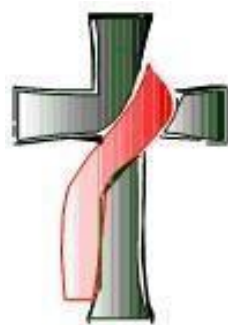




COURAGEOUSLY
Living the Gospel

*Diocese of St. Petersburg
Office of the Diaconate*

Diaconate Guidelines



Office of the Diaconate
Post Office Box 40200
St. Petersburg FL 33743
Email – diaconate@dosp.org
Phone (727) 341-6826

Update May 2022

A. OVERVIEW OF THE DIACONATE

- [A Brief History of the Restoration of the Diaconate](#)
- [The Ministry of Deacon](#)

B. PROGRAM FOR THE FORMATION OF DEACONS

- [The Paths and Dimensions in the Formation of Deacons](#)
- [Admission and Selection Criteria and Procedures](#)
- [Formation Program Requirements](#)
- [The Year of Inquiry](#)
- [Aspirant Path in Diaconal Formation](#)
- [Candidate Path in Diaconal Formation](#)
- [Post-Ordination Path in Diaconal Formation](#)

C. GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR DEACONS

- [Standards of Integrity, Attitude, or Behavior for Deacons](#)
- [Definition of Diaconal Status](#)
- [Expectations of Assignment](#)
- [Faculties of the Diaconate](#)
- [Ministry Agreement](#) (sample form included)
- [Post-Ordination Formation](#)
- [Continuing Formation](#)
- [Retreats](#)
- [Diaconate Meetings](#)
- [Episcopal-Presbyterate-Diaconate Relationship](#)
- [Liturgical Guidelines for Deacons](#)

D. ADMINISTRATIVE ISSUES

- [Background Screening and Safe Environment Training](#)
- [Deacon Reassignment](#)
- [Leave of Absence](#)
- [Retirement](#)
- [Extern Deacons](#) (Deacons incardinated outside the Diocese)
- [Clearance for Deacons to perform Ministry](#)
- [Extern Deacons seeking retired or limited faculties](#)
- [Role of the wives of Deacons](#)
- [Compensation for Permanent Deacons](#)
- [Deacon Marital Concerns](#)
- [Diaconate Benevolent Fund](#)
- [Funeral Policy](#)

E. STRUCTURE OF THE DIACONATE COMMUNITY

- [Diaconate Community](#)
- [Director of the Deacon Personnel](#)
- [Director of Diaconal Formation](#)
- [Deacon Council](#)
- [Admission & Formation Board](#)

OVERVIEW OF THE DIACONATE

A Brief History of the Restoration of the Diaconate

In its Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, the Second Vatican Council restored the diaconate as an order in the Church. In *Lumen Gentium*, #29, the Council briefly described the nature and functions of the diaconate and the need of the Church it hoped this ministry would meet, and left it to local episcopal conferences to decide, with papal approval, whether or not to restore the diaconate in their own countries.

During the next several years, Pope Paul VI implemented the Council's decision in three important steps. The Apostolic Letter *Sacrum Diaconatus Ordinem* (June 18, 1967) established canonical norms for the diaconate. On June 17, 1968, new rites for the conferral of all three of the ordained ministries were authorized in the Apostolic Constitution *Pontificalis Romani Recognito*. Finally, on August 15, 1972, Pope Paul VI published new norms for the diaconate in the Apostolic Letter *Ad Pascendum*.

The bishops of the United States decided in the spring of 1968 to petition the Holy See for permission to restore the diaconate in this country. In their letter of May 2, 1968, they offered the following as the reasons for their request:

- to enrich and strengthen the many and various diaconal ministries at work in this country with the sacramental grace of the diaconate.
- to enlist a new group of devout and competent men in the active ministry of the Church.
- to aid in extending needed liturgical and charitable service to the faithful in both large urban and small rural communities.
- to provide an official and sacramental presence of the Church in many areas of secular life, as well as in communities within large cities and sparsely settled regions where few or no priests are available.
- to provide an impetus and source for creative adaptations of diaconal ministries to the rapidly changing needs of our society.

On August 30, 1968, the Apostolic Delegate informed the United States bishops that Pope Paul VI had acceded to their request. The following November, the Bishops Committee on the Permanent Diaconate was established. Its principal functions are:

- to offer local bishops recommendations concerning concrete details of and questions about diaconal vocations.

- to establish a formation program including doctrinal, pastoral, and spiritual aspects of training.
- to review and approve plans for the ministry of deacons, developed by various dioceses.
- at the request of local ordinaries, to make formal evaluations of diaconal programs after they have been operating for three years.

In February 1978, the committee was authorized to commission a comprehensive study of the permanent diaconate in the United States. The results of that survey were published in 1981, under the title *A National Study of the Permanent Diaconate in the United States*. This volume points up the strengths and weaknesses of the diaconate as it developed in this country and made suggestions for improving formation programs and for the exercise of this ministry in the Church.

In 1984, the National Conference of Catholic bishops published revised guidelines to refine the vision expressed in the 1971 guideline, in the light of experience.

Ordained Ministries in the Church

Every Christian has his or her own gift from the Spirit, yet not all receive the same gifts. In the Church, there is a unity of mission and a diversity of ministry. The Church is the healthy and living Body of Christ when all submit their gifts to the discernment of the community, acknowledge the gifts others have been given, serve as their own gifts permit, and are willing to be served by the gift's others receive.

Central among the many ministerial gifts Christ has given to his Church are the ordained ministries of bishops, priests, and deacons. These ministries have existed in the Church since New Testament times, although the concrete roles of each and their interrelationships have varied over the course of the Church's history. These three orders belong to the essence of the Church's ministry, and they are received by the Church as special ministries willed by Jesus Christ and empowered by a special grace of the Holy Spirit.

The Ministry of Deacon

At the Second Vatican Council, the diaconate was restored as a permanent ministry in the Church. In the discussion before, and at the council that led to this decision, three primary motives were at work. The first was a desire to restore to the Church the full complement of active apostolic ministries. A second motive was the desire to integrate and strengthen with sacramental ordination and grace those who were, in fact, already exercising diaconal functions. The third goal was to provide ministers for those regions where functions vital to the Church's life would not be carried out.

The Diaconate is an ordained ministry. It belongs to those central ministries of leadership to which Jesus Christ has entrusted the fundamental task of assuring that the Church become and remain the authentic sacrament of salvation. In ordination, a Christian blessed with the ability to minister is chosen from among the members of Christ to occupy an office and to fulfill a role representative of both Christ and the Church. In this sacrament, a bishop lays hands upon a man and, in the name of the Church, prays for God to empower him with the gifts of the Spirit that will enable him to fulfill his role. The believing community then receives the man as one who, in his sacramental consecration, permanent commitment, and specific ministry, is a sacrament to it of Jesus Christ himself. Ordination is the sacramental differentiation of a Christian within the community of faith, so that he becomes for it a unique sign and instrument of what Jesus Christ is for the Church and of what the Church must be for the sake of Jesus Christ.

Secondly, the diaconate is a distinct order within the ordained ministry of the Church. The bishop, as successor to the apostles, presides over the local diocesan Church. To him is entrusted the primary responsibility of faithfully and integrally preaching the Word of God; of ministering the mysteries of God in the sacraments; and of governing the People of God. Within a diocese, priests assist the bishop as his representatives in and to the local communities of faith. They do so through the ministry of Word and sacrament and by guiding communities in fidelity and charity.

In communion with the bishop and priests, deacons are ordained for a distinct ministry, which is indicated by their names: they are ordained, says the ancient tradition (repeated at Vatican II) for service. They function in all three areas of the Church's life: in the transmission of the word, in celebration of the sacraments, and in the community's active love.

PROGRAM FOR THE FORMATION OF DEACONS

The Paths and Dimensions in the Formation of Deacons

There are three separate but integral paths that constitute a unified diocesan formation program for deacons: aspirant, candidate, and post-ordination. ... They ... become 'one sole organic journey' in diaconal formation. In each path, the four dimensions or specific areas in formation – human, spiritual, intellectual, and pastoral – are always essential.

One who will serve as a deacon requires a formation that promotes the development of the whole person. Therefore, the four dimensions in formation should be so interrelated as to achieve a continual integration of the objectives in the life of each participant and in his exercise of ministry.” (National Directory for the Formation, Ministry, and Life of Permanent Deacons in the United States, 104-105)

Aspirancy

Aspirancy follows a period of initial inquiry. At the end of the inquiry period, the bishop may accept some of the inquirers into Aspirancy. The path of Aspirancy is a time in which the formation team discerns the capabilities and readiness of an aspirant for nomination and possible acceptance as a candidate for diaconal ordination. The path of Aspirancy lasts three years.

Candidacy

Candidacy is a period of intense human, spiritual, intellectual, and pastoral formation. It is a period of continued and deep discernment on the part of both the candidate and the formation team of a diaconal vocation. The path of candidacy lasts one year.

Post-Ordination

The post-ordination path provides the newly ordained deacon with opportunities to continue to develop spiritually, intellectually, and pastorally and to integrate the various dimensions of formation into his daily life and ministry. The post-ordination path is a three-year period.

Human Dimension

“Formation for ministry begins with human formation and development.” (106)

Deacons work closely with people inside and outside of the Church. By virtue of their sacramental bond of service to all people, they are called to collaborate with individuals both inside and outside of the Church. The ministry of the deacon is also a prophetic one. As such, it is their responsibility to speak out for the weak and to defend their rights. Moreover, as proclaimer of God’s Word, through word and deed in the modern world, the deacon must be able to communicate with diverse groups of people and live the Gospel.

Among the attributes that the deacon must possess or be able to develop are:

- a sense of responsibility
- honesty
- professional conduct
- good health
- interpersonal skills
- ability to dialogue with people of different cultures and faiths
- good communication skills
- openness of mind
- capacity to communicate consolation and hope
- aptitude for working in the areas of peacemaking, development, socio-cultural promotion, justice, health care

To help the aspirant develop or grow in these abilities, the formation program includes formation in:

- the human virtues
- capacity to relate to others
- affective maturity (including psychosexual maturity and health)
- the development of the moral conscience

Spiritual Dimension

“A man should not be admitted to diaconal formation unless it is demonstrated that he is already living a life of mature Christian spirituality.” (111)

The deacon is configured sacramentally to Christ the Servant, so the deacon must be able to serve with the mind of Christ. A deacon’s spirituality must therefore be grounded in the attitudes of Christ and be marked by openness to God’s word, to the Church, and to the world.

To help the candidate develop a balanced spirituality the spiritual dimension of the

formation program seeks to:

- deepen his prayer life
- cultivate and deepen a commitment of service to God’s word, the Church, and the world
- acquaint him with the richness and depth of the Catholic spiritual tradition
- increase his appreciation for the Christian witness of matrimonial and celibate spirituality
- focus his spirituality on the life of the people he encounters where he lives, works, and serves

Intellectual Dimension

“An increasingly educated society and the new roles of leadership in diaconal ministry require that a deacon be a knowledgeable and reliable witness to the faith and a spokesman for the Church’s teaching.” (118)

Important elements of the intellectual formation of the deacon are an understanding of Christian doctrine that is consistent with the teaching of the Church, knowledge of and appreciation for Sacred Scripture, preparation in theological and liturgical studies, and a solid foundation in preaching, its preparation, and practice. The focus of the intellectual dimension of the formation of deacons is the pastoral context of service. As such, the formation program should provide the participant with the knowledge, skills, and appreciation of the faith that he needs to effectively fulfill the ministry of word, liturgy, and charity. Also, of importance is to form the participant so that he can evaluate his society and culture considering the Gospel and to understand the Gospel in the light of the society and culture in which he will be serving. Considering the multi-cultural environment of the Diocese of St. Petersburg, it is particularly important that the participant have an appreciation for the cultural and ethnic expressions of the faith, as well as what is shared.

Pastoral Dimension

“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.” (126)

The purpose of the pastoral dimension of the formation program is to relate the human, spiritual, and intellectual dimensions to pastoral practice. This dimension strengthens and enhances his ability to exercise the prophetic, priestly, and servant- leadership functions

that derive from his baptismal consecration. Pastoral competence is such an important element in the formation of a man for ordination to the diaconate that the demonstration of pastoral skills is a crucial element in the assessment of fitness for ordination.

The basic skills that the participant will need to develop and demonstrate are:

- pastoral responsibility and a style of leadership that is consistent with the pastoral focus of the ministry
- generosity and perseverance
- creativity
- respect for ecclesial communion
- filial obedience to the bishop

Pastoral formation is a component of spiritual formation. The participant must be able to identify with the *diakonia* entrusted to the Church by Christ. To allow the participant to enter into a closer identification with the mission of the universal Church, the formation program includes:

- opportunities to introduce the participant into the pastoral life of the local Church through periodic meetings with the diocesan bishop, priest, other deacons, religious, and laity serving in official ministry.
- supervised pastoral formation adapted to the needs of the participant
- opportunities to share his pastoral experiences with deacons already in ministry

The pastoral dimension of formation also focuses on the *diakonia* of word, liturgy, and charity.

The Church's Ministry of the Word

It includes proclamation of the word in the varied contexts of ministerial service: preaching, catechesis, preparation for the sacraments, theory, and practice of homiletics, evangelization, and missiology.

The Church's Ministry of Liturgy

It focuses on liturgical practice, which includes celebration of the sacraments and sacramentals, and service at the altar.

The Church's Ministry of Charity and Justice

It is focused on preaching; educating the Christian community on the social dimensions of the Gospel; fostering by facilitation, motivation, and organization the Church's ministry of charity and justice; and the preferential option for the poor.

Admission and Selection Criteria and Procedures

The Role of the Pastor and Parish Community

Any inquirer who seeks to be considered for ordination to the diaconate needs to enter into dialogue with his parish community and pastor. It is the pastor who presents him for consideration into diaconal formation through a letter that states that he is a practicing Catholic of good repute and in good standing.

The Role of the Diocese

The Director of Diaconal Formation coordinates the selection process and arranges interviews of the applicant with members of the Admissions and Formation Board. The interview is designed to assess the applicant's level of awareness of a diaconal vocation, to obtain information and background on his family life, to evaluate his employment stability as well as his aptitude for diaconal ministry. The interview includes his wife, if he is married, and any children living at home. Appropriate psychological testing and consultation is included as part of the applicant process.

Diocesan Norms for All Applicants

- The following minimum requirements apply to all seeking entrance to the Aspirancy path of the diaconate formation program.
- at least 35 years of age and no older than 65 years of age at ordination
- in good health
- if married, in a stable marriage with no discernible serious family problems
- economically sound
- has earned at least a bachelor's degree from an accredited educational institution (exceptions, though rare, are considered for those applicants to demonstrate a capacity to engage in college-level work)
- at least three years of significant service in a parish, or satisfactory completion of two years of the Lay Pastoral Ministry Institute Program, or equivalent.
- Exceptions to these requirements are at the sole discretion of the Bishop, with consultation of the Director of Diaconal Formation and the Admissions and Formation Board.
- In addition, the following application documents will be required:
 - A completed application form (see Appendix I for a sample).
 - A detailed, typed autobiography.

- A recent photograph of the applicant, spouse, and family (if applicable).
- Sacramental documents:
 - a copy of baptismal certificate (issued within the past 6 months)
 - a copy of confirmation certificate
 - a copy of marriage certificate
 - If divorced, a copy of divorce and annulment decrees.
- Signed release forms and authorization for background check
- Employment Information Release Form
- Authorization for criminal and financial background check
- A personal, handwritten statement requesting admission to aspirant formation, indicating the applicant's motivation for seeking ordination to the diaconate, his willingness to pledge his service to the diocesan Church, and his ability to fulfill the requirements of aspirant formation (described in the application cover letter).
- If married, a personal, handwritten statement from the wife indicating her initial consent for the application and entrance into aspirant formation.
- Proof of residency in the diocese (valid driver's license, other current picture identification with address).
- Letters of reference from the applicant's pastor, another priest, deacon, or vowed religious, a faculty member of the diocesan Lay Pastoral Ministry Institute program, a recent employer or supervisor if employed, a close friend, a relative other than one's spouse.
- A physician's recent medical report attesting to the applicant's good health.
- An official transcript of past or present college or university level studies.

Screening Process

Interviews

The screening process includes a personal interview with the applicant and his wife (if married). Each of the interview teams will normally consist of two members of the Admissions and Formation Board. An interview by the Bishop or the Director of Diaconal Formation may also take place.

Psychological Screening

Applicants participate in psychological testing conducted by professional psychologists. In addition, each applicant will be interviewed by one of the psychologists. The results of the psychological screening and interview provide only part of the data collected during the screening process and are not used as the sole basis for selecting or not selecting an applicant.

Notifications

Each applicant will be notified by letter of the outcome of the screening process. Those accepted into the Aspirant Year of formation will be notified by the bishop in writing. The applicant's pastor will be notified prior to the Bishop's letter of acceptance.

The main checkpoints of the application process are receipt of a completed application, interview with a member of the Admissions & Scrutinies Board, completion of psychological testing. The application process may be terminated at any one of these checkpoints.

There are three possible outcomes of the assessment and evaluation process: invitation into Aspirancy by the bishop, notification that the inquirer has not been accepted into Aspirancy, a judgment that the inquirer will be placed on hold status until the next inquiry cycle (usually two years). Those who are not accepted into Aspirancy may not reapply to the program at a future time.

Those inquirers placed in hold status, will be notified of the specific actions they should take during the two-year hold period. At the end of the two-year period, if they have fulfilled the requirements stated in the letter notifying them of the hold status, the applicant will be invited to participate in the next cycle of inquiry sessions. The merits of their application will be evaluated with that of all other inquirers at the time.

Formation Program Requirements

The formation program consists of one year of inquiry, three years of aspirancy, and one year of candidacy, for a total of five years. For those who complete the Diaconate Formation Program and are ordained, participation in a three- year post-ordination program will be required. The aspirants and candidates undergo a rigorous formation in the spiritual, intellectual, pastoral, and human dimensions. Evaluations of the aspirant and candidate are conducted throughout the program.

Mentoring and Spiritual Direction

Mentoring and spiritual direction are integral parts of the formation program in that they help shape the aspirant and candidate in their awareness of the uniqueness and charism of diaconal ministry and in their relationship with God. The individual is expected to develop an effective and mature spirituality.

A deacon mentor is assigned by the Director of Diaconal Formation to the aspirant prior to the start of the aspirancy year. The mentors are selected based on the formation needs of the aspirant that were identified during the application and selection process. Both the aspirant and mentor are expected to meet regularly – at least once every four to six weeks. After each meeting, the mentor completes a summary report of the meeting and sends it to the Coordinator of Mentors at the Office of the Diaconate (refer to Appendix III for a sample report form).

The Director of Diaconal Formation recommends the assignment of the spiritual director, who can be a priest, a vowed religious, or a layperson, to the bishop. As with the mentor, the spiritual directors are selected based on the formation needs of the aspirant that were identified during the application and selection process. The expectation is that the aspirant or candidate will meet with his spiritual director every four to six weeks.

The formation class will be required to meet once monthly at a location, time, and date of their choosing. The gatherings must focus on spiritual formation and thus should consist of faith-sharing, communal prayer, celebration of the Eucharist, and other similar activities. It is also required that the wives attend at least the majority of these gatherings.

Days of Reflection and Retreats

A day of reflection is conducted in January of each year of formation. Generally, both the aspirant and candidate groups are combined for this day.

An annual retreat is conducted in June for both the aspirants and candidates. Both the aspirant and candidates' groups participate for some aspects of the retreat. Separate breakout sessions that are relevant to the level of formation are provided for the aspirants and candidates.

Formation Workshops

These workshops are designed to supplement the academic preparation with a perspective on various key pastoral and other topics. Presentations and discussion groups for topics such as pastoral leadership, liturgy, homiletics are provided. These workshops typically take place monthly on a Saturday. The workshops are conducted by the formation staff.

Pastoral Internships

During each of the formation years, both aspirants and candidates are required to complete a supervised pastoral internship. The internship may consist of two 20-hour or one 40-hour assignments. The internship is selected in consultation with the mentor and the Coordinator of Pastoral Internships. All proposed internships are reviewed and approved by the Diaconate of Diaconal Formation.

Liturgy Practicums & Comprehensive

During the third year of Aspirancy, the aspirants are required to participate in several liturgical practicums, designed to develop competency as a presider and liturgical minister. A written comprehensive examination in key areas of liturgy is administered at the end of the series of practicums.

Homiletics Practicums

Throughout the year of Candidacy, the candidates gain experience preparing and delivering homilies. They will be required to submit written, brief homilies, which will be evaluated and returned for corrections as necessary. The candidates will be required to deliver several homilies before a group of evaluators, who will assess the candidate's level of homiletic competence.

Academic Requirements and Fees

The academic dimension of the formation program is provided by St. Leo University. The standard program grants the candidate a Master of Arts in Pastoral Studies from the University. For those candidates who do not hold a bachelor's degree from an accredited institution, the University grants an undergraduate certificate, which may be applied toward a bachelor's degree.

The courses are conducted by the St. Leo University faculty on a trimester basis. Each course is four months in length, meets one full day on a Saturday at a local parish, and requires of the student supplemental work conducted over the University online teaching system.

Aspirants and candidates are expected to earn a passing grade in each course to continue in the formation program. Failure to complete a course successfully will result in the aspirant or candidate having to withdraw from the formation program or to repeat the whole year of formation.

All aspirants and candidates who hold a bachelor's degree from an accredited institution are required to take the courses for graduate credit. Those who must take the courses for graduate credit pay a little over 40% of the course fee (currently a little over \$300) and all book fees. Those whose academic preparation does not allow them to take the courses for graduate credit, pay only the book fees. The diocese pays the costs of all retreats and days of reflection.

Participation of the Wife

Wives are strongly urged to participate in the courses and workshops as observers to the extent practical for the particular family circumstances. Lack of participation of a wife in some of these activities will precipitate a discussion with the director of the program in an effort to make appropriate accommodations for the wife to attend some of the sessions. In addition, wives are required to attend all retreats, days of reflection, and occasional meetings conducted specifically for the wives.

Formation Evaluations

Annually, the mentor submits a formal evaluation of the aspirant's / candidate's growth. The baseline for this assessment is established by the Personal Growth Plan, which is developed by the aspirant in consultation with the mentor. Refer to Appendix IV for a sample of the evaluation forms used for the aspirants and candidates.

Annually, the spiritual director is asked to notify the Director of Diaconal Formation whether or not the meetings have been taking place regularly.

Similarly, the pastors are asked for their assessment of the aspirant or candidate.

Admissions & Formation Board

The Admissions and Formation Board is established to review continuously the progress of the aspirants and candidates in their formation. Any aspirant or candidate can be dismissed at any time if the Admissions and Formation Board, considering all circumstances under the Holy Spirit, concludes the lack of diaconal vocation of a candidate.

The Year of Inquiry

Introduction

Conducted by the formation staff, the purpose of the year of inquiry period is to engage the participant, the participant's family, and the local Church in a process of discernment.

Both the inquirer and his wife are expected to also consider the implications seriously for the inquirer should the wife pre-decease him after ordination.

Should that occur, the deacon is expected to live a celibate life, as dispensations for re-marriage are generally not granted. In addition, should the wife pre-decease the aspirant/candidate during the formation period, it is likely that he will be required to take a leave of absence from the program so that he has the appropriate time to grieve and to seriously reflect on whether or not he will be able to live a celibate life.

At the end of the inquiry period, the expectation is that both the participant as well as the extended community will have discerned a possible vocational path for the individual. The inquiry process is conducted every other year, on even years.

The year of inquiry consists of six, two-hour discernment workshops, conducted from September through November. Written reflections will be assigned and evaluated throughout this part of the program.

At the end of the period, the participant, spouse, and mentor may be invited to attend the application workshop, conducted in January. At that time, the application forms are distributed, and the assessment and evaluation process described. This important workshop is required. The office accepts applications only from those who have successfully completed the discernment workshops and who have attended the application workshop. The assessment and evaluation process continues with the submission of a completed application, usually in February, and usually ends with final notification of the inquirer's status in June.

Aspirant Path in Diaconal Formation

Introduction

Lasting three years, the aspirant path introduces the participant to the formation process and provides a structured process for further discernment of the individual's vocation. Upon admission to Aspirancy, the aspirant receives a copy of the National Directory for the Formation, Ministry, and Life of Permanent Deacons in the United States. The contents of this latter document will be useful to the aspirant in discerning his vocation to the diaconate. Not all aspirants will necessarily be accepted for admission to candidacy and participation in the aspirant path does not imply a commitment to candidacy or ordination on the part of the Diocese of St. Petersburg.

Formation in the Aspirant Path

The Aspirancy path of the formation program begins with a day of reflection, which typically occurs in August. Both the aspirant and wife are required to attend this event. The aspirant is assigned a spiritual director and a deacon mentor, with whom he must meet every 4-6 weeks throughout the year. In addition, this year consists of studies offered by St. Leo University and other workshops conducted by the formation staff. Finally, the aspirant is required to complete a supervised internship between January and August each year of aspirancy. The table below identifies the academic curriculum for the years of aspirancy formation. Those aspirants who continue to demonstrate a potential vocation to ordained ministry are called to candidacy by the bishop usually in October of the last year of formation.

Course	Sequence
Intellectual Formation:	
Year 1	
History, Theology, Spirituality of the Diaconate	Sept – Dec
Christian Spirituality: History and Praxis	Jan – Apr
Hebrew Scriptures	May - Aug
Year 2	
Christian Scriptures	Sept – Dec
Philosophical Foundations of Theology	Jan – Apr
Christology	May - Aug
Year 3	
Ecclesiology	Sept – Dec
Ethics I: Foundations	Jan – Apr
History of Christianity / Patrology	May - Aug

The aspirant path concludes with a formal assessment conducted by the Admission and Formation Board. At that time, the following documents must be prepared:

- A personal, handwritten, and signed letter by the aspirant requesting admission to the candidate path of formation, as well as the reception of the Rite of Admission to Candidacy.
- A personal, handwritten, and signed letter of consent prepared by the married aspirant's wife.
- After the petition is submitted the following occurs:
- The Director of Diaconal Formation prepares a declaration outlining the profile of the aspirant's personality and a judgment of suitability.
- Each petitioner and wife (if applicable) is interviewed by the Director of Diaconal Formation to appraise his readiness for nomination into the candidate path of formation.
- The Director of Diaconal Formation ascertains the wife's level of consent and support for her husband's promotion into candidate formation.

The Admissions and Formation Board convenes and reviews all pertinent information on the aspirant and each member makes a recommendation on the suitability of the aspirant for the candidate path to the Director of Diaconal Formation.

The Director of the Diaconal Formation, on behalf of the Board, sends the recommendations to the bishop, who selects those to be admitted to candidacy.

A copy of both the declaration and the bishop's letter to the aspirant regarding his acceptance into candidacy is placed in the aspirant's personal file.

Rite of Admission to Candidacy

In the Rite of Admission to Candidacy, the one who aspires to ordination publicly manifests his will to offer himself to God and the Church to exercise a sacred order. This rite is normally celebrated in October of the second year of formation. After the celebration of the Rite of Admission to Candidacy, a certificate indicating the reception, date, place, and the name of the bishop is prepared and signed by the chancellor and officially sealed. This document is placed in the candidate's personal file.

Candidate Path in Diaconal Formation

Introduction

Lasting one year, the candidate path of formation assesses the readiness of the candidate for ordination and continues to form him for this possibility. In addition to formal academic preparation, the program includes seminars and workshops in various topics relevant to the ministry of the deacon.

These are all designed to help the candidate develop the human, spiritual, intellectual, and pastoral dimensions of diaconal ministry. The following table highlights the key elements of the intellectual formation. Schedules and content are subject to change.

Course	Sequence
Intellectual Formation	
Year 4	
Ethics II: Social Justice and Public Ethics	Sept – Dec
Worship, Sacraments, and Liturgy	Jan – Apr
Homiletics	May – Aug

Ordination

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

1. A declaration that the course of studies has been completed (CIC 1027, 1032.3, 1050.1, 1051.1)
2. A declaration that the ministries of lector and acolyte have been received and exercised for at least six months, and that a profession of faith has been made and signed (CIC 1035, 833.6)
3. A handwritten declaration by the candidate of his free and lifelong commitment to the ecclesiastical ministry, and his petition to receive the order of deacon (CIC 1035)
4. A written statement of consent from the wife of a married candidate (CIC 1050.3)
5. A signed Profession of Faith and an Oath of Fidelity.

It is the Bishop's decision only to call a candidate to ordination, after having seriously considered the recommendations of the Admissions and Formation Board and the candidate's formators regarding his worthiness, effort, and choice of ministry.

Post-Ordination Path in Diaconal Formation

Introduction

Post-ordination formation is five years in duration. Throughout this period, the newly ordained undergoes continued formation in the human, spiritual, intellectual, and pastoral dimensions. Through regular meetings with his pastor or priest-supervisor, deacon mentor, and spiritual director, the deacon is able to adapt to his new and expanded role in the ministry of the Church.

Ministry Agreement

Each deacon makes a commitment to the Diocese of St. Petersburg by developing, in consultation with his pastor or priest-supervisor, a Ministry Agreement. This agreement establishes a clear and mutual understanding between the pastor or supervisor, and the deacon, with respect to the duties of his assignment. The agreement should be consistent with the needs of the Church and the work and family circumstances of the deacon. It is expected that the deacon will commit to a minimum of 40 hours of diaconal service each month. Refer to the Diaconate Office Deacon Guidelines for more information.

Post Ordination Requirements

The commitment of the deacon after ordination includes:

- Approximately 30 hours or more of continuing, in-depth formation,
- An annual evaluation of ministry prepared by their pastor or priest supervisor,
- Meetings with a deacon mentor and with a spiritual director,
- Attendance at an annual, canonically required, retreat; the annual retreat is sponsored by the Office of the Diaconate is the norm for an annual retreat. In limited situations, an alternate retreat may be attended with prior approval of the Director of Deacon Personnel. Wives are expected to attend the retreat,
- Compliance with the guidelines for deacons published by the Office of the Diaconate on behalf of the bishop.

GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR DEACONS

Standards of Integrity, Attitude, or Behavior for Deacons

Through Ordination we become official representatives of the church, called to ministerial service of Word, Liturgy and Charity. The National Directory for the Formation, Ministry, and Life of Permanent Deacons in the United States reports it clearly (#28) *“The Sacrament of Holy Orders marks deacons” with an imprint(‘character’) which cannot be removed, and which configures them to Christ, who made himself the ‘deacon’ or servant of all.” For this level of Holy Orders, Christ calls and the Church asks the bishop to ordain deacons to be consecrated witnesses to service.”* Through the Bishop’s assignment, the Deacon represents the Bishop in service to the people of the local and sometimes broader church. By nature of ordination a promise of obedience to the Bishop is made. A deacon is called to work collaboratively with the pastor or supervisor as well as the parochial vicar and staff at his assignment. With those expectations in mind, noted below are key standards of integrity, attitude, or behavior for deacons with faculties serving in the Diocese of St. Petersburg:

- A Deacon’s behavior and way of life, whether officially representing the church, or outside the church in family life, must be above the norm with a higher level of standard in all social settings, whether individually or within the context of other people, known or unfamiliar. Deacons must avoid behavior that could cause a scandal or create a public disgrace within the church or local community.
- The integrity of a deacon calls them to be open and honest in any dealings with the public whether ministering or in the daily walk of life. This is especially true when working with fellow clergy within the Catholic Church or ministers of other Christian or Interreligious Faiths.
- Deacons are expected to maintain their Christian responsibility of leading a chaste life, whether in the married or single state.
- A deacon must always maintain a professional and proper attitude when dealing with fellow clergy or staff, but more importantly with parish members or visitors. They are to be a model of healthy and positive behavior with children, adolescents, and other adults.
- Respect and dignity for all people is a basic expectation. We must be sensitive and open to an individual’s perspective or state of mind. A deacon should act appropriately to avoid outspoken or boisterous confrontations, or mean, degrading and offensive language, or physical contact because of a conflict.

- As representatives of the church a deacon is to express, formally or informally, the Church's official teachings or position on a subject, even if individually we have not come to fully appreciate or understand that teaching. If a deacon is unfamiliar with those teachings they must seek out, through appropriate local church resources, the proper understanding.
- Meetings with individuals should be done in a public area (restaurant, library, retail store) or in an office with a window. It is always good to have another person in the vicinity during such meetings. Never meet privately with a person in a home, hotel, vehicle, or park.
- When dealing with young people, those under the age of 18, deacons are expected to comply with the Code of Conducts for Adults working with Youth in the Diocese of St. Petersburg.
- If a deacon finds himself in the role of a vendor or parish employee at their particular assignment, they must always act with openness and honesty, not take advantage of their position as an ordained minister by taking opportunities not afforded to others. Deacons should never act as a paid independent or direct consultant where they are assigned.
- The computer, internet, and smart phones are a regular part of our world's communication process. A deacon must never exchange, display, or view sexually explicit or pornographic materials, whether written or graphic in nature. If such items cannot be openly shared with other peers, they may be deemed inappropriate.
- Because a deacon is more in the mainstream of society it is easier to get involved in political issues or offering personal opinions. When preaching, you are not to endorse a candidate, political party, or position. Be sensitive when forwarding electronic or physical material of political information (even intended as humor) ensuring that your information and position supports Gospel Values.
- If movies, clips, music, graphic, or print resources are used for sharing or education, they must be screened and deemed appropriate for their audience. When shared with others, proper copyrights must be obtained.
- We are expected to be aware of and comply with all applicable parish, organization, or diocesan policies with special attention to sexual misconduct, harassment, safety, transportation, permission requirements, and emergency incidents.
- The Deacon is expected to officially report violations of civil or ecclesial law as prescribed by guidelines within the church.

Definition of Diaconate Status

Active

A deacon who has the faculties of the Diocese has an assignment from the Bishop and is currently working in that assignment. The deacon is subject to the liturgical, formation and ministry guidelines.

Retired:

A deacon, in good standing, with the faculties of the Diocese for at least two years, who because of age (75) or infirmity will be subject to retirement. He may continue serving at the discretion of his pastor/supervisor. He is not required to maintain a ministry agreement nor attend continuing formation.

Temporary Leave

A deacon who, at his request or at the recommendation of the Director, has been authorized by the Bishop to withdraw from active ministry for a fixed period. Faculties and benefits of diaconate status cease during this time. Faculties may be reinstated by request of the Deacon and Office with accompanying proof of resolution of the reason of leave.

Inactive

A deacon who has not been assigned to a parish or agency and is not currently functioning as a Deacon. Faculties and benefits of diaconate status cease while inactive until reassigned.

Administrative Leave

A deacon whose faculties have been suspended by the diocesan Bishop may not function as an authorized minister in any parish, agency, or institution of the Diocese. The deacon will receive a letter from the chancery stating the fact of his suspension and the effective date.

Laicized

A deacon, who, voluntarily or involuntarily, is returned to the lay state by the Apostolic See, at his request, or at the request of the diocesan bishop.

Faculties

A faculty is a grant by a higher authority enabling a person to act in a way that the recipient would not otherwise be empowered or authorized to act. Upon ordination or assignment in the diocese, the diocesan bishop grants faculties for a particular assignment. At the recommendation of the Director of Deacon Personnel, the diocesan bishop issues the letter granting the faculties. Faculties for deacons ordained outside the Diocese are normally granted for one year. The deacon must then apply for permanent faculties after the initial year. Faculties will only be granted when accompanied by a Ministry Agreement.

Expectations of Assignment

A Deacon is given his faculties and assignment through the Office of the Bishop, coordinated through the Office of the Diaconate. An agreement is to be made between the pastor/supervisor and the deacon concerning expectations and duties. As the service of a deacon is typically part-time and voluntary, at least ten hours per week, or forty hours per month of service is suggested.

- Generally, a newly ordained a deacon's initial assignment is to the parish or agency that recommended him during the formation, but a deacon may be assigned to any Diocesan Parish or Agency. The Pastor/Supervisor of the sponsoring parish or agency will be consulted prior to the initial assignments, specifically if they will be assigned elsewhere.
- The diaconate in this Diocese is envisioned as being voluntary and part-time. A deacon is to be reimbursed for out-of-pocket expenses, books, phone, gasoline, etc., necessary for his ministry in the parish/diocesan department. The expense for the annual retreat for the deacon, and for adequate ongoing formation is to be provided by the parish/diocesan department as well.
- A deacon may seek and accept part-time or full-time employment with the Diocese, but the details of that employment should be distinct from any other compensation and/or remuneration.
- In the case of a deacon salaried by the diocese/parish, the contribution of voluntary ministry approximate to that of the unsalaried deacon is expected.
- Clerical dress for deacons, i.e., the clergy collar and shirt, is not permitted within the Diocese without express permission of the Bishop.
- The deacon is expected to avail himself of the continuing formation programs offered in the Diocese and is required to take part in at least fifteen (15) hours annually.
- Attendance at diaconal deanery meetings is expected and wives are also encouraged to attend as one aspect of forming diaconal community.
- While a deacon is greatly supported in his ministry by his wife, who will at times collaborate with him in aspects of his pastoral work, there will be areas of confidentiality and privacy which may not be shared with one's spouse.

- The deacon should remain mindful of the threefold responsibility which is his: family, occupation/ profession, and diaconal ministry. He is to be aware of the danger of engaging in diaconal ministry at the expense of his family. Should family and/or work commitments require that the Deacon withdraw for a time from active ministry, the matter should be discussed with the Diaconate Office.
- An annual evaluation of each deacon to assess personal growth and ministerial effectiveness should take place. Both pastor and deacon should participate jointly in this evaluation.
- Reassignment of a deacon is made at the request of the deacon and/or the pastor/supervisor of the diocesan agency.
- When a dispute occurs between a deacon and priest or another party in ministry, an attempt at a solution should be made before referring it to the Diaconate Office. If the Director of Deacon Personnel cannot effect reconciliation, the matter is referred to the Vicar for Clergy and/or Reconciliation Board.
- In the case of the severe illness of a deacon or member of his family, the Diaconate Office should be notified. It will inform the diaconal community.
- A deacon will offer his retirement at age 75. The Bishop may request the deacon's retirement at an earlier age if circumstances so dictate. A retired deacon continues to have faculties within the diocese and is required to attend an annual retreat. He is encouraged and expected to attend the annual retreat with the Diaconate Community. A retired deacon may perform diaconate functions at a parish at the invitation and consent of the pastor.

These Guidelines are applicable to all deacons having the faculties of the diocese. Failure to follow the guidelines may result in action by the Diaconate office relative to the deacon's desire to serve the community as determined by the Office of the Bishop of the Diocese of St. Petersburg.

Faculties of the Diaconate

In addition to those faculties and permissions granted to deacons by the universal law of the Church, a deacon incardinated in the Diocese of St. Petersburg or holding a current letter of assignment and faculties from the Bishop of St. Petersburg or his delegate enjoys the following:

To Preach Everywhere

This faculty is granted by the universal law itself [c.764] and is presented here for clarity. It is to be exercised with the consent of the pastor or rector of the local Church.

Baptism

To baptize, with at least the presumed consent of the parish pastor, children under the age of seven. The deacon may, of course, baptize any person in danger of death. In Normal circumstances, the deacon should not baptize (or receive into full communion) adults or children who have reached at least the age of seven. The Church desires that such persons be confirmed upon the occasion of their baptism or reception into full communion; thus, a priest with the faculty to confirm such persons should administer the baptism.

Christian Burial

To preside over funerals and burials for the faithful. To celebrate, with at least the presumed consent of the pastor, funeral rites for children whose parents intended to baptize them but who died before their baptism. [c. 1138]

Marriages

- If the deacon is assigned to a territorial parish, to receive the vows for the church at marriages within the territorial boundaries of that parish, provided one of the two being married is of the Latin Rite.
- To validly receive the vows at marriages elsewhere, the deacon needs a faculty to assist, delegated to him by the local ordinary or pastor of that other parish [c. 1111].
- The deacon may sub-delegate to a specified priest or deacon a faculty to receive the vows at specific individual marriages within the territorial boundaries of the parish to which the deacon is assigned. The fact of sub-delegation is to be noted in the marriage register and in the marriage file.
- To assist validly at other marriages, the deacon must have proper faculties delegated by the local ordinary, the pastor, or the parochial vicar having jurisdiction. [Cf. c. 137 & 3, 1111]

Ministry to the Sick and Dying

The deacon may bring viaticum to the sick and dying.

Ministry of the Eucharist

The deacon may proclaim the Gospel, preach, voice the needs of the people in the general intercessions, assist in the presentation of the gifts, prepare the altar for the Eucharist, distribute communion, at the discretion of the Presider, lead the penitential rite, and give the dismissal. (see Liturgical guidelines for assisting at Mass).

Other Liturgical Practices

The deacon may also:

- Preside over liturgies of the Word,
- Lead the faithful in the Liturgy of the Hours,
- Conduct exposition and benediction of the Blessed Sacrament,
- Lead non-sacramental reconciliation services,
- Conduct prayer services for the sick and dying,
- Administer or preside at rites as prescribed through the documents of the church.

Vesture

- a. A deacon should wear the vesture as prescribed by the General Instruction of the Roman Missal. An alb, stole, and dalmatic is the norm for the celebration of the Sunday Eucharist. For daily Eucharist he may vest in alb and stole.
- b. For other liturgical rites, the deacon is to vest in alb and stole and, at his discretion, may wear a cope. A Deacon is also permitted to wear a cassock and surplice without a Roman Collar. A stole is not to be worn over any secular clothing.
- c. For Rites of an emergency nature outside the church proper, (i.e., Viaticum, Emergency Baptism) liturgical vestments are optional.
- d. If assisting or presiding outside his assigned church, the deacon may refer to the normal practice of the specific church for vesture.

The Diocese of St. Petersburg has set forth the policy that the Roman Collar is not to be worn by deacons with faculties in this Diocese.

Ministry Agreement

To facilitate an orderly and professional agreement between the deacon and his pastor/supervisor, it is appropriate for both parties to enter into a Covenant of Service (agreement). The agreement defines the level of expectation each may anticipate from the other and provides an objective document in the event arbitration is necessary.

- The deacon, with faculties from the bishop, is expected to enter into dialogue with his pastor/supervisor about these expectations. Since the diaconal service is envisioned as voluntary, part-time, and non-stipend, it is suggested that the norm be ten (10) hours of service per week.
- It is expected that a new agreement will be signed within the first three months of a new assignment of a deacon or when a new pastor or director is assigned to the parish or agency the deacon is currently assigned to.
- The deacon and pastor are encouraged to review the faculties granted to the deacon to define the sacramental work available to an ordained deacon in the parish. In addition to this, the deacon and pastor are asked to review pertinent ministries that fall within the deacon's competence, and which contribute to the overall pastoral work of the parish. Some of the suggested ministries may be:
 - Marriage preparation: A deacon working with Marriage Preparation is expected to meet with representatives of the Family Life Office of the Diocese of St. Petersburg to encourage an understanding of process and procedure for Marriage Preparation within the Diocese.
 - Annulment work: A deacon working with formal declaration of nullity or other issues of freedom to marry, is expected to meet with representatives of the Tribunal Staff of the Diocese of St. Petersburg to encourage an understanding of process and procedure for annulments within the Diocese.
 - Youth ministry: Resources exist in parishes and the Pastoral Center regarding youth ministry. Youth ministry carries a specific obligation for the safety and protection of children along with aspects of faith formation.
 - Outreach to the sick and dying, especially those in hospitals, nursing homes, and the homebound.
 - Bereavement ministry to families after the death of a loved one as well as preparation and planning of funeral liturgies.

- Training of liturgical ministers (lectors, Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion, ushers, Youth and Adult Altar Servers, Sacristans, etc.)
- Involvement with civic or local agencies that have a specific connection to the church in justice or mercy provide an opportunity for the deacon to server in the local community and church.
- Each parish has unique needs. It is the responsibility of the pastor and the deacon to develop the appropriate ministries to respond to those needs.
- Represent the parish in activity and outreach with committees or services through the Pastoral center, Diocesan offices, or specialized Ministry Organizations or Associations.

Annually the Office of the Diaconate will request the Pastor or Supervisor to provide an update of the Agreement through an annual written review. This gives the deacon and Pastor/Supervisor an opportunity to review their compliance to the agreement and potentially areas of adjustment



DIACONATE MINISTRY AGREEMENT

Diocese of St. Petersburg FL

This Ministry Agreement is intended to facilitate dialogue regarding the Deacon's ministerial service. It will assist the Pastor, Supervisor, and the Deacon in reaching a broad understanding regarding that service and it will promote accountability to the Bishop, to the Pastor and Supervisor and to the Deacon. The Bishop alone assigns the deacon to service, after a review and recommendation is given to him by the Diaconate Office.

All parties should regard this agreement as a serious commitment. It is a document which concretely lists the sacramental dedication of a particular person to a particular parish community. In completing this agreement, it is necessary to consider the threefold ministry of diaconate.

This agreement made between:

Deacon _____

AND

Pastor: _____

Parish: _____ City _____

Dated: _____

For: _____ % of the Deacon's Diaconal Service

AND (if applicable)

Agency _____ Supervisor: _____

Dated: _____

For _____ % of the Deacon's Diaconal Service.

The Deacon will be of service to the parish & agency approximately _____ hours each month.

This agreement expires on June 30th _____ (not to exceed 5 years).

A deacon is an ordained minister of the Church. He is to be an authentic sign of the Christ the Servant by his threefold ministry of Word, Charity, and Sacrament. These three dimensions of diaconal ministry are inseparably joined together as one in the service of God's redemptive plan.

Ministry of the Word

Estimated hours per month _____

At their ordination the Bishop says to the deacon, "Take this book of Holy Scripture and be faithful in handing on the Word of God so that it may grow strong in the hearts of his People". In addition to proclaiming the Gospel and articulating the Church's needs in the general intercessions at the liturgy, the deacon's ministry may also include preaching, offering catechetical instruction, and counseling, instructing catechumens, giving retreats, conducting parish renewal programs, and reaching out to alienated Catholics. Areas of consideration and monthly hours may include.

Bible Study	_____	Homily*	_____
Fallen Away Catholics	_____	Adult Faith Formation	_____
Generations of Faith	_____	Altar Server Training	_____
Liturgy Committee	_____	Other	_____
Marriage Preparation	_____	RCIA	_____
Ministers of Holy Communion	_____	Prayer Groups	_____
Renew/CRHP	_____	Lector Training	_____
Retreat Leader	_____	Religious Education	_____

** Deacons are permitted to preach by virtue of their faculties but only with the expressed or presumed consent of the pastor. Deacons and pastors need to be very clear about the use of this faculty and how liberally or strictly it is applied.*

Ministry of Charity

Estimated hours per month _____

Deacons are ministers of charity and justice. They are dedicated to building a just society and living lives of holiness amidst the challenges of our modern world. Because deacons and their families live in their own communities and work in the world they are uniquely positioned and deeply involved in promoting catholic social teaching. They may, therefore, minister in prisons and in hospitals, serving prisoners and the sick. They can visit the homebound and people in nursing homes. They will serve the mentally ill, the chemically dependent, the abused and the battered, the old and the young, the abandoned, the dying and the bereaved, immigrants and refugees as well as victims of racial and ethnic discrimination. Areas of consideration and monthly hours may include:

<i>AIDS Ministry</i>	_____	<i>Home Sick Calls</i>	_____
<i>Senior Ministry</i>	_____	<i>Hospital & Nursing Homes</i>	_____
<i>Youth Ministry</i>	_____	<i>Mentally Handicapped</i>	_____
<i>Physical Challenged</i>	_____	<i>Annulment & Couples</i>	_____
<i>Migrant Ministry</i>	_____	<i>Homeless & Food Shelters</i>	_____
<i>Domestic Abuse</i>	_____	<i>Grief Ministry</i>	_____
<i>St. Vincent DePaul</i>	_____	<i>Other ~</i>	_____

Ministry of the Sacrament

Estimated hours per month _____

A deacon's sacramental ministry will center, above all, on the Eucharist, but includes other sacraments as well. The deacon's role in the Eucharist, in addition to proclaiming the Gospel and articulating the Church's needs in the general intercessions, is to prepare the gifts and offer Communion (Cup) at the Lord's Table. Moreover, the deacon may solemnly baptize children, witness marriages in the name of the church, bring Viaticum to the dying, and preside over wakes, funerals, and burial services. He may also preside over liturgies of the Word, the Liturgy of the Hours and exposition and benediction of the Blessed Sacrament. He may lead non-sacramental reconciliation services, conduct prayer services for the sick and dying, and administer certain of the Church's sacramentals. Areas of consideration and monthly hours may include:

<i>Marriage Rites</i>	_____	Assist at Sunday Mass	_____
<i>Wakes, Funerals, Committals</i>	_____	Communion Services	_____
<i>Baptism</i>	_____	Prayer Services	_____
<i>Adoration, Exposition, Benediction</i>	_____	Other	_____
<i>Liturgy of the Hours</i>	_____	Other	_____

Sacramental Stole Fees: *In the event the deacon officiates at Baptisms, Weddings, Wakes, Funeral Liturgies, or Interments, and a stole fee is offered, the deacon should be allowed to accept this fee, even if they are employed by the parish in some capacity.*

Ministry outside the Parish

Estimated hours per month _____

Often a deacon's call to service and example brings him outside the scope of the parish. These too are an important part of serving as deacon in civil, social, or diocesan ministries. Areas of consideration and monthly hours may include:

<i>Catholic Charities</i>	_____	<i>Diaconate Community</i>	_____
<i>Prison Ministry</i>	_____	<i>Fire or Police Chaplain</i>	_____
<i>Life, Marriage & Family</i>	_____	<i>Hospital Chaplain</i>	_____
<i>Community Service</i>	_____	<i>Chamber of Commerce</i>	_____
<i>Other Diocese Entity</i> _____	_____	<i>Other</i> _____	_____
<i>Other Diocese Entity</i> _____	_____	<i>Other</i> _____	_____

Even though a deacon's ministry must include all three dimensions of Word, Charity, & Sacrament, it does not mean that he must give equal time to all three. The needs of the community, the deacon's own specific gifts and charismas, and the guidance of the Church's pastors will help him discern how to use his resources wisely and effectively. These areas are suggested areas for the deacon and his respective parish. Any other ministries that are suggested between the pastor and the deacon are encouraged, provided that, they fall within the deacon's competence. The Deacon may only serve with faculties of the Bishop.



DIACONATE AGREEMENT ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Diocese of St. Petersburg FL

Deacon _____ is to serve as one who encourages and promotes lay ministry in this parish while, at the same time, complementing that of the ordained priesthood. In return, as a parish, we will give him the opportunity to render these services and to fulfill his ministerial role. We will support him and his family with Christian community and challenge him to live fully his dual vocations of marriage and diaconate. We will keep open the avenues of communication so that the unfolding role of the deacon will be able to grow in our midst. Relying on the Holy Spirit to enable us to fulfill our commitments, we enact this agreement.

Deacon's Signature

Date

Wife's Signature

Date

Pastor's Signature

Date

Supervisor's Signature

Date

- When a deacon is assigned to a Parish and Diocesan Entity a separate ministry overview is to be attached.

Post Ordination Formation

Post-ordination formation is five years in duration immediately following ordination. Throughout this period, the newly ordained undergoes continued formation in the human, spiritual, intellectual, and pastoral dimensions. Through regular meetings with his pastor or priest-supervisor, deacon mentor, and spiritual director, the deacon is able to adapt to his new and expanded role in the ministry of the Church. The overall goal of Post Ordination is to help the newly ordained harmonize all dimension of life and ministry in this new role. Not only are we to help seek harmony in the afore mentioned dimensions of ordained life, but consideration must also be given to the effects on the deacon's family life, work life and life in the local church.

Focus & Support

All active non retired deacons with faculties in the Dioceses of St. Petersburg are expected to meet specific ongoing formation requirements to maintain faculties in the diocese. The Norms (as set forth by the 2nd Edition National Directory 2022) calls for a specific five year program for the formative years in diaconate ministry focusing on these dimensions of Diaconate Formation.

- Human Dimension (pp245) A credible witness to the sanctity and preciousness of human life.
- Spiritual Dimension (pp246) Ordination is a “new consecration to God.” Faithful to the spiritual life and duties of ministry
- Intellectual Dimension (pp248) A systemic and substantive deepening of the theological demands of the call to ministry.
- Pastoral Dimension (pp249) Making the love and service of Christ present in the church and society

To support of these preliminary years of transition, Post Ordination Formation will focus more on a human and pastoral approach with a less concentrated emphasis on academics.

- For the first 2 or 3 years, each newly ordained will be assigned a Deacon Mentor whose focus will be targeted to this transition as it relates to the family and parish transition.
- The Director of Deacon Personnel will conduct interviews with the pastors between the 4th & 8th months after ordination.

Requirements for Post Ordination Formation

The newly ordained will be expected to participate in the following outline for Continuing Formation for the first five years after Ordination. Topics may be changed or adjusted based on the needs of the men, the Diocese or society.

	Diaconate Workshops	Other Activities
YEAR 1 Nov./June	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6 Specific Workshops for the Newly Ordained <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Expected/Unexpected, Ritual & Liturgical Form, Tribunal, Homiletics, Faith Formation. • 1 Diocesan Originated Workshops 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monthly Mentor Meetings • Meetings with Spiritual Director • Attend Toast Masters within the first 6 months of Ordination • Diaconate Day of Reflection (Feb).
YEAR 2 July/June	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 annual Diaconate Continuing Formation days. • 3 Specific Workshops for the Newly Ordained (Pastoral listening, Homiletics Revisited, Liturgy revisited.) • 2 Diocesan Originated Workshops 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting with the Director • Twice Quarterly Mentor Meetings • Meetings with Spiritual Director • Diaconate Day of Reflection (Jan/Feb). • Annual Diaconate Retreat • 6 hours of an approved online or college course on Christian Scripture.
YEAR 3 July/June	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 annual Diaconate Continuing Formation days. • 2 Diocesan Originated Workshops • 1 Workshop/Continuing Formation <u>sponsored outside the Diocese</u> • One individually targeted topic for PO Formation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting with the Director • Quarterly Mentor Meetings • Meetings with Spiritual Director • Annual Diaconate Retreat • Diaconate Day of Reflection (Feb). • 8 hours of an approved online or college course.
YEAR 4 & 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual Day of Reflection • Diaconate Continuing Ed. Days • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On-Line or In Person sessions directed to Social Justice (through Just Faith, Campaign for Human Development, or Catholic Charities. • On-Line or In Person sessions directed at cultural diversity.

Compliance

Continuing Formation takes a time commitment and financial support. The newly ordained and their pastors are expected to see these first three years requirements as part of Diaconate Formation. Maintaining these activities must supersede other parish schedules and planning. Many of these workshops (specifically the academic requirements in years two and three) do

have associated costs anywhere from \$25 to \$100 per session. The local parish is expected to set aside budgeted funds for Continuing Formation for the newly ordained deacon. The deacon will also be expected to personally participate in the financial support as well. In the event Continuing Formation creates a serious financial burden the deacon should discuss this with the Director of Deacon Personnel to not jeopardize his faculties based solely on a financial burden.

Naturally, there are times when special circumstances may create conflicts with participation in these programs. Exemption from these will be on a case-by-case basis approved by the Director of Deacon Personnel. A deacon failing to comply with this specific five-year Post Ordination Formation risks the suspension of his faculties.

Responsibility

It is the direct responsibility of the newly ordained deacon to ensure participation and compliance of Post Ordination Formation, seeking assistance as necessary from the Office of the Diaconate, his Pastor, and Mentor. The Office of the Diaconate will be responsible to ensure that these opportunities are made available.

This Post Ordination is developed and structured on the National Directory for the Formation, Ministry, and Life of Permanent Deacons in the United States (2nd Edition 2022 USCCB). These are the Norms for the Diocese of St. Petersburg.

Continuing Formation

The Continuing Formation of deacons is a human necessity which must be seen in continuity with the divine call to serve the Church in the ministry and with the initial formation given to deacons, to the extent that these are considered two initial moments in a single, living, process of Christian and diaconal life. Indeed, “those who are ordained to the diaconate are obliged to ongoing doctrinal formation which perfects and completes what they received prior to ordination,” so that, by periodic renewal of the “I am” pronounced by the deacons at their ordination, the vocation “to” the diaconate continues and finds expression as vocation “in” the diaconate. – *Directory for the Ministry and Life of Permanent Deacons*

- It shall be the duty of the Deacon Council and the Diaconate office to promote the personal, spiritual, and pastoral formation of deacons by organizing and publicizing formational programs for all deacons of the Diocese and assisting deacons participating in educational programs not within the Diocesan programming.
- Deacons, in active ministry are expected to complete fifteen (15) hours of continuing formation annually. Each hour is defined as fifty minutes of classroom instruction. The annual period begins July 1 and ends June 30.
- Deacons ordained within the last five years are expected to complete a minimum of thirty (25) hours of continuing formation annually. Each hour is defined as fifty minutes of classroom instruction. The annual period (including the year of ordination) begins July 1 and ends June 30 the following year.
- Examples of qualifying continuing formation instruction include the following types:
 - Continuing Formation Programs coordinated by the Diaconate Office.
 - Classes conducted within the Formation Program.
 - College-level programs in theology, ministry, spirituality, Church history, and Sacred Scripture.
 - Professional conferences conducted for priests, deacons, and/or lay ministers.
 - All other courses, lectures, programs, presentations, seminars, and workshops approved and paid for this purpose by the Diaconate Office.

Responsibility for the development and administration of continuing formation programs for deacons is that of the Diaconate office. The Office will evaluate programs to determine their qualification for continuing formation credit and establish procedures for recording completion of qualifying hours of instruction. It is recommended that deacons attending non-sponsored programs obtain the Diaconate office evaluation of such programs in advance to ensure they will be accepted as continuing formation hours.

- A deacon may receive up to (5) five credit hours annually for the development and presentation of a formation program sponsored by a Diocesan Office offered to individuals involved in ministry outside the local parish. Examples include Formation programs for the Diaconate Office, Lay Pastoral Ministry Office, Diocesan PreCana, etc.
- Achievements in ongoing formation will be recorded in the deacon's personnel file maintained by the Office of the Diaconate. Deacons failing to comply with continuing formation without due cause are subject to temporary suspension of their faculties.
- Those deacons who fail to complete or report Continuing Formation or Retreat attendance or have not provided an acceptable explanation (in agreement with the Office of the Diaconate) of why they have not completed these requirements will have 90 days to provide the information. During this 90-day period the Office of the Diaconate will provide both verbal and written reminders at approximately 30 days and 60 days passed the original due date. If the information is not received within the original 90-day period, the Deacon will be subject to temporary suspension of his faculties. The pastor will also be notified of the potential suspension of faculties by a copy of the letter. The deacon will have 30 days to provide the Office with specific arrangements for Continuing Formation or the retreat which must be completed within four months. If the deacon fails to meet this commitment steps will be taken to suspend faculties until a suitable resolution is made in agreement with the Deacon, the Office of the Diaconate, and the Pastor/Supervisor.

Retreats

Deacons are required by Canon Law to make an annual retreat. The Diaconate Office schedules an annual retreat, which is to be paid for by the deacon's assigned parish or agency. Wives are expected to attend this retreat as guests of the Office of the Diaconate. A retreat is considered as a definite time spent away from one's normal life for the purpose of reconnecting in prayer and reflection with God. A retreat typically consists of at least one overnight stay, away from home and is coordinated through a retreat director.

- Deacons with faculties in the Diocese are expected to attend the annual Diaconate retreat coordinated through the Diaconate Office. Periodically a deacon may wish to be excused from the retreat. To do so, he must contact the Director of Deacon Personnel directly and provide sufficient reason to be excused and provide information for an alternative retreat.
- If, with permission, the deacon participates in a retreat, not coordinated through the local Diaconate office, a written acknowledgement of the retreat must be submitted to the diaconate office as a way of maintaining the diocesan records of the deacon.
- Deacons are strongly encouraged to participate in additional retreats or days of reflection for the sake of spiritual development in addition to the annual retreat.

Diaconate Meetings

In an effort to encourage prayer and fellowship within the Diaconate Community, a concerted effort is made to encourage the men and wives to come together at events developed through the Office of the Diaconate.

- Generally, the Diaconate Community gathers as one at various times each year.
 - January or February – Annual Day of Reflection.
 - March (Lent) – Mass of Recommitment, State of the Diaconate & Lunch
 - April/May - Continuing Formation Day
 - End of October Annual Retreat
 - November/December – Continuing Formation Day

- Area Clusters are established by geographic region and number of deacons. The main purpose of the cluster is to help strengthen the local community of the Deacons and wives in the area. Meetings on a cluster level are a time to gather for prayer, fellowship, and for sharing information on ministry, service and the local church that may be of interest to all.

- Deacons are encouraged to participate in periodic area meetings. Such activities will be coordinated through their own efforts however, administrative support of the Office of the Diaconate is available for mailings, website notices, or general information. Deacons gathering for such an event will receive up to 2.0 hours of continuing formation.

Episcopal – Presbyterate – Diaconate Relationships

The parish provides an ecclesial context for a deacon's ministry and serves as a reminder that a deacon's labors are not carried out in isolation, but in communion with the Bishop, his priests, and all those who in varying degrees share in the public ministry of the Church.

- The deacon has an obligation to respect the Office of the Bishop, his pastor/supervisor, and priests, and to cooperate conscientiously and generously with the Bishop, Presbyterate, and staff. The Deacon also has a right to be accepted and fully recognized by his fellow clergy, and by all, for what he is, an ordained minister of the word, the altar, and charity.
- In a case where it becomes obvious that a deacon and a pastor/supervisor are not working well together, a representative of the Office of the Diaconate will meet with either or both parties to help process the concerns and to determine whether an agreeable solution can be worked out between them.
- If it is determined that the situation is irreconcilable, the pastor/supervisor may request, in writing, to the Vicar General (with a copy to the Office of the Diaconate) that the deacon be reassigned, remaining with active faculties at the parish until a reassignment is made.

Liturgical Guidelines for Deacons

After the priest, the deacon, in virtue of the sacred ordination he has received, holds first place among those who minister in the Eucharistic Celebration. For the sacred Order of the diaconate has been held in high honor in the Church even from the time of the Apostles. At Mass, the deacon has his own part in proclaiming the Gospel, in preaching God's Word from time to time, in announcing the intentions of the Prayer of the Faithful, in ministering to the priest, in preparing the altar and serving the celebration of the Sacrifice, in distributing the Eucharist to the faithful, especially under the Sacred species of wine, and sometimes in giving directions regarding the people's gestures and postures. (GIRM 2002 no. 94; CB nos. 23-25)

PART 1: GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS SIGNS OF REVERENCE

- A bow signifies reverence and honor shown to the persons themselves or to the signs that represent them. There are two kinds of bows: a bow of the head and a bow of the body.
 - A bow of the head is made when the three Divine Persons are named together and at the names of Jesus, of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and of the Saint in whose honor the Mass [or the liturgy of the hours] is being celebrated.
 - A bow of the body, that is to say a profound bow, is made to the altar if there is no tabernacle with the Blessed Sacrament near or directly behind the altar, to the bishop, before and after incensation (except in the case of the altar and gifts for the Eucharistic celebration), in the Creed at the words "by the power of the Holy Spirit . . . and became man," or whenever it is expressly called for by the rubrics of the various liturgical books. The same kind of bow is made by the deacon when he asks for the blessing before the proclamation of the Gospel. (GIRM 2002 nos. 275 & 277; CB no. 68)
- A genuflection, made by bending the right knee to the ground, signifies adoration, and therefore it is reserved for the Blessed Sacrament [whether exposed or reserved in the tabernacle], as well as for the Holy Cross from solemn adoration in the liturgical celebration of Good Friday until the beginning of the Easter Vigil. (GIRM 2002 no. 274; CB no. 69)
- If, however, the tabernacle with the Blessed Sacrament is near or directly behind the altar, the priest, deacon, and other ministers genuflect when they approach the altar and when they depart from it, but not during the celebration of Mass itself. Otherwise, it is a profound bow to the altar. (GIRM 2002 no. 274)
- Ministers carrying the processional cross or candles may bow their heads. Neither a genuflection nor a profound bow is made by those who are carrying articles used in the celebration, for example, the cross, candlesticks, the Book of the Gospels. Ministers carrying the processional cross or candles bow their heads. (GIRM 2002 nos. 173 & 275; CB no. 70)

Vesture and Seating

- The vestment proper to the deacon is the dalmatic, worn over the alb and stole. The dalmatic may, however, be omitted out of necessity or on account of a lesser degree of solemnity. The stole is worn by the deacon over his left shoulder and drawn diagonally across the chest to the right side, where it is fastened. (GIRM 2002 nos. 338 & 340; CB no. 67)
- In the Eucharistic assembly, the traditional place for the seating of the deacon is to the right of the bishop/priest celebrant. A second deacon may sit to the left of the bishop or priest.

Vesting as an Order

- For certain diocesan celebrations, where the Order of Deacons is present as the result of an official invitation generated through the Office of the Diaconate, the Office of Worship, or the Office of the Chancellor, deacons are to vest in the vesture proper to the Deacon – the dalmatic.
- In the Diocese of St. Petersburg, the opportunities to gather as an Order have been reserved for the Chrism Mass, ordinations, special Diocesan liturgies, or the funeral of a Deacon. In the case of the funeral of a Deacon's wife or a priest, the deacons should vest in an alb and white stole.
- The Deacon's role is to assist as needed. So, the presence of the Bishop for a liturgy does not necessarily mean that all Deacons present may vest. Questions about vesting outside the normal practice within a parish assignment, should be directed to the Diaconate Office or the Office of Worship.

Incense

- The rite of incensation is a sign of reverence and of prayer and is optional in any form of Mass or as indicated in the liturgical books. (GIRM 2002 no. 276; CB nos. 84, 86-87)
- At Mass incense may be used:
 - during the entrance procession, at the beginning of Mass to incense the cross and the altar.
 - during the procession and proclamation of the Gospel reading.
 - at the presentation of the gifts to incense the gifts, altar, cross, bishop, concelebrants, and the people.
 - at the elevation of the bread and the chalice after their consecration.
- Use of incense as indicated in the liturgical books include:
 - the dedication of a church or altar.
 - the blessing of oils and consecrating chrism (esp. as they are taken away);
 - at the exposition of the Blessed Sacrament when the monstrance is used;
 - at funerals.

- Celebrations where as a rule incense should be used include: (CB nos. 88-89)
 - the feast of the Presentation of the Lord
 - Passion Sunday (Palm Sunday) the Mass of the Lord's Supper o the Easter Vigil
 - the solemnity of the Body and Blood of Christ (Corpus Christi)
 - other processions of solemnity
 - Morning & Evening Prayer where the altar and people can be incensed
 - during the singing of the gospel canticle

How does a person incense? (GIRM 2002 no. 277; CB nos. 90-92)

- The deacon presents the incense boat to the bishop or priest celebrant (two servers may bring the thurible and the boat). After the presider places three scoops of incense onto the coals and blesses the incense, the deacon returns the boat to a server and from them takes the thurible. The deacon presents the thurible to the presider. (CB no. 90)
- Before and after an incensation, a profound bow is made to the person or object being incensed, except for the altar and gifts of the Eucharistic celebration.
- The thurible is swung back and forth Three (3) times (center, left, and to the right--see CB no. 92 and Book of the Gospels no. 18)
 - the Blessed Sacrament [from a kneeling position],
 - a relic of the true cross
 - images of the Lord that are solemnly exposed
 - the gifts on the altar
 - the altar cross
 - the Book of the Gospels
 - the Easter candle
 - the bishop or priest celebrant
 - a civil authority in attendance at the liturgy
 - the choir and people
 - the body of a deceased person.
- The thurible is swung back and forth Twice (2) – to the left and to the right – for the incensing of relics and images of the saints exposed for public veneration.
- At the beginning of Mass, if there is a cross on or beside the altar, it is incensed before the altar is incensed. If the cross is behind the altar, it is incensed as the priest passes in front of it. (GIRM 2002 no. 277)

PART 2: THE ROLE OF THE DEACON AT MASS INTRODUCTORY RITE

Entrance Procession

- When carrying the Book of the Gospels, the deacon walks immediately before the bishop/priest. If there are concelebrating priests, he walks in front of them. When not carrying the Book of the Gospels, the deacon may walk at the right side of the priest celebrant. (GIRM 2002 nos. 171 & 210; CB no. 128)
- When the deacon reaches the altar, if he is carrying the Book of the Gospels, he omits the gesture of reverence and goes to the altar and places the book upon it. Then the deacon and the priest celebrant venerate the altar with a kiss. However, if the deacon does not carry the book, he makes a profound bow and, with both hands resting on the altar, kisses the altar with the priest. When the occasion warrants, the priest may incense the altar. The deacon may assist the server(s) with the incense. (GIRM 2002 nos. 49 & 173; CB no. 130)

Introduction:

- After greeting the assembly, the priest, the deacon, or a lay minister may very briefly introduce the faithful to the Mass of the day. (GIRM 2002 no. 50; CB no. 132)

Rite for the Blessing and Sprinkling of Water [Option]:

- On Sunday, especially in the Season of Easter, it is commendable that the rite of blessing and sprinkling holy water to recall Baptism replace the usual act of penitence. The deacon assists the bishop/priest and may also sprinkle the assembly with him. (GIRM 2002 no. 51; CB no. 133; Appendix II, Roman Missal)

Penitential Act [Option]:

- The 3rd option of the Penitential Act is the only option available to the Deacon (#6 RM). The first two options, the Confiteor, or Mercy Prayer, are reserved for the priest celebrant. The invocations can be said or sung by the deacon. See samples in Appendix VI (pages 1316-1322). 1340 The tropes are invocations of praise addressed to Christ that are brief, adaptable to the Readings of the day, and are not substitutes for intercessions. If the invocations are written, the writer should be mindful that the act of penitence focuses on the all-embracing mercy of God and is neither a listing of sins nor an examination of conscience.

THE LITURGY OF THE WORD

The Gospel

- If incense is used, the deacon assists the bishop/priest in putting incense into the thurible (see above). Then bowing before the priest he asks for a blessing. The deacon makes the sign of the cross and responds, "Amen." The deacon bows to the altar and then takes up the Book of the Gospels which was placed upon it. He reverently picks up the book and, without further reverence to the altar, he carries it slightly elevated to the ambo. The deacon may be preceded by candles and the thurible. (GIRM 2002 no. 175; CB no. 140)

- The Proclamation of the Gospel: At the ambo, with joined hands, the deacon greets the people with, "The Lord be with you." At the words, "A reading from the Holy Gospel according to . . .," he makes the sign of the cross on the book and then on his forehead, lips, and breast. The deacon may incense the book with three swings of the thurible (see above) and then proclaims the reading in a clear voice. At the conclusion of the Gospel reading the deacon does not elevate the book when saying, "The Gospel of the Lord." After the Gospel reading, the deacon kisses the book and says silently, "Through the words of the Gospel may our sins be wiped away." When the deacon is assisting the bishop, he carries the book to him to kiss. After the bishop kisses the book, the deacon may take the Book of the Gospels to the credence table or another suitable place if closer than the ambo. (GIRM 2002 no. 175; CB no. 141; see also the Book of the Gospels, Introduction, nos. 17-21)

The Prayer of the Faithful (Universal Prayer):

- After the introduction by the bishop/priest, the deacon normally announces the intentions of the Prayer of the Faithful from the ambo or another suitable place. If at the ambo, the deacon moves to the ambo after the introduction and back to their seat following the concluding prayer. (GIRM 2002 nos. 71 & 177; CB no. 144)

THE LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

Preparation of the Gifts and Altar:

- The deacon prepares the altar and assists with the reception of the gifts. Preparation should be done in conjunction with the altar servers or others charged with assisting the preparation. The deacon stands to the right of center of the altar to prepare the ciboria, Chalice and Communion Cups.
- Then the deacon hands the bread to be consecrated to the bishop/priest for the offering. (GIRM 2002 nos. 73 & 178; CB nos. 145-146; NDRHC no. 36).
- As the bread is being offered by the priest, (or before the bread is offered) the deacon prepares the chalice and other cups. After the chalice and cups are filled with wine, he pours a little water only into the main chalice (or carafe) and says inaudibly, "By the mystery of this water and wine . . ." Then he hands the main chalice to the bishop/priest. (GIRM 2002 no. 178; CB no. 147)
- As mentioned by Pope Francis, the Deacon must position himself in a way to not take the place of the principal celebrant, he should stand to the side and back, allowing ample room, and moving as necessary to not hinder or hamper the celebration of the Mass.
- If the gifts and altar are to be incensed, the deacon holds the thurible while incense is placed in the thurible. The deacon hands the thurible to the bishop/priest and at the discretion of the celebrant, may accompany him as he incenses. The bishop/priest gives the thurible to the deacon and he incenses the bishop/priest, the other ministers, and the people. (GIRM 2002 nos. 75, 144 & 178; CB no. 149; see also the Order of Mass, no. 27)

The Eucharistic Prayer

- The deacon stands near, but slightly behind the priest in order to assist with the book and/or the chalice. (GIRM 2011 no. 179; CB no. 153) If a Deacon is physically unable to kneel, they should remain standing. If either of two deacons assisting Mass cannot kneel, neither should kneel.
- At the final doxology of the Eucharistic Prayer, the deacon stands to the right of the bishop/priest celebrant and is either given or takes and holds up the chalice until the people have sung the acclamation, "Amen." The final doxology is sung or said alone by the bishop/priest celebrant or with the concelebrating priests, the deacon does not proclaim the doxology. (GIRM 2002 no. 180; CB no. 158)
- The Sign of Peace. With hands joined, the deacon invites the assembly to offer the sign of peace by saying, "Let us offer to each other the sign of peace." (GIRM 2002 nos. 181 & 239; CB no. 161; see also rubric in The Order of Mass, no. 128)

The Communion Rite

- Lamb of God: During the fraction rite, while the litany is being sung, the deacon may assist the bishop/priest in distributing the consecrated bread into additional ciboria or patens. (GIRM 2002 no. 240; NDRHC no. 37)
- The deacon receives Communion under both forms from the principal celebrant after the celebrant and all concelebrants have received. Neither the deacons nor the lay ministers may ever receive Communion in the manner of a concelebrating priest – they always have Communion ministered to them. (GIRM 2002 nos. 182, 244 & 246; NDRHC no. 39)
- After the priest's and deacon's reception of Communion, the deacon may assist the priest with giving Communion to the Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion and then assisting with the distribution of the vessels containing the Body and Blood of the Lord to these ministers. (NDRHC nos. 38 & 40). When the Eucharist is distributed under both forms, "the deacon ministers the chalice."
- If Communion is only offered under the sacred species of Bread and the deacon is ministering, the words for giving Communion are simple, straightforward and need no elaboration. When giving the Eucharistic bread, the deacon raises the host, shows it to the communicant and says, "The Body of Christ." The deacon does not bless the communicant with the consecrated bread before giving it to them. (GIRM 2002 no. 161; NDRHC no. 41; see also the Order of Mass, no. 134)
- When ministering the cup, the deacon offers the chalice to the communicant and says, "The Blood of Christ." Upon receiving the chalice back, the deacon wipes the rim with the purificator, turns the chalice a quarter turn and offers it to the next person in line. (GIRM 2002 no. 286; NDRHC no. 43) When all have received Communion, the deacon assists with collecting any remaining fragments and the consumption of any remaining Precious Blood. The purification of the vessels may take place at a side table or immediately after the Mass. After being purified, the vessels should be washed with warm water and dish soap. NOTE: The remaining Precious Blood is to be consumed and never to be poured in the ground or the sacrarium. (GIRM 2002 nos. 163, 183, 247 & 279; NDRHC nos. 51-55; CB nos. 164-165)

THE CONCLUDING RITE

Announcements, Blessing and Dismissal

- Following the Prayer after Communion the priest or deacon may make brief announcements to the people if they are necessary. (GIRM 2002 nos. 90a. & 184)
- If a prayer over the people or a solemn formula for the blessing is used, the deacon says, “Bow down for the blessing.” (GIRM 2002 no. 185; CB no. 169; see also rubric in the Order of Mass – Solemn Blessings)
- After the bishop’s/priest’s blessing, the deacon, with hands joined, dismisses the assembly saying, “Go forth the Mass has ended” or one of the other formulas. (GIRM 2002 nos. 90c. & 185; CB no. 170; see also rubric in the Order of Mass, no. 144)
- Along with the priest, the deacon, with both his hands resting on the altar, venerates the altar with a kiss, makes the proper gesture of reverence, and departs in a manner similar to the procession in at the beginning of the Mass. Concelebrating priests do not venerate the altar. The Book of the Gospels is not carried in procession at the end of Mass. (GIRM 2002 nos. 186 & 251; Book of the Gospels, Introduction, no. 22)

This information has been compiled from the following sources: the revised General Instruction of the Roman Missal (GIRM 2002), the Ceremonial of Bishops (CB), and the Norms for the Distribution and Reception of Holy Communion Under Both Kinds in the Dioceses of the United States of America (NDRHC). This information is offered to assist priests and deacons to better understand the particular liturgical roles and functions of the deacon at Mass for clarity and uniformity Office of Worship Revised: November 2013

Mass with two or three Deacons

There are times when a Parish or Diocese Celebration may have two or three Deacons assisting at the Mass. The only time it would be common for three deacons to be vested for a Mass is when the Bishop is the Presiding Celebrant and two Deacons act as Chaplains and another Deacon is the Deacon of the Gospel.

- When two Deacons assist at a Mass the duties are split between the Liturgy of the Word and the Liturgy of the Eucharist.
- The Deacons are expected to clarify and agree on their individual roles prior to the specific celebration.
- The Deacon of the Word will process with the Gospel Book, offer the Penitential Rite (if appropriate), Proclaim the Gospel and offer the Intercessions.
- The Deacon of the Eucharist will prepare the altar and assist at the Presiders' side, offer the sign of Peace and Dismissal.
- The sound system in the church may require one deacon to be assigned all speaking parts. The speaking roles should be split between the two functions if the sound for both deacons is the same, either with a microphone or without a microphone. The secondary Deacon is expected to provide help with the accepting the gifts or other functions as expected to assist with the flow of the Liturgy.

During a Diaconate Event or Diocesan Celebration Deacons, A Deacon, vested in Alb and Stole, may assist with the Distribution of Holy Communion.

Mass with a Bishop as principal celebrant (some reminders):

- The Deacon should check with the MC for special instructions or processes related to the Mass and customs of the parish. It is common that the MC has a detailed Liturgical Planning guide submitted previously by the parish.
- In the Entrance Procession, if the Deacon is not carrying the Book of Gospels, he should walk immediately behind the Bishop, flanking his right shoulder, not at his side. (CB 80 The Bishop always walks alone)
- It is common that the Deacon may expect to offer the Penitential Act, 3rd option appropriate to the Deacon following the guidelines of the formula.
- After the Gospel, the Deacon does not kiss the Book of the Gospels but brings the open book to the Bishop to kiss. The Bishop may simply kiss the book or take it from the Deacon to bless the people, then return it to the deacon to be placed in a suitable place.
- The MC and other servers may assist the Deacon with preparation of the altar.
- If there is no MC, the zucchetto should be placed on the Presidential Chair when the Bishop removes it and places on the altar following the prayer over the gifts.

ADMINISTRATIVE ISSUES

Safe Environment Programs

All deacons granted faculties of the Diocese of St. Petersburg must be screened in accordance with current Diocesan policy related to background checks and the Safe Environment Program [SEP] training. The Director of Deacon Personnel is responsible to enforce this requirement.

- All deacons of the Diocese of St. Petersburg and all deacons assigned by the Diocese are fingerprinted. All such records are maintained by the Director of Deacon Personnel Office in the individual deacon's files. The Department of Human Resources is to assist the Director of Deacon Personnel Office in this.
- The parish office will also be expected to maintain the proper documents prescribed by the Diocesan Human Resources or the Office of the Diaconate.
- The Director of Deacon Personnel Office is responsible for coordinating requests for screening and assures that all deacons have been screened.
- Deacons are required to complete background screening (through fingerprinting) in the same manner as diocesan employees and are subject to re-screening every five years.
- The Director of Deacon Personnel Office requests screening or seeks assistance from the Safe Environment Office who manages the records for the Diocese of St. Petersburg.
- Deacons are required to complete training as it relates to the care, safeguards, and sensitivity of working with children and with vulnerable adults. Currently the diocese requires "Safe Environment Program" training for clergy and staff members for both children and vulnerable adults.
- The Diaconate Office will maintain records of screening results in the respective deacon's files. Documentation records of the screen are held by the Safe Environment office with appropriate access to the Diaconate Office.

- Parishes and other entities, utilizing the services of Deacons, are responsible for verifying that the Diaconate Office has screened those deacons and that the appropriate records are on file. Requests for verification may be made to the Diaconate Office or the Safe Environment Office. The Diaconate Office will respond to those requests with written verification when appropriate screening has been conducted and that no criminal record was found. The Parish or Agency of assignment will be responsible for any fees related to initial or updated background screening or Safe Environment Program training or recertification. The Office of the Diaconate will assume the fees of Deacons requesting full or seasonal faculties within the Diocese.
- All deacons are expected to meet the minimal standards as set forth by the Diocese regarding background screening. In the event faculties are denied because of information obtained during a background check, an appeal process through the Tribunal is available. For deacons from outside the Diocese, the request for an appeal must be made through the Office of the Director or Deacon Personnel.

Deacon Reassignment

Diaconal ministry is to be conceived and established as a response to the needs of the local church. These needs will vary from place to place, from time to time, and from culture to culture. (Deacons in the U.S. #49, NCCB). After serving at one parish or agency, a deacon may sense a call to relocate or change assignments, allowing him to grow in ministry through new assignments or new relationships. The desire to change assignments for reasons other than health, residence, or employment issues, is often a way the Holy Spirit works within us. With the desire to change, also comes a responsibility to the community and pastor in which he serves. Therefore, in keeping with the philosophy of allowing for change in the diaconal ministry assignment, the following procedures have been adopted as a reassignment policy for Deacons with faculties within the diocese of St. Petersburg.

- A deacon with faculties in the diocese has faculties at any church or agency within the Diocese, (requires permission for a marriage out of his local church) however, a deacon receives his specific assignment from the Bishop with the consultation of the Office of the Diaconate. Except for immediate need of reassignment, a reassignment of a deacon will be coordinated to take place at a time amenable to the deacon and affected parishes.

- In the event a deacon would like a reassignment due to a change of residence, change of employment, the end of his ministry agreement, or an opportunity to better utilize his skills and talents, the Deacon may request the reassignment in writing to the Office of the Diaconate or Bishop. Such reassignments will be targeted for the 1st of July. The Deacon is to provide a copy of this request to the Office of the Diaconate and to his current Pastor/Supervisor.

- The Office will work to accommodate this request. Any reassignment will ensure that the deacon and family will reside within a reasonable proximity and travel time to the new assignment and in consultation with the pastor/administrator of the new parish/institution of assignment, the deacon, and, if applicable, the deacon's spouse.

- Once a new assignment is approved the Office of the Diaconate will coordinate the completion of a new ministry agreement. Assignment changes will be announced in the diocesan bulletin and an official letter of assignment will be issued by the Office of the Bishop.

Leave of Absence

There are two types of leaves presently granted, a *Temporary* leave for a designated period and an *Administrative* leave, an unlimited period of time, with return to ministry dependent on deacon's request, his suitability for ministry and the availability of assignment.

Temporary

- A leave of absence may be granted to a deacon when formally requested in writing to the Director of Deacon Personnel. After a personal meeting with the Director, a leave may be granted for reasons of health, study, personal problems, family commitments, change of occupation or parish situation, or temporary dislocation from the diocese, with approval of the Director, issued by the Ordinary.
- Such leave will be granted for a period agreed upon by the Director of Deacon Personnel. The situation will be reviewed upon termination of set period and may be extended if both parties deem this necessary and suitable. A deacon may request return to active ministry before the expiration date agreed upon.
- A deacon on temporary leave is considered to be in good standing in the diocese. He is encouraged to participate in all activities of the diaconal community (social, spiritual, educational). However, faculties cease during this leave and the deacon may not function in any ministerial capacity.

Administrative

- A deacon who is placed on administrative leave is relieved of all responsibility and faculties for any ecclesiastical office or function, as well as participation in active ministry. He may not function or represent himself as a deacon while on administrative leave.

In the event an Administrative leave is put into effect due to an accusation of malfeasance the deacon will be subject to the same treatment, care, and consideration as set forth in the guidelines for clergy. A person is presumed innocent until proven otherwise, but due to the nature of such an accusation the deacon will be removed from service to allow for an in depth and proper investigation of the circumstances of the accusation.

Retirement

Normal retirement age for a deacon is 75 years of age however, if health or other circumstances require, a Deacon may request retirement at an earlier age. A retired deacon, with faculties, serves at the invitation and approval of the pastor. The requirement for faculties is coordinated through the Office of the Diaconate

- As the deacon approaches his 75th birthday, his last regular Ministry Agreement will contain a termination date, which coincides closely with his 75th birthday.
- Twice annually, (January & June) the Diaconate Office will notify those who have reached their 75th birthday within the prior six months of their change of status. Upon receiving this notice, the deacon should consult with his pastor/supervisor to define a subsequent ministerial role and service times consistent with the deacon's capabilities, his wishes for continued service, and the ministerial needs of the parish/or agency.
- A deacon in retired status is not required to maintain a ministry agreement, nor is the deacon required to meet ongoing formation requirements. The deacon is expected to participate in the annual Diaconate retreat sponsored by the Diocese and will be expected to keep current requirements for background and safe environment training.
- It is the expectation that that parish/agency where the retired deacon is active will pay for the annual retreat. If a retired deacon is not regularly active at a parish or agency arrangements for the cost of the retreat will be coordinated with the Office of the Diaconate.
- For health reasons a deacon may request, or at the discretion of the Bishop, to retire before his 75th birthday. The status of the deacon (inactive or retired) will be determined on a case-by-case basis.
- The retired deacon will continue to enjoy the benefits of continuing formation, retreats, liturgical, and social activities offered to all active deacons of the Diocese.
- Annually, or as necessary, the Director of Deacon Personnel will communicate with the local pastor to update the active retired deacon's effectiveness in ministry.

A retired deacon maintains his faculties within the diocese unless otherwise indicated by the Director of Deacon Personnel in consultation with the Ordinary.

Extern Deacons - (Deacons incardinated outside the diocese)

Through ordination to the diaconate, one is incardinated into a particular church (i.e., an arch/diocese). Deacons moving into another diocese retain their incardination in their diocese of ordination.

- The Diocese of St. Petersburg does not have an obligation to provide opportunities for diaconal ministry to deacons moving into the Diocese from other dioceses. Neither does the Diocese have an obligation to provide secular employment. The Diocese will try to give opportunities for diaconal ministry where pastoral needs exist and the abilities of the deacon match those needs.
- Prior to applying for faculties, the Office of the Diaconate will avail itself to meet with the deacon (and his wife) upon their permanent arrival to the Diocese to discuss potential assignments near their place of residence. We will also connect them with a deacon ministering in the area to help them become accustomed to the processes of the Diaconate Office. Additionally, the deacon may also want to become involved in a parish or local Catholic ministry (without faculties).
- It is the general policy of the Diocese to accept the application from an extern Deacon only after they have established permanent or seasonal residency for at least six months. Because Diaconate Formation programs vary dramatically across the United States, this practice allows the deacon and his family to become better acquainted and acclimated to the customs of the local church, the diocese, and local community.
- When an extern deacon decides to apply for faculties (either permanent or seasonal) he must notify the Office to obtain an application. The Deacon must complete an application before the faculties are granted or before a parish assignment is established.
- During the application process the Diaconate office requests the following documents.
 - A letter from the Deacon's Ordinary giving him permission to reside in the Diocese and attesting to his suitability to exercise diaconal ministry.
 - His Certificate of Ordination; and whenever possible, the academic transcripts of his formation process.
 - An inquiry from the Office of the Diaconate of his last Diocese of faculties, evaluating his strong or weak points and character.
 - A confidential inquiry from the Pastor(s) or head(s) of the ministry which the deacon has been assigned in the past five years.

- Although the Diaconate Office requests this information directly, it is the responsibility of the deacon requesting faculties to ensure these documents are completed and sent to the Diaconate Office on a timely basis. Faculties will not be granted without them.
- During the inquiry process the deacon seeking faculties will be required to meet with the Director of Deacon Personnel or other assigned representative to review the Diaconate Guidelines, Liturgical requirements, and other important aspects of Diaconal Ministry in the Diocese
- Before faculties are granted the deacon must complete the required background screening and the Safe Environment Program (SEP) of the Diocese of St. Petersburg.
- The Diaconate office will review these documents and letters; and if a decision is reached to grant faculties, then the availability of the deacon for ministry will be made available through direct contact to a parish based on where the deacon resides and the need and/or request of a parish pastor or agency.
- When a suitable location for ministry has been identified, the Office of the Diaconate will recommend to the Bishop's Office that faculties be granted for one year. Once the assignment is announced the Office of the Diaconate will ensure that a Ministry Agreement between the Pastor/Supervisor and deacon is completed within 30 days.
- The Diaconate Guidelines for the deacons of the Diocese of St. Petersburg apply to extern deacons living in the diocese with faculties for the Diocese. A newly assigned Extern Deacon will be provided with a Deacon Mentor to help him adjust to the nuances of Diaconate Ministry in the Diocese.
- Deacons enjoying the Faculties of this Diocese are expected to be active in the life of the diaconate community. They are expected to attend local and diocesan diaconate meetings, continuing formation workshops, and an annual retreat. Wives are also invited and encouraged to attend.

Seasonal Faculties

Periodically an Extern Deacon requests "Seasonal Faculties" during a period of time he resides in the Diocese. Normally temporary or 'Seasonal' faculties will be granted for time frames from three to six months. The above policies apply to Seasonal Faculties with two additional conditions.

- The current pastor of the Seasonal Parish is expected to request, in writing, their desire to have the seasonal Deacon assigned to the parish and the anticipated ministries they will serve.

- After Seasonal Faculties are granted, a Deacon returning for Seasonal Residence will be required to provide a recent (30 days) Letter of Suitability for Ministry (Good Standing) from his current Diocese.
- If a deacon has not initiated his Seasonal Faculties for two consecutive years, he must reapply using the above guidelines. Clearance for Deacons to perform Ministry – Letter of Good Standing.

Clearance for Deacons to Perform Ministry

At times Deacons are asked to participate outside their Diocese of Faculties for Sacramental Celebrations, Retreats, Days or Reflection or other Ministerial or Liturgical events. A Letter of Good Standing is required to act as a Deacon within the Diocese of St. Petersburg.

- All deacons coming to the diocese to perform any ministry such as baptism, wedding, funerals, or parish mission, must be in good standing and cleared by their ordinaries or provincial before coming to the diocese. Such permission is granted for a particular day or event.
- A letter of Good Standing from the Deacon's current Diocese must be provided to the Chancellor's Office at least 10 days before the event (excluding funerals).
- Any deacon with faculties in our diocese may request a letter of Good Standing through the Office of the Diaconate or Chancellor, whenever possible, at least two weeks before the necessary event.
- Such letters, issued at the request of the Office of the Diaconate, through the office of the Chancellor, will be US Mailed, Emailed, or provided sealed for personal delivery to the local church or agency seeking the letter.
- The deacon must be in Good Standing in the Diocese of St Petersburg before such a letter is issued.

Extern Deacons seeking retired or limited faculties

Due to the nature of our location, there are times when a Deacon from outside the diocese retires here or spends extended time in the area and has a desire to exercise diaconal ministry by offering assistance to the local parish. Extern Deacons, age 73 or older, who are seeking faculties may obtain them to serve at a particular parish at the specific invitation and consent of the current pastor. Before faculties are granted for active retired faculties.

- The Pastor of that local church must request, in writing, their desire for the deacon to obtain retired faculties. They may seek limited (liturgical) or full faculties.
- The deacon must provide an application for ministry, a picture, and a current letter of Good Standing from his current diocese.
- He must successfully pass the Level II screening and participate in SEP training for Clergy.
- Annually, the Office of the Diaconate will request an update on the status of the deacon from the pastor.
- The Deacon will receive regular communication from the office including “Diakonia,” invitations to the Annual Retreat, Mass of Recommitment, and other events however these is no expectation or requirement for them to participate in the events. Payment for such events is at the expense of the individual from the parish they serve.

Role of the wives of Deacons

The Diaconate is the first modern day experience of married Roman Catholic clergy. The husband who takes upon the lifestyle and commitment of a deacon also involves his wife and family.

- During the formation process and after ordination the wife will oftentimes be required to share her husband's gifts and talents with the larger parish community. This, at times, is not always easy and demands sacrifice, understanding, and generosity on the part of the wife.
- The Diaconate Office is responsible for a ministry of pastoral concern and compassion to the wives of deacons as well as the widows of deceased deacons. This ministry is not intended to overshadow the ministry of the local parish, but to recognize the unique status of the deacon's wife (or widow).
- To help support and affirm the wives and widows of deacons, the Diaconate Office extends an invitation to wives and widows to participate in functions planned for deacons, except in the case of those activities designated only for the deacon. Such activities include continuing education seminars, retreats, and days of recollection, deanery meetings, and any other function communicated by the Office. Occasional social functions for Deacons, spouses, and their families should be held to strengthen the bond among the wives and family members of deacons.
- Wives of active deacons are encouraged to be available as resources for the wives of candidates in formation. By establishing this bridge, wives help to make the transition easier for those wives whose husbands are in formation.
- The community of deacons' wives may establish ministries outside their individual parish. The wives may find a special role in reaching out to the widows of deacons and to deacons who have been widowed. In addition, ministries may include those that serve single parents or children in need, where the experience of diaconate formation and service along with family life provide a sound resource for ministry.

Compensation for Permanent Deacons

A Deacon is a member of the clergy of the Diocese. The role or title “Deacon” is not a paid position in a parish or agency.

Assigned, Non-Employed Deacons

Permanent Deacons who are not employed by the Diocese of St. Petersburg or a Parish or other Catholic institution of the Diocese but have been canonically assigned to a diocesan ministry or to parish ministry, serve voluntarily without monetary compensation for services rendered.

Annual allowance and reimbursement for spiritual and professional advancement

All allowances and reimbursable expenses for active and retired permanent deacons are to be paid by the institution to which the deacon is canonically assigned or serving in retirement. Permanent deacons do not receive housing or transportation allowance or other “priest-clergy” benefits.

Retreats	actual cost to \$600
Formation Opportunities provided by the Diocese	actual cost to \$300
Books, Periodicals, internet	actual cost to \$500

Parish Liturgical Responsibilities

Pastors must provide the deacons assigned to their parish with proper liturgical vesture (dalmatic, deacon stole, alb) in accord with the liturgical norms. Unless otherwise agreed, this vesture is the property of the parish. Pastors should also make available to the deacons those liturgical books or materials necessary for their ministry.

Offerings of the Faithful “stole fees”

Deacons may receive an offering, directly or through the parish, for celebrating a baptism, witnessing a marriage, or presiding at the vigil service, funeral, or internment of the faithful departed in accord with the practice of the parish to which they are assigned.

Deacons employed by a Diocesan Church or Agency

Compensation for a deacon employed by a church or agency will vary depending on job description and responsibility. The employed deacon should be paid a comparable salary to any lay person holding the same responsibilities. Employed permanent Deacons do not receive housing or transportation allowance or other “priest-clergy” benefits. Refer to the Employment Handbook and the Summary of Lay Employee Compensation and Benefits Plan of the Diocese

Benefits & Pension

Permanent deacons employed 20 hours per week or more should refer to the aforementioned handbooks (5 above) for specific Plan Benefits and Pension guidelines.

Deacon Marital Concerns

Commonly, 95% of Deacons also share in the joys of the Vocation of Marriage. Sadly, there are rare times that the challenges and struggles of life or a relationship weaken or test the vocation of marriage. Such times create a period of uncertainty and strain on both the deacon's role as husband and as a representative of the Church.

- When a deacon or spouse begins to sense that their marriage is experiencing difficulty, or when tensions and problems become such that routine responsibilities to family, occupation, and ministry are affected, the following procedures are to be followed:
 - The deacon has the responsibility to notify the Director of Deacon Personnel to discuss the matter.
 - The spouse of the deacon, who recognizes that a serious problem exists, should exercise her right to bring the matter to the attention of the Director as well.
 - The pastor or supervisor where the deacon is assigned should notify the Director when they become aware of a marriage problem. In light of the above, the Director will initiate discussions with the individual deacon.
 - Following a meeting with the Director, a determination will be made whether the deacon should continue in active ministry. Counseling will be made available.
 - After approximately 60 days, further determination will be made regarding the situation.
 - If the situation cannot be resolved, the Director of Deacon Personnel will recommend to the Bishop a course of action that will allow the couple to focus exclusively on the resolution of this problem. This may result in a leave of absence, curtailment of major ministerial activities, or inactive status.

Should the situation deteriorate to the point of scandal or embarrassment or the responsibility on the part of the deacon for the marital difficulties is judged severely grave because of abuse, infidelity, criminality, pathology, etc. the Director will recommend appropriate action to the Ordinary.

Separation

When a separation occurs, the following procedures will be followed:

- The deacon must notify the Director of Deacon Personnel. The spouse has the right and is encouraged to bring this situation to the attention of the Director or Assistant.
- The Director, pastor, or supervisor will make sure that each is informed.
- The Director will initiate a meeting with the deacon; a determination will then be made to what extent he should continue in active ministry.
- After approximately sixty days, a further determination will be made regarding the status of the situation.
- The deacon is reminded that Divine Law requires behavior appropriate to his marital vows and his promises of Diaconate ordination.

If the deacon is adjudged as responsible for severely grave marital problems such as abuse, infidelity, criminality, pathology, etc., the Director will recommend to the Bishop one of the following courses of action: 1) curtailment of pastoral duties – 2) leave of absence – 3) inactive status 4) suspension or laicization

Divorce

When a divorce occurs, the following protocol must be followed:

- The deacon contacts the Director of Deacon Personnel. The spouse has the right and is encouraged to notify the Director as well.
- The Director, pastor, team, or supervisor will make certain that all responsible parties are informed.
- Resources for counseling will be made available to the deacon, spouse, and/or children.
- Ordinarily, a six-month leave of absence will be required.
- Should the deacon, after consultation with the Director, return to ministry it is anticipated that the reassignment will be to a different parish or institution of the Diocese.

- In the event the deacon is adjudged as responsible for severely grave marital difficulties such as abuse, infidelity, pathology, criminality, etc., and/or if scandal has been caused, the Director will recommend to the Bishop inactive status or laicization.
- The deacon must fulfill all financial and paternal responsibilities as required by the civil law court and must live a life in accordance with his sacramental vows to marriage and promises of Diaconate ordination.

Diaconate Benevolent Fund

There are times when the diaconate community must reach out and help its own. Being that most of the Diaconate Community are supported by secular jobs there are times when unemployment, serious illness or injury, or other family tragedy causes personal hardship for a deacon or his family. As brother clergy, as good Catholics, when possible, we will come to the aid of our fellow deacons. The Diaconate Benevolent Fund was created for such outreach. In the event a deacon or his family is struck by an undue financial burden limited funds are available to help that deacon through these tough times.

Process

- The Office of the Diaconate has established a Benevolent Fund committee, whose members will include the Director of Deacon Personnel, the Vicar General, the Director of Diaconal Formation, a member of the Finance Office and at least one other deacon outside the daily administration of the Office.
- The committee will meet on an as needed basis and their sole responsibility is to review and approve any requests for funds from the Benevolent Fund.
- Any requests for funds will be made directly to the office of the Diaconate (confidentially to the Director if desired) in written form. All requests will be held in strictest confidence. A deacon may request funds personally or, on his behalf, a fellow deacon may submit another deacon for consideration of receiving funds. Such a request needs to provide some detail as to the need as well as the circumstances leading up to the need. Funding is made available to assist with medical or shelter needs.
- All awards will be confidential, helpful, and appropriate. Generally, they will be limited in range of up to \$3000 annually per request, with deviation fully at the discretion of the Benevolent Fund Committee.

Funds:

A unique bank account is held and managed through the Diocesan Finance Department with oversight by the Office of the Diaconate. Funds deposited or withdrawn are solely for use of the Benevolent Fund.

- Funding is available through three main sources.
 - Memorial Mass Cards.
Memorial cards are available through the Office of the Diaconate. All donations made on behalf of a deceased person through the Memorial Card will support the fund. Each year, at the Annual Mass of Recommitment held during Lent, the names will be included as intentions for the Mass.

- An Annual Diaconate Donation
Once each year (currently the Winter Gathering) we will ask the members of the Community to support the fund with a direct deposit as well as a gift from their local parish.
 - Directed gifts or offerings
Any direct gifts (from within or outside the Diaconate Community) or bequests intended to assist deacons in need will be deposited into the funds.
-
- The Vicar General and the Director of Deacon Personnel have full authority over the practices, policies, issues, awards, or decisions related to the Diaconate Benevolent Fund.

Funeral Policy

The death of any family member is a time of sorrow and emptiness, but it can also be a time of confusion, and uncertainty when the family is dealing with the death of a deacon, who, by ordination, has a specific association to the Diocesan Church and Ordinary he serves. When a deacon or the wife of a deacon dies, the Office of the Diaconate will take an active role in assisting with or coordinating the arrangements. This applies for deacons ordained for the Diocese, retired from active ministry, or an extern deacon with faculties here, and who will be buried here.

- The Pastor or immediate family should notify the Office of the Diaconate as soon as possible at the death of a deacon. Funeral rites should take place in his parish church or in the one to which he was assigned as a deacon. Funeral arrangements should not be made for an incardinated deacon until the Bishop's Office has been contacted by the Diaconate Office to coordinate the Bishop's availability.
- The Office of the Diaconate will notify the Chancellor's office, who will in turn notify the Pastoral Center. The Office of the Diaconate will notify the diaconate community of the details of the death and service information. Specific notification is made to the Deanery Representative, who may coordinate specific representation and arrangements with their particular area.
- It is presumed and customary that the surviving family will pay for, and make the funeral arrangements, and their wishes will be honored. As necessary, the Office of the Diaconate and Office of Worship, in conjunction with the parish, will assist the family to coordinate the vigil and funeral rites. The Worship Office can assist with developing worship aides and liturgical outlines for the Reception of the Body at the church, Evening Prayer, Funeral Mass, and Burial.
- Families should provide for the traditional Catholic burial rite consisting of Office of the Dead Evening Prayer, a Funeral Mass, and an appropriate committal at the graveside. It is proper that a deceased deacon be vested for burial in alb, white stole, and white dalmatic. A deacon should be buried in the family plot. It is also proper that the church of assignment be used for the viewing of the body and funeral Mass.
- The Bishop of the Diocese is the usual celebrant of the Mass. In his absence, he will delegate another priest to celebrate the Mass. It is expected that there will be a Deacon of the Word and a Deacon of the Eucharist assisting at the Mass. The participating deacons will be determined by the family's choice, other deacons in the parish, classmates, or members of the Diaconate Staff.

- The Pastor, Parish Deacon, of the Office of the Diaconate would normally be the Presider of the Office of the Dead Evening Prayer. The graveside committal is commonly presided over by the pastor, or other appropriate clergy as delegated by him. Members of the diaconate community are encouraged to vest for Mass for a deceased deacon.
- In the event of the death of a deacon's wife, the office will make the same notifications to the Chancellor's Office and to members of the Diaconate community. The Office will assist, as requested by the deacon, in the planning and preparation for Liturgy.
- Periodically the Diaconate Office will request that a deacon update the information pertaining to the deacon's funeral desire. If a deacon has knowingly changed his information, they can submit a revised form to the diaconate office at any time. Forms are available through the Office or on the Diaconate Website.

STRUCTURE OF THE DIACONATE COMMUNITY

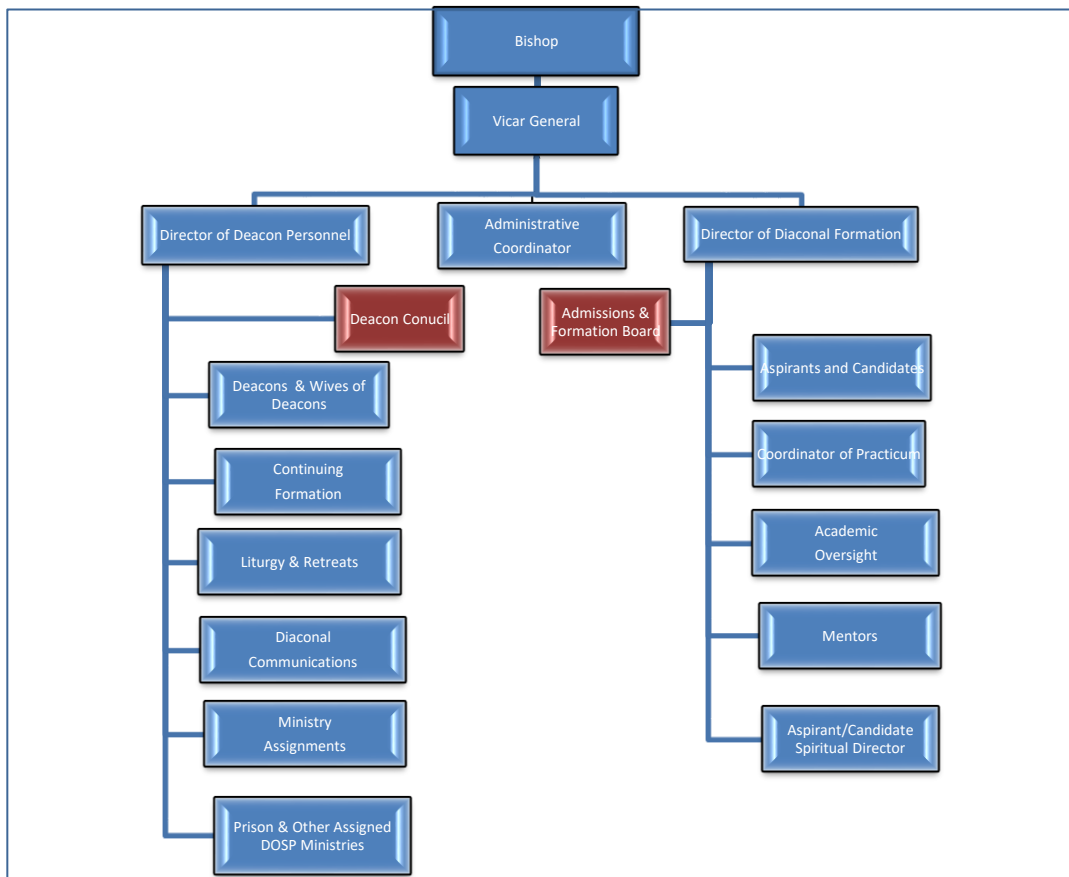
Diaconate Community

The Office of the Diaconate is committed to serving the diverse needs of the local diaconate community. The primary purpose is to provide for the support and supervision of the Deacon's ministerial life in the local church, as well as the formation of permanent deacons.

The office offers guidance to deacons in their ministry, provides assistance for their continuing formation and spiritual growth, supports individual deacons and their families, and encourages and promotes the diaconate community.

The office provides an approval process for deacons moving into the diocese who apply for faculties and a parish assignment.

The office plans and supervises the diaconate formation program, identifies, and screens applicants, evaluates their individual formation, assists in developing a foundation for their individual ministries, accepts candidates, and then presents them to the Bishop for ordination.



Director of Deacon Personnel

The Director of Deacon Personnel is a member of clergy, empowered by the Bishop, and is responsible to the Bishop or his delegate, to act in all matters pertaining to the Diaconate Community. He is the direct link between the Bishop, Vicar General, Pastoral Center, and the Deacon. His objective is to be the voice of the Bishop with direct matters of personal, spiritual, or concerns of the Diaconate Community. The main functions of the Director of Deacon Personnel are:

- To develop first-hand knowledge of the deacon group, their needs, interests, abilities, and limitations, as well as the personnel, needs, changes, and overall direction of the church in the diocese.
- To promote fraternity, spirituality, and common concern between deacons and their families and between deacons and priests of the Diocese.
- To be particularly sensitive to the need and desires of the wives and families of the deacons, lest the deacon's ministry interfere with his primary responsibility to his wife and family, and job/employer.
- To make provisions for the Post Ordination and Continuing Formation for all Deacons and to provide for the planning and implementation of the annual retreat for the deacons and their wives.
- To interview and direct the process for Deacons requesting Faculties within the Diocese.
- To supervise the placement and assignment of the deacons and assist them and the pastors in effecting transfers or changes within their assignment and to evaluate deacon/parish agreements and maintain a regular schedule for the updating of agreements.
- Reviews and evaluates diaconal faculties or assignments and requests for deacons and assists deacons seeking leaves of absence, transfer of assignment, or laicization and coordinates any changes through the Office of the Chancellor.
- To coordinate and oversee the pastoral care of deacons and their families, especially those living and ministering outside the Diocese as well as those inactive, ill, on leave or widowed within the Community.
- To investigate and resolve matters of conflict when the conflict involves a deacon. To work with the Bishop, Vicar General, or Chancellor (as necessary) when the conflict combines both deacons and priests.
- To oversee all administrative records for formation, faculties, personal matters, and budgetary issues of the Office of the Diaconate.
- To actively participate in Boards or Committees established for the Diaconate and for Diaconal Formation.

Director of Diaconal Formation

The Director of Diaconal Formation is a member of clergy, appointed by the Bishop, and is responsible to the Bishop or his delegate. The Director of Diaconal Formation oversees the implementation of the formation program. He conducts regular assessments of the aspirants/candidates, supervises the formation team or process, faculty, and mentors, and maintains contact with the pastor's and/or supervisors of the aspirants/candidates. The main functions of the Director of Diaconal Formation are to:

- Obtain and process information about the progress of the candidates, make recommendations to the Bishop and lead the meetings of the Admissions and Formation Board.
- Directly select and supervise the formation team and faculty on matters related to those roles.
- Directly supervise all aspects for the mentors including the selection of mentors, and the procedures and reporting process for mentors and for the aspirants/candidates as related to the mentor phase of formation.
- Coordinate the approval and assignment of Spiritual Directors.
- Directly oversee all aspects of the implementation and schedule of the formation program and conduct and coordinate the regular assessments of the candidates and formation faculty.
- To coordinate and oversee the screening of potential candidates for admission into the Diaconate Formation Program
- Collaborate with the Bishop on the execution of the program, on assessing the progress of the candidates, and on dealing with any family issues that arise during the program.
- Coordinate and communicate as necessary on Diaconate matters with the Director of Deacon Personnel.

Deacon Council

The Deacon Council assists the Director of Deacon Personnel by offering recommendations, review, and input for the ongoing support, policies, and reviews of the Diaconate Community.

More specifically

- a) To study, evaluate, and recommend policies and procedures proper to the ministry of the Diaconate.
- b) To maintain contact with the deacons within their assigned region, cluster, or areas.
- c) To develop processes, committees, or task force for ongoing Diaconal support for the good of the Diaconate Community.
- d) To provide input and direction related to working issues or changes within the diaconate.
- e) To act as a vehicle for review and discussion related to diaconate activity via the deanery representatives.
- f) To address and advise on specific issues at the discretion of the Director.

Membership

- Permanent Members include the Director of Deacon Personnel and Administrative Coordinator
- Ex-officio members include the Bishop and Vicar General, Director of Diaconal Formation and Assistant Director of the Diaconate and Diaconal Formation.
- Members include from six to eight deacons, appointed by the Bishop for a three-year period, renewable at least once. Members include at least one representative from each of the Diaconate clusters or deaneries, and one or two Deacon wives.

Meetings

The Deacon Council will meet four times each year, with at least one meeting being face to face. Committees or task force groups may submit written reports to the Council at least one week in advance. These reports and an agenda will be issued prior to the meeting.

Admissions and Formation Board

The Admissions and Formation Board is responsible to the Ordinary to advise on the selection of candidates to Holy Orders as Permanent Deacons for the Diocese of St. Petersburg and for the ongoing evaluation and development of the education and formation program in preparation for ordination.

Generally, the role of the Admissions & Formation Board is to:

- a) Interview the prospective aspirants (and their wives) for admission into the Diaconate Formation Program.
- b) Review and recommend applicants for admission to the diaconate formation program, to make nominations for the Rite of Admission to Candidacy, to installation into the ministries of lector and acolyte, and for ordination to the diaconate. (cf. National Directory for the Formation, Ministry, and Life of Permanent Deacons in the United States, #284)
- c) Study the policies and concern proper to the formation program as related to academic, spiritual, and pastoral ministry formation.
- d) Monitor the spiritual and intellectual formation of diaconal aspirants and candidates.

Membership

- Permanent members include the Director of Diaconal Formation, Assistant Director of Diaconal Formation, Diocesan Director of Vocations, and Administrative Coordinator of the Diaconate.
- Ex officio members include Bishop and Vicar General, Director of Diaconate Personnel.
- Appointed members include four to six members of the Diaconate Community of the Diocese of St. Petersburg. Appointments, made by the Bishop, with terms of four years, staggering every two years.
- Auxiliary Members include Psychological consultants and Mentor Couples engaged during discernment processes.

Meetings

The permanent and appointed members of the Admissions & Formation Board will meet quarterly January, April, August, and October and as necessary to evaluate and form guidelines, goals, and planning for the recruitment, education, and formation of permanent deacons for the Diocese of St. Petersburg. Meetings will typically involve evaluation and making specific recommendations regarding nominations for those to be admitted to aspirancy, candidacy, into the ministries of lector and acolyte, and for those to be proposed for ordination as well for the ongoing evaluation and development of the formation program.