

Personal Qualifications for Applicants

1. Be at least 33 years of age but not older than 62 at the beginning of the formation program.
2. Be a practicing Roman Catholic for five consecutive years or more.
3. Have been a resident within the Diocese of Sacramento for five consecutive years or more.
4. Have demonstrated leadership ability either within parish or community organization.
5. Be in good physical and mental health.
6. Have sufficient financial and employment stability.
7. For married men: have been married at least five years, have the positive consent of his wife, and acceptance of his children, and a well-adjusted family life.
8. Be sensitive to the time and needs of his family.
9. Have sufficient time for diaconal formation and ministry.
10. Possess the desire and capacity for growth, continued education, and developing skills for ministry.
11. Possess an eagerness for prayer and acceptance of spiritual formation.
12. Be faithful to the traditions / teachings of the Church; be open to the awareness of contemporary expressions in theology.
13. Be willing to make a commitment of talent and time.
14. Possess reading and writing skills in order to participate fully in the academic program.



Course of Studies Preliminary Formation and Year of Aspirancy

- T Basic religious formation through or other college programs.
- T After admission the aspirant follows a one year program of discernment and study, prior to the four-year formation program.

Year I

- Study of Theology
- Church
- Spirituality
- Basic Skills for lecturing and writing
- Ministry Skills I
- Christology
- Old Testament
- Morality
- Sacraments
- The liturgical year
- Liturgy Preparations
- Spiritual Direction

Year III

- New Testament
- Grace/Trinity
- Synepotic Gospel
- Gospel of John
- Homiletics II
- Christian Social Ethics
- Church History II
- Ministry Skills
- Sacraments of Initiation and Rite of Baptism
- Obedience
- Celibacy
- History of spirituality II

Year II

- History of Spirituality I
- Homiletics I
- Ministry Skills
- Psalms
- Covenant/Prophecy
- Wisdom/Apocalyptic
- Church History I
- Liturgy of the Hours
- Ministry to the Poor

Year IV

- History of American Catholic Church
- Letter of Paul
- Rite of Christian Burial
- Cultural Awareness
- Sacrament of Marriage
- Marriage Preparation
- Critical Life Issues
- Sacrament of Holy Orders
- Annulments
- The role of the deacon in catechesis and evangelization
- Ecumenical and inter-religious dialogue
- Mary and the Church

The Vocation of **Permanent Deacon**



Diocese of Sacramento

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Permanent Diaconate in the Diocese of Sacramento

In the light of Gospel values as lived by the early Christian community the Permanent Diaconate in the Diocese of Sacramento exists to continue the effective ministry of the servant Christ responding to human needs. Deacons are ordained for service, to fulfill an important role in the up building and activity of the local Church.

Following the suggestion of Vatican Council II and the decision of the Bishops of the United States, the Diocese of Sacramento inaugurated the Diaconate in the fall of 1977, and the first Deacons were ordained in 1981 upon completion of the program of formation.

The Formation Program, which includes preliminary formation plus a period of four years, includes both, the deacon candidate and his wife. It is designed to equip the candidate with those skills and techniques that will assist him to minister to those whom he is called to serve. The program includes spiritual, theological and liturgical formation, and pastoral field ministry experiences.

What does a Deacon do?

The Dogmatic Constitution on the Church speaks of three areas of diaconal service: Ministry of Charity, Ministry of the Word, and Ministry of Liturgy.

Ministry of Charity: The deacon is ordained to be a witness to the Gospel through a life of loving service to the needy.



A deacon serves through his person-to-person encounters: he ministers to the poor, the aged, the sick, prisoners. He participates in programs dealing with community problems, such as, substance abuse, child abuse, poverty and justice. The deacon works with youth and young adults, in various parish and/or community programs.

Ministry of the Word: The deacon proclaims the Gospel and preaches at liturgical gatherings; he teaches in religious education programs and in sacramental preparation programs such as baptism and marriage preparation and RCIA.

Ministry of Liturgy: The deacon assists at the Eucharistic Celebration, administers baptism, witnesses marriages, officiates at wakes and funerals, administers some sacramentals and presides at prayer services such as communion services and benediction.

The deacon of today has the flexibility to dedicate his special talents under the guidance of the Holy Spirit and through the Church, to contribute to the mission of the Church within his own world of community activity. The Diaconate broadens the concept of ministry and makes it possible for others to share their talents in varying ways.

After ordination the deacon is assigned by the Bishop and subsequently enters into a formal agreement with the community he has been assigned to serve.



How do I know I am called to be a deacon?

There is no simple answer to this question. However, we believe that God's will can be discovered by the person of faith through personal prayer, competent spiritual direction and recognition that the Church has the obligation to discern if such a vocation is truly present.

Certain personal, social and spiritual qualities are required for ordained ministry. These are generally of two kinds: those that pattern the candidate in the likeness of Christ, and those required to meet the special needs of the local Church at a particular time and place. Anyone contemplating a vocation to the Diaconate should be actively involved in ministry in his local community and/or parish. A candidate's desire to be a deacon is never sufficient in itself. He must, in addition, wait on the prayerful, enlightened decision of the Church.

Criteria for Entry into Formation Program

Men seeking application into Diaconate formation come with an understanding that the Diaconate is a call to a dedicated life of service, to a specific vocation.

The deacon emerges out of the universal diakonia to stand in the midst of the community as one who makes present in his person and deeds the servant character of Christ and Church. Through the sacramental ordination the deacon becomes a public sign to the world that the Church is authentically servant. The deacon is the animator and promoter of the common service of the Church