

Diaconate Handbook

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ARCHDIOCESE of OMAHA

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I. Introduction to the Permanent Diaconate Program

A. The Theology of the Diaconate

The diaconate, in so far as it is a grade of sacred orders, confers a character and communicates specific sacramental grace. The deacon as an ordained minister participates in the ministry of Christ. He is the sacramental sign in the Church of Christ the Servant. The deacon, because of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, signified by the imposition of hands and the prayer of consecration, exercises a service of the people of God, in the three fundamental areas of the action of the Church (word, Eucharist and charity). While the diaconate is essentially one and the same in every case, and the outlines of ministerial service inherent in the diaconate are very well defined, “the concrete ways of carrying it out are diverse; these must be suggested in each case by the different pastoral situations of the single Churches” (*Basic Norms*, 9).

Thus, the deacon is called to proclaim the Gospel and to preach the word, to instruct the people of God through the homily and through catechesis.

In the liturgical and sacramental context, by virtue of his ordination, the deacon participates in the sanctifying action of God. He presides at some of the sacraments, e.g., Baptism, Marriage and at the Rite of Christian Burial. He presides at the Liturgy of the Hours; he blesses persons and things, and above all assists the diocesan bishop and the priest in the celebration of the Eucharist. At the celebration of the Eucharist, the deacon proclaims the Gospel and has the faculty to preach the homily. As an ordinary minister of Holy Communion, he distributes the Eucharist to the faithful during Mass, and administers Viaticum to the sick. It is in the Eucharistic Sacrament that the reality of the Church and its ordained ministry is most particularly expressed.

In the third place, and in a preeminent manner, the deacon is called to be a witness of the charity of Christ, reproducing in his ministry the merciful action of the Lord, who came not to be served but to serve. An essential dimension of the vision of the Second Vatican Council was that the Church would engage in a new way with ‘the modern world’. This vision is clearly expressed in the opening words of *Gaudium et spes*: “The joys and hopes, the grief and anguish of the people of our time, especially those who are poor or afflicted, are the joys and hopes, the grief and anguish of the followers of Christ as well. Nothing that is genuinely human fails to find an echo in their hearts.” The deacon serves in the midst of the poor as a prolongation of his ministry at the Eucharistic table. In his love of preference for the poor and the sick the deacon exercises a leadership role in the community, which finds its expression in his particular care for those who suffer from infirmities and limitations whether physical or spiritual in nature.

The deacon is ordained not to priesthood, but to a ministry of service (*Lumen Gentium*, 29). In consequence of this the deacon is called by the diocesan bishop, not to preside at the Eucharist, but to exercise the ministry that is entrusted to him. This ministry is linked into the local Church in such a way that the pastoral ministry of the deacon can be organized on a parochial, deanery or diocesan level. The different pastoral needs which present themselves will dictate the concrete form of the ministry according to the gifts of each deacon.

It falls to the diocesan bishop as pastor of the diocesan Church to determine the pastoral tasks of the deacons, and to supervise in a special way the pastoral cooperation between deacons and priests. The deacons must collaborate with the priests, and together they must collaborate

with the diocesan bishop. The deacons will exercise their ministry in hierarchical communion with the diocesan bishop and with his priests.

B. What does Christ want of Me?

The Diaconate is a call from Christ into the sacrament of Holy Orders. This call is mutually discerned by a man who perceives the call and the church, as present in the archbishop, who ratifies the call. A deacon allows Christ to extend His mystery of sacred service into every age by his willing Yes. To become a deacon is to configure one's life to Christ and to the pastoral vision of one's own Diocesan bishop. The church needs affectively and spiritually mature men who are no longer looking to find themselves but give themselves to the work of the Holy Spirit. The church needs creative men, men who have the capacity to see those ministerial needs that have yet to be met in the Archdiocese, and in light of the Diocesan bishop's call, stepping up to meet them. The church needs prayerful men, men willing to suffer the deepening of their own prayer lives so that they have something to offer the people of the Archdiocese beyond common sense or cultural values. The church needs knowledgeable men, men who integrate their prayer with a love for Scripture, theology and preaching. It needs men who preach and teach out of their deepest communion with Christ and not simply from the clever wisdom of a journalistic age. A man who aspires to the diaconate is one who lets himself be healed of any fear of Christ coming too close, he desires Christ to affect him in heart, mind and action as his foundational longing. With this as his foundation a deacon can lead others to Christ by word and deed.

C. How does a man know if he has a call to the Permanent Diaconate?

Are you attracted to prayer, prayer that overflows into creative and maybe even unique service to the church as a member of the clergy? Do you desire to attend to the Scriptures as your "food" for the rest of your life? Is there an urgency you feel to gratefully return to the Lord all that He has done for you? Do you love the Catholic Church with all your heart, mind and soul? Do you love the teachings of the Church, and wish only to abide by its doctrines and moral standards? Are you willing to evangelize and publicly proclaim your love of Christ and His church as an envoy of the archbishop, not simply from the ambo, but within the fabric of your daily life, receiving no remuneration from the Church for such action, and maybe even suffering because of such commitment? Do you possess a burning desire to assist the laity in their essential role as heralds of the new evangelization, embedding yourself deep within the secular world so as to abide with the laity as sacred minister...bringing grace, counsel and teaching to their mission? Will you enter the vital work of defending the Church's religious liberty, the right for its members to speak the contents of their ecclesially-formed consciences? Do you reverence deep within your heart a deepest of loves for the Holy Eucharist at which you will assist the priest with eager availability? Will you find Christ in all mundane service asked of you by other clergy and the needs of the laity? Are you willing to baptize, witness marriage, pray at wakes, visit the sick and counsel the spiritually troubled? Is there a motivation to teach the catechism and preach at Mass and parish missions? And finally, if married, do you in conscience believe that the diaconate will make you a holier spouse and father to your children? If your spouse were

to die, would you be willing to live in perfect continence, without a spouse, until you die? If you answered yes to these questions, then “come and see” (Jn 1:38-39).

The process to receive Holy Orders in the United States endeavors to implement the specific normative elements that are present in the following documents:

Basic Norms for the Formation of Permanent Deacons (Cong. For Catholic Education, Congregation for Clergy, 1998).

Directory For the Ministry and Life of Permanent Deacons (Congregation For the Clergy, 1998).

National Directory For the Formation, Ministry, and Life of Permanent Deacons in the United States (United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2005).

D. A Brief History of the Permanent Diaconate

A foreshadowing of the office of deacon in the Church predates the New Testament. In the Prayer of Ordination for deacons the “sons of Levi” are recalled. Moses, instructed by God, established an order of men, the Levites, who represented the people in service to the priests and to minister in the former tabernacle of the old covenant (Numbers 18:2-6).

As referenced above, the institution of the order of deacons by the Apostles arose from an early necessity of service in the Church that was too demanding for the Apostles to manage alone. The solution was to appoint seven men of good repute to assist them in the daily ministry. Through prayer and the laying on of hands they entrusted to those chosen men the ministry of serving at table. Saint Paul describes the particular qualifications needed for a man to be appointed to the office of deacon. We can ascertain from other texts of the New Testament that deacons in the early Church preached (St. Stephen, Acts 6 and 7), baptized (St. Philip, Acts 8), and served the early Church community. With the spread of the Faith in the early Church, deacons began to have a liturgical function.

Emphasized throughout the Gospels, the Greek word that became the designation for the office of deacon, *diakonia*, was grounded in Jesus Christ himself. Jesus offered himself in total service to the Father:

“For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him who sent me” (John 6:38).

“But I am among you as one who serves (*diakonia*)” (Luke 22:27).

In conformity to Jesus the Servant, an essential character of the Church is to be a servant of God and his people. The deacon is an icon of this servanthood in the midst of the Church.

In the early second century, St. Ignatius of Antioch, in many references to deacons, considered a Church without the orders of Bishops, Priests, and Deacons unthinkable. In his *Letter to the Magnesians*, chapter VI, he wrote:

“I exhort you to be careful to do all things in the harmony of God, the bishop having primacy after the model of God and the priests after the model of the council of Apostles, and the deacons, who are so dear to me, having entrusted to them the ministry of Jesus Christ.”

Among other early references to the order of deacon are those made by St. Polycarp, St. Justin Martyr and St. Irenaeus of Lyons.

As the order of deacon became more prominent throughout the early centuries of the Church, the deacon became the functional arm of the local bishop. He assisted the diocesan bishop during the sacred liturgy, exercised responsibility for the temporal affairs and goods of the Church, and distributed alms to the poor. As the diocesan bishop's advisor, legal representative and confidant, he was often the logical choice to succeed the diocesan bishop upon his death, after receiving priestly and episcopal ordination.

By 400 A.D. abuses of power and conflict with the order of priests, often over monetary compensation, are cited as factors that contributed to the decline of the diaconate as a permanent order within the Latin Church. Social changes within the Church led to the development of monasteries and religious orders that assumed responsibility for charitable institutions, further contributing to a reduction in the need for deacons who had formerly ministered to these needs. Over the centuries that followed, many factors contributed to a chain of events that, by 800 A.D., resulted in the diaconate being reduced to a transitional step toward the priesthood in the Latin Church. Since the order of deacon had apostolic roots going back to the New Testament, it could not simply be abolished in the Church. The solution at the time was to make it a step toward the fuller order of the priesthood. In the Churches of the East, the diaconate remained a permanent ministry and order.

In Germany during the 1950s, a proposal was stirring to restore the diaconate as a permanent order within the Latin Church. In the 1960s, the fathers of the Second Vatican Council proposed to the universal Church that the ministry of the deacon came from the Apostles, and as such, should be restored as a permanent order in the Church: "It will be possible in the future to restore the diaconate as a proper and permanent rank of the hierarchy" (*Lumen Gentium*, 29).

Assigned once again to the permanent diaconate were his traditional ministries of administering baptism, being an ordinary minister of Holy Communion, witnessing of marriages, bringing viaticum to the dying, proclaiming the Sacred Scriptures, exhorting and instructing the people, officiating at funeral rites, and being dedicated to charitable works.

With regard to the Church's missionary activity, it was believed that catechists and those governing remote communities of faith would be strengthened for their apostolate through the sacramental grace of diaconal ordination resulting in a more fruitful ministry (Blessed Pope John Paul II, *General Audience on Wednesday, 13 October, 1993*). This was in response to a concrete reality in the life of the Church in certain developing countries where many communities of faith were in remote areas that very seldom had the opportunity to receive the ministry of priests. The permanent diaconate was formally restored by Pope Paul VI in 1967, and it has grown steadily since. In 1975, for example, there were 898 permanent deacons in the United States and by 1985 there were 7204. As of this writing there are more than 16,000 permanent deacons in the United States. In Rome, in 1959, Caritas International requested that the "permanent" diaconate be restored and from 4-16 October 1963, the subject was discussed during the deliberations of the Second Vatican Council. On 29 September 1964, in four separate votes, the Council Fathers approved the restoration of the diaconate as a permanent order, in its own right, a full part of the three-fold hierarchy of Holy Orders: bishop, priest, and deacon. On 18 June 1967, Pope Paul VI issued "*Sacrum diaconatus ordinem*," a document that re-established the permanent diaconate for the Latin Church. In May of 1968, the Roman Catholic bishops of the United States petitioned the Holy See for permission to restore the diaconate in our country. The Apostolic

Delegate informed our bishops on 30 August 1968 that Pope Paul VI had acceded to their request. The National Conference of Catholic Bishops created a standing committee on the diaconate in November 1968. Beginning in 1971, with *Permanent Deacons in the United States: Guidelines on their Formation and Ministry*, the committee published a lengthy series of monographs as a national catechesis on the diaconate. Following the direction of the Second Vatican Council, the Archdiocese of Omaha reestablished the diaconate with the ordination of its first deacons in 1973.

E. Deacon Profile

It is essential to understand that the deacon is not defined by "what" he does, but rather "who" he is. A deacon's identity is rooted in his faith as a follower of Jesus Christ. He is a person committed to the Gospel. In discerning the invitation of Our Savior the deacon comes to examine the call to ordained ministry. With the decision of the Church and the interior acceptance of his vocation, a deacon is called to Ordination. This is not a position of power but rather the means by which a man can better serve Christ within His Church. All are called to proclaim the gospel but a deacon has made a formal, public commitment to live as a witness, sealed in his receiving the Sacrament of Holy Orders. The deacon represents the care, love, forgiveness and teaching of Holy Mother Church. Within the Church the deacon is a sign of commitment to the Gospel and the service it teaches. To society he brings public witness to the Gospel that Christ's love is not private but He wills His love to be known by all. The deacon is committed to the archbishop and his vision of pastoral ministry. As a deacon he implements the mission of the archbishop, he is characterized by openness and responsiveness to a wide variety of needs in keeping with this mission.

The secular employment of a deacon is also linked with his ministry. Although his secular work may benefit the community, some professions can become incompatible with the pastoral responsibilities of his ministry. The archbishop shall evaluate individual cases as they arise and may require a change of profession. Deacons must give priority to the spiritual life and live their *diakonia* with generosity. They should integrate their family obligations, professional life, and ministerial responsibilities so as to grow in their commitment to the person and mission of Christ the Servant. Clerics have a special obligation to seek holiness in their lives. Deacons must not become directly involved in political activities that lead to the seeking of official leadership positions in partisan groups, nor ought they seek public office in that such would constitute a danger to his freely proclaiming the Gospel in its entirety.

F. Recognition of Deacons as Clergy and the Relationship with the Archbishop and Priests

Through the reception of the Sacrament of Holy Orders at the hands of the archbishop, a deacon becomes a cleric and is incardinated into the Archdiocese of Omaha. He is no longer a member of the laity of the Church.

As a cleric, the deacon enjoys all the rights afforded him in the *Code of Canon Law* and is also subject to all of the obligations required of him under the same law.

Also, “through the imposition of hands and the prayer of consecration [in the Rite of Ordination], [the deacon] is constituted a sacred minister and a member of the hierarchy. This condition determines his theological and juridical status in the Church.” The deacon has a special and direct bond to the archbishop under whose authority he exercises his ecclesial service and in communion with extends Christ’s own ministry of charity.

In this light it is important to recognize the deacon’s new status in the Church as a result of his ordination. The deacon’s primary identity is to be a man who, by virtue of ordination, sacramentalizes the service of the Church. The deacon participates through the grace of ordination in Christ’s own servant mysteries (“I am among you as one who serves,” Lk 22:27).

The deacon has a special relationship with the diocesan bishop and the priests of the diocese. The diaconate is intended to help and serve the orders of the episcopacy and priesthood. “The principal function of the deacon, therefore, is to collaborate with the diocesan bishop and the priests in the exercise of a ministry which is not of their own wisdom, but of the word of God, calling all to conversion and holiness” (*Directory*, 23).

Particular attention must be paid to the relationship between the deacon and his pastor, especially when he is assigned to parochial ministry. The pastor and all priests serving in the parish or mission must recognize the deacon as a collaborator in ministry and as one who shares with them in the Sacrament of Holy Orders.

Even though the deacon is there to help and serve the pastor, his dignity as a brother in Christ and as a sacred minister of the Church must be respected. The deacon, for his part, must remember that the pastor is the one whom he helps and serves under the authority of the diocesan bishop. Mutual respect and charity should govern this relationship.

G. Deacons Serve the Church

1. Diocesan Service:

Deacons are not ordained for any particular parish, even their own. They are ordained for service to the archbishop and the local Church.

Even though a deacon’s usual status conveys to people that he is a cleric ministering in a parish there may be times when some deacons function more like “priests in residence” providing ministry to the wider church and society even as they serve liturgically at a parish altar and ambo. Since deacons are ordained for the diocese to serve the diocesan bishop’s pastoral plan a deacon’s ministry may be exclusively for the local church and not simply for a particular parish. Well discerned and creative ministry to bring the Gospel beyond the parish confines is welcomed.

Men are ordained to the diaconate out of a discerned need acknowledged by the archbishop. All deacons serve a particular need for which they are ordained. The deacon’s primary ministry is twofold: to serve at the altar and ambo and ***from within such service to be sent by Christ, while always abiding with Him in prayer***, to respond to the spiritual and corporeal needs of people.

The particular service rendered will be reflected in the letter of assignment once a man is ordained to the diaconate. The assignment letter may read that the deacon is assigned to a particular parish or mission *to minister in a particular area of need* (e.g., to the poor of the

community, to the sick, to the elderly, to the imprisoned, to the youth, as a catechist, etc.). The deacon could also be assigned to some broader diocesan or regional ministry with diaconal faculties in a particular parish or mission. This does not mean that the deacon could never engage in some other area of ministry as his diaconal ministry matures. It does mean that he must always have some particular focus of his diaconal ministry on specific needs in the community.

2. Sacramental/liturgical functions:

- Assisting at Mass
- Baptism and baptismal preparation
- Weddings where no Mass is requested and marriage preparation
- Distribution of Viaticum to the Dying
- Funeral vigil service outside of Mass and funeral committal service
- Preaching and proclaiming the Word of God at Mass and other liturgical celebrations
- Liturgy of the Word with Communion/Sunday Celebration in the Absence of a Priest
- Presiding at liturgy of Hours
- Presiding at Eucharistic Adoration
- Giving Parish Missions
- Leading novenas and other devotionals

3. Pastoral Care:

Deacons serve all the faithful, especially the sick, the elderly, the bereaved, the home-bound, prisoners, homeless; they are available for pastoral counsel and spiritual encouragement at the parish and beyond in many secular environments, work, school, in hospitals, nursing homes, etc. Deacons counsel the engaged and the married. They pray with people and teach others how to pray.

4. Evangelization/Catechesis:

Catechist training; teaching adult faith formation or child catechesis

5. Social Services:

Parish pantry, homeless, immigrants, clothing distribution, etc.

H. The Permanent Deacon and Preaching

The *Code of Canon Law* for the Latin Church gives the deacon the faculty to preach everywhere, with at least the presumed permission of the rector of the church, unless this faculty has been restricted or removed by the competent Ordinary (c. 764).

In the case of a deacon, the competent Ordinary mentioned above is the diocesan bishop, and the local ordinaries such as the Vicar General or the Vicar for Clergy. The deacons possess the faculty to preach anywhere in the diocese with the consent of the pastor of the parish. It is to

be noted that preaching is not a canonical *right* of the deacon, but a *faculty*. Canon 767 directs that the homily at Mass is reserved only to those in Holy Orders.

The permanent deacon has the opportunity to preach in various liturgical and ecclesial contexts. These include, but are not limited to: wake services, the funeral liturgy outside of Mass, baptisms, wedding celebrations outside of Mass, liturgies of the Word outside of Mass, Sunday celebrations in the absence of a priest, during the Liturgy of the Hours, and other prayer and liturgical services.

As regards the preaching of the homily at Mass the liturgical norms presume that the one who presides at a liturgical service, or who is the principal celebrant at Mass, is also to give the homily. This should be the ordinary practice. This principle is borne out by both the universal Directory for the Ministry and Life of Permanent Deacons (n. 31) and the General Instruction of the Roman Missal (66 and 94):

“When the deacon presides at a liturgical celebration, in accordance with the relevant norms, he shall give due importance to the homily...”

The deacon may give the homily at Mass:

“The homily should ordinarily be given by the priest celebrant himself. He may entrust it to a concelebrating priest or occasionally to the deacon...”

So, from time to time the deacon may be entrusted with the homily by the priest celebrant. When a deacon is to be entrusted with the homily at Mass is worked out under the direction of the parish pastor.

II. Discerning the Diaconate and Applying to the Permanent Diaconate Program

A. The Initial Discernment Process for Men Considering the Diaconate

- Must be a Catholic for at least three years.
- An applicant must be between the ages of 31 and 55 years of age.
- Must have conversations with his pastor leading to the approval of the pastor to make application.
- Must have the approval of his spouse and family.
- Must meet with the Director of the Diaconate at least three times. These meetings must occur at least six months before formation weekends begin for a new class. Based on these meetings, the Director may require additional time for discernment before applying to the program.
- Must spend at least one weekend at Norfolk observing a formation weekend. During this weekend, the man will have discernment conversations with staff members.

- The inquirer will be encouraged to get a spiritual director during this discernment period.
- After the aforementioned steps, the man can request an application.
- Must submit the application and all of the requested documents and forms.

B. Formation Requirements

Once invited into the program (which accepts new men every other year) a man will spend four years receiving the Love and Truth of Christ through spiritual direction, counseling, pastoral ministry, prayer, and seminars on doctrine and theology.

When a man enters formation, he accepts his own personal call from God to come and share in Christ's own eager availability to minister. Within, and by way of, the formation processes a man renders himself available to those who cry out for spiritual truth and material welfare. A vital goal of the formation process is to facilitate a candidate's radical availability to the mystery of Christ. In becoming deeply available to Christ, the deacon's ministry becomes prayer, thus allowing his service to become that of Christ's.

The deacon serves the poor through the many ways found in the corporal and spiritual works of mercy (CCC 2247); he serves them first and foremost as a spiritual man bearing spiritual gifts. What characterizes the life and ministry of the deacon is his participation in the self-offering of Christ as one who comes to serve (Lk 22:27).

During four years of formation a man will be asked to die to all that is not of Christ and welcome the painful conversion that accompanies the loss of sin as a false consoling pleasure in life. It is Christ who wants to become his authentic place of consolation, healing and inspiration. Since a man has responded to the call of Christ to enter Holy Orders he no longer is to remain satisfied with the status quo of his spiritual and intellectual life. By entering the formation program, a man consents to being vulnerable to a divine love that changes him at the points where he has refused change in the past. Without this consent a man will not progress toward ordination. To want to remain untouched by the fire of Christ's love would be similar to a man who wants to get married but remain in the values of his bachelor life. Such a man has not truly entered marriage but instead used marriage to attain private and self-centered goals. Christ calls all those who choose to enter formation to a new life of courage. This life is monitored and facilitated by the structures of formation--growth in prayer, growth in self-knowledge, growth in understanding of doctrine, and growth in seeing the needs of others with the eyes of Christ. Therefore the first formation requirement is courage, a courage that leads a man to confront the truth about himself and his relationship with Christ. Without this virtue then all other aspects of formation may be an occasion for simply "jumping through hoops."

The most vital part of a man's formation will be the discipline of spiritual direction.

During the four years of formation a man must enter the depths of prayer in such a way that he becomes more and more vulnerable to the presence of Christ. The spiritual goal for a deacon will be to become a man "who prays unceasingly" (1 Thes. 5:17); "Remain in me and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit unless it remains on the vine, so also with you unless you remain in me" (John 15:4). One cannot race toward ministry without first suffering a new way of being with Christ. Ministry is communion with Christ and without such communion it simply becomes philanthropy. Ministry is only sustained by "a truly personal encounter with Jesus, a relationship with the Father and a profound experience of the Spirit" (Blessed Pope John Paul II, *Pastores*

Dabo Vobis, 72) As the Congregation for Education noted, “In a spirit of prayer, **with which he should be permeated**, the deacon, following the example of the Lord who gave himself “unto death, death on a cross” (Phil 2:8), should deepen every day his total gift of self” (*Basic Norms*, 8).

For the total gift of self to be genuine a man must discuss his prayer life, his time with Christ alone, with a competent priest spiritual director. The Permanent Diaconate Office will assist everyone in formation with finding a spiritual director. Formation is to be built upon prayer, which means it is built upon a man’s honesty about his prayer life. This honest sharing about one’s intimacy with Christ is first and foremost the content of spiritual direction which is always confidential (Neb. Rev. Stat. 27-506 – clergy communication is confidential “if made privately and not intended for further disclosure”). The main content of spiritual direction is not “personal problems.” It is a sharing on how the affect was moved in the course of prayer, how the intellect judged and received such love, and how in noting such interior movement the man receives a deeper intimacy with Christ.

The second vital part of a man’s formation is found in his capacity to be rigorously **honest about his own identity**, sense of self, and how he relates to his wife, if married, the church and his secular activities and profession. No man can proceed in formation if there is not integrity between his faith in Christ and his public commitments. To live a split or double life is unacceptable for a cleric; there must be congruence between who one is and who one says he is. Without the desire to become congruent, honest and guileless grace cannot penetrate to the depths of a man and the aids given in formation simply remain impotent. This disposition does not mean a man must be “without sin” to gain from formation and eventually give the self to the Church. It simply means that he must be aware of his faults, repudiate them, and where sin is involved, repent regularly within the sacrament of penance.

The deacon is called to be a bridge between Christ and others. It is important that the deacon’s character and personality not become a stumbling block to such a meeting. Hence formation is always about growth in self-knowledge in light of Christ’s love for each man.

III. The Permanent Diaconate Program

A. Dimensions of Diaconal Formation

There are four dimensions in diaconal formation: human, spiritual, intellectual, and pastoral. These are assessed through the candidate's knowledge and demonstrable skills. A further essential element of formation is the discernment of a vocation explored by the candidate and spouse through self-reflection, spiritual direction, and formation evaluations.

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

In accord with the *Code of Canon Law*, the *Basic Norms for the Formation of Permanent Deacons* by the Congregation for Catholic Education specifies that essential formation consists of two paths, **Aspirancy** and **Candidacy**.

The **Aspirant path** in diaconal formation is during the first year of formation. It is primarily a time to discern the capability and readiness of an aspirant to be nominated to the archbishop for acceptance as a candidate for diaconal ordination. It is also a time for a married aspirant and his wife to assess the quality of their relationship and the ramifications of his possible ordination to the diaconate upon their married life. For the single aspirant, it is a time to discern his capacity for celibacy. The discernment of the authenticity of a person's vocation to the permanent diaconate is the responsibility of the diocesan bishop. The fact that somebody aspires to the permanent diaconate does not in itself determine that a vocation is present.

The **Candidate path** in diaconal formation is during the last 3 years of the formation process. It is the occasion for continued deepening of a diaconal vocation and preparation for ordination. Throughout this path in formation, the candidate himself assumes the primary responsibility for his formation.

B. Time Commitment

The hours aspirants/candidates will be required to commit to over the course of the four year program in order to be in compliance with the *Directory for Formation* are listed below.

Weekend Sessions (19 hrs. X 32 mos.):		608 hrs.
Intellectual Formation (instruction):	264	
Human, Spiritual, and Pastoral Formation:	72	
Liturgies:	120	
Practicum:	40	
Small groups/Sharing of graces:	56	
Fellowship:	56	
Study & Preparation (20 hours X 32 mos.):		640 hrs.
Human Formation Interviews:		8 hrs.
Human/Spiritual Formation Conferences (1 hr. X 32 mos.):		32 hrs.
Spiritual Direction (1 hr. X 48 mos.):		48 hrs.
Summer Ministry Hours (after 1st yr.):		20 hrs.
Supervised Pastoral Formation Field Experiences (after 2nd yr.):		100 hrs.
Homeless Ministry:	25 hrs.	
Hospital Ministry:	25 hrs.	
Prison Ministry:	25 hrs.	
St. Augustine Mission:	25 hrs.	
Supervised Pastoral Formation Teaching & Ministry Project (after 3rd yr.):		80 hrs.
Retreats (1 couples retreat. Candidate's 5-day canonical retreat)		
TOTAL:		1536 hrs.

C. Year-by-Year Requirements

1. First Year Aspirant Requirements

The **Aspirant path** in diaconal formation is during the first of the four years of the formation process. It is primarily a time to discern the capability and readiness of an aspirant to be nominated to the archbishop for acceptance as a candidate for diaconal ordination. It is also a time for a married aspirant and his wife to assess the quality of their relationship and consider the ramifications of his possible ordination to the diaconate upon their married life. For the single aspirant, it is a time to discern his capacity for celibacy.

Aspirants and their wives are required to attend weekend formation (every other month from September to May).

Aspirants are required to meet with their Pastor a minimum of four times during the year.

Aspirants are required to meet with their Spiritual Director monthly.

During the summer after the man's aspirancy year, he will sustain a ministry of no more than 20 hours in the area of scripture study or catechetical instruction in a setting that promotes the pro-life, pro-family truths of the Catholic Church. This ministry of instruction can be ordered toward unwed mothers, a men's or father's ministry, or some engagement with marriage preparation or chastity education. In so doing, the man endeavors to bring the Gospel to those who can most assist to develop the culture into one that reverences life.

Upon completion of satisfactory evaluations and interviews, aspirants submit a handwritten letter to the archbishop petitioning for transition to the Candidate Path of Diaconate formation. This letter is due at the May weekend formation session. A recommendation from the aspirant's pastor to receive candidacy is also required. The actual transition occurs during the Rite of Candidacy at which all formation classes attend. The Mass is held in Norfolk during the month of September following the aspirancy year. Aspirants vest in alb and cincture.

Sample Letter Requesting Transition to Candidacy

(Written in own handwriting)

(Date)

Most Reverend George J. Lucas
Archbishop of Omaha
100 N. 62nd St.
Omaha, NE 68132

Your Excellency,

I wish to express by means of this document my intentions to be admitted as a candidate for the Holy Order of Deacon in the Archdiocese of Omaha.

My intention is made freely and without any form of coercion on the part of anyone, and with the hope that God has called me to this holy vocation.

Sincerely in Christ,

(Your Signature)

Wife's Letter of Consent for Candidacy

(Written in wife's own handwriting)

Most Reverend George J. Lucas
Archbishop of Omaha
100 N. 62nd St.
Omaha NE 68132

Your Excellency,

Recently, my husband, *(Full Name)*, was selected to continue his preparation to become a Deacon and receive The Sacrament of Holy Orders. He has completed the Aspirancy Period and has been recommended by the Deacon Office and approved by you to have The Rite of Candidacy conferred upon him on *(date)* at *(location)*.

As his wife, I hereby give my written consent for *(First Name of husband)* to receive the Rite of Candidacy and continue his formation for the Order of Deacon in the Roman Catholic Church. I give this consent freely without any force or coercion. I will support my husband during this time of discernment and study.

Respectfully yours in Christ,

(Signature of Wife)

2. Second Year Candidate Requirements

The **Candidate path** in diaconal formation occurs during the second, third, and fourth years of the formation process. It is the occasion for continued development of a diaconal vocation and preparation for ordination. Throughout this path in formation, the candidate himself assumes the primary responsibility for his formation. In accord with the Code of Canon Law, and the *Basic Norms for the Formation of Permanent Deacons* by the Congregation for Catholic Education the candidate path in diaconal formation must last at least three years, in addition to the aspirant period.

Candidates are required to attend weekend formation (September to May).

Candidates are required to meet with their Pastor a minimum of four times during the year.

Candidates are required to meet with their Spiritual Director monthly.

Candidates are required to perform 100 hours of supervised pastoral field experience in the year following their second year of formation. A training session is held on a Saturday in June and the candidates have until the following May to complete the 100 hours. For more information, see below under Pastoral Formation.

Second Year Candidates submit a hand-written letter of petition to the Archbishop for conferral of the ministry of lector in March. This letter is due at the December weekend formation session. A recommendation from the candidate's pastor to receive the ministry of lector is also required. All classes attend the lector ceremony. The lector, and the acolyte Mass which follows in third year of candidacy, is held on the Deacon Day of Prayer with the Archbishop each year in March. Since diaconal formation adds a new class only every other year, this Mass institutes lectors one year and acolytes the next. Candidates vest in alb and cincture.

Prior to the institution of a candidate as a lector, instruction will be given about the significance of this ministry, the canon law statements about it, and how to implement it into the candidate's life. The *Basic Norms* (no. 87) make it clear that this ministry should be emphasized through evaluation of its implementation in the life of the candidate. The candidate will be challenged to read the Mass readings every day. The ideal would be for them to read frequently at Mass but, if this is not possible, they will be encouraged to read them at home. The goal is for them to read the texts every day as if they were reading them during the Mass.

Letters will be mailed to the candidate's pastor informing him that the candidate has been instituted as a lector and asking him to increase the frequency of the candidate's opportunities to read publicly over the next year. The rationale for this will be explained in the letter.

The candidate will keep a journal of his reading, especially of what the Lord was doing within him as he proclaimed the Word of God. This journal should be shared with the candidate's spiritual director. Serving the Church as a lector is also symbolic of the candidate's eventual call to be a preacher and teacher.

The candidate will submit a copy of his journal notes to the Coordinator of Pastoral Formation (CPF) every three months after being instituted. His pastor will be contacted about the candidate's progress in reading. The CPF will conduct brief interviews with the candidate several times during the year to receive feedback from him. This can be done during formation weekends or over the telephone. At least once during the year the CPF will observe the candidate

as he reads during Mass. Feedback will also be given to the candidate when he reads during the formation weekend's Liturgy of the Hours. After the first year of being a lector, there will not be this same level of supervision.

Along with regular conversations, at the end of the first year the CPF will meet with the candidate for one final interview. The assessment of the pastor, what has been observed by the permanent diaconate leadership team, the level of reflection in the candidate's journal, and anything else the CPF has observed will be the basis for the feedback to the candidate. Feedback during the second year that the candidate is a lector will be informal.

Sample Letter Requesting Conferral of Lector Ministry

(Written in own handwriting)

(Date)

Most Reverend George J. Lucas
Archbishop of Omaha
100 N. 62nd St.
Omaha, NE 68132

Your Excellency,

I, *Your Name*, hereby humbly and freely request that I be formally installed into the ministry of lector in the Archdiocese of Omaha. I recognize the responsibility toward the Word of God. I pray that with continued training in Scripture Scholarship and with God's help I will be of service to the Church of the Omaha Archdiocese.

Sincerely in Christ,

(Your Signature)

3. Third Year Candidate Requirements

Candidates are required to attend weekend formation.

Candidates are required to meet with their pastor a minimum of four times during the year.

Candidates are required to meet with their spiritual director monthly.

Third Year Candidates are required to perform 100 hours of supervised pastoral field experience in the year following their third year of formation. This experience includes public teaching and the development of a ministry project. The candidate has from June until the following May to complete the 100 hours. For more information, see below under Pastoral Formation.

Third Year Candidates submit a hand-written letter of petition to the Archbishop for conferral of the ministry of Acolyte in March. This letter is due at the December weekend formation session. A recommendation from the candidate's pastor to receive the ministry of acolyte is also required. All classes attend this installation ceremony. The Lector or Acolyte Mass is on the Deacon Day of Prayer with the Archbishop held each year in March. Since diaconal formation adds a new class only every other year, this Mass institutes lectors one year and acolytes the next. Candidates vest in alb and cincture.

The candidate will be challenged to learn the prayer for the purification of the vessels, the vesting prayers, as well as the prayers said by the deacon at the altar. Along with these prayers, a list of scriptural passages on holiness and the importance of a minister being purified by the Spirit of God will be submitted to the candidate for reflection and prayer. The candidate will keep a journal of his reflections on these prayers and scriptures along with his experiences of serving as an acolyte to be shared with his spiritual director.

Letters will be mailed to the candidate's pastor informing him that the candidate has been instituted as an acolyte asking him to use the candidate as an acolyte over the next year. The letter will also include the request that the candidate be given opportunities to purify the vessels after Mass. The rationale for this will be explained in the letter.

The Coordinator of Pastoral Formation (CPF) or the Director will instruct the new acolytes using the document, "The Ministry of the Acolyte" (prepared by the Permanent Diaconate Office).

Each quarter of the year the candidate will submit his journal notes to the CPF. His pastor will be contacted about the candidate's progress in serving. The CPF will conduct brief interviews with the candidate several times during the year to receive feedback from the candidate. This can be done during formation weekends or over the telephone. At least once during the year the CPF will observe the candidate as he serves during Mass and purifies the vessels. This could be done at the candidate's home parish but could also be done during either of the Masses held during the formation weekend. Since an instituted acolyte is only one step away from the diaconate, he should know all of the vesting prayers, prayer during the purification of the vessels, and the prayers a deacon prays at Mass. Supervision of this will come in the form of the candidate being asked by the CPF to recite these prayers during formation weekends.

Along with regular conversations, at the end of the first year the CPF will meet with the candidate for one final interview. The assessment of the pastor, what has been observed by the

permanent diaconate leadership team, the level of reflection in the candidate's journal, and anything else the CPF has observed will be the basis for the feedback to the candidate.

Sample Letter Requesting Conferral of Acolyte Ministry

(Written in own handwriting)

(Date)

Most Reverend George J. Lucas
Archbishop of Omaha
100 N. 62nd St.
Omaha, NE 68132

Your Excellency,

I, Your Name , hereby humbly and freely request that I be formally installed into the ministry of Acolyte in the Archdiocese of Omaha. I recognize the responsibility to assist the deacon and the priest in liturgical celebrations, especially in the celebration of Mass by carrying the missal, cross, candles, etc. or by performing other such duties. I pray that my ministering in this capacity will bring fitting service to the people of the Archdiocese and glory to God.

Sincerely in Christ,

(Your Signature)

4. Fourth Year Candidate Requirements

Candidates are required to attend weekend formation.

Candidates are required to meet with their Pastor a minimum of four times during the year.

Candidates are required to meet with their Spiritual Director monthly.

Candidates are required to attend a five-day directed retreat prior to ordination. The retreat director must be approved by the Director of Permanent Diaconate Formation.

Candidates submit a hand written letter of petition for Ordination to the Archbishop. This letter is due at the February weekend formation session. A recommendation from the candidate's pastor to be ordained is also required. During the March weekend formation session, the candidates will sign the Oath of Fidelity, the Oath of Freedom, and the Profession of Faith. Spouses will sign the Spousal Consent for Ordination.

After ordination during the first weekend in May, the newly ordained are required to attend the May weekend formation session for mystagogia and the blessing of the stoles.

Statement of Spousal Consent for Ordination

(Written in wife's own handwriting)

I, _____, spouse of deacon candidate
_____, do hereby consent to his ordination to
the Diaconate.

I will support him in his ministry.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Oath of Fidelity

I, _____, on assuming the Office of Deacon, promise that both in my words and in my conduct I shall always preserve communion with the Catholic Church.

I shall carry out with the greatest care and fidelity the duties incumbent on me toward both the universal Church and the particular Church in which, according to the provisions of the law, I have been called to exercise my service.

In fulfilling the charge entrusted to me in the name of the Church, I shall hold fast to the deposit of faith in its entirety, I shall faithfully hand it on and explain it, and I shall avoid any teachings opposed to that faith.

I shall follow and foster the common discipline of the whole Church, and I shall observe all ecclesiastical laws, especially those which are contained in the Code of Canon Law.

In Christian obedience I shall unite myself with what is expressed by the Bishops as authentic doctors and teachers of the faith or established by them as those responsible for the governance of the Church. I shall also faithfully assist diocesan Bishops, in order that the apostolic activity exercised in the name and by the mandate of the Church may be carried out in the communion of the same Church.

So help me God, and God's holy Gospels, on which I place my hand.

Signature _____

This Oath of Fidelity was taken publicly at _____

in the presence of _____ on _____

Oath of Freedom

I, _____, the undersigned, having presented to the Archbishop my petition for the reception of the Diaconate, now at the approach of Sacred Ordination, having diligently weighed the matter before God, do hereby testify under oath, first that I am not compelled to the reception of this Sacred Order by any coercion or force, or by any fear, but do spontaneously desire it and of my own full and free will wish to receive it, as I am convinced and feel that I am really called by God.

I profess that I know fully all the obligations and other consequences which this Sacred Order entails, which of my own will I desire and propose to receive, and I resolve to observe them all, with the help of God, most diligently during the entire course of my life.

Finally, in all sincerity, I promise that I will most obediently observe, according to the Sacred Canons, all that my superiors command me and ecclesiastical discipline requires, and that I am prepared to set a good example both in word and deed, in order that I may be rewarded by God for the undertaking of so great an office.

So I promise, vow, and swear, so help me God and these His Holy Gospels, which I touch with my hands.

Signature _____

This Oath of Freedom was taken publicly at _____

in the presence of _____ on _____

Profession of Faith

I, _____, with firm faith believe and profess everything that is contained in the symbol of faith, namely:

I believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible. I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Only Begotten Son of God, born of the Father before all ages. God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father; through him all things were made. For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven, and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and became man. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate, he suffered death and was buried, and rose again on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead and his kingdom will have no end. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets. I believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church. I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.

With firm faith I also believe everything contained in God's word, written or handed down in tradition and proposed by the Church, whether by way of solemn judgment or through the ordinary and universal Magisterium, as divinely revealed and calling for faith.

I also firmly accept and hold each and everything that is proposed definitively by the Church regarding teaching on faith and morals.

Moreover, I adhere with religious submission of will and intellect to the teachings which either the Roman Pontiff or the College of Bishops enunciate when they exercise the authentic Magisterium, even if they proclaim those teachings by an act that is not definitive.

Signature _____

This Profession of Faith was taken publicly at _____

in the presence _____ of on _____

Petition for Holy Orders

(Written in own handwriting)

(date)

Most Reverend George J. Lucas
Archbishop of Omaha
100 N. 62nd St.
Omaha, Nebraska 68132

Your Excellency:

I, *(full name)*, the undersigned, in compliance with Canon 1036 of the Code of Canon Law, do hereby petition to receive the Order of Deacon.

I testify and affirm that I seek ordination freely and of my own accord. I am impelled by no sort of compulsion, force or fear to receive this sacred order.

I voluntarily desire it and of my own free will wish to be ordained to the Diaconate. I have carefully considered this matter before God and believe that I am truly called by God to receive this sacred order.

I am fully aware of all the obligations attached to this order. I freely assume them and intend, with God's grace, to fulfill them throughout my life.

I declare especially that I am clearly aware of what the law of celibacy entails. I firmly resolve with the help of God to fulfill that law willingly and to keep it in its entirety until the end of my life.

I testify and affirm that I will devote myself permanently to the ecclesiastical ministry.

Respectfully Yours in Christ,
(Signature)

D. Intellectual Formation

1. Materials Aspirants and Candidates will need to purchase:

- *Liturgy of the Hours*
- *Catechism of the Catholic Church*
- *The Bible*
- Required reading texts for each course of study: to be determined by Instructors

2. Academic Curriculum

The study of scripture and theology is essential in becoming a public minister of the Church. The Church’s mission depends upon men who can articulate clearly and competently the doctrine and spiritual heritage of Catholicism. It will be the candidates’ paramount duty to study the Catechism, Scripture and Liturgical documents and rites with an eager prayerfulness to understand their content so as to share it with others. The deacon is an evangelist and he must know the Word of God and love it, eager to read it daily and desirous to share it with others. The intellectual formation of a deacon is based upon the interpenetration of discursive study and prayerful receptivity of God’s love and truth as carried by such study. All men in formation will learn a contemplative form of study based upon the ancient tradition of *lectio divina* (Benedict XVI, *Verbum Domini* 82, 86-87).

CURRICULUM (with CCC Sections and other Foundational Texts)

Aspirancy (Year 1)	
September – Discernment; vocation to the diaconate and marriage.	CCC: 1-25, 358, 825, 873, 898, 931-933, 1601-1666, 1700, 2196-2257, 2331-2400
November - The role of the wife; the theology of the diaconate.	CCC: 1569-1571
January - How to pray: interior prayer, liturgy of the hours, praying in marriage.	CCC: 1066-1075, 1163-1199, 2558-2865
March - What is Ministry?	CCC: 873-879, 893, 1536
May - Lectio, Spiritual Direction, Reconciliation, Praying at Mass, and Counseling: ways of living for interior freedom	CCC: 1420-1498
Candidacy (Year 1)	
September – How to study prayerfully; How to participate in a seminar; Matthew and Mark	CCC: 26-184

October – Luke and John	CCC: 26-184
November/December – Pauline Epistles	CCC: 26-184
January/February – Introduction to Theology: Trinity, Christology, and Pneumatology	CCC: 185-747
March – Theology of the Body; Theology/Spirituality of Diaconate	CCC: 1701-1740 A Deacon’s Retreat (Keating)
April – Theology/Spirituality of Diaconate	CCC: 1536-1590
May – The Prophets and Diaconal Ministry	CCC: 26-184, 2052-2557
Candidacy (Year 2)	
September – Introductory Matters; Church History	
October – Eschatology	CCC: 988-1065, 2771-2772
November – Theology of Pastoral Ministry	CCC: 858-865
December – Preaching From the Gospels	USCCB, Preaching The Mystery of Faith: The Sunday Homily (2012)
January/February – Sacraments (Holy Orders, Baptism, Marriage, Confirmation)	CCC: 976-987, 1210-1690
March – Vatican II and Papal Documents	CCC: 84-100, 888-892, 2030- 2040
April – Ecclesiology and Mariology	CCC: 748-975, 2030-2051
May – Theology of Prayer (including Saints: Biographies of Holiness)	CCC: 2558-2865
Candidacy (Year 3)	
September – Fundamental Moral Theology and Sexuality	CCC: 1691-2051, 2331-2400, 2514- 2557
October – Medical Ethics and Ministerial/Professional Ethics	CCC: 1691-2051, 2258-2330
November – Canon Law, with an Emphasis on Marriage and Ministry Themes	See John Huels, The Pastoral Companion: A Canon Law Handbook,

	Chaps.8-12 CCC:1601-1659
December – Evangelization and Catechetical Methods	CCC: 4-10, 905, 2464-2513
January/February – Social Teachings	CCC: 1691-2051, 2104-2109, 2258- 2330, 2401-2463
March – Ecumenism, Interreligious Dialogue, and Missiology	CCC: 839-856
April – Theology of Eucharist	CCC: 1066-1209, 1322-1419, 2177- 2183
May – Diaconal Mystagogy (unpacking the graces of ordination)	The Rite of Ordination

3. Formation Weekend Schedule

Friday

- 7:00 – Instruction
- 8:00 – Break
- 8:15 – Instruction
- 9:15 – Fellowship
- 10:15 – Silence (until breakfast)

Saturday

- 7:00 – Mass
- 7:30 – Breakfast
- 8:00 – Morning Prayer (First Floor Chapel)
- 8:30 – Instruction
- 10:30 – Break
- 11:00 – Instruction
- 12:00 – Lunch
- 1:00 – Silence: Time for Spiritual Direction, Human Formation, Pastoral Counseling
- 2:15 – Practicum
- 3:30 – Break, Personal Prayer, Silence
- 3:45 – Instruction
- 5:00 – Personal Prayer, Journaling, Counseling
- 6:00 – Dinner
- 7:00 – Evening Prayer (First Floor Chapel)
- 7:30 – Instruction
- 8:30 – Break
- 8:45 – Small Groups
- 9:15 – Eucharistic Adoration, Instructions in Prayer (Fourth Floor, “The Upper Room”)
- 9:45 – Fellowship

10:30 – Silence (until breakfast)

Sunday

7:00 – Mass
8:00 – Breakfast
8:30 – Instruction
9:30 – Morning Prayer (First Floor Chapel)
10:00 – Break
10:15 – Q&A, Sharing of Graces
11:30 – Dismiss

4. Practicum

Each weekend during formation there is instruction on and practice of one of the rites performed by a deacon. Following is the schedule and list of those rites:

September	Contemplative Homiletics
October	Communion Service
November	Baptism
December	Presiding at a Wake Service
January	Pastoral Care of the Sick
February	Exposition and Benediction/ Incense
March	Rite of Marriage
April	Assisting at the Mass
May	Praying with People

5. Small Groups

The small group sessions on Saturday night provide an opportunity for the men in formation to get to know each other and share the graces they have experienced during the day.

6. Acolytes and Lectors

During formation weekends, instituted acolytes and lectors are utilized as follows:

Acolytes

Instituted acolytes serve in the following ways. Each month one of the acolytes is designated as the acolyte for that month. On arrival the acolyte, vested in alb and cincture, brings up from the First Floor Chapel everything required for Exposition and Benediction (monstrance, humeral veil, luna from the tabernacle, etc.) and places these in the Fourth Floor Chapel. They serve as the acolyte at Exposition and Benediction. They lead the prayers at the meals and at the beginning of each class. When possible, they also serve at the Masses. At the end of the weekend they take everything required for Exposition and Benediction back to the First Floor Chapel.

Lectors

Only instituted lectors read during the Liturgy of the Hours. Lectors do the reading at the ambo and, after the homilies and a period of silence, lead the responsory.

Non-instituted Candidates

They, like the instituted candidates, can say the intercessions at the Liturgy of the Hours and can also do homilies. They are only limited in that they cannot do anything that is part of the ministry of a lector or an acolyte.

Aspirants

Aspirants learn by observing and participating in the liturgies but they do not fulfill any leadership roles.

7. Homilies

There are three homilies at each Liturgy of the Hours. Since there are three liturgies each formation weekend, nine men preach. Homilies are based on the reading in the Liturgy of the Hours and are delivered without notes. They are to be brief. The homilists are chosen by the leadership team and announced at the beginning of the liturgy. Thus, all candidates are required to prepare to preach for each liturgy.

8. Location of Formation Weekends

Immaculata Monastery
300 North 18th Street
Norfolk, NE 68701-3687
(402) 371-3438

9. Contact Information

Director of the Permanent Diaconate Office

Deacon James Keating, Ph.D.
Director of Theological Formation
Institute for Priestly Formation
Creighton University
2500 California Plaza
Omaha, NE 68178
402-280-3326
402-280-2556
jameskeating@creighton.edu

Coordinator of Pastoral Formation

Deacon George Butterfield, D. Min.
Legal Reference Librarian
Creighton Univ. School of Law Library
2500 California Plaza
Omaha, NE 68178
Office phone: 402-280-2243
Cell phone: 402-452-8332
GeorgeButterfield@creighton.edu
gbutterfield@archomaha.org

10. Faculty Bios (complete bios on the faculty are available from the Deacon Office)

Archbishop George Lucas – Archbishop of the Diocese of Omaha.

Bill Beckman, M.A. – Bill is the Director of the Office of Evangelization and Catechetics for the Archdiocese of Omaha.

Fr. Mark Beran, M.Div. – Fr. Mark is the pastor of St. Mary's Church in Wayne and the chaplain for the Wayne State College Catholic Newman Center.

Jean Butler, M.A. – Jean is an adjunct faculty member in the Theology Department at Creighton University and has taught in both the Deacon Formation Program and the four-year Biblical School.

Deacon George Butterfield, M.Div., D.Min. – Deacon George is the Legal Reference Librarian at Creighton University School of Law and the Coordinator of Pastoral Formation for the Office of the Diaconate.

Fr. Damien Cook, M.Div. – Fr. Damien is the pastor of St. Peter Church in Omaha.

Sharon Doran, M.A. – Sharon is the teaching director of “Seeking Truth,” a new Catholic Bible study for men and women in the Omaha, Nebraska, area.

Bernadette Esposito, M.T.S. – Bernadette is an Archdiocese of Omaha Catholic Biblical School instructor.

Fr. Rich Gabuzda, S.T.D. – Fr. Rich is the Executive Director of the Institute for Priestly Formation.

Omar F. A. Gutiérrez, M.A. – Omar works as the Special Assistant to the Archbishop of Omaha and as the Manager for the Office of Missions and Justice.

Fr. Paul Hoelsing, S.T.L. – Fr. Paul is the Director of Vocations for the Archdiocese of Omaha.

Jessi Kary, A.O., M.A. – Jessi was appointed as the National Director of the Pro Sanctity Movement in the USA in 2011 and is responsible for the Pro Sanctity School of Initial Formation.

Deacon James Keating, Ph.D. – Deacon Keating is Director of Theological Formation in the Institute for Priestly Formation at *Creighton University* in Omaha Nebraska. He is a deacon of the Archdiocese of Omaha, where he serves as Director of the Office of the Diaconate.

Fr. Jeff Lorig, M.A. – Fr. Jeff is currently enrolled in the Spiritual Director Training Program with the Institute of Priestly Formation and is a Pastor in the Archdiocese of Omaha.

Deacon Steve Luna, B.A. in Business– Deacon Steve is the Coordinator of Pastoral Planning for the Archdiocese of Omaha and has been actively involved in ministry to men.

Teresa Monaghan, A.O., S.T.L. – Teresa is the local and National Moderator of the Pontifical Secular Institute of the Apostolic Oblates and the National Director of the Pro Sanctity Movement.

Timothy Mueting, M.A. – Tim is a teacher in the religion department at Roncalli Catholic High School.

Fr. Andrew Roza, S.T.L. – Fr. Roza serves as a campus minister and teacher to Scotus Central Catholic in Columbus, NE.

Fr. Andy Syring, M.A., M.Div. – Fr. Syring is the Parochial Vicar of his home parish of Divine Mercy in Schuyler, NE, and is a part of the Good Leaders Good Shepherds leadership program.

Fr. Francis Valerio, M.Div. – Fr. Francis lives in a hermitage and devotes himself to solitude, prayer, work and ministry.

11. Attendance at Formation Weekends

Participation is first measured by attendance. Please note that all absences of Aspirants and Candidates must be excused by the Director. Unexcused absence is grounds for dismissal from the program. Participation also manifests itself in the engagement of shared group discussion during discussion sessions. Finally, participation includes active attention to those presenting, and seeking clarification and or asking questions when appropriate. Attendance is mandatory because the man must become competent in knowledge of scripture and doctrine, as well as learn the ways of ongoing study as a virtue after ordination.

12. Missing Weekend Policy

It is the responsibility of all diaconal aspirants and candidates to see to it that their formation for Holy Orders is of the highest priority. It is never acceptable to miss a formation weekend for any casual, recreational, or family reasons not involving health or death. Please make sure that your secular employment is informed about your vocation so that you can resolve any conflicts with them in favor of your freedom to be on formation weekends. Since all are in possession of the formation calendar for the next three years planning should be made easier to accomplish. Please note the following:

- All absences have to be excused and the *only valid excuses* include sickness, death, direct threat of unemployment from your employer, or severe weather.
- For those who miss a formation weekend other means for gaining the knowledge will be required: failure to secure these other means under the guidance of the Director will result in dismissal from the program. Such means may include viewing online lectures over the internet from a authorized teacher that specializes in diaconal formation as well as other requirements deemed necessary to make up the loss of formation content and time. If you miss two formation weekends your formation will be extended or your ordination delayed.

13. Weather Alert Policy

In the case of severe weather the Director will notify all of those in formation that the weekend has been cancelled. Due to the size of the Archdiocese there may be occasions where some men will have to absent themselves while a greater portion of men can make the travel to Norfolk in safety and the weekend will progress. If Norfolk is the center of the storm the entire weekend will be cancelled or if the instructors are unable to attend the entire weekend will be cancelled. All of those in formation must give to the Director three ways of being reached by the Director (e.g., home phone, cell phone, email, etc).

Please note that if storms cancel a weekend during the regular calendar year a summer month will be available to make up the missed dates, please reserve them on your calendar when announced.

14. Monthly Preparation

Each aspirant or candidate is responsible for the required reading given to them by their instructor through the Deacon Office. Preparation includes reading the material and taking notes so that the aspirant or candidate is ready to receive the presentations' content as familiar to him. Notes should be kept on the material on the discursive (what is the material about) and affective (what was Jesus doing within me when I read it) levels.

15. Book Reviews and Exams

Book Reviews

Book reviews may be given instead of an exam. Thus, candidates may want to have an outline complete upon arrival to the formation weekends because some of the discussion on those weekends may add a better and deeper insight for the review.

Exams

Exams will be distributed to the candidates at the end of the formation weekend. They are to be done at home, then mailed or emailed to the instructor before the deadline.

16. Wife of Aspirant/Candidate

The wife's role during the formation process is to assist and support her spouse in discerning his call to Ordination.

Wives of Aspirants/Candidates are encouraged to seek a Spiritual Director.

They are required to attend formation weekends during the aspirancy year.

After the aspirancy year wives are welcome to attend formation weekends but are not required to do so.

17. Dress Code

Aspirants, Candidates, and wives are required to adhere to the following guidelines for appropriate dress while in the formation program and for the following events:

Weekend Formation: Business Casual

Candidacy Mass: Business Dress (aspirants will vest with alb and cincture)

Pastoral Ministry: Check with the field coordinators

Lector and Acolyte Mass: Business Dress (candidates will vest with alb and cincture)

Ordination Rehearsal: Business Casual

Ordination Dinner: Business Dress

Ordination: Business Dress

Business Casual Dress Defined

Men: pants, shirt with collar (polo acceptable).

Women: slacks and blouse, sweater.

No jeans, sweat pants, or tee shirts.

Business Dress Defined

Men: coat and tie or suit and tie.

Women: dress, suit, pant suit, skirt with matching top.

18. Communication

The normal means of communication between the Deacon Office and all deacons and those in formation will be through an assigned Archdiocesan email address. There will also be essential data communicated regularly through the Vicar for Clergy's email newsletter which will come to each deacon and candidate through their Archdiocesan email.

E. Spiritual Formation

1. Description

Spiritual Formation is the heart of clerical formation. Each Deacon is to live in intimate and unceasing union with God (USCCB, *Program for Priestly Formation*, 5th ed. n.107). This disposition of prayer, this communion with the Trinity becomes the ever flowing source of all ministry. Without a developed and guarded prayer life, a deacon simply becomes a “helper, a man of service.” To serve without remaining in intimacy with God is the path to weariness, depression, and every temptation. Therefore, there is no work in formation more vital than the “work” of receiving and suffering God's love in prayer. To this end the most important relationship a man has in formation is the one he enters with his spiritual director. Each candidate is to meet with his spiritual director at least once a month. The content of direction is discussion about his prayer life, its images, affections, and graces received and refused. Spiritual direction aids in a man's capacity to discern his own voice from God's, his own will from God's. Spiritual direction assists a man to verbalize his conversations with God. To verbalize one's loving knowledge of God is crucial for becoming a good preacher, teacher, and spiritual counselor.

Spiritual direction is not pastoral counseling; it is not about problem solving or alleviating psychological pain. There are other forums for these. Obviously, when a man prays, he prays with his whole being so there will be some aspects of his psychological and pastoral and marital life that will be relevant but these are not the emphasis; the emphasis is his prayerful communion with the Trinity and his capacity or lack of capacity to receive that communion more and more deeply each month. During the course of formation these spiritual themes and activities will be emphasized:

- Learning how to receive the grace of Christ sharing His own servant mysteries
- Learning how to recognize Christ living in you
- Training in Lectio Divina,
- Formation in personal and communal prayer,
- Instruction in how to prayer the Liturgy of the Hours,
- Formation in how to be with Christ in Eucharistic Adoration,
- Aspects of Discernment of Spirits,
- Instruction on how to pray with people one-on-one,
- Formation in devotions such as the rosary, novenas, etc.

2. Requirements

Those in formation will be asked to:

- Commit to a personal relationship of love for the Holy Trinity,
- Possesses an ease in speaking about God’s work in his life and is able to express it in appropriate contexts,
- Integrates his academic study with prayer in the use of classroom journals,
- Attend Daily Mass, where possible and Regular attendance at Sunday Eucharist, commitment to praying Liturgy of the Hours, and at least monthly celebration of the Sacrament of Reconciliation,,
- Cultivates a devotion to Eucharistic Adoration and lectio divina,
- Commits to a spiritual direction relationship with a priest without fail,
- Make optional and required retreats with eagerness,
- Commits to communicating with God, and where appropriate, his wife and family, his feelings, fears, and hopes of spiritual life,
- When possible, he commits to praying with his wife and children each day beyond the minimum of grace before meals or night prayers,
- Commit to balance in regard to marriage and ministry commitments,
- Prayerfully explore a willingness to accept the gift of celibacy if so called; to speak truthfully about the gift and demands of a celibate life,
- Cultivate friends wherein spiritual conversation is preeminent and intentional,
- Integrate prayer with pastoral ministry, a capacity to receive grace even while giving himself in service,
- A willingness to help others with their spiritual life.

F. Pastoral Formation

1. Description

A deacon is called to love the poor. The Catholic Church understands poverty to be “neediness,” so anyone in some material or spiritual need is someone who elicits the ministry of Christ the servant. The deacon is to love the poor and not be anxious about “doing ministry right.” Effectiveness is important but more important is *a desire to be with those in need* as Christ was when he saw Zacchaeus or when he sat and spoke with the woman at the well. Primarily pastoral formation is about carrying the disinterested love of God to those in need. By loving the poor the deacon grows closer and closer to God who loves all humans for their own sake. Pastoral ministry is a response to “seeing” the poor after a man has finally let God see him in love. Although certainly personally fulfilling a deacon does not have his own private emotional needs met in ministry. No, he only loves because he has deeply received and is still receiving the love of God which compels Him to share such love with others.

Several components make up the pastoral formation program for Aspirants and Candidates. These include:

- Meetings with the Director of the Permanent Diaconate Program-and the Coordinator of Pastoral Formation,
- Meetings with the man’s pastor – minimum of four times a year,

- Parish/Community service,
- Supervised field experiences,
- A public teaching practicum, and
- The development of a supervised self-initiated ministry.

2. Requirements

Year one (aspirancy year)

Pastoral formation in the aspirancy year will consist of ongoing ministry work in the parish without additional diaconate formation responsibilities. This year is dedicated to spiritual formation, strengthening the marriage bond, and a greater dedication to the work already being conducted in the parish. Occasional meetings with the aspirant's pastor and the Coordinator of Pastoral Formation will also be required.

Year two

The new candidate will continue his work in the parish and meet with his pastor and the Coordinator of Pastoral Formation. In addition, the candidate will participate each month in a formation practicum session where he is trained in the useful diaconal activities, including homiletics, assisting at Mass, baptism, presiding at a wake service, visitation of the sick, exposition and benediction, the rite of marriage, and how to pray with people. On occasion he will be called upon to preach during the Liturgy of the Hours as well as to lead the intercessions. The candidate will also be challenged to begin to pray about and consider the autonomous ministry development project that he will do in his fourth year of formation.

Year three

The third year of formation builds upon year two's activities. The new component in year three is a series of pastoral formation field experiences. The candidate will also be challenged to continue to pray about and consider the self-initiated ministry development project that he will do in his fourth year of formation. During year three the broad outline of this project should begin to take shape in the mind of the candidate.

Year four

The fourth year of formation adds a component to the candidate's ongoing parish ministry, meetings with his pastor and Coordinator of Pastoral Formation, and the formation practicum sessions that will be held every weekend of formation. That component is a self-initiated ministry development project along with several sessions of public teaching.

See "A Guide to the Pastoral Formation of Permanent Deacons in the Archdiocese of Omaha, Nebraska" for additional details. This guide is available from the Deacon Office.

G. Human Formation

1. Goal

The goal of formation is the integration of the humanity of the diaconal candidate with his faith in Christ so that such integration can bear fruit as self-donation. In human formation, a man is challenged to let the truth of who he is be received in his conscience. This truth, when received in trust of God's Love, begins to free the man from any blindness or illusion about himself. Formation aims at freeing the man from such illusions, attachments to sin and artificial consolations so that he is ready to give himself to others in ministry. In human formation, a man's appropriation of Christ as the foundation of his own humanity is facilitated. One's gifts, personality, strengths, talents, weaknesses and limitations affect one's ministry, as do one's emotional, physical and spiritual limitations. The discovery of the self in Christ aims to deepen a man's freedom to serve out of emotional, moral and spiritual maturity. To participate fully in human formation, a man needs to enter prayer generously and freely reveal the truth about himself in regular meetings with the Director of the Permanent Diaconate, who represents the Archbishop.

2. Evaluations

General evaluation is based upon the aspirant's/candidate's presence and participation at weekend formation, his pastoral ministry, his participation in class which demonstrates careful preparation and proper research, and his one-on-one sessions with the human formation advisors. This written assessment is made by the Director and Coordinator of Pastoral Formation.

Particular written evaluations are produced by the Director, the man's pastor, his teachers, the Coordinator of Pastoral Formation, and the human formation advisors. The results of these evaluations are given to the archbishop each year. The deacon candidate may review the evaluation and comment upon it to the Director. The evaluations are based upon demonstrated ability to:

- Articulate the truth about one's freedom to say "yes" to Christ and the demand his love makes for continual conversion
- Be a man who readily acknowledges both strengths and weaknesses
- Possess a freedom from anxiety that is rooted in the reception of God's ongoing love for the man as one who is receptive to the truth
- The ability to discern one's vocation with the Church free from the expectations of others
- An ease and eagerness to seek counsel, and a willing inclusion of the wisdom of others in his own thoughts
- To demonstrate a spirit of gratitude free from all cynicism, sarcasm, self-aggrandizement
- Establish deep self-knowledge illuminated by a prayerful knowledge of God
- Appropriate professional and spiritual boundaries to maintain personal and psychological health
- Demonstrate personal and professional preparedness in ministry

- Cultivate true Christian friendships
- Demonstrate appropriate respect, responsibility, and accountability to the archbishop
- Become a hospitable person creating an environment where people feel free to come to you to share their pain, burdens and needs
- Express oneself clearly
- Maintain a healthy balance in personal life and ministry
- Be flexible and assign appropriate priorities in varied circumstances
- Demonstrate dependability and trustworthiness
- Communicate with and relate to a wide variety of people
- Discern and evaluate ever-changing pastoral needs
- Physically exercise is encouraged

3. Human Formation Advisor.

Human formation advisors meet individually with the aspirants and candidates during formation weekends. They complete a human formation advisor form and submit it to the Director. Following is a copy of that form:

HUMAN FORMATION ADVISOR FORM

Name of Aspirant/Candidate: _____ Date: _____

Aspirant/Candidate begins session with prayer.

1. “Regarding your personality, where have you been a bridge, inviting people to Christ and where have you been an obstacle for those seeking Christ?”
2. (Follow-up): “What have you learned from your wife about your personality in relation to your strengths and weaknesses?”
3. “Where are you challenged in your spiritual and academic readings to grow into the maturity of Christ (in your capacity of self-gift)?”
4. “Describe a time in ministry when you knew your virtues were being used by Christ.” [Some virtues include courage, intelligence, chastity, prudence, etc.].
5. “Where in your pastoral ministry might you have refused to be a servant of Christ, either in behavior or interior attitude?”
6. “What kind of interaction relevant to your formation as a deacon did you have with your pastor this past month?”

7. “Describe the ways your marriage bond is being strengthened or threatened by diaconal formation.”

For Advisor Only: please complete your assessment from this conference:

ASSESSMENT OF ASPIRANT:

DEMONSTRATED ABILITY	AREA OF STRENGTH	AREA FOR IMPROVEMENT & GROWTH
Self-knowledge illuminated by a prayerful knowledge of God		
Readily acknowledges his own strengths and weaknesses.		
An ease and eagerness to seek counsel, and a willing inclusion of the wisdom of others in his own thoughts.		
Maintains a healthy balance in personal life and ministry.		
Ability to communicate with and relate to a wide variety of people.		
The ability to discern his vocation with the Church free from all expectations of others.		
A hospitable man creating an environment where people feel free to come and share their pain, burdens and needs.		
Possesses a freedom from anxiety, rooted in the reception of God’s on-going love for him as his receptiveness to the truth.		

OBSTACLES TO FORMATION

OBSTACLE	FOLLOW-UP DISCUSSION REQUIRED	COMMENTS FROM ASPIRANT

NO OBSTACLES IDENTIFIED AT THIS TIME:

_____ Initials

Advisor Signature

Date

Please place any additional notes on the back. Check the box if you have placed any notes there.



H. Ordination Activities

1. Ordination Rehearsal

This is held at the Cathedral on the Friday night before ordination. Ordinandi and their spouses, if they are married, are required to attend.

2. Ordination Dinner

This is held in the Cultural Center behind the Cathedral on the Friday night before ordination. Ordinandi and their spouses, if they are married, are invited.

3. Ordination Liturgy

All formation classes attend the Ordination Mass which is held at St. Cecilia Cathedral.

IV. Diaconate Formation for the Ordained

A. Ongoing Formation for Permanent Deacons

1. The ongoing formation of permanent deacons is under the care and evaluation of the Deacon Office which delegates the organization of this formation to the Deacon Council. For further understanding of the mission of the Deacon Council, please see Appendix A. Approval of Policies and Procedures:

- Adopted October 8, 2011
- Effective January 1, 2012
- Revised January 17, 2012

2. Policy on Continuing Education.

Continued growth both in theological knowledge and pastoral skills is essential to the ongoing formation and development of a permanent deacon. To this end, all permanent deacons in active service within the Archdiocese of Omaha are required to obtain a minimum of twenty

(20) contact hours of continuing education on a calendar year basis. Each active deacon shall submit a report of his continuing education activities to the Permanent Diaconate Office on a semi-annual (June 20th and December 20th) basis. The form to be used for reporting such activities is included in this policy.

The requirement for continuing education is measured in contact hours. This means that for every hour of instruction or skill building in which a deacon takes part, one hour of credit is allowed towards the fulfillment of the twenty (20) hour annual requirement. Each deacon is ultimately responsible for attending workshops, courses, small groups, etc. which will provide him the hours needed to meet the requirements of this policy. The Archdiocesan Deacon Council, however, will assist deacons in locating opportunities to help fulfill the expectations.

To ensure that the educational requirements are achieved, certain criteria have been established and are stated below to assist each deacon in determining what qualifies as appropriate content for fulfillment of the contact hour's requirement:

- a. The scope and nature of the instruction taken should be that it adds to the intellectual knowledge or practical skills of the deacon (especially relative to the ministries of Word, Worship, and Justice/Charity), or that it helps in his spiritual development. Any courses which provide background, or updating in your present ministry, or courses which will prepare you for other types of ministry are considered to be appropriate for continuing education.
- b. Contact hours are to be distinguished from total hours offered in a particular program. The twenty (20) hour requirement is fulfilled by time in which one is actually getting information, learning new skills, etc. The following activities are not normally considered contact hours:
 - (1) Travel to and from the place where instruction is given
 - (2) Informational meetings or conferences
 - (3) Retreats
 - (4) Prayer services and liturgies
 - (5) Spiritual Direction sessions
 - (6) Parish Council or committee meetings
 - (7) Social gatherings
 - (8) Archdiocesan Boards and Committee meetings
 - (9) Support group functions
 - (10) Courses not directly related to ministerial service
 - (11) Conducting classes, workshops, retreats, etc.

Courses need not necessarily be offered by a Catholic institution. Deacons are encouraged to look upon workshops or formal academic courses in counseling, social work, and any other human helping skills as appropriate for continuing education credit.

c. Credit may be recorded in whole or in part using the following guidelines:

- (1) Attendance at courses which grant certificates, whether they are national, regional, or local courses, may simply be reported according to the number of actual contact hours of instruction or practice.
- (2) Creighton University and/or other university/college courses: count one contact hour for each classroom hour attended. Add an additional five (5) hours of contact for course preparation including the final exam.

(3) Adult enrichment courses offered at parishes, in local high school programs, hospitals, etc. count one hour for each contact hour of lecture or classroom work attended.

(4) Other formal courses, conferences, seminars, or workshops are to be reported as in #3 above, each hour of instruction being counted as one contact hour.

(5) Self-study projects: According to the Continuing Education policy, a maximum of ten (10) contact hours in self-study may be used toward fulfilling the yearly requirement. Self-study projects which may be considered include individual reading of books, periodicals, etc. specifically related to enhancing a deacon's ministry knowledge base (other than just leisure reading), library research, listening to CDs, viewing DVDs, etc.

(6) Other activities: General reading of a theological, pastoral, or spiritual nature, homiletic research, pilgrimage, C.P.E., internships, and formal ministry supervision experiences would all be appropriate activities to fulfill a deacon's continuing education responsibility.

(7) On-the-job experience: Very often a deacon in his civil occupation may be attending programs which are beneficial to his skills as a deacon. Any job-related courses which, in fact, build the personal skills of a deacon for his ministry should certainly be included as providing contact hours in fulfillment of the continuing education policy.

(8) Online (or distance) continuing education courses. Contact hours will be credited as prescribed by the online course provider.

Particular emphasis is made to small group study in the fulfillment of the annual CE requirement. Gathering in small groups (e.g., parishes, deacon geographical "areas", etc.) can be an effective way to learn, to share ideas, and to grow. Examples of small group study can include viewing of DVDs; discussion of a particular spiritual or theological book that the group has read; discussing a social teaching of the Catholic Church or papal encyclical, etc. There is a wealth of subject material available to deacons in a variety of formats. Another example of an effective continuing education experience is when a deacon offers a lecture(s) to a small group on a particular subject in which he has expertise.

3. Continuing Education Reporting.

Following completion of a particular continuing education unit, the deacon is encouraged to write a brief report outlining the knowledge that was gained and how the learning applies to his ongoing development as a deacon. Novel ways of communicating these messages abound, such as creating a video using Archdiocesan equipment and subsequently posting it to the diaconate web page. In this way, a deacon can share his ongoing formation with the community.

The reporting form for continuing education activities is available online.

4. Policy on Ongoing Spiritual Formation.

a. Ongoing spiritual formation is essential to the lifelong development of a permanent deacon. Some recommended spiritual exercises to assist the deacon in developing and promoting his spiritual life include:

- (1) Daily or frequent participation in the Eucharist, as well as daily or frequent Eucharistic adoration, as often as his secular employment and family situation allow.
- (2) Regular reception of the Sacrament of Reconciliation (at least monthly).
- (3) Daily celebration of the Liturgy of the Hours, particularly morning and evening prayer (This is required).
- (4) Shared prayer with his family.
- (5) Lectio divina.
- (6) Devotion to Mary, the Mother of God.
- (7) Prayerful preparation of oneself prior to the celebration of the sacraments, preaching, or beginning one's ministry of charity and service.
- (8) Theological reflection.
- (9) Regular spiritual direction (see discussion following.)
- (10) Participation in an annual retreat (see discussion following.)
- (11) Authentic living of one's state of life and vocation with particular regard for the sacrament of Holy Orders.
- (12) Time for personal and familial growth.

b. Specific Archdiocesan requirements relative to ongoing spiritual formation which require annual reporting to the Office of the Permanent Diaconate are:

- (1) Spiritual direction: Each deacon is required to have a spiritual director with whom they confer regularly. Each deacon shall provide a written report to the Office of the Permanent Diaconate on a semi-annual basis stating the name of his spiritual director and the number of times met during the reporting period. The form to be used to report this information is available online.
- (2) Annual retreat: To facilitate growth and ongoing conversion, active deacons are required by canon law to make at least one (1) retreat each calendar year. The retreat must be at least twenty-four (24) consecutive hours in duration. Deacons are free to choose any appropriate retreat. The Archdiocese of Omaha will strive to offer one or more retreats each year to facilitate completion of this requirement.

5. Men's Ministry Programs.

Of particular importance in the Archdiocese of Omaha is the development and nurturing of men's ministry programs.

To the extent that a deacon has the proper skills and desire, through the graces of the Holy Spirit, he is encouraged to learn about and support the ongoing efforts of bringing lay men to Christ through leadership in developing men's ministry programs in the Archdiocese. The Permanent Diaconate Office particularly encourages deacons to attend learning sessions or workshops on how to 1) evangelize men, 2) teach men to pray, 3) assist men in becoming authentic Catholic spouses and fathers, and 4) be better witnesses to Christ in their professions and while participating in cultural and political activities.

B. Contact Information

Director of the Permanent Diaconate Office

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Deacon Council President

Deacon Marty Warwick
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mwarwick@stephen.org

C. Issues for the Ordained

1. Definition of Diaconal Status

- a. *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 Diaconate Ordination or Incardination into the Archdiocese, the Diocesan bishop grants diaconal faculties.
- b. *Active*: A deacon who is functioning within the parish, agency, or institution to which he is assigned by the archbishop and is fulfilling liturgical, ministerial, or staff functions.
- c. *Retired*: A deacon who, because of age or infirmity, has withdrawn from active ministry. He may still minister in whatever manner he is able, especially at the altar and in the ministry of preaching, as long as he is current with all diocesan requirements, e.g. Safe Environment Certification.
- d. *Temporary Leave of Absence*: A deacon who at his own request has been granted authorization by the archbishop to withdraw from active diaconal ministry for a fixed period of time. Faculties will be withdrawn at this time. The Chancery will notify the Deacon of this status.
- e. *Inactive*: A deacon who through his own action/inaction or through mutual agreement is not functioning in an assigned diaconal role. Faculties as a Deacon are revoked or cease when the period of inactivity is determined. The Chancery will notify the Deacon of this status.
- f. *Administrative Leave of Absence*: A deacon who has been relieved of all responsibility by the archbishop or his representative for any ecclesiastical office or function, as well as participating in active ministry. He may not function or represent himself as a deacon while this status is in effect. This is usually a temporary withdrawal from ministry without seeking laicization. Faculties are revoked pending resolution of the reason(s) for the leave of absence. The Chancery will notify the deacon of this status.

g. *Suspended*: A deacon whose faculties have been suspended by the archbishop or his representative may not function as a Deacon in any parish, agency or institution of the archdiocese. The Chancery will issue a letter to the deacon subjecting him to this canonical penalty.

h. *Laicized*: A deacon who voluntarily or involuntarily is returned to the lay state by the Holy Father at the request of the archbishop. The Chancery will notify the deacon of this decision.

2. Deacon Role in Ministry

a. Ministry to the Faith Community

(1) Meet family obligations

(a) On occasion a deacon should worship at Mass with his own family in a pew.

(b) Flexibility in ministry to meet family, work and personal needs

(2) Assist as Deacon at weekend liturgies: Regular rotation schedule

(3) Assist as Deacon on Holy Days and at other special liturgies and celebrations

(a) Ash Wednesday

(b) Holy Week; especially Palm Sunday and the Sacred Triduum

(c) Christmas

(d) First Communion

(e) Confirmation

(f) National Holidays

(g) Other Concelebrated Liturgies

(4) Participate in communal sacramental celebrations

(a) Distribute ashes on Ash Wednesday

(b) Visitation of the Sick and Viaticum for the sick and dying

(c) Other communal sacramental celebrations e.g. Liturgy of the Hours, Blessing of Throats, Eucharistic Adoration, etc.

(5) Preach Homilies and Proclaim the Word

(a) In accordance with the schedule set by the pastor

(b) During Church devotions (e.g. Novenas, Rosary, Eucharistic Adoration, parish missions, retreats) when presiding

(c) Baptisms when officiating minister

(d) Weddings:

(d1) When officiating minister,

(d2) When requested by couple.

(e) Vigils, Mass of Christian Burial, and Committals

(6) Celebrate the Sacrament of Baptism: Regular rotation schedule

(7) Conduct Vigil Services: Regular schedule/ as needed by priests

(8) Witness Sacrament of Matrimony: Usually when requested by couple or within ecumenical marriages where no Mass is being celebrated.

(9) Perform works of charity according the spiritual and corporeal works of Mercy

b. Specific Ministry beyond parish

Some possibilities:

(1) Serve as Spiritual Advisor (or Spiritual Director when proper training has been received)

(a) To specific parish organizations as appointed

(b) To fraternal/charitable organizations in the parish

(c) To Deacons and/or spouses as selected

(d) To lay ministers in the parish (as appointed/selected)

(2) Participate in Sacramental preparation programs

(3) Serve on Parish and/or Archdiocesan Committees

c. Other Expectations

(1) Maintain a current ministry agreement with the parish, agency or institution he serves.

(2) Meet with pastor/ministry staff supervisor on regular basis.

(3) Participate in staff meetings when scheduling permits.

(4) Attend an annual spiritual retreat.

(5) Participate in continuing education programs in accordance with the guidelines of the Archdiocese.

(6) Deacons are required to include as part of their daily prayer those parts of the liturgy of the hours known as Morning and Evening Prayer. Deacons are obliged to pray for the universal Church. Whenever possible, they should lead these prayers with the community to whom they have been assigned to minister.

(7) A deacon may not present his name for election to any public office or in any other general election, or accept a nomination or an appointment to public office, without the prior written permission of the Archbishop. A deacon may not actively and publicly participate in another's political campaign without the prior written permission of the Archbishop.

(8) To provide for their own upkeep, every deacon is obliged to satisfy the legal requirements for Social Security benefits or a comparable program.

(9) Deacons in full-time employment by the diocese, parish, or agency are to receive remuneration commensurate with the salaries and benefits provided to the laymen and laywomen on staff for that particular occupation.

(10) Deacons are obliged to obtain the permission of their diocesan bishop before submitting for publication written material concerning faith and morals.

3. Procedure for Permission to minister

a. Deacons who move into the Archdiocese and wish to minister within it must obtain temporary faculties. This applies whether they seek incardination here or remain attached to their home diocese.

b. Such a deacon should request a personal interview with the Director of the Diaconate. After a full review and consultation with the deacon's former Diocese, the Director will request temporary faculties from the Chancery. A letter will accompany this from the

local pastor requesting the services of the deacon and the pastor's willingness to accept and work with him.

c. When a permanent deacon of the Eastern Catholic Churches is granted bi-ritual faculties to assist in the Roman Church, the theological understanding of the sacraments and the order of the diaconate in the Eastern Catholic Churches are to be respected. A deacon of the Eastern Catholic Churches is not to be allowed to solemnize marriages in the Roman Church.

4. Attire and Title

The *Code of Canon Law* does not oblige permanent deacons to wear ecclesiastical garb. The National Directory suggests that each Ordinary should, however, determine and promulgate any exceptions to this law, as well as specify the appropriate clerical attire if it is to be worn, (e.g., in prison ministry) where it supports the deacon in his ministry. Deacons should refrain from wearing “excessive” signs of devotion (e.g., large pectoral crosses, shirts mimicking clerical collars, etc). Diaconal lapel pins are modest and encouraged if a deacon desires a public sign of his clerical vocation.

Liturgical books clearly specify the liturgical garb of a deacon for various rites and liturgical celebration. The normal vesture for a deacon assisting at Mass is the alb, stole, and dalmatic. Without causing undue financial stress each parish that has a deacon ministering at the altar should provide dalmatics.

REGARDING TITLE: in all forms of address for permanent deacons, the appropriate title is “**Deacon**”. The abbreviated form is “**Dcn.**” It is proper for a deacon to affix this title on printed material (e.g., church bulletins, business cards, documents, letters, publications, etc.) and to refer to himself as such publicly. The title “Reverend Mr.” is reserved for transitional deacons.

5. Ministry Agreement Guidelines

a. Every deacon ministering in the Archdiocese of Omaha should have a current Ministry Agreement in effect to avoid any misunderstanding and to establish a means of communication.

b. This agreement should be effected with the parish or agency to which the deacon is assigned. This agreement is for the parish/institution and is signed by the pastor/director on behalf of the parish/institution.

c. The following sample is just a guide to developing a Ministry Agreement:

Ministry Agreement
Deacon Assignment
Archdiocese of Omaha

This ministry agreement is entered into this date between Deacon and his Pastor/Director,
at (Parish/Agency/Institution)

(Address and Zip Code)

The Deacon hereby agrees to perform the following duties:

The Deacon agrees to commit (approx.) hours of ministry each week. Special conditions of Ministry:

This agreement is for a year period commencing on and ending on unless otherwise stated herein, or until such time as mutually agreed to by the Deacon, the Pastor/Director and the Ordinary. The Deacon will receive the following compensation in accordance with the Archdiocesan policy for clergy:

a. Continuing Education Allowance (see section 7 below)

b. Annual Retreat Allowance (see section 7 below)

(Deacon's signature) (Spouse's signature)

(Pastor's signature) (Director's signature)

Original to Office of the Diaconate

Copy to Deacon

Copy to Parish

6. Ministry Appraisal

- Ministry appraisals should occur at regular intervals, usually annually. The archbishop is the ultimate supervisor of the deacon during this appraisal and should call upon the pastor of the parish or institution where the deacon is assigned. The archbishop, along with his curial staff, will supervise deacons who do not have a parish assignment.
- Ministry appraisal procedures presume written ministry agreements and clear lines of supervision and accountability.
- Ministry appraisals should reflect a process of establishing yearly goals and objectives for each ministerial position.
- Ministry appraisals offer the opportunities to comment on the performance or the performance review.
- Ministry appraisals should include a self-evaluation, as well as that of the immediate supervisor, and input from appropriate external sources.

Feedback from ministry appraisals is directed toward the mutual growth of each minister and his immediate supervisor.

In the event of consistently poor ministry appraisals, a detailed supervisory procedure should be initiated. No detailed supervisory procedures will be initiated until areas in need of improvement are identified in writing and communicated to the deacon. Mutually agreeable goals and a time line for meeting the goals should be developed. Failure to meet goals in accordance with the time line as determined by a second ministry appraisal may result in additional supervisory action.

Newly ordained deacons are to be appointed to and supervised by a priest, where relevant and possible. This pastoral care of a newly ordained deacon, coordinated by the Director of the Diaconate, extends for the first year after ordination. This time would include opportunities for ongoing formation, with an initial emphasis upon the issues and concerns voiced by the newly

ordained as he gains ministerial experience. It is likewise a unique opportunity to assist the deacon's family as it adjusts to its new situation within the community.

7. Financial Assistance

- a. Parishes/pastors are encouraged to support assigned deacons financially with parish funds to defray the costs for continuing education and for an annual retreat. The amount of funding is to be negotiated by the deacon and the parish or agency to which he is officially assigned. It is recommended that each deacon know the amount allotted for this benefit at the beginning of the fiscal year. The benefit is given only when utilized for these two purposes, and does not accrue beyond that fiscal year.
- b. Beyond this funding, consideration should be given by the parish to which a deacon is assigned to provide dalmatics and stoles for the deacon. The deacon is responsible for acquiring his own alb and cincture.
- c. Offerings for baptisms, weddings, wake services or funerals, which a deacon performs, should be allocated in a just and equitable manner.

8. Deacon Assignment Policy

Deacons are ordained for the Church as a whole and serve within the Archdiocese. The following procedures will be used to make official assignments for deacons:

- a. The first assignment in the Archdiocese, or when a Deacon begins the process of incardination, will be made by the archbishop in consultation with the Pastor/Administrator of the parish/institution, the Director of the Diaconate, the Deacon and spouse. Generally speaking, it is imagined that this assignment will be to serve his home parish.
- b. In addition, the Archbishop may assign the deacon to extra-parochial duties.
- c. It is expected that the assigned deacon and family shall reside within a reasonable proximity and travel time to the deacon's ministerial assignment.
- d. All changes in diaconal ministry assignment will be processed through the same procedure as the Deacon's first assignment; i.e., in consultation with the archbishop, the Pastor/Administrator of the parish/institution of assignment, the Director of the Diaconate, the Deacon and spouse.
- e. A Deacon may request reassignment due to relocation, or to more fully utilize his skills and talents. The Director of the Diaconate will advise the Deacon and the Diaconate Community of any assignments that are available.
- f. It is expected that the assigned Deacon and family will reside within a reasonable proximity and travel time to the new assignment.
- g. All assignments will be formalized by the Archbishop in writing and will be published in *The Catholic Voice*.

9. Procedures for Incardination/Excardination Diocese by a Deacon

- a. A Deacon wanting to transfer to or from a diocese follows the norms provided in the *Code of Canon Law*, especially cc. 267 and 271.
- b. Documentation that the Deacon is required to provide:
 - (1) Write letter of notification to his diocesan bishop/Director regarding the intended move.
 - (2) Write letter of notification to the new Director/Diocesan bishop informing them of the intended move into the diocese.
 - (3) Provide the new Director with a resume that would include:
 - (a) Curriculum vitae,
 - (b) List of ministerial experiences,
 - (c) Statement of specific talents and skills,
 - (d) Special language skills,
 - (e) Names and addresses of former pastors/supervisors under which he served,
 - (f) A copy of previously assigned faculties.
- c. Responsibility of the Deacon Director: Prepare a letter of introduction and recommendation and transmit it to the Director of the Diocese to which the Deacon desires to transfer.
- d. Responsibility of the Receiving Director:
 - (1) Interview deacon (and wife if applicable).
 - (2) Obtain necessary documentation and letters of reference.
 - (3) Follow local requirements of diocese and established procedures.
- e. Upon completion of these steps the Director may request that the faculties of the Diocese be extended to the Deacon.
- f. Until such time as the Deacon completes the incardination/excardination process according to the norms of the Code of Canon Law and the Diocesan guideline, he remains attached to the Diocese in which he is incardinated.

10. Leave of Absence

There are two types of leaves presently granted: 1) Temporary - for a designated period, and 2) Administrative - undesignated, with return to ministry dependent on deacon's request, his suitability for ministry and the availability of assignment.

A leave of absence may be granted to a deacon when formally requested in writing to the Diocesan Bishop. After a personal meeting with the Bishop or his representative, 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 Archdiocese.

Such leave will be granted for a period agreed upon by the Bishop of the diocese. 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 still possesses "good standing" within the Diocese. He is encouraged to participate in all activities of the diaconal community (social, spiritual,

educational). However, faculties will be removed during this leave and the deacon may not function in any ministerial capacity.

11. Administrative Leave

- a. A deacon who is placed on administrative leave is relieved of all responsibility for any ecclesiastical office or function, as well as participation in active ministry. He may not function or represent himself as a deacon while this is in effect.
- b. This is usually a temporary withdrawal from ministry. Faculties are revoked pending resolution of the reason(s) for the leave of absence.
- c. If the matter is resolved favorably, the deacon will be returned to the "active" status. Lacking a favorable resolution, the deacon will either be placed on "inactive" status indefinitely or even "suspended" if warranted canonically.

12. Loss of the Clerical State by a Deacon and a Dispensation from All the Obligations of Ordination

- a. In accord with current canonical legislation the request of a Deacon for the loss of the clerical state and a dispensation from all the obligations of ordination may be granted only "*ob graves causas*" (Can. 290, § 3), whether for a transitional or permanent deacon, diocesan or religious. The petition must include the following documents:
 - (1) An explicit request by the Deacon for the favor, signed in his own hand and addressed to the Holy Father, giving a brief description of the reasons which led to the petition.
 - (2) The "*Curriculum Vitae*" of the petitioner should include an explanation of: the seriousness of the reasons for the request, the development of events which led to the crisis, and where the responsibility for the same lies, i.e., either with the Deacon or due to external factors.
 - (3) The "*votum*" of the archbishop of incardination concerning "*de rei veritate*" and the advisability of granting a return to the lay state and a dispensation from the obligations of Holy Orders.
 - (4) The testimonies or depositions of Superiors, professors and colleagues from the time of formation and the period of diaconal ministry.
 - (5) The acts from the archdiocesan archives regarding the period of formation and the scrutinies for his admission to Holy Orders (Can. 1051).
- b. A complete judicial process is generally required for the dismissal of a deacon from the clerical state who will not ask for the same of his own volition (cf. Canon 1342 § 2). In this case, it is necessary to prove, not only a lack of fitness for ministry, but also that the deacon committed a crime for which the *Code of Canon Law* envisions a dismissal from the clerical state.
 - The responsibility for conducting such a process rests with the archbishop.

13. Protocol for the Incardination/Excarnation of Deacons

a. Foundational Principles

(1) Historical and Theological Principles

(a) Incardination specifies the relationship of clerics to the Church and the service which they render in it. Taken from the Latin term *incardinare* (to hang on a hinge) incardination is traditionally used to refer to the attachment of the priest or deacon to a particular local church headed by the diocesan bishop. Theologically it underscores the close, permanent association of bishops, presbyters and deacons in the church's ordained ministry and hierarchical structure. Canonically the term referred both to one's diocese of ordination as well as the practice of transferring one's allegiance from one local church to another, and hence from one diocesan bishop to another. The ordained priest or deacon may thus be excardinated from one diocese and incardinated into another but only at the judgment of the local ordinaries.

(b) In light of the teaching of Vatican II on the ordained ministry, the restoration of the diaconate as a permanent order in the church and the revised rites of ordination, the notion of incardination is grounded theologically in the call to ordination in and for a local church and the way priests and deacons function for the service of a local church. Deacons and priests are ministers of the community and as such are representatives of the diocesan bishop.

(2) Canonical Norms

(a) Canon 265: "Every cleric must be incardinated into some particular church..."

(b) Canon 266.1: "A person becomes a cleric through the reception of the diaconate and is incardinated into a particular church or personal prelatore for whose services he has been advanced."

(c) Canon 267.1: "In order for a cleric already incardinated to be incardinated validly into another particular church, he must obtain from the diocesan bishop a letter of excardination signed by the diocesan bishop; he must likewise obtain from the diocesan bishop of the particular church into which he desires to be incardinated a letter of incardination signed by that diocesan bishop."

b. Implementation

(1) A deacon transferring from his own diocese to another diocese will do the following:

(a) When the decision has been made to move to a new diocese, the deacon will inform the diocesan director of the diaconate, or the diocesan bishop of the impending move. In like manner, the deacon will write to the bishop of the new diocese to inform the diocesan bishop of his pending arrival, stating his intention to call on the diocesan bishop or his delegate in person after his arrival.

(b) The deacon will request that the director of the diaconate forward to the diaconate director or the bishop of the new diocese a letter from the

- diocesan bishop providing information regarding the new move together with appropriate letters of recommendation and evaluation.
- (2) The diocesan bishop will send or cause to have sent to the receiving diocesan bishop and/or his director of the diaconate the following:
- (a) A letter informing the receiving diocesan bishop of the impending move with a statement of the just cause of the deacon's move (e.g. employment, retirement or health conditions) together with letters of recommendation and evaluation.
 - (b) A résumé of the deacon's personal history, which will be the basis for a character reference together with the recently adapted protocol between bishops testifying to the deacon's record of conduct and moral integrity.
 - (c) A written record of the deacon's academic, spiritual and pastoral formation, to include notation of academic degrees awarded or citations earned.
 - (d) An evaluation of the deacon's ministry.
- (3) Upon arrival in the host diocese, the deacon will call upon the diocesan bishop or his director of the diaconate to make his presence known as well as his desire for diaconal faculties and a diaconal assignment.
- (4) The diocesan bishop or his director of the diaconate will evaluate the deacon's resume and examine the needs of the diocese. After favorable review, the diocesan bishop will give the deacon faculties and a temporary assignment. The diocesan bishop would appoint a supervisor to the deacon and indicate that evaluations will take place at six and twelve month intervals.
- (5) After due and prayerful consideration, the deacon will write to his diocesan bishop to advise him of his intent to seek incardination in the diocese in which he is now resident and excardination from his diocese of incardination.
- (6) After the deacon has served in the new diocese for a time, usually for a minimum of two years, and after suitable evaluations, the deacon may petition the diocesan bishop for incardination assuming it is his intent to remain permanently within the diocese.
- (7) After receiving letters of suitable evaluation and the recommendation of his deacon director and having weighed the relative merits of the deacon's petition and the needs of the diocese, the diocesan bishop will respond to the petition and indicate his willingness regarding incardination.
- (8) If the diocesan bishop expresses willingness to the incardinate the deacon, the deacon will write to his bishop of incardination for a letter of excardination, which will include an explanation of the just cause(s) for the request.
- (9) The excardination bishop executes a document to the effect that the deacon is granted a permanent and unconditional excardination. In accord with Canon 267 the letter must be signed by the diocesan bishop and in view of Canon 270 include the declaration that the excardination is being given for just cause.
- (10) After receiving the legitimately executed document of excardination, the new diocesan bishop issues a decree of incardination within one month and notifies the diocese of excardination of the incardination of the deacon. Incardination to the

receiving diocese is not completed until both documents have been executed and the bishops (*a quo* and *ad quem*) have been duly notified.

c. The following documents should be on file in the diocese or other entity for which a deacon is ordained:

- (1) Certificate of baptism
- (2) Certificate of confirmation
- (3) Certificate of freedom from irregularities and impediments
- (4) Certification that studies have been completed
- (5) Certificates of installation as lector and as acolyte
- (6) Certificate of admission as candidate for orders
- (7) Declaration of freedom in applying for the order
- (8) Married candidate for diaconate, written consent of his wife and marriage certificate
- (9) Testimonial from deacon director concerning the candidate's qualities
- (10) Certificate of ordination to the diaconate

d. Excardination/Incardination Sample Letters.

- (1) Letter from Deacon to New Bishop of Diocese to Which He Is Moving

Most Reverend Chanute Vicarius
Bishop of Newminster

Your Excellency:

I am a deacon of the Diocese of Oldminster in good standing. By reason of employment (or for reasons of health and on the recommendation of my doctor) I shall be relocating into your diocese after the beginning of September. Following my arrival in the Diocese of Newminster, I shall call your office to request an appointment to call on you or your designated representative. I have requested of my diocesan bishop that a letter of introduction to be sent to you.

Sincerely yours,
Deacon Stephen Diaconos
cc: Vicar for Deacons
Diocesan Director of Diaconate

- (2) Letter from Deacon to His Bishop Informing of Impending Move From Diocese

Most Reverend Christian Romanum
Bishop of Oldminster
Your Excellency:

By reason of transfer of employment (or reason of condition of health and recommendation of change in climate by my doctor) it is my intention to leave the

Diocese of Oldminster and resettle in the Diocese of Newminster, effective the first day of September. It is requested that a letter be sent to the Bishop of Newminster providing information of this move with appropriate letters of recommendation and evaluation. Sincerely yours,

Deacon Stephen Diaconos
cc: Vicar for Deacons
Diocesan Director of Diaconate

(3) Letter of Recommendation and Evaluation From Deacon's Ordinary to Receiving Bishop

Most Reverend Chanute Vicarius
Bishop of Newminster

Your Excellency:

Deacon Stephen Diaconos, a deacon in good standing in this diocese, by reason of transfer in employment (or for reasons of health and on the recommendation of his doctor) will be relocating into your diocese after the beginning of September. Enclosed is a resume of Deacon Diaconos's personal history, a written record of his academic, spiritual and pastoral formation, and an evaluation of his ministry. It is requested that favorable consideration be given to providing Deacon Diaconos with a suitable ministerial assignment. Your assistance in this matter is deeply appreciated.

Sincerely yours,
Christian Romanus
Bishop of Oldminster

(4) Letter From Receiving Bishop to Deacon Informing of Temporary Assignment

Deacon Stephen Diaconos
Newminster

Dear Deacon Diaconos,
In accordance with the request of the Bishop of Oldminster, your own expressed desire for a ministerial assignment, following a review of your resume and appropriate consultation, in response to ministerial needs you are hereby assigned on a temporary basis to the Pastoral Care Team at St. Mary's Hospital and as pastoral minister in Saint Paul Parish, Rocky Hills, of which the Reverend George Smiley is Pastor, effectively immediately. You are accorded the following faculties of the Diocese of Newminster: (here listed). These faculties are valid

until withdrawn. Father Smiley will also serve as your supervisor and he will conduct evaluations of your ministry at six month intervals.

Sincerely yours,
Chanute Vicarius
Bishop of Newminster

(5) Deacon's Letter to His Diocesan Bishop Stating His Intention to Seek Incardination Elsewhere

Most Reverend Christian Romanum
Bishop of Oldminster

Your Excellency:

I have been resident in the Diocese of Newminster for ___ years. It appears that I shall be living here indefinitely. During this time I have been given faculties to minister in the Diocese of Newminster. After prayerful reflection, it is my intention, God willing, to seek incardination in the Diocese of Newminster and excardination from the Diocese of Oldminster.

Sincerely yours,
Deacon Stephen Diaconos
cc: Vicar for Deacons
Diocesan Director of the Diaconate

(6) Letter From Deacon to Receiving Bishop Requesting Incardination

Most Reverend Chanute Vicarius
Bishop of Newminster

Your Excellency:

Having served the Diocese of Newminster ___ years with favorable evaluations of my ministry, because of the pastoral needs of the Diocese, my own interest and pastoral formation, I desire to continue to provide pastoral ministry. I have therefore requested excardination from my diocese of incardination to the Diocese of Oldminster, and the bishop has indicated his willingness to grant this. I now hereby request incardination in the Diocese of Newminster and declare that I wish to be dedicated to the service of the Diocese of Newminster in accord with the norm of law.

Sincerely yours,
Deacon Stephen Diaconos

(7) Letter of Incardinating Bishop to Deacon

Deacon Stephen Diaconos
Newminster

Dear Deacon Diaconos,

After consulting with the personnel board of this diocese, I am pleased to inform you that I am willing to incardinate you in the Diocese of Newminster. Please write to the Bishop of the Diocese of Oldminster requesting a letter of excardination. After I have received a letter from the Bishop of Oldminster, I will issue a formal incardination into this diocese. Asking God's continued blessings upon your ministry among us, I am

Sincerely yours in Christ,
Chanute Vicarius
Bishop of Newminster

(8) Letter From Deacon Requesting Excardination

Most Reverend Christian Romanum
Bishop of Oldminster

Your Excellency:

Because of the pastoral needs of the Diocese of Newminster and because of my own interest and pastoral formation, I desire to continue to provide pastoral ministry in the Diocese of Newminster. My relocation to the Diocese of Newminster was occasioned by reason of employment. What appeared to have been a temporary arrangement I have now been assured by my employers will be on a more stable basis. The prospect of long-term residence is now assured and the Bishop of Newminster has expressed a willingness to incardinate me. In light of the above, I am therefore requesting excardination from the Diocese of Oldminster in order that I might incardinate in the Diocese of Newminster.

Sincerely yours,
Deacon Stephen Diaconos

(9) Letter of Excardinating Bishop to Deacon

Deacon Stephen Diaconos
Newminster

Dear Deacon Diaconos,

In response to your letter requesting excardination, I am writing to grant you excardination from the Diocese of Newminster. This letter does not take effect until you receive a letter from a diocesan bishop who will incardinate you. It is my understanding that the Bishop of Newminster has expressed a willingness to incardinate you. If there should be any changes in your plans, please notify me. With my prayers and best wishes for your continued ministry, I remain

Sincerely yours in Christ
Christian Romanum
Bishop of Oldminster

(10) Notification of Incardination to Diocese of Excardination

Most Reverend Christian Romanum
Bishop of Oldminster

Your Excellency:

I am writing to confirm that I have consented to the incardination of Deacon Stephen Diaconos, and have issued today the necessary letters for this purpose. Enclosed is a copy. Your assistance in this matter has been deeply appreciated.

Sincerely yours in Christ,
Chanute Vicarius
Bishop on Newminster
Enclosure

14. Retirement of Deacons

Consistent with the archdiocesan retirement policy for its priests, normal retirement age for deacons is established at 70 years. The Director of the Diaconate is to be informed each year after the deacon turns 70 whether the deacon feels he wants/needs to retire from diaconal ministry. The Director will keep the archbishop informed yearly of the deacon's status. The archbishop may request that a deacon retire for whatever reasons he deems necessary. The Director of the Diaconate will inform the deacon of the archbishop's wishes. A deacon may also request retirement from diaconal ministry due to his own health problems or the health problems of his spouse (if married) or if there are other conditions that prevent the proper exercise of diaconal ministry. As the deacon approaches his retirement from diaconal ministry, his last regular Ministry Agreement will contain a terminal date. Upon reaching the age of 70, the deacon should consult with the archbishop and the Director of the Permanent Diaconate Office to define a subsequent ministerial role and service times consistent with the deacon's vigor, his wishes for continued service, and the ministerial needs of the diocese. The deacon resigns from his diaconal assignment or ecclesiastical office, not from the diaconate.

The parties shall draft a Ministry Agreement for submission to the Diaconate Director for his approval and/or modification.

The new Ministry Agreement between the deacon and the Diocesan bishop will have one-year terms, renegotiable each year.

The above conditions could be accelerated for health reasons for deacons in good standing (those who have performed their ministry at or above minimum expectations).

The Director of the Diaconate will monitor the yearly renewal for the mutual benefit of the parties involved.

Public recognition in the form equivalent to the retirement notices published in the archdiocesan newspaper for priests shall be prepared by the Director of the Diaconate and submitted through the Chancery and the Diocesan Office of Communication for publication in the newspaper or other computerized media.

Upon retirement, the deacon retains his diaconal faculties in the diocese, unless it is clear that he cannot function properly. Even in the cases of illness, the Diocesan bishop must make the determination and officially remove the deacon's faculties, informing the deacon concerning the reason for such action. However, the Diocesan bishop, in consultation with the Director and the deacon, and with good reason, may also remove only certain faculties from a retired deacon, depending upon the capabilities of the individual deacon. The Diocesan bishop may also choose to leave the deacon with all his diaconal faculties. Subsequent retirement letters may be requested.

A retired deacon is encouraged to remain active in all functions of the Diaconal Community. He is entitled to all benefits and information accorded to all deacons.

D. Episcopal - Presbyteral - Diaconal Relationship

The Archbishop of Omaha appoints deacons to specific assignments, normally by means of an official letter of appointment. The assignment takes into consideration the pastoral needs of the Archdiocese and the skills and qualifications of the deacon as discerned in his previous experience and the course of his formation. The assignment also takes into consideration the deacon's family and employment responsibilities.

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 archbishop, his priests and all those who in varying degrees share in the public ministry of the Church. The deacon has an obligation to respect his pastor and the office of the archbishop and priests and to cooperate conscientiously and generously with him and his staff. The deacon also has a right to be accepted and fully recognized by them 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 are not working well together the archbishop will request the Director to visit with the deacon and with the pastor. The Director will then visit with both of them to try and determine whether an agreeable solution can be worked out between the two of them. If it is decided that the situation is irreconcilable it will be referred back to the archbishop for further evaluation and action.

E. Diaconate Assistance Programs

Should any individual deacon or family member need the services of a trained counselor, they are available to him through the Catholic Charities. The assistance is provided to all deacons, their spouses and families at minimal expense as a supportive system in recognition of their contributions to the ministry of the diocese. Should the need arise they need only to identify themselves and their status in our community.

F. The Death of a Deacon's Wife

The death of a married deacon's wife is a particular moment in life that calls for faith and Christian hope. The death of the wife of a married deacon introduces a new reality into the daily routine of his family and ministry. Charity should be extended to the widowed deacon as he assesses and accepts his new personal circumstances, so he will not neglect his primary duty as father to his children or any new needs his family might have. A widowed deacon should be assisted to seek professional counsel and spiritual direction as he encounters and integrates the bereavement process. Further, the fraternal closeness of the archbishop, the priests with whom he ministers, and the diaconal community should offer comfort in this moment in his life.

The Church acknowledges the gift of celibacy that God grants to certain of its members who wholeheartedly live it according to its true nature. The essential meaning of celibacy is grounded in Jesus' preaching of the kingdom of God. Its deepest source is love of Christ and dedication to his mission. If the celibate deacon gives up one kind of family, he gains another. In Christ, the people he serves become mother, brother, and sister. In one-way or another, celibacy affects every deacon, married or unmarried. Understanding the nature of celibacy—its value and its practice—are essential to the married deacon. Not only does this understanding strengthen and nurture his own commitment to marital chastity, but it also helps to prepare him for the possibility of living celibate chastity should his wife predecease him. Tragically, some deacons who were married at the time of ordination only begin to face the issues involved with celibacy upon the death of their wives. As difficult as this process is, all deacons need to appreciate the impact celibacy can have on their lives and ministry.

In exceptional cases, the Holy See may grant a dispensation for a new marriage or for a release from the obligations of the clerical state. However, to ensure a mature decision in discerning God's will, effective pastoral care should be provided to maintain that a proper and sufficient period of time has elapsed before either of these dispensations is sought. If a dispensation for a new marriage is petitioned and granted, additional time will be required for the formation of a stable relationship in the new marriage, as well as the enabling of his new wife to obtain sufficient understanding and experience about the diaconate in order to give her written, informed consent and support.

A similar sensitivity also should be given to the widow of a deacon since she shared so intimately in her husband's life and ministerial witness. The archbishop and her pastor, as well as the diaconal and parish communities, should extend appropriate and adequate support in her bereavement. Widows of deacons ought to remain connected with the diaconal community, not only because of support and encouragement, but also because of the unique bonds that had been forged by virtue of her husband's ordination.

G. Chemical or Alcohol Dependency Problems

Should any individual deacon or family member need the services of a trained counselor in the field of Chemical Dependency they are available through Catholic Charities. This dependency takes many forms: alcohol and the large number of drugs that are available. While the deacon himself may not be directly involved in such abuse, he may be deeply affected by a spouse, a parent, or child. All those affected need assistance.

H. Problem Marriage

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:

1. The deacon has the responsibility to notify the Director of the Diaconate to discuss the matter. The spouse of the deacon who recognizes a serious problem should exercise her right to bring the matter to the attention of Director. The pastor, team 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 discussion with the individual deacon.
2. Following a meeting with the Director, a determination will be made whether the deacon should continue in active ministry at that time. Counseling and spiritual direction will be made available.
3. After approximately sixty days, further determination will be made regarding the situation.
4. If the situation cannot be resolved, the Director of the Diaconate will recommend to the archbishop 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.
5. Should the situation deteriorate to the point of scandal or embarrassment or that causal responsibility on the part of the deacon for the marital difficulties is judged to be severely grave because of abuse, infidelity, criminality, pathology, etc. the Director will confer with the archbishop and the Vicar for Clergy to recommend appropriate action.

I. Marital Separation

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

1. The deacon must notify the Director of the Diaconate. The spouse has the right and is encouraged to bring this situation to the attention of the Director.
2. The Director, pastor, or supervisor will make sure that each is informed.
3. The Director will initiate a meeting with the deacon, a determination will then be made to what extent he should continue in active ministry. Resources for counseling and spiritual direction will be made available for husband, spouse and/or children.
4. After approximately sixty days a further determination will be made regarding the status of the situation.

5. During this time of separation, the deacon is reminded that Divine law requires behavior appropriate to his marital and diaconal vows.
6. In the event that the deacon is adjudged as responsible for severely grave marital problems such as abuse, infidelity, criminality, pathology, etc., the Director will recommend to the Diocesan bishop one of the following courses of action: curtailment of pastoral duties, leave of absence, inactive status, suspension or laicization.

J. Divorce

When a divorce occurs:

1. The deacon must contact the Director of the Diaconate. The spouse has the right and is encouraged to notify the Director.
2. The Director, pastor/supervisor will make certain that all responsible parties are informed.
3. Resources for counseling will be made available to the deacon, spouse and/or children.
4. Ordinarily, a six-month leave of absence will be required.
5. Should the deacon after consultation with the Director return to ministry, reassignment to a different parish or institutional ministry should be expected.
6. In the event that 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 archbishop inactive status or laicization.
7. The deacon must fulfill all financial and paternal responsibilities as required by the civil court, and must live a life in accordance with his sacramental vows to marriage and the diaconate.

K. Age

Upon reaching the age of 70 if a man determines *its necessity* through discernment and conversation with his pastor and his wife he may submit a letter of resignation from active ministry at the altar. He does, however, remain a deacon and can continue whatever ministry he and his pastor deem appropriate for the circumstances.

APPENDIX A

Association of Permanent Deacons of Northeast Nebraska

Constitution and Bylaws

As Revised July 1, 2011

Preamble

As Permanent Deacons in the Archdiocese of Omaha, we acknowledge our accountability to the Archbishop and to his appointed representatives to formulate and support the post ordination formation of the permanent deacons. We join in this Association with the desire to assist and cooperate in this endeavor.

Article I. Name and Duration

The name of this organization shall be the ASSOCIATION OF PERMANENT DEACONS OF NORTHEAST NEBRASKA. The duration of this Association shall be perpetual.

Article II. Location

The Association will have interest in permanent deacons in the Archdiocese of Omaha. The Board of Representatives may meet in any community located within the Archdiocese provided notice is given as indicated herein.

Article III. Membership

This Association will include all permanent deacons, spouses and those serving in the Archdiocese of Omaha. Membership shall also be extended to spouses of deceased candidates.

Article IV. Purpose

The purpose for which this Association has been established is to assist the Archbishop or his designate in providing for the continued needs of the permanent deacons and spouses.

This Association intends:

- a. To provide guidelines for the on-going spiritual and educational aspects of Continuing Formation for the permanent deacon as he strives to pattern his life in the footsteps of Christ.
- b. To strengthen and preserve the Christian community and social well being of permanent deacons in the Archdiocese.
- c. To identify and respond to the needs of the Church and the People of God in the Archdiocese, especially where the ministry of the Archbishop has not yet reached.

Article V. Board of Representatives

Section 1. Authority

The affairs of this Association shall be conducted by a Board of Representatives, also known as the Deacon Council, which shall act as an advisory body to the Archbishop and his designated representative. The Deacon Council shall conduct the affairs of the Association of Permanent Deacons of Northeast Nebraska and shall be the administrator of the purposes, plans, and business of the Association. The Archbishop or his designate in his absence serves as the Association's president. The Deacon Council will be presided over by the President of the Deacon Council.

Section 2. Accountability

The Deacon Council shall be accountable to the Archbishop, his designated representative, and to the individual Association members.

Section 3. Number, Tenure, and Qualification

The number of Representatives shall be nine (9) representing the various geographical areas of the Archdiocese and the President of the Deacon Council.

Omaha Northeast – bounded by 90th street on the west and Dodge Street on the south, including Dodge Street. Blair and Ft. Calhoun will be part of this area.

Omaha Northwest – bounded by and including 90th Street on the east and Dodge Street on the south. Fremont, Valley, and Elkhorn will be part of this area.

Omaha Southeast and part of Sarpy County – bounded 90th Street on the west and Dodge Street on the north. Bellevue will be part of this area.

Omaha Southwest and part of Sarpy County – bounded by 90th Street on the east and Dodge Street on the north. Papillion, Springfield, and Gretna will be part of this area.

Rural Northeast – bounded by Highway 81 on the west and the southern county lines of Wayne and Thurston counties.

Rural Northwest – bounded by Highway 81 on the east and the southern county lines of Pierce through Antelope County to the southern county boundary of Holt County.

Rural Southeast – bounded by Highway 81 on the west and the southern county boundaries of Wayne and Thurston counties.

Rural Southwest – bounded by Highway 81 on the east and the southern county lines of Pierce through Antelope County to the southern county boundary of Holt County.

President of the Deacon Council – elected by the Deacon Council of the Association.

Note: Where parish boundaries overlap the boundaries listed above, the deacon will normally belong to the area in which the parish facilities are located. An individual of this Association may elect to belong to a different area than in which he lives.

The Area Representatives will be elected as follows:

The Omaha Northwest, Omaha Southwest, Rural Northwest, and Rural Southwest Representatives will be nominated and elected in the “odd numbered” years for a two year term that will begin the following January.

The Omaha Northeast, Omaha Southeast, Rural Northeast, Rural Southeast Representatives will be nominated and elected in the “even numbered” years for a two year term that will begin the following January.

The nomination of the Area Representatives will be held in September and election in October at area meetings by a simple majority of the area's association members present and voting at such meetings. At the same time, an Alternate Representative will be selected for each Area.

The Representatives shall serve from January 1 of the first year until December 31st of the final year of the term or until a successor is elected and qualified. A member of the Board may be re-elected for one (1) additional two year term, but service is limited to four consecutive years, plus any unexpired term served, after which a two year absence and interval is required as a minimum prior to re-election. Board vacancies and/or unfilled memberships may be filled by a special Area election as soon as possible after a vacancy occurs.

Section 4. Meetings

The Deacon Council shall officially meet a minimum of once a year in the month of December, on a day and a location approved by the Executive Committee. At this annual meeting, the officers will be elected who will begin their terms on January 1 of the next year. The President of the Deacon Council may call other meetings of the Deacon Council as deemed necessary. The date or place of any meeting can be changed by the President upon at least ten days notice to the members of the Deacon Council and appropriate committee chairpersons.

The Representatives shall preside at their respective Area meetings and shall call such meetings as often as the majority of the area members decide to meet. The meetings shall be held on a date and at a place approved by a majority of the area members. An alternate Representative will be elected for each Area to preside at any Area meetings in the absence of the Representative and to be the official alternate to represent that Area at a Deacon Council meeting when the Representative is unable to attend. In the event the Area Representative is elected President Elect of the Deacon Council or becomes otherwise unable to complete their term, the Alternate Representative automatically becomes the Area Representative. At the earliest possible area meeting, a new Alternate Representative should be elected. The Area meetings shall be for prayer, spiritual reading and sharing, input to the Deacon Council, the exchange of information, continuing education, and any other items as needed.

Section 5. Special Meetings

Special meetings of the Deacon Council may be called anytime by the President and shall be called by the President upon the written request of any five (5) members of the Deacon Council. The President shall cause a special meeting of the Deacon Council to be held within fourteen (14) days after receipt of any such request.

Section 6. Notice of Meetings

Notice of regular and special meetings of the Deacon Council shall be given to each Board member not less than seven (7) days prior to the meeting. The notice shall specify the place, date, and hour of the meeting and in the case of a special meeting the general nature of the business to be transacted.

Section 7. Voting

The consensus process will be used to arrive at decisions as much as possible, but parliamentary rules will prevail in actual voting. Voting by proxy shall not be permitted nor shall cumulative voting be permitted. Each member of the Deacon Council or the Alternate Representative shall be entitled to one vote at all meetings of the Deacon Council. Only members of the Deacon Council designated in Article V, Section 3 are voting members.

Section 8. Quorum

Any five (5) Representatives (or official Alternate) shall constitute a quorum and a quorum shall be necessary for the transaction of any business except that a lesser number may adjourn a meeting to another time. At all meetings at which a quorum is present, a majority vote shall be necessary for the adoption of any matter voted upon.

Section 9. Open Meetings

All meetings of the Executive Committee and all meetings of the Deacon Council, except meetings of the Designated Members listed in Article V, Section 3, in CLOSED SESSION, shall be open to the members of the Association. Such attendance by the members shall be as interested observers only and not with the right to speak or vote. Persons other than members of the Deacon Council may speak if on the agenda or invited by the President during the Deacon Council meeting.

Article VI. Duties

Section 1. Composition

The elected officers of the Deacon Council shall be a President, a President Elect, a Secretary, a Treasurer, and such other officers as the Deacon Council may consider necessary. All officers shall be elected by the Deacon Council from their own members as the last agenda item of the December meeting. When an office cannot be filled from the Deacon Council, the President can, with the consent of the Deacon Council, nominate a deacon not on the Deacon Council to fill that office. Officers shall serve from January 1 until December 31 of the next year. Any officer may be removed from office by a majority vote of the Deacon Council at any regular or special meeting of the Deacon Council. Cause for removal from office shall be non-fulfillment of duties and responsibilities of the office or absence without excuse from two consecutive Deacon Council meetings. Vacancies in any office shall be filled by the Deacon Council at any regular or special meeting.

Section 2. Duties of the President

The President shall be the presiding officer of the Deacon Council and shall have general supervision over the affairs of the Deacon Council, subject to the control of the Deacon Council. He shall preside at all meetings of the Deacon Council and shall be the official liaison to other Archdiocesan offices. He shall be the Chairman of the Executive Committee and shall be an ex-officio member of all other committees and shall have such other powers and duties as may from time to time be prescribed by the Deacon Council.

Section 3. Duties of the President Elect

The President Elect shall, in the absence of or disability of the President, perform the duties and exercise the powers of the President and shall perform such other duties as the Deacon Council shall from time to time prescribe. The President Elect shall be the Chair of the Special Projects Committee and of the Social Activities Committee.

Section 4. Duties of the Secretary

The Secretary shall keep or cause to be kept a book of minutes of all meetings of the Deacon Council and a roster showing the name and address of each member of the Deacon Council. The Secretary shall provide for the notification of all meetings to the members of the Deacon Council, as directed by the President.

Section 5. Duties of the Treasurer

The Treasurer shall be the officer of the council primarily responsible for overseeing the management and reporting of the finances of the Deacon Council. The Treasurer's duties will include:

- Bank account maintenance – Selecting a bank, signing checks, negotiating contracts and investing excess funds prudently in compliance with proper fiscal management and with consent of the Council.
- Financial transaction oversight – Being knowledgeable about who has access to the funds of the Council, and any outstanding bills or debts owed, as well as developing systems for keeping cash flow manageable.
- Budgets – Developing the annual budget as well as comparing the actual revenues and expenses incurred against the budget.
- Financial Policies – Overseeing the development and observation of the financial policies of the Council and maintaining positive working relations with the Fiscal offices of the Archdiocese of Omaha.
- Reports – Keeping the board regularly informed of key financial events, trends, concerns, and assessment of fiscal health in addition to completing required financial reporting forms in a timely fashion and making these forms available to the Council.

Section 6. Remuneration

Members of the Deacon Council shall not receive compensation for services to the Deacon Council.

Article VII. Committees

Section 1. Standing and Special Committees

Committees of the Deacon Council shall be standing and special. Standing Committees of the Deacon Council shall include the:

- Executive Committee
- Spirituality and Growth
- Human Needs Committee
- Social Activities Committee
- Communication Committee
- Special Projects Committee
- Archdiocesan Pastoral Committee

And other special and standing committees as the Deacon Council shall from time to time create. Chairpersons of the Committees are automatically invited to Deacon Council meetings unless it is a CLOSED MEETING or a SPECIAL MEETING not requiring committee input.

Section 2. Committee Chairpersons

The President shall be the Chair of the Executive Committee. The President Elect shall be the Chair of the Special Projects Committee and the Chair of the Social Activities Committee. The

Chairperson of the other standing committees shall be appointed annually by the Deacon Council at the January regular meeting. The chairpersons of any other standing or special committees created by the Deacon Council shall serve as the Deacon Council directs.

Section 3. Executive Committee

There shall be an Executive Committee, which shall be comprised of the four officers of the Deacon Council. The Executive Committee shall be subject to the ultimate authority of and any express limitations imposed by the Deacon Council. The Executive Committee shall meet as called by the President and may be asked by the President to help prepare the agenda for the Deacon Council meeting. The Executive Committee may pre-schedule and hold its regular meetings without call or notice, at such time and place as the Executive Committee may decide.

Section 4. Open Meetings

Meetings of the standing committees and special committees shall be open to all members of the Deacon Council who desire to attend.

Section 5. Committee Members

Members of the special and standing committees, with the exception of Chairpersons of standing committees who are elected, shall be appointed by the President of the Deacon Council. It is the intent that all officers of the Deacon Council be a member of at least one committee.

Section 6. Committee Responsibilities

The scope, authority, responsibilities and composition of all committees shall be determined by the Deacon Council unless otherwise defined elsewhere in these bylaws.

- a) Spirituality and Growth Committee is responsible for the oversight and coordination of all resources of the Archdiocese available for the continuing spiritual and educational growth of all members of the Association in support of the Archbishop or his designated representative.
- b) Social Activities Committee is responsible for overseeing and planning all social activities of all members of the Association.
- c) Special Projects Committee is responsible for overseeing and planning any special projects of the Council, for directing the talents of the members to special needs of the Archdiocese.
- d) Human Needs committee will respond to the needs of the entire Association to provide emergency financial and other types of support to those who request help or whose needs become known by the community. This Committee will consist, as a minimum, of the chairperson. The Committee will be accountable to the Executive Committee. The Chairman of this committee will have authority to spend up to \$200.00 without prior approval of the Executive Committee. However, the need will be identified and communicated to the Treasurer for the disbursement of all funds. Amounts in excess of \$200.00 will require prior approval of the Executive Committee.

- e) Communication Committee is responsible for all regular communications of the Association. These include, but are not limited to:
 - a. Establishing and maintaining an email network for quick communication to the Association members of any emergency needs of individual members or of the Association as a whole.
 - b. Responsible for all publicity and communications regarding Diaconate activities to members of the Association and to the general public.
 - c. Maintaining and preserving the archives of the Diaconate.
 - d. Maintaining oversight of Deacon Data, Prayer Line, and Web page.

The Communication Committee will inform the Deacon Council of the status and plans for communications in the mentioned areas.

Article VIII. Standing Rules

The Deacon Council may, at any regular or special meeting, adopt Standing Rules, which shall be consistent with the Constitution and Bylaws of the Council and which, until amended, superseded or revoked, shall govern the Deacon Council, its officers and committees. Notice of consideration of action on standing rules shall be encouraged but shall not be required prior to any action.

Article IX. Rules of Order

The rules contained in Robert's Rules of Order Revised shall govern the Deacon Council in all cases to which they are applicable and in which they are not inconsistent with the Constitution, Bylaws, or Standing Rules of the Deacon Council.

Article X. Dues and Assessments

At the first monthly meeting of the first fiscal quarter of the Deacon Council, the Deacon Council will determine any dues and assessments on members to provide the funds needed to conduct the business of the Deacon Council in the coming year. Such dues and assessments may be waived upon request from any member unable to meet the requirement. Widows will not be assessed any dues. Members living outside of the Archdiocese will not be assessed any dues, however, they will continue to receive information from the community, especially the Deacon Data newsletter.

Article XI. Amendments to the Constitution and Bylaws

This Constitution and any Bylaws may be altered, amended or repealed and the changes may be adopted by a two-thirds majority of the Representatives present at any regular meeting of the Deacon Council or at any special meeting of the Deacon Council if at least ten (10) days written notice is given of the intention to alter, amend or repeal or to adopt changes at such regular or special meeting.

APPENDIX B

Ordination – Class Calendar (2010-2031)

Calendar Year(s)	Classes in Formation	Class Ordained	Ordination Date
2010-2011	2011, 2012, 2013, 2015	2011	October, 2011
2011-2012	2012, 2013, 2015	2012	May, 2012
2012-2013	2013, 2015	2013	May, 2013
2013-2014	2015, 2017	None	None
2014-2015	2015, 2017	2015	May, 2015
2015-2016	2017, 2019	None	None
2016-2017	2017, 2019	2017	May, 2017
2017-2018	2019, 2021	None	None
2018-2019	2019, 2021	2019	May, 2019
2019-2020	2021, 2023	None	None
2020-2021	2021, 2023	2021	May, 2021
2021-2022	2023, 2025	None	None
2022-2023	2023, 2025	2023	May, 2023
2023-2024	2025, 2027	None	None
2024-2025	2025, 2027	2025	May, 2025
2025-2026	2027, 2029	None	None
2026-2027	2027, 2029	2027	May, 2027
2027-2028	2029, 2031	None	None
2028-2029	2029, 2031	2029	May, 2029
2029-2030	2031, 2033	None	None
2030-2031	2031, 2033	2031	May, 2031

APPENDIX C

Stational Mass of the Diocesan Bishop

According to the *Ceremonial of Bishops* paragraph 128

128: As the entrance song is being sung, the procession moves from the vesting room (sacristy) to the sanctuary (chancel) in the following order:

- censerbearer carrying a censer with burning incense;
- an acolyte carrying the cross, with the image to the front, walks between seven other acolytes, or at least two, carrying candlesticks, with lighted candles;
- clergy, two by two
- the deacon carrying the Book of the Gospels
- deacons, if present, two by two;
- concelebrating presbyters, two by two;
- the bishop, walking alone, wearing the miter, carrying the pastoral staff in his left hand and blessing with his right
- a little behind the bishop, the two deacons assisting him;
- finally, the ministers who assist with the book, the miter, and the pastoral staff.

Entrance Procession

Incense

Cross

Candle

Candle

Book Bearer

Clergy (in choir dress), two by two

Deacon of the Gospel

Deacons, if present, two by two

Concelebrating Presbyters, two by two

Archbishop

Deacons to the Archbishop

Miter Bearer

Crosier Bearer

Ordination of Deacons

According to the *Ceremonial of Bishops* paragraph 497

497: When everything is ready, the procession moves to the altar in the usual way. The candidates walk in front of the deacon who carries the Book of the Gospels.

Entrance Procession

(Master of Ceremonies)

Incense

Cross

Candle

Candle

Book Bearer

(Seminarians, two by two)

Clergy (in choir dress), two by two

Candidates

Deacon of the Gospel

Deacons, if present, two by two

Concelebrating Presbyters, two by two

(Master of Ceremonies)

Archbishop

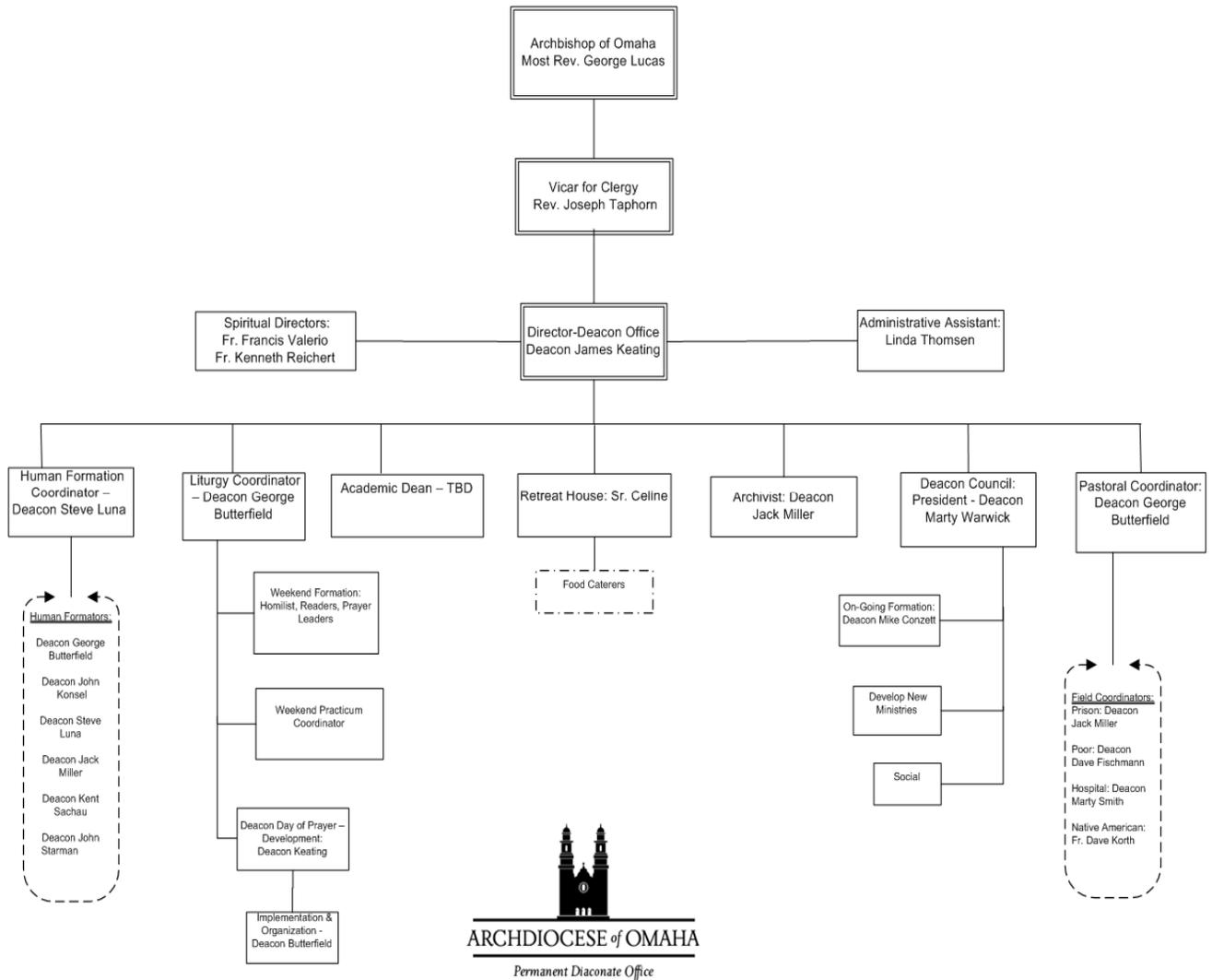
Deacons to the Archbishop

Miter Bearer

Crosier Bearer

Appendix D

Permanent Diaconate Organizational Chart



Appendix E

Diaconate Formation, Archdiocese of Omaha PEER EVALUATION FORM

Name of Candidate Evaluated: _____ Class: _____

The identity of the person completing this form will be held in strict confidence. Information given by all candidates completing this evaluation will be collated into one report which will be shared with the man evaluated. The report itself will not be given to the candidate.

I. Formational Status

- a. How does this man project his desire and readiness to be ordained a deacon?

II. Evaluation in the Area of Human Formation

- a. What positive qualities do you see in this man?

- b. How would you describe this man's capability in dealing with anger, stress, and anxiety?

- c. How would you describe this man's readiness to exercise diaconal ministry regarding his capability of being a man of communion, of attracting people to the Gospel through his personality, virtues, mannerisms, language, personal hygiene, conversational skills, etc.?

III. Evaluation in the Area of Spiritual Formation

There should be accountability in the external forum for a man's participation in spiritual exercises of formation and their growth as a man of faith. Within the parameters of the external forum, habits of prayer and personal piety are also areas of accountability.

- a. What spiritual practices and disciplines do you see as admirable in this man?

- b. How would you describe the man's responsibility to the Mass, the liturgy of the hours, etc.?

- c. Are there any spiritual or liturgical practices of this man that you see as a concern for someone discerning a diaconal vocation?

IV. Evaluation in the Area of Intellectual Formation

- a. How would you describe this man's readiness to faithfully preach the Gospel as a deacon?

- b. How does this man demonstrate knowledge of the Catholic Faith? Are there any concerns regarding positions or opinions of this man that may contradict the Faith?

Appendix F

Tickler File

Every Year

September

Get formation weekend dates with the monastery for another year (the goal is to have the dates for the current year and the next three years after that).

1st Year

September

Emergency Contact Form.

November

Contact pastors.

March

Contact pastors.
Psychological evaluation of the aspirants.

May

Aspirants submit a hand-written letter to the archbishop petitioning for transition to the Candidate Path of Diaconate formation.

June

Contact pastors: a recommendation from the aspirant's pastor to receive candidacy is required.
Contact spiritual directors.

2nd Year

September

Emergency Contact Form.
Candidacy Mass (2014 only, scheduled for November)

November

Contact pastors.

December

Candidates submit a hand-written letter of petition to the Archbishop for conferral of the ministry of lector in March.

February

Have the archbishop visit that formation weekend and present his vision for the ministry needs of the archdiocese.

March

Peer evaluations.

Contact pastors: a recommendation from the candidate's pastor to be instituted as a lector is required.

Lector letters given to the archbishop.

Mass to institute the candidates as lectors.

June

Contact pastors.

Contact spiritual directors.

A pastoral formation training session is held on a Friday-Saturday.

3rd Year

September

Emergency Contact Form.

November

Contact pastors.

December

Candidates submit a hand-written letter of petition to the Archbishop for conferral of the ministry of Acolyte in March.

March

Peer evaluations.

Contact pastors: a recommendation from the candidate's pastor to be instituted as an acolyte is required.

Acolyte letters given to the archbishop.

Mass to institute the candidates as acolytes.

June

Contact pastors.

Contact spiritual directors.

4th Year

September

Emergency Contact Form.

November

Contact pastors.

February

Candidates submit a hand written letter of petition for Ordination to the Archbishop.

March

Peer evaluations.

Contact pastors: a recommendation from the candidate's pastor to be ordained is required.

The candidates sign the Oath of Fidelity, the Oath of Freedom, and the Profession of Faith.

Spouses sign the Spousal Consent for Ordination.

May

Mystagogia and the blessing of the stoles.