriate multicultural resources
	How to approach theological study from within the context of his pastoral experience and ministry	• To discern how God is calling him into ministry and to link, in reflection, his pastoral and personal experiences to theology — apprehending God's presence through touching the needs of the poor or afflicted; to be an advocate for people in need and a facilitator of the community's resources in response to human needs
Diaconal Vocation & Ministry	*His ongoing relationship with God as the source of his ministry and discernment of a diaconal vocation*	• To articulate his relationship with God and reasons for believing he has a call to the Order of Deacons within the formation community

	Appreciation / knowledge of	Demonstrated ability / skill
	His call and his personal commitment to live the Good News in all aspects of life	• To articulate his call and commitment to his spiritual director and to the formation personnel and to communicate this through self/peer/formation/pastoral/ family assessment
	The role and ministry of the deacon within the faith community	• To articulate this understanding in ways that are life-giving and empowering within his family, place of employment, parish, formation community; to identify, call forth, affirm, and support the gifts, strengths, and talents of others
	The teaching that it is the Church that calls and affirms the vocation to an ordained ministry	• To participate collaboratively in all aspects of formation; to be cooperative, open, and respectful to all who journey with him; to be receptive of insights offered by the formation personnel, his wife and family, peers, and pastor

Model Standards for Readiness for the Ordination and Post-Ordination Path

"Model Standards for Readiness for the Ordination and Post-Ordination Path," as developed by the USCCB, outline criteria for assessing a candidate's suitability for ordained ministry, focusing on personal qualities like emotional health, human-spiritual development, intellectual formation, and pastoral and missionary skills. These standards ensure individuals are well-prepared for the lifelong commitment of service in the Church, covering their call, knowledge, and ability to live out their vocation.

		Appreciation / Knowledge of	**Demonstrated ability / skill**
HUMAN DIMENSION	*1. Personal Qualities*	*His gifts, personality, strengths and talents, and weaknesses and limitations and how they affect his ministry*	• To engage in self-reflection and assess his abilities and limitations
		His emotional, physical, and spiritual limitations	• To set healthy and responsible goals, maintain a healthy balance in his personal life and ministry, and develop positive support systems among family, friends, and peers
		A family perspective and its impact on personal and ministerial activity	• To infuse a family perspective into ministerial and personal scheduling and programming
		The complexities of daily life and ministry	• To be flexible and assign appropriate priorities in varied circumstances
		The need for collaboration, reliability, accountability, and confidentiality	• To demonstrate dependability and trustworthiness; to consult, plan, and support the pastoral team
		The use of imagination, enthusiasm, and humor	• To communicate with and relate to a wide variety of people
		The influence and importance of peers in growing as deacon	• To participate in local, regional, and national professional associations; to promote and participate in diocesan programs, in services, and community opportunities for deacon personnel
	2. Relationship	*The various ministries, roles, and responsibilities of a deacon, especially in his relation to the pastor, parish staff, director of religious education, etc., as they relate to and serve the community*	• To initiate, create, and sustain a positive, collaborative relationship with all colleagues in ministry; to discern, set, and maintain healthy and responsible boundaries in all pastoral relationships; to solicit input from those who will be affected by activities or policies
		The role and mission of the deacon in the universal, diocesan, and parochial communities	• To discern and evaluate everchanging pastoral needs; to recruit, train, coordinate, and support parish volunteers in their ministerial and spiritual development; to find and use personal and professional support systems
		Psycho-social dynamics and how cultural and ethnic	• To recognize and work to dispel prejudices and cliques within his own

		Appreciation / Knowledge of	Demonstrated ability / skill
		differences affect ministerial practice	life and that of the community; to network with others in challenging injustice
		The diversity of cultures and ethnic backgrounds within families and family systems; the role of culture in one's formation and self-awareness	• To create and support viable structures and strategies for the inclusion of all families so they may participate actively in the planning and implementation of parish programs, including families of diverse cultural and ethnic backgrounds
		The dynamics of human growth and development	• To create a hospitable environment where people are valued for who they are and who they might become; to conduct honest self-assessments and to help others to do the same
		Church structures at the arch/diocesan, regional, national and universal levels	• To function appropriately at different levels of the diocesan Church while linking the parish structures and needs to larger church structures and resources
		The role of the bishop, priests, and the pastor and their authority within the life of the diocese and parish	• To demonstrate appropriate respect, responsibility, and accountability to the bishop,pastor, or their delegates; to cooperate in the implementation of diocesan and parish policies and programs
	3. Personal Pastoral Care	*Health: physical, psychological,and spiritual maintenance of himself as person and minister*	• To establish appropriate health and spiritual boundaries to maintain personal health and care
		Sabbaticals, planned ministerial change in placement, and creativity in ministry discernment and placement; retirement; time off/vacations; a family perspective	• To demonstrate personal and professional preparedness in ministry; to use a ministry performance appraisal, needs assessment, and appropriate professional resources; to plan retirement; to spend time alone and with family and friends
SPIRITUAL DIMENSION	*4. Spirituality & Prayer*	*The need for lifelong faith formation and education to grow as a person and a deacon*	• To develop and commit to a plan for continuing personal and professional diaconal education and formation
		The response to the universal call to holiness with an integrated spirituality based on prayer, reflection, and liturgical participation in the Eucharist and Sacrament of Reconciliation	• To participate in the Eucharist daily or frequently; to participate regularly in reconciliation; to participate in ongoing spiritual formation (e.g., spiritual direction, retreats, community worship [especially the Liturgy of the Hours], personal prayer, meditation, visits to the Blessed Sacrament, personal penance and mortification, and

		Appreciation / Knowledge of	Demonstrated ability / skill
			devotion to Mary and the communion of saints
		Commitment to Christian ministry that builds on and expands one's baptismal call to ongoing personal conversion	• To develop a lifelong commitment to leadership in Christian ministry, a driving force of the Church's service in the world
		Various spiritualities that have developed in the history and life of the Church	• To identify, affirm, and critique the various Christian spiritualities operative in himself and others; to discern new forms of prayer spiritualities in today's Church
		The ways in which faith is active in his life and ministry	• To articulate his personal expression of faith with his spiritual director, formation team, faculty, pastor, colleagues, deacons, parishioners, etc
		Moral and social issues as constitutive elements of a Gospel-based life	
		The value of receiving spiritual direction and personal counseling for his growth in wholeness	
		To integrate the wide spectrum of moral and human issues into his spiritual consciousness, prayer, and ministry: human rights, sexuality, economics, peace, ecology, moral ethics, solidarity with human needs, the preferential option for the poor	
		To maintain a commitment to regularly scheduled spiritual direction and to opportunities, as appropriate, for physical and psychological health in consultation with a professional advisor	
	5. Spirituality & Marriage	*A commitment to the spiritual life in the context of his marriage and ministry*	• To communicate and share his ministry, prayer, and formation with wife and family; to demonstrate marital chastity in conformity to the magisterial teaching on marriage and sexuality
		Relationship of marriage and ministry	• To balance marriage and ministry commitments

		Appreciation / Knowledge of	Demonstrated ability / skill
	6. Spirituality & Celibacy	*A commitment to celibacy for the unmarried candidate and deacon*	• To form a support system
		The potential for a celibate lifestyle for the married candidate and deacon	• To accept the gift of celibacy and be willing to accept it if so called; to speak truthfully about the gift and demands of a celibate life
INTELLECTUAL DIMENSION	*7. Sacred Scripture*	*The concepts of revelation, inspiration, historical development, and literary criticism*	• To articulate the foundational relationship of Scripture to the deposit of faith; to exercise appropriate exegetical skills in the context of church tradition and the needs of the community, especially in homiletic preparation
		The major themes and content of the Old and New Testaments	• To explain the major teachings found in the Scriptures to adults, teens, and children
		Christian Scriptures, their stages of formation, and their place at the heart of Scriptures	• To interpret the Scriptures in harmony with the Magisterium and Catholic biblical scholarship
		The power of Scripture to transform lives	• To articulate the ways in which Scripture illumines and promotes his personal growth in faith and that of others
		The major justice and peace themes in the Scriptures that root and foster Catholic social teaching	• To infuse justice and peace foundations and concerns in his preaching regularly and into all aspects of diaconal ministry
		The nature and skills for a successful transmission of Scripture in preaching	• To relate the Scriptures to his personal experience and that of others to transform and empower God's people
		The use of Scripture in theological reflection	• To articulate the foundational relationship of Scripture to the deposit of faith; to exercise appropriate exegetical skills in the context of church tradition and the needs of the community, especially in homiletic preparation
	8. Theology of God, Christian Anthropology, & Christology	*The relationship of philosophy and theology*	• To demonstrate familiarity with John Paul II's *On the Relationship Between Faith and Reason*
		God as unity and trinity	• To explain the relationship of Trinitarian theology to Christology and ecclesiology
		God's self-revelation in creation, the person of Jesus, Scripture, liturgy, and people, especially the poor and needy	• To articulate and demonstrate reverence for this revelation and presence of God in the world through prayer, liturgy,ministries, and his present circumstances

		Appreciation / Knowledge of	Demonstrated ability / skill
		The basic aspects and principles of Christian anthropology:incarnation, grace, sin, redemption, resurrection, the sacredness of human life, etc	• To identify and apply these basic principles to contemporary human issues; to be familiar with John Paul II's *The Gospel of Life*
		The sacredness and dignity of each human person	• To apply an appreciation of the sacredness and dignity of each human person to acts of charity and justice in hospitality and welcoming, direct pastoral care, ministry to migrants and immigrants, the ill, etc.; to advocate and organize for action
		Traditional and contemporary Christology: Jesus' historical life, mission, death, and resurrection	• To articulate an understanding of the historical person and mission of Jesus; to engage in faithsharing and reflection on Jesus' message as it impacts all aspects of human life
		Eschatology: death, particular judgment, purgatory, hell, heaven, last judgment, and the hope of the new heaven and the new earth	• To articulate an understanding of the redemptive revelation of the kingdom, the hope of the resurrection, the second coming of Christ, and his own personal readiness in his ministry to those who are dying, viaticum, funeral liturgies, and counsel to families
	9. Ecclesiology	*The Church's historical and traditional development and its relevance to the present Church; the Latin and Eastern Churches*	• To explain the Church's heritage and history and communicate the teaching of the Magisterium faithfully
		The significant ecclesial renewal confirmed by the Second Vatican Council: the Church as sacrament, mystery, communion, and mission; the People of God; the universal call to holiness; privileges and responsibilities of the baptized community of disciples in mission; and the role of the ordained and lay faithful	• To explain these foundationalimages of the Church describedby the Second Vatican Council,especially to adults
		Mariology and the communion of saints	• To explain the place of Mary and the saints in the life of the Church and in an authenticCatholic Christian spirituality
		The role of the Holy Spirit in the Church and in the world as unifier	• To reflect upon and explain the presence and role of the Holy Spirit in the Church and world
		Catholic doctrine and belief as presented in Catholic Tradition, the documents of	• To teach, evangelize, preach, and catechize about the foundations of the Catholic faith and doctrine, as well as

		Appreciation / Knowledge of	Demonstrated ability / skill
		Vatican II, the Catechism of the Catholic Church, and other relevant church documents	convey the basic teachings of the Church faithfully and appropriately
		The use of theological sources to ground, interpret, and guide the activity that constitutes the pastoral dimension of the life ofthe Church	• To interpret the meaning and value of pastoral life in light of the ecclesiology of Vatican II; to enable people to identify and share these meanings more consciously in their lives
	10. Worship, Liturgy & Sacraments	*The history and essential principles of the Church's liturgical and sacramental life*	• To explain the history and meaning of the liturgy and sacramental rites of the Church
		Liturgical principles, documents, and revised rites of the Church	• To use liturgical principles and documents in designing and leading learning sessions for adults as an immediate preparation for the Sacrament of Baptism, Eucharist, Reconciliation, Confirmation, Marriage, Eucharistic benediction, and Christian burial; to preside during the liturgy of the word in the absence of a priest; to help plan specific liturgical rites
		The variety of forms and styles of prayer and the difference between liturgical and private devotional prayer	• To incorporate appropriate prayer experiences for different groups
		The liturgical rites in which deacons participate; the meaning, structure, and implementation of the RCIA/RCIC	• To provide authentic and credible witness in diaconal liturgical functions; to be familiar with the Church as envisioned in the RCIA and with *Study Text VI*
		The theology of Holy Orders	• To articulate a theology of diaconate, in the context of the other orders, Tradition, history, the restoration at the Second Vatican Council, and the Rite of Ordination of Deacons
	11. Moral Theology	*Scriptural, theological, philosophical, and psychological foundations and principles for Catholic moral teaching, conscience formation, and decision-making; Christian ethics*	• To explain and teach a Catholic understanding of conscience and moral formation to individuals and groups to assist in the development of Christian consciences informed by God's word, magisterial teaching, and reason
		The complex nature of moral and social issues	• To apply Catholic moral principles to discussion of moral and social issues of our times, including abortion, euthanasia, capital punishment, abuse, war, sexuality, and economic justice

		Appreciation / Knowledge of	Demonstrated ability / skill
		Key concepts of Catholic morality found in the Catechism of the Catholic Church, Catholic social teaching, and contemporary theological reflection, especially John Paul II's encyclical letters The Splendor of Truth and The Gospel of Life, and the pastoral letters of the bishops of the United States	• To enable people to make moral decisions as Catholics in fidelity to Catholic moral teaching and principles; to develop a Catholic moral attitude and conscience
	12. Canon Law	*Book I: General Norms: Canons 1 (Latin Rite only), 11 (subjects), 85 (dispensations), 96*	• To understand that Baptism is a juridical act that incorporates one into the Church of Christ; to understand that ecclesiastical law obligates those who are baptized into the Roman Catholic Church; to demonstrate practical knowledge of who is affected by church law
		Book II: People of God: Canons 204/205 (effects of Baptism), 206 (catechumens), 212 (triple munera), 215/216 (associations), 220/221 (privacy/defend rights), 233 (fostering vocations), 330/331 (Roman pontiff), 369 (diocese), 383 (role of bishop), 573/574 (religious life)	• To demonstrate knowledge of the effects of Baptism of Christian faithful with emphasis on the role of the laity; to demonstrate knowledge of the basic hierarchical structures of the Church, the role of religious and all vocations, and the rights and duties of Christian faithful as expressed in the various roles and structures of the Church
		Incardination/excardination; rights of clerics	• To demonstrate an understanding of what constitutes the deposit of faith as handed down through Scripture and Tradition; to understand that the baptized are to proclaim the Gospel to all peoples according to each one's proper role in the Church, and in a spirit of ecumenism; to demonstrate practical knowledge of evangelization and the mandate of the Christian faithful to safeguard the ministry of the word; to understand the importance of Catholic education and its relationship to the parental role of furthering the mission of Christ
		Book III: Teaching Function: Canons 747-750 (truth and teaching), 755 (ecumenism), 766 (preaching), 774 (parental role), 781 (mission mandate), 788 (catechumens), 793-796 (Catholic education)	• To demonstrate functional knowledge of the sanctifying character and form of the seven ritual sacraments, the liturgy, and sacramentals; to understand the basic theology and essential form of the sacraments of the Church; to

		Appreciation / Knowledge of	Demonstrated ability / skill
			explain the use of sacramentals and the veneration of the saints
		Book IV: Office of Sanctifying: Canons 840 (nature of the sacraments), 842 (primacy of Baptism), 849 (Baptism: theology, form), 879/880 (Confirmation: theology, form), 897/899 (Eucharist: theology, form), 959/960 (Penance: theology, form), 998 (Anointing: theology, form), 1008/1009 (Orders: theology, formation, special attention to canons on permanent deacons), 1055/1061 (Matrimony: theology, essential properties and form for validity), 1186 (veneration of saints)	• To identify and understand the norms of the universal Church on the Sacrament of Matrimony so that an adequate and thorough preparation can be achieved for Christian couples in their celebration of a valid and licit marriage.
		Book IV (continued): Canons 851/852 (Baptism: preparation), 861 (Baptism: ministers), 868 (Infant Baptism), 873/874 (Baptism: sponsor), 877 (record of Baptism), 891 (Confirmation: age), 893 (Confirmation: sponsor), 895 (record of Confirmation), 919 (Eucharist: preparation), 961 (Penance: general absolution), 1108/1122 (Matrimony: valid form), 1124/1129 (Matrimony: mixed religious and disparity of cult), 1156/1160 (Matrimony: simple convalidation), 1171 (sacramentals), 1176-1177 (funeral rites), 1180/1184 (burial and records), 1246/1248 (Sunday, holyday observance)	• To apply the norms of the universal Church in the design and implementation of sacramental catechesis and liturgical celebration; to understand canonical requirements for sacramental ministers, liturgical form, and proper reception of the sacraments; to understand canonical guidelines for the use of sacramentals and proper observance of Sunday and holy days
		Book IV (continued): Canons 916 (Eucharist: state of grace), 917 (Eucharist: frequency), 983 (Penance: seal of), 987/988 (Penance: disposition), 1063 (Matrimony: marriage care), 1249/1250 (days of penance)	• To apply the principles of rights, obligations, and interior disposition in catechizing and in ritual celebrations; to give appropriate instruction regarding rights and obligations and necessary dispensations for sacramental observances
		Book V: Temporal Goods: Canons 1262 (support of	• To understand the responsibilities of good stewardship in supporting the

		Appreciation / Knowledge of	Demonstrated ability / skill
		church), 1265 (fund raising), 1280/1283/1287 (administration)	works of the Church in respect to gifts, church property, and ecclesiastical goods; to demonstrate knowledge of criteria for responsible stewardship
		Book VI: Sanctions: Canons 1323 (exemptions from penalty), 1324 (penalty lessened), 1398 (abortion)	• To be cognizant of penalties attached to serious transgressions in the Church, and the pastoral applications of penalties; to demonstrate awareness of the conditions and circumstances affecting the application of penalties, especially a procured abortion
		Book VII: Resource: how to advise an individual of his or her rights within the Church and canonical processes available	• To be familiar with due process and tribunal ministry
		How to revere and respect the individual and the community of Christian disciples	• To be familiar with the canonical bill of rights for all the baptized
	13. New Evangelization, Catechesis & Small Christian Communities	*The theological and scriptural foundations of Catholic evangelization and catechesis*	• To infuse evangelization and catechesis into all diaconal ministries
		The aims, processes, and principles of evangelization; familiarity with U.S. bishops' strategies for evangelization in the United States in Go and Make Disciples	• To implement effective strategies for evangelization; to facilitate and motivate a Catholic witness in the world
		Effective methods of evangelization and mission in outreach through relationship-building and witness	• To preach the Gospel when convenient and inconvenient, especially in the marketplace and at home; to bear witness to the Gospel with one's whole life
		Effective teaching as a catechist, especially among adults	• To articulate the basic tenets of the faith using appropriate catechetical pedagogy and methodologies that address the age, psychology, and needs of those being catechized
		The nature and purpose of small Christian communities in the contemporary Church	• To organize and support the organization, leadership, and spiritual development of small Christian communities
		Relevant catechetical documents as well as diocesan sacramental standards and policies	• To demonstrate familiarity with catechetical documents; universal, national, and diocesan policies; pedagogy; and methods to evaluate catechetical processes, programs, and personnel in light of these documents and policies

		Appreciation / Knowledge of	Demonstrated ability / skill
		Effective catechetical methods for adult and youth religious formation	• To implement methods in preaching, teaching, and directing adult/youth learners; to relate Scripture and Creed, especially in preaching
	14. Catholic Identity, Ecumenism & Interreligious Dialogue	*The effort to recover the unity of all Christians as the gift of Christ and work of the Holy Spirit; the Church's mission ad gentes*	• To develop relationships of understanding and respect with individuals of other Christian and non-Christian faiths while retaining his own Roman Catholic identity
		The common spiritual values shared by all believers and non-believers	• To articulate his own Catholic faith while identifying with other denominations and other religious traditions
		Similarities and differences among the Catholic tradition and other Christian traditions	• To provide learning opportunities to develop ecumenical knowledge, understanding, and openness, especially on the parochial level
		Jewish faith and tradition	• To articulate and appreciate our Catholic roots within Judaism
		Other non-Christian religious traditions and the gifts they bring to humankind	• To foster an appreciation for other religious traditions; to provide and participate in common dialogue, especially for collective • social action
		Canon Law and other principles, guidelines, and magisterial teaching for Christian and interfaith dialogue, common action, prayer, and marriage	• To provide an authentic and effective ministry and presence in Christian and interfaith activities; to give leadership to opportunities for prayer and common action in response to human needs
PASTORAL DIMENSION	*15. Pastoral Theology*	*How to connect the academic disciplines of theology with pastoral care*	• To use theology as a help to analyze pastoral situations for an understanding of God's presence and will as articulated in Scripture, Tradition, and the magisterial teaching of the Church
		The role/function of religion in people's lives	• To demonstrate empathy in ministry, applying religious psychology and sociology
		Use of theological sources to ground, interpret, and guide the pastoral life of the Church	• To locate, select, and use appropriate sources for specific pastoral situations
		Complex theological issues stemming from life experiences	• To reflect in an interdisciplinary way, using psychology, sociology, and cultural and theological disciplines in understanding issues confronting societies
		The role of theological reflection in pastoral ministry	• To facilitate a critical reflection on complex human and church pastoral

		Appreciation / Knowledge of	Demonstrated ability / skill
			issues doing theological reflection from within concrete experiences
		The theory and practice of social analysis in theological reflection	• To use available resources to conduct social analysis, including the integration of the various levels of diocesan/parish diversity
	16. Communication	*The importance and use of listening skills*	• To employ good verbal and non-verbal communication skills; to be an empathetic, active listener, providing feedback and withholding and making judgments appropriately
		Self-expression skills	• To express himself succinctly in a well-ordered and logical way, conveying his feelings and views yet remaining open to differing views with tolerance
		Conflict management and confrontation	• To express himself succinctly in a well-ordered and logical way, conveying his feelings and views yet remaining open to differing views with tolerance
		How to direct effective meetings	• To discern the issues involved in conflict and promote appropriate resolution; to provide behavior-focused feedback
		Group process and collaborative skills	• To motivate and lead groups to set agendas collaboratively, manage time, set goals, and make decisions through consensus; to empower others with leadership skills
		Public speaking skills, including organization of thoughts	• To build groups of solidarity, cooperation, and trust through partnership and teamwork
		Sacraments and prayer in pastoral ministry and as primarily relational	• To speak in a clear, well-ordered, logical way; to use a variety of techniques and methods to support oral presentations
		The needs of migrant and immigrant people; the role of hospitality, welcome, and service	• To provide directly or by referral the resources of the Church and its tradition to the occasions of pastoral care
		Competencies and limitations	• To demonstrate multicultural sensitivity; to provide appropriate spiritual and physical response

		Appreciation / Knowledge of	Demonstrated ability / skill
		New technologies	• To not act beyond his level of training in each pastoral care situation; to know when, how, and to whom appropriate referrals should be made • To be familiar with the Internet, especially distance learning, through online seminars and interactive conferencing
	17. Human Development & Conversion	*The stages of human development: physiological, psychological, cultural, spiritual, intellectual emotional, sexual moral, and social*	• To apply appropriate human development principles in preaching, programming, and counsel
		*Various theories of faith **development**, especially in youth and adult formation*	• To utilize appropriate models of faith formation in preaching, programming, and counsel
		How major cultural and family trends and values affect human development	• To assess and utilize the family, social, cultural, and global trends and concerns in developing appropriate pastoral ministries and in preaching
		Dynamics of conversion	• To identify, articulate, and foster personal and communal conversion experiences
		Role of personal prayer	• To demonstrate regular commitment to a pattern of personal prayer and to support others' growth in prayer
		The needs of persons with physical or developmental disabilities	• To appreciate, understand, and include groups and/or individuals with physical or developmental disabilities in a variety of pastoral programming and activities, especially in Eucharistic liturgies and religious formation; to be familiar with the U.S. bishops' pastoral letter *Welcome and Justice for Persons with Disabilities*
		Cultural and family mythologies and practices of those to whom he ministers	
	18. Pastoral Care, Assessment & Intervention	*The need for prudence in dealing with others, especially their personal lives*	• To be empathetic, genuine, and respectful; to maintain confidentiality and objectivity; to apply basic counseling skills
		Assessment and intervention skills	• To discern if and when referral is necessary

		Appreciation / Knowledge of	Demonstrated ability / skill
		Local resources for use in assessment, intervention, and referral	• To identify competent resources in the parish, diocese, and societal community; to maintain an information, referral, and skill training network
	19. Multicultural Sensitivities, Justice, Service & the Option for the Poor	*Principles, processes, and models for the development of a justice consciousness; how to facilitate service outreach programs with emphasis on the preferential option for the poor*	• To integrate justice and peace into his diaconal life, family, preaching, teaching, and staff organizational meetings; to attend to issues of homelessness, hunger, and AIDS; to model the interconnectedness of all people and, especially, to the earth (global ecology); to model a simple lifestyle; to stimulate reflective decision making and action for those in need; to discern appropriate societal response
		How to develop diaconal ministries in the context of a multicultural church and society	• To demonstrate personal awareness and response to the needs of particular cultural/racial/ ethnic communities
		Traditions and faith expressions of different cultural groups; the role of culture in formation	• To incorporate cultural expression of faith into diaconal preaching, service, and prayer experiences
		Cultural communication patterns and their impact in setting ministerial goals and programming	• To use cultural communication patterns when appropriate; to create and support viable structures and strategies to foster diverse cultural and ethnic participation
	20. Lay Leadership Formation & Development	*How to affirm and call forth the gifts of youth and adults and provide for their ongoing spiritual and leadership development*	• To enable others to reflect upon and express their faith experiences
		The skills needed by volunteer ministerial leaders	• To match gifts with ministry needs
		Resources to effectively call forth the gifts of the community for ministry	• To utilize all types of media resources to recruit and facilitate ministerial leaders
	21. Community Foundation	*Principal elements for community building, activities, and process*	• To create, in cooperation with the Holy Spirit amid the world and the Church, an environment of hospitality and welcome for all gatherings within church and neighborhood
		The richness of the community: images of the Church as People of God, mystery, sacrament, communion, mission, Mystical Body of Christ	• To implement a community dimension into all structures for planning, programming, and evaluation

		Appreciation / Knowledge of	Demonstrated ability / skill
		Basic communications and relational skills	• To demonstrate patience and sensitivity in communicating with and relating to staff, families, and organizations
	22. Leadership Processes & System Strategies	*How to work collaboratively with individuals and groups within and outside a diaconal assignment*	• To recruit, train, support, supervise, and assess
		Necessary managerial principles and skills: e.g., pastoral planning, time management, financial management	• To apply appropriate managerial principles and administrative skills to design, implement, and coordinate programs; to employ needs assessment and analysis; to formulate mission statements, goals/objectives, strategies, and evaluation methods; to prepare and monitor budgets; to organize tasks by priority and organize and manage his time in accord with ministry requirements; to delegate responsibilities, including authority to act; to recognize stress and select methods to respond
		Principles for supervision and performance appraisal	• To develop and implement appropriate job descriptions; to set achievable performance goals; to supervise appraisals
		The dynamics of the role of leader	• To engage in advocacy, mediation, referrals, and facilitation
		Computer and Internet resources	• To demonstrate knowledge and skills in computer/internet applications, including online seminars
		How to use media and technology in developing and implementing programs	• To use media and technology for effective ministerial implementation
	23. Ethical Standards	*Liabilities pertinent to ministry: confidentiality, insurance issues, harassment, etc.*	• To engage in employment agreements through familiarity with canonical and civil law pertaining to rights of individuals and employees relating to hiring, evaluation, dismissal, and abuse issues; to establish positive support systems and referral networking; to conduct information programs so that these basic rights and responsibilities are affirmed and cherished
		Liabilities relating to personal conduct in ministry	• To establish prudent and appropriate boundaries for interpersonal conduct, especially with women and youth
DIACONAL VOCATION & MINISTRY	*24. Ministerial Identity and Vocation*	*The role of the deacon in the life and mission of the diocesan and parochial Church and the esteemed*	• To effectively proclaim the Gospel; to be recognized at the altar as the sacrament of Jesus, the Deacon-Servant, in the midst of the community,

		Appreciation / Knowledge of	Demonstrated ability / skill
		tradition of deacons in the Church	and as herald of the word, sanctifier in liturgy, and advocate for the poor as minister of charity and justice
		The background of the restoration and the implementation of the diaconate in the context of the Second Vatican Council, the writings of Paul VI, the teachings of John Paul II, the Basic Norms and Directory for the Ministry and Life of Permanent Deacons (published by the Congregations for Catholic Education and for the Clergy) and the National Directory of the U.S. bishops	• To instruct and catechize others about the diaconate and its mission as "the Church's service sacramentalized"
		His call to the diaconate and a commitment to living the Gospel in all aspects of life	• To witness to Christ in living, giving, and empowering ways; to articulate his call to diaconate as vocation; to identify, call forth, affirm, and support the gifts and talents of others
		The dynamics of the role of leadership in today's Church as a member of the clergy and participant in the hierarchy	• To help others to grow in their knowledge of the faith and personal holiness; to animate, facilitate, and motivate the whole Church ministry of charity and justice; to collaborate with others in leadership in diocesan and parochial ministries; to mediate or manage conflict; to make decisions and monitor outcomes; to witness to The Gospel of Life by an exemplary life and service
		The deacon's mission in the marketplace in society	• To witness to the Gospel in his place of employment; to understand the implication of political decisions in view of the Gospel and the social justice teaching of the Church; to sensitize God's people with an informed social consciousness; to evangelize non- Christians and Christians
	25. Ministry of the Word	*Relationship of Scripture, doctrine, and revelation*	• To prepare a proper exegesis and contemporary application of the biblical text(s); apply the biblical text(s) with the Tradition and teaching of the Church to issues confronting the community today
		How to proclaim the moral and social teachings of the Church	• To preach on matters of faith and morals, Christ's initiation, and our response, expressing himself clearly

		Appreciation / Knowledge of	Demonstrated ability / skill
			and easily in a manner appropriate to the occasion; to be sensitive to the varied cultural, ethnic, racial, and gender dynamics of the text and the message
		How to catechize the faithful on the basic truths of the Church	• To utilize the skills for an effective homiletic or catechetical presentation through frequent social gospel preaching; to inform the community of their obligation to respond to the needs of the poor and to serve as Jesus did; to give personal witness; to speak the Gospel in his place of employment and in the marketplace with boldness, linking the sanctuary to the neighborhood, as well as the needs of the neighborhood to the sanctuary; to organize business leaders and neighbors around the Gospel, even on an ecumenical basis
		How to evangelize non-Catholic neighbors and non-Christians	• To evangelize, drawing from the U.S. bishops' statement *Go and Make Disciples*, as well as from the writings of Pope Paul VI, Pope John Paul II and Pope Francis on evangelization
	26. Ministry of Liturgy	*How to lead liturgical and sacramental celebrations*	• To lead and/or provide for Baptisms, communion services, burial services, weddings, nonsacramental reconciliation rites, devotions, and Sunday celebrations in the absence of a priest as a liturgical presider
		How to assist at Eucharistic celebrations	• To exercise the ministry of deacon in Eucharistic celebrations; to identify the table of Eucharist with the table of the poor, bringing their needs to the common prayers of intercession
		Liturgical directives and rites	• To exercise his role in conformity with the Church's liturgical directives
		How to prepare and plan for sacramental celebrations	• To collaborate with the pastor, other priests and deacons, worship committees, and liturgical ministers in planning and implementing the liturgy; to provide effective baptismal and marriage preparations in accordance with canonical norms and directives of the diocesan Church; to guide liturgical planning; to coordinate liturgical ministers or enable others to exercise that role
		The direct care of those in need	• To serve in charitable care the needs of the poor, homeless, elderly,

		Appreciation / Knowledge of	Demonstrated ability / skill
			imprisoned, ill (including people with AIDS), and the marginalized of any kind
	27. Ministry of Charity & Justice	*Advocacy for those in need*	• To create an environment of hospitality toward all people, especially the stranger and the marginalized; to join in coalition with other religious and secular groups for common political and community-based action; to integrate justice themes into his life and ministry
		Education of the community	• To provide educational programs that will assist the parish in understanding social justice as constitutive of the Gospel; to promote just parish structures; to situate study, reflection, and decision-making in the context of a responsibility to his world, especially to those in need; to participate in local debates and community action on behalf of those who are homeless, unemployed, suffering from AIDS, abused, etc.
		How to witness to charity and justice	• To model and encourage simple living and environmental values; to preach justice by example and word; to demonstrate familiarity • with the needs of the people in the community; to participate in charitable organizations; to be an advocate and servant of the poor; to promote justice and human development in local socio-economic situations; to minister to migrant and immigrant communities

Abbreviations

CB	Ceremonial of Bishops
CIC	Code of Canon Law
GIRM	General Instruction of the Roman Missal
LG	Lumen Gentium
MSGR	Monsignor
PDV	Pastores Dabo Vobis
REV	Reverend
USCCB	United States Conference of Catholic Bishops