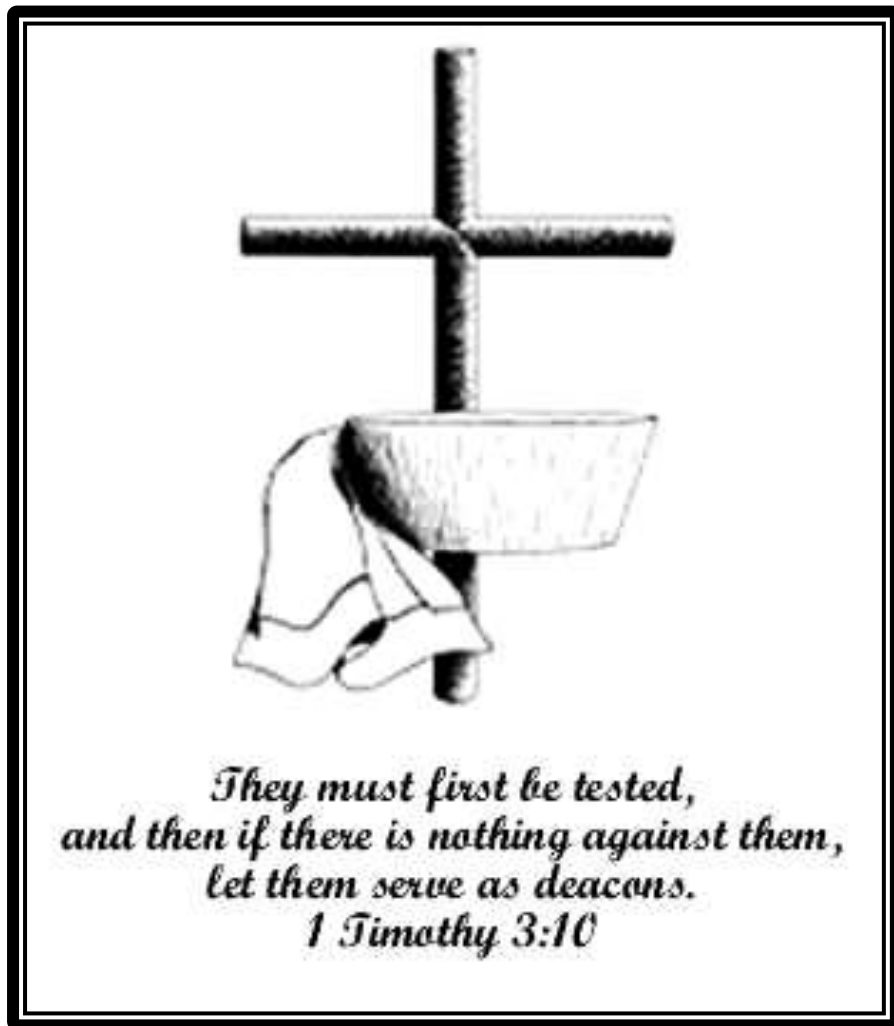


**Diocese of St. Petersburg
Office of the Permanent Diaconate
Aspirant & Candidate Internship Handbook**



Introduction

At the end of each academic year of your formation, a practical field experience of forty hours will be required of each participant. This is part and parcel of your formation and discernment process and is a requirement as much as any other part of the process. The internship **IS NOT** a service project as one might experience in confirmation preparation. How much charitable work you do is not important to this process. The goal each year is to gauge your growth in all four dimensions of your formation.

You will be guided in this process by the Coordinator of Pastoral Field Education, (C.P.F.E.), your mentor, and your on-site internship supervisor. Selection of an internship must be done in close consultation with your mentor and approved in advance by the C.P.F.E. to whom you will submit an *Internship Learning Agreement* before beginning your on-site work.

At the end of your forty hours, you will meet with your on-site supervisor for an evaluation of your internship. You will submit a reflection paper of between ten and fifteen pages in length and the evaluation to the C.P.F.E. before the fall academic semester begins. The reflection paper is the primary way the formation team will evaluate your internship. Once the reflection papers have been evaluated, you will receive a written evaluation of your experience.

There will be a Saturday meeting at which each member will give a brief presentation to their classmates on their internship.

Dimensions of Formation

There are two separate but complimentary documents the church has issued with regard to the formation of deacons, *National Directory for the Formation, Ministry and Life of Permanent Deacons in the United States* by the USCCB, and, *Basic Norms for the Formation of Permanent Deacons* by the Congregation for Catholic Education in Rome. Both documents talk about the three charisms of the deacon: liturgy, word, and charity, and about the four dimensions of formation.

Human Dimension

Growth in self-formation

A participant comes to formation with a history of interrelationships with other people. Formation for ministry begins with human formation and development. Participants “should therefore cultivate a series of human qualities, not only out of proper and due growth and realization of self, but also with a view to the ministry”ⁱ

Spiritual Dimension

A mature spirituality in imitation of Jesus

“Human formation leads to and finds its completion in the spiritual dimension of formation, which constitutes the heart and unifying center of every Christian formation. Its aim is to tend to the development of the new life received in Baptism.”ⁱⁱ

Intellectual Dimension

Knowledge of faith and Church

Intellectual formation offers the participant “substantial nourishment” for the pastoral, human, and spiritual dimensions of his life. Intellectual formation is a “precious instrument” for effective discernment and ministry.ⁱⁱⁱ

Pastoral Dimension

The diakonia of word, liturgy, and charity

An integral formation must relate the human, spiritual, and intellectual dimensions to pastoral practice. “The whole formation imparted to the participants . . . aims at preparing them to enter into communion with the charity of Christ. . . Hence their formation in its different aspects must have a fundamentally pastoral character.”^{iv}

Your Guides in the Process

Coordinator of Pastoral Field Education, (C.P.F.E.)

This person will send you forms and schedules, and approve your internship proposal as submitted on the internship learning agreement. The C.P.F.E. can provide an authoritative answer to any questions about the process and help with getting your internship started. In case of a serious problem once the internship begins, contact the C.P.F.E. immediately. The C.P.F.E. will also read your reflection paper and prepare an evaluation for you and the formation team.

Your Mentor

Your mentor will be familiar with your formation and your strengths and areas for growth. There should be very close collaboration between you and your mentor in choosing each year's internship in light of your mentor's knowledge of your situation. In no case may your mentor be your on-site supervisor.

Your On-Site Supervisor

This person must be intimately familiar with the ministry to which you are committing your 40 hours. The On-site Supervisor should have academic training and experience in this ministry and, supervisors from your parish are **strongly** discouraged. Your supervisor should spend at least the first few hours of your internship with you. If, after that time, you both feel comfortable with you ministering alone, you may work on your own. In that case, however, there must be regularly scheduled time for the intern and the supervisor to meet and process experiences. This person need not be Catholic, if they are not, reflection on the difference in point of view is appropriate.

Choosing an Experience

With regard to practical formation the *National Directory* says the following, "Pastoral formation should introduce the aspirant to the practical services provided by the diocesan Church. Pastoral placements, matched to the aspirant's experience and need, allow an exploration of core issues regarding charity and the social dimension of the Gospel as confronted by the diocesan Church. Exemplary deacons, approved by the bishop, should serve as mentors inviting the aspirant to accompany, observe, co-minister, and reflect upon the specific diaconal ministries experienced. Appropriate ecumenical pastoral experiences should be considered and implemented as opportunities emerge. Opportunities should also be provided, when possible, for involvement with the Jewish community and with representatives of other religions."^v

As part of your formation you will be required to complete four internships.

Internships should be in the following areas in **bold** below.

Below each area are examples of ministries in *italics*. The examples are in no way an exhaustive list.

Ministry to those in need (2)

Jail or Prison Ministry, Ministry to the Homeless, St Vincent DePaul Ministry, Food Kitchen or Food Bank, Ministry to AIDS victims, Crisis Pregnancy Ministry, Migrant Ministry, Homebound,

Health Care (1)

Hospital, Hospice, Nursing Home, ALF

Ministry of the Word, Evangelization (1)

Adult Ed, Youth Ministry, RCIA, Evangelization Team, Faith Formation

This ministry should be in a parish other than the one you attend & should be the 4th year but in no case earlier than 3 rd . Your mentor should help place you.

Hints to Good Choices

- One of the goals of the internships is to introduce you to the needs and services within the diocese. However, for those so inclined, one mission experience outside the diocese is permitted for one of the ministry to those in need experiences.
- New experiences, even in familiar ministries, should be sought out. Therefore, ministry in your own parish will be strongly discouraged.
- A strong emphasis on interaction with those needing the ministry is a must. Administrative work can hardly be avoided but it should be as small a part as practical.
- Since it is likely you will be assigned near your home, it is good to know local needs. Pick an experience somewhat near you.
- Stretch yourself! Ordained ministry will put you in positions you never dreamt of.

When the forty hours are completed, meet with your supervisor:

Go over your evaluation. If your supervisor doesn't have any suggestions for growth, you should have probably picked a different experience. Try to elicit suggestions based on the four dimensions of formation above.

Putting it all Together: The Reflection Paper

The reflection paper of between ten and fifteen double spaced pages in length will be the primary way in which the formation team evaluates this essential piece of your formation. Honestly evaluating growth or challenges in the four dimensions of formation in yourself as a result of your internship is the key to your reflection paper. If you don't quite understand the four dimensions, meet with your mentor, the Formation Director, or the C.P.F.E. before beginning your internship. Papers which do not meet these criteria will be returned to you, and a new paper which addresses growth or challenges in the four dimensions of formation will be required.

A tool that may be helpful follows:

The Examine is a daily spiritual practice first put forward by St. Ignatius of Loyola, the founder of the Society of Jesus, or Jesuits. As with all prayer, remind yourself that you are in God's presence, and ask God to help you with your prayer.

The Examen consists of five parts:

- 1) *Gratitude*: Recall anything from the day for which you are especially grateful and give thanks.
- 2) *Review*: Recall the events of the day, from start to finish and in detail, noticing where you felt God's presence, and where you accepted or turned away from any invitations to grow in love.
- 3) *Sorrow*: Recall any actions or dispositions you regret
- 4) *Forgiveness*: Ask God's forgiveness. Decide if you need to reconcile with anyone you may have hurt.
- 5) *Grace*: Ask God for the grace you need for the next day and an ability to see God's presence more clearly

When you are reviewing your day in step two, it may be helpful to ask yourself how you felt at each incident; below are some sample questions.

- Was I scared, bored, excited, sad, comforted, angry, confused, repulsed etc? *Human Dimension*
- Ask what these moments and feelings tell you about yourself in ministry, the presence of God at that moment, and what conclusions you can discern from those two things. *Spiritual Dimension*
- Did the experience influence your feelings about people you may not have come in contact with before? *Human Dimension*
- Did it influence how you think about your parish, your job, your family? *Human Dimension*
- How did what you learned in your academic classes come in to play? *Intellectual Dimension*
- Did this experience influence your notion of God and/or Church? *Pastoral/Spiritual Dimension*
- Did it influence your prayer life? *Spiritual Dimension*
- Did it change your notion of diaconal ministry? *Pastoral Dimension*

Keep a daily journal of your reflections

Use the journal as the vast majority of your reflection paper. The paper should be narrative and not just journal entries, but the narrative should be an integration of your journal. The reflection paper should not contain material better discussed with your confessor or spiritual advisor. However, if there aren't things in the journal to bring up with your spiritual advisor and/or confessor, you are not doing it right.

Not every ministry is for every person. It does not indicate you are a bad person or will be a bad deacon if your experience wasn't for you or if you struggled with it. The point is to grow in each dimension of formation.

Group Presentation

These should be brief, no more than ten minutes and describe your internship so as to familiarize your classmates with ministries in the diocese. More description of the process and less reflection is appropriate for this presentation. Group presentations will be scheduled by the Formation Director



End Notes

ⁱ USCCB, National Directory for the Formation, Ministry and Life of Permanent Deacons in The United States, #106

ⁱⁱ Ibid #110

ⁱⁱⁱ Ibid #118

^{iv} Ibid #126

^v Ibid #197