

OFFICE FOR PERMANENT DEACONS

ARE YOU BEING CALLED TO BE A PERMANENT DEACON?

If you think that God may be calling you to a vocation as a Permanent Deacon, spend time in prayer and reflection about your call to the Diaconate. Talk to your family and one or two close friends and then to your pastor. If your family and pastor agree (*pastor's formal endorsement required to apply*) please consider attending the Annual Permanent Diaconate Information Session or one of the Regional Information sessions.

For more information about the Permanent Diaconate, to register for the next Information Session, or to request an application.

**Visit: www.archphila.org/deacon
or scan the QR Code.**



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SAINT CHARLES BORROMEO SEMINARY SCHOOL OF DIACONAL FORMATION



The School of Diaconal Formation of Saint Charles Borromeo Seminary, working under the Rector of the Seminary and the Vicar for Clergy of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia, has as its primary mission the formation of candidates for the Permanent Diaconate. These candidates, along with their spouses if married, participate in a program designed to prepare deacons who will serve our Archdiocese through the ministry of the word, ministry at the altar and ministry of charity.

To carry out this mission, the School of Diaconal Formation is committed to a program of formation which provides, six years of training in the following areas:

- ♦ **Spiritual Formation:** by means of spiritual direction, days of recollection, spiritual conferences and an annual retreat.
- ♦ **Intellectual Formation:** through weekly classroom instruction in theology and homiletics.
- ♦ **Human and Pastoral Formation:** through workshops and practicums.

All activities are undertaken with complete fidelity to the Magisterium of the Church and in complete communion with the Archbishop of Philadelphia.

- * Those accepted into the formation program have the option of entering a pass/fail track or pursuing a Master of Arts in Theology.

Website: www.scs.edu/school-of-diaconal-formation/



Archdiocese Of Philadelphia Office For Permanent Deacons

WHAT IS A DEACON?

**A Catholic Permanent Deacon Is An Ordained
Member Of The Clergy Configured To The
Person Of Christ The Servant**

Through the Sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation, all believers are called to share in the mission of Jesus Christ according to the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Those who are ordained also offer service in the world, but in a way proper to the Sacrament of Holy Orders. Christian service for the ordained minister entails proclaiming, preaching and teaching God's Word, leading the community in prayer and in sacramental liturgies and exercising administrative leadership in the Church. It is a lifetime commitment. The permanent deacon serves as a bond between the Church and the world, and thus manifests the love of God for both.

What distinguishes the permanent deacon from the lay person is that the permanent deacon is a member of the clergy and shares in the hierarchy of the Sacrament of Holy Orders. He has been ordained to assist the bishop in his doctrinal, sacramental and charitable ministry both publicly and permanently. Through the Sacrament of Holy Orders, the deacon is configured to Christ the Servant. It is Christ the Servant who acts through the ministry of the deacon.



Brothers, select from among you seven reputable men, filled with the Spirit and wisdom... (Acts 6:3)

THREE-FOLD MINISTRY OF THE PERMANENT DEACON

The leadership-service of the permanent deacon is performed not in isolation, but in union with that of other ordained and non-ordained ministers in the Church. His specific charism is manifested in lifetime service and may be divided into three categories:

MINISTERS OF THE WORD

"Receive the Gospel of Christ, whose herald you now are. Believe what you read, teach what you believe and practice what you teach."

- ◆ Proclaim the Gospel and preach
- ◆ Teach the Catholic Faith
- ◆ Evangelize both believers and unbelievers

MINISTERS OF THE ALTAR

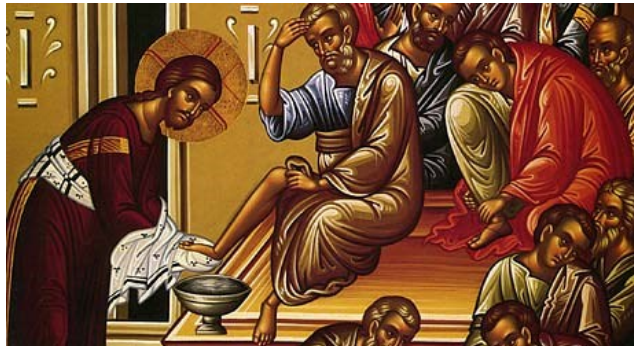
"According to the tradition of the Church and the provisions of law, deacons assist the bishop and priests in the celebration of the divine mysteries."

- ◆ Assist bishops and priests at the Liturgy
- ◆ Ordinary minister of the Eucharist
- ◆ Administer the Sacrament of Baptism
- ◆ Witness marriages
- ◆ Preside over devotional services
- ◆ Preside at wake services and the rites of burial

MINISTERS OF CHARITY

"In the ministry of charity, deacons should conform themselves in the likeness of Christ the Servant, whom they represent, and above all, they should be 'dedicated to works of charity, and to administration.'"

- ◆ Perform charitable, and social welfare duties
- ◆ Visit the sick and feed the hungry
- ◆ Minister to the dying and the bereaved



CRITERIA FOR ADMISSION

CATHOLIC MAN WITH DEEP SACRAMENTAL LIFE: The applicant is a male who has received all the Sacraments of Initiation. He is a man of faith who believes and professes what the Church teaches. If the applicant is a convert to the Catholic faith, he has been a fully initiated Catholic for at least five years at the time of admission to the formation program.

AGE: The applicant must be at least 35 years of age at the time of his ordination. Ordinarily, the applicant is not older than 55 years of age to begin the program.

EDUCATION: A high school diploma is required. Many applicants possess an undergraduate degree.

RESIDENT OF THE ARCHDIOCESE OF PHILADELPHIA: The applicant is a U.S. Citizen or a legal resident, and resides within the Archdiocese of Philadelphia and is willing to make a life-long commitment to serve the Church of Philadelphia.

HEALTH: The applicant enjoys good physical and mental health with no debilitating conditions, and willing to submit to a psychological exam.

FINANCIAL SECURITY: The applicant possesses financial security with a history of steady employment. His employment does not require frequent or extended travel.

MARRIAGE: If married, the applicant has been in a valid sacramental, and stable marriage for at least five years at the time of admission to the formation program. He enjoys the full support of his spouse. If single, the applicant enjoys a stable, settled life with a history of healthy relationships and understands and is willing to order his life towards a commitment to celibacy.

TIME & TALENT: The applicant is willing and able to give the time required for study and service during his formation without detriment to his family and employment, and, if ordained, is willing and able to serve the Archbishop of Philadelphia in any pastoral assignment that may be given to him, which includes 10 to 12 hours weekly in the service of such assignment.

CLEARANCES: Pass the required PA State Police Criminal Record Check, PA Department Human Services Child Abuse History Clearance, and Federal Criminal Background Check, and renewed as per state law.

RECOMMENDATION: The applicant has his pastor's recommendation, is presently active within his parish community, is able to work in a cooperative spirit with his pastor and other parish staff, and is recognized and accepted as a leader within the parish community.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q: How long does it take to become a Permanent Deacon in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia?

R: With two years of Aspirancy, and four years of candidacy, the formation program is six years in duration, which consists of classroom instruction, retreat days of recollection, pastoral workshops and practicum sessions. Candidates have the option of earning a Master of Arts in Theology.

Q: When and where are the classes held?

R: Classes are held at Saint Charles Borromeo Seminary through the School of Theological Studies on one or two evenings per week..

Q: What courses does the candidate take?

R: During the six years of formal classroom instruction, the candidate's studies include such courses as philosophy, systematic theology, doctrine, Sacred Scripture, and homiletics.

Q: Is my wife's consent necessary?

R: Yes! Because diaconate impacts and makes demands upon marriage and family, the support and consent of the wife is absolutely necessary.

Q: Does my wife need to accompany me to class, workshops, etc.?

R: It is ordinary expectation that your wife express her support by attendance at as many formational activities as possible.

Q: Is there tuition?

R: At present, candidates pay approximately ten percent of the actual costs of their training.

Q: If ordained, where will I be assigned?

R: Deacons are clerics of the Archdiocese; they may receive an assignment anywhere within the Archdiocese. Personal and family considerations are considered along with the pastoral needs of the Archdiocese, for whom the deacon is ordained.