

# Diaconal Ministries

# Candidacy

# Handbook

Diocese of Steubenville Ohio

Promulgated: December 26, 2009

### The Permanent Diaconate Aspirancy Period: Formal Discernment Begins

1. "No one has a right to receive the sacrament of Holy Orders. Indeed no one claims this office for himself" (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1578). The formal work of discernment begins when the application of the inquirer has been accepted by the Director of Diaconal Ministry—in conjunction with the Bishop of the Diocese and meets all of the requirements of the formation program.
2. It must be understood that acceptance of the inquirer into the Candidacy does not guarantee his candidacy for the Order of Deacon but rather confirms that formal discernment between the Church and the inquirer commences.
3. When an inquirer is first accepted in the Diocese of Steubenville to the Permanent Diaconate Formation Program, he begins the aspirancy period. After the one year aspirancy period, the candidate discerns his capability and readiness to be nominated to the bishop for acceptance as a candidate for diaconal ordination. From the candidate's perspective, candidacy is a time of gaining deeper knowledge of theology, spirituality and ministry as it pertains to the permanent diaconate and it is a period for more attentive discernment of what it means to serve the Church as an ordained minister.

### Goals of Candidacy

4. Candidacy will extend according to the schedule proposed by the Director of Diaconal Ministry and with the approval of the diocesan bishop.
5. Candidacy will offer presentations on the spirituality and theology of the permanent diaconate as well as practical ministerial implications that one should consider in his discernment particularly in light of the pastoral needs of the Diocese of Steubenville.
6. The goal of the candidacy is to educate the candidate in the teaching of the Church, preparing him for sacramental, catechetical, and pastoral life.

### General Schedule and Expectations

7. Candidacy involves formation workshops, academic classes, and other activities as well as individual meetings with a formation advisor and spiritual director (see appendix).
8. Candidacy is an occasion for candidates to formalize their discernment by receiving as much information as possible about the spiritual, theological and ecclesial dimensions of the permanent diaconate. The weekends, therefore, will provide opportunities for prayer, instructions, reflection, and discussion ensuring the objective nature of the vocational discernment. The wives of the candidates are encouraged to attend as many sessions as they are able to attend. (cf. *Basic Norms*, 43).

### Dimensions of Permanent Diaconal Formation

9. Candidacy introduces the candidate to the requirements of permanent diaconal formation. Formation of a candidate to Holy Orders requires that he be open to the process, which prepares him to be a qualified, prayerful minister of the Church. The Church, therefore, has outlined certain dimensions of diaconal formation required for ordination, which are: the human, spiritual, intellectual, and pastoral.
10. One who is called to the Order of Deacon requires a formation that promotes the development of the whole person. These dimensions characterize formation to the diaconate and are interrelated to achieve

a continual integration of identified objectives in the life of each candidate in order to prepare him for ordained ministry.

11. The four dimensions of diaconal formation are described in the *Basic Norms for the Formation of Permanent Deacons* (1998) which re-state, in essence, the goals of priestly formation programs outlined in the Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Pastores Dabo Vobis* (1992). Candidacy emphasizes these dimensions of diaconal formation in order for candidates to discern the permanent diaconate in the context of the Church's expectations of ordained ministers.

12. The diaconate formation program challenges the candidate to integrate the dimensions of formation in such a way that he is adequately and thoroughly prepared for ordained ministry. The candidate will need to seriously discern if he is capable of integrating the standards of formation into his life. The Deacon Advisory Board (DAB) will evaluate, through the use of professor evaluations, formation director evaluations which stem from goals set by the candidate, and personal contact, the progress of each candidate in terms of his ability to integrate these four pillars of diaconal formation.

13. The Model Standards for Formation readiness will be used by the candidate and the formation team throughout the discernment process. The candidate should be honest in his appraisal of the standards determining how best to integrate these expectations into his formation. (see Appendix C).

14. The formation team will provide adequate direction and information to support the discernment of the candidate in the conferences and workshops. However, the formation program is structured with the expectation of personal accountability on behalf of the candidate. He is to appropriate this information and discuss it with his formation advisor and spiritual director as well as with his family, pastor, and friends.

### Human Dimension of Formation (see Appendix C)

15. The scope of human formation is that of molding the personality of the candidate for the diaconate in order for him to be a bridge and not an obstacle in the exercise of ministry. The candidate will be introduced to the human qualities necessary for ordained ministry since all those called to serve the Church as deacons need to acquire and perfect a series of traits to carry out ministry in the name of Christ and the Church (cf. *Basic Norms*, 66).

16. The Holy See's document on the *Basic Norms for the Formation of Permanent Deacons* highlights four primary goals of the human dimension of formation. The candidate and formation team will evaluate and determine how to integrate these goals in the context of the candidate's discernment of the diaconate (see *Basic Norms*, 67-70).

17. Formation in the Human Virtues. The candidate for ordination to the diaconate must be formed to love the truth, be loyal, respect every person, have a sense of justice, be true to his word, be genuinely compassionate, be a man of integrity and, especially, be balanced in judgment and behavior.

18. The candidate will need to evaluate his attitude and disposition, determining how he can pursue the human virtues expected by the Church for ordained ministers. The DAB (as mentioned in #12) will also evaluate and judge if the candidate possesses the proper ability to pursue these virtues necessary for ordination to the diaconate. (see Appendix A)

19. Capacity to Relate to Others. The deacon is called to be a "man of communion and service". This requires that he be affable, hospitable, sincere in his words and heart, prudent and discreet, generous and ready to serve, capable of opening himself to clear and brotherly relationships, and quick to understand, forgive and console.

20. The candidate who is closed in on self, cantankerous and incapable of establishing meaningful and serene relationships with others must undergo a profound conversion before setting off with conviction on the path to ministerial service.
21. The candidate will need to evaluate how his personality and relationships can contribute in his formation to being "a man of communion" as expected by the Church. The formation team will also evaluate and judge if the candidate possesses the proper ability to pursue these virtues necessary for ordination to the diaconate.
22. Affective Maturity. At the root of the capacity to relate to others is an affective maturity which must be attained with a wide margin of certainty in both celibate and married candidates. Such maturity presupposes the discovery of the centrality of love in their own lives and the victorious struggle against their own selfishness.
23. Diaconal formation involves all aspects of the person, his physical, psychological and spiritual dispositions. Affective maturity requires the candidate to have full dominion over his sexuality which enables him to enter into healthy, appropriate, personal, professional, and ministerial relationships.
24. For a celibate candidate, to live love means offering the totality of one's being, one's energies and readiness to Christ and the Church. The gift of celibacy presumes that the candidate has taken into account the inclinations of the affective domain of human behavior. The affective maturity of a candidate calls for renunciation, vigilance, prayer and fidelity to a precise rule of life.
25. For a married candidate, to live love means offering himself to his spouse in a reciprocal belonging, in a total, faithful and indissoluble union, in the likeness of Christ's love for His Church; at the same time it means welcoming children, loving them, educating them, and showing forth to the whole Church and society the communion of family. Like a celibate candidate, a married candidate must also demonstrate affective maturity with regards to renunciation of sin, vigilance, prayer and fidelity to a precise rule of life.
26. The candidate will need to evaluate his lifestyle, relationships, social behavior, and sexuality in an effort to determine how he can be the man of love expected by the Church. The formation team will also evaluate and judge if the candidate possesses the proper ability to pursue these virtues necessary for ordination to the diaconate.
27. Training in Freedom. A pre-condition for an authentic human maturity is training in freedom, which is expressed in obedience to the truth of one's own being as a member of the Body of Christ. Freedom requires the candidate, for ordained ministry, to exhibit self control. He must be determined to fight and overcome different forms of selfishness and individualism, which threaten the dignity of life. He must also be ready to reach out to others with generous and dedicated service.
28. Training in freedom requires the education of the moral conscience. With this training the candidate will be better prepared to listen to the voice of God in the depths of his heart and adhere to it in his life and ministry. The candidate therefore will approach his formation in freedom, with an eye on discerning the contentment that results, from his participation in the formation program.
29. In freedom, the candidate accepts the gifts of obedience, chastity, and prayer. Formation for Christian freedom is a life-long task for the believer and a requirement for ordained ministers.
30. The emphasis on human formation is a time for the single candidate to discern his capacity and receptivity for celibacy. It is a time for the married candidate and his wife to assess the quality of their relationship. It is important for them to consider the ramifications that his possible ordination to the diaconate will have on their marriage covenant and family life. The candidate and his wife should also

be made aware of the specifications in Code of Canon Law concerning the celibacy requirements of a married deacon, if his wife precedes him in death.

### Spiritual Dimension of Formation (see Appendix C)

31. The spiritual dimension of formation of the permanent diaconate candidate presumes a certain level of knowledge and practice for which the application process would have already confirmed. The aim of spiritual formation is to build on the new life received in Baptism and to introduce the candidate to the disciplines of diaconal spirituality.

32. The Holy See's document on the *Basic Norms for the Formation of Permanent Deacons* highlights the primary goals of the spiritual dimension of formation. The candidate and formation team will evaluate and determine how to integrate these goals in the context of the candidate's discernment of the diaconate (see *Basic Norms*, 71-78).

33. Spirituality of Service. The element which most characterizes diaconal spirituality is the discovery of and sharing in the love of Christ the Servant who "*came not to be served but to serve.*" *Mark 10:45* The candidate must, therefore, be helped progressively to acquire those attitudes, which are specifically diaconal, although not exclusively so. These attitudes include, but are not limited to, simplicity of heart, disinterest for self, the choice of a life-style of sharing and poverty, total giving of self, a humble and helpful love for the brothers and sisters, the suffering, the poorest and the most in need.

34. The candidate will discuss with his spiritual director, family, friends, and others with whom he is in relationship, how to surrender his life to Christ and the Church, while maintaining those relationships and practices in their family, employment, and social memberships which have already been forged.

35. The candidate will embrace a spiritual formation to service (*diakonia*) and selfless offering which is a distinctive quality of diaconal spirituality. It will be necessary for the candidate to humbly demonstrate how he can live a life of service and simplicity.

36. The Eucharist. "The Eucharist is the source and summit of Christian life" (CCC 1324) The Eucharist characterizes the ministry of a deacon. Service to the poor is a logical consequence flowing from service at the altar and drawing one back to the altar interceding for the poor. Therefore, the candidate will be invited to participate daily, at least frequently, within the limits of his family and professional commitments, in the celebration of the Eucharist and will be helped to penetrate ever deeper into the Eucharistic mystery. "Through the mingling of this water and wine may we come to share in the divinity of Christ who humbled Himself to share in our humanity." (Preparation of the Gifts at Mass)

37. The candidate will be encouraged to explore other Eucharistic devotions and practices that can assist his formation and are consistent with diaconal spirituality.

38. Within the context of Eucharistic spirituality, the candidate will need to give adequate appreciation to the sacrament of Penance. The regular celebration of this sacrament effects the life of any individual with a disposition for mercy, forgiveness, and compassion for ones self and for those they serve.

39. The candidate may want to exercise the sacrament of Penance with his spiritual director, or at least, be able to discuss the sinfulness most challenging to his diaconal ministry discernment and to living the Christian life.

40. The Word of God. The deacon is called to be an authoritative preacher, being reminded of these words of ordination, "Receive the Gospel of Christ, whose herald you are, believe what you proclaim, teach what you believe, and practice what you teach." (Rite of Ordination of a Deacon) The candidate must

learn to know and live the Word of God ever more deeply and to seek, in the Word of God, constant nourishment for his spiritual life, through a loving and thorough study and the daily exercise of *lectio divina* (reading, meditating, praying and contemplating the person of God through Sacred Scripture).

41. The candidate can share what disciplines he already enjoys in his celebration of the Word of God and what he still needs to consider to deepening his love and knowledge of the Word. Once again the Spiritual Director will be most helpful in this discernment and formation.

42. *Liturgy of the Hours*. The candidate will be introduced to the meaning of prayer with reflection on the uniqueness of Christian prayer and the meaning and living out of the *Liturgy of the Hours*, "fulfilling the Lord's precept to pray without ceasing, offering praise to God the Father and interceding for the salvation of the world." (Sacred Congregation for Divine Worship, Decree)

43. The candidate will be instructed on how to pray the *Liturgy of the Hours* and be expected to take personal accountability in the incorporation of this prayer into his daily regimen. The Spiritual Director and Formation Advisor will frequently ask the candidate to discuss his progress in praying the *Liturgy of the Hours*.

44. It is the responsibility of the candidate to secure the 4-volume set of the *Liturgy of the Hours*.

45. A Man of Prayer. "Ordained ministers are servants of the Good Shepherd, they are ordained to lead the People of God to the living waters of prayer." (CCC 2686) The deacon is seen by the faithful as a man of prayer who can lead the community in prayer both orally and through example. The candidate, therefore, will need to cultivate a series of disciplines and virtues to support his formation as a candidate for ordained ministry.

46. In addition to the Eucharistic formation, the candidate will desire to develop a spiritual life that includes popular devotion to the communion of saints and in a most special way to the "authentic mystery of the Mother of Jesus, for Christology is also Mariology. This should be done through the means traditionally used by the Church to arrive at a real interior devotion, such as the saints possessed, as in the expression of St. Louis Marie Grignon de Montfort, the 'secret' of salvation". (Spiritual Formation in Seminaries 4.) Recitation of the rosary, novenas to the saints, praying of litanies, meditative prayer and "prayer from the heart" are also ways to cultivate spirituality consistent with the permanent diaconate.

47. Obedience. The Eucharist is the sacrament of redemptive sacrifice. "Obedience will always be a sacrifice. It must at the same time be a joy, for it is a way of loving God." (Spiritual Formation in Seminaries 3.) The permanent deacon incarnates the charism of service as a participation in the ministry of the Church. Diaconal spirituality characterizes the charism of service through obedience and fraternal communion. The candidate will receive instructions on the virtue of obedience to ensure ecclesial authenticity in the apostolic work of the Church. The bishop will need to be assured that the candidate will be disposed to freely offer ministry in order that the bishop can assign the deacon to ministry in the diocesan Church.

48. The candidate must, therefore, be educated to a sense of belonging to the body of ordained ministers, to fraternal collaboration with them, and to spiritual sharing.

49. The candidate will work to mature his spirituality in seeing his bishop as a spiritual father to be trusted, loved, and sought after with affection and loyalty. The ecclesial dimension of obedience is manifested in the ordained minister's love for the People of God, and his superior and in his respect for ecclesiastical law and discipline.

50. A particular task of the spiritual director is to assist the candidate in discerning the signs of his vocation, to support an attitude of ongoing conversion by the candidate, to bring to maturity in the

candidate the traits proper to the spirituality of the deacon, and to bring about a balanced synthesis of the candidate's state of life, profession, and ministry.

51. Provisions will be made for the wives of the candidates to attend conferences in order to grow in their awareness of the diaconate vocation. These conferences will further encourage the wives, not only in their own call to holiness, but to their awareness and espousal mission of support to their own husband's diaconal vocation.

### Intellectual Dimension of Formation (see Appendix C)

52. Intellectual formation is a necessary dimension of the permanent diaconate formation insofar as it offers the candidate substantial nourishment for his spiritual life and a precious instrument for his discernment of ministry. The exercise of diaconal ministry will take place in a society of religious indifference, with the obscuring of values, loss of ethical convergence, and the influence of cultural pluralism. This demands that candidates be introduced to an intellectual formation which is complete and serious.

53. The objectives and content for intellectual formation during candidacy are to communicate a deeper and further knowledge of the faith and Church tradition than the candidate has already attained. The candidates will be given an opportunity during the candidacy to deepen their understanding of faith through workshops and conferences. The candidate, for his part, should take personal initiative in study and research.

54. The Holy See's document on the *Basic Norms for the Formation of Permanent Deacons* highlights the primary goals of the intellectual dimension of formation. The candidate and formation team will evaluate and determine how to integrate these goals in the context of the candidate's discernment of the diaconate (see *Basic Norms*, 79-84).

55. Criteria. The candidate is to utilize and observe the following criteria in his dimension of formation:

- a) the necessity to learn how to explain his faith and bring to maturity a lively ecclesial conscience
- b) a sincere attention to the qualities and specific duties of diaconal ministry and a willingness to be formed in order to acquire those qualities and learn those duties
- c) the readiness to acquire a capacity to read the "sign of the times" and how to adequately inculcate the Gospel
- d) a usefulness of knowing and learning communication techniques and group dynamics, the ability to speak in public, and to be able to give guidance and counsel

56. Objectives. In order for a permanent deacon to clearly communicate to others their ministries of "service (diakonia) of the liturgy, of the Gospel, and of works of charity" (CCC 1588), he must first understand and practice the essentials of Christian doctrine and life. The exercise of diaconal ministry must also consider the needs of culture and challenges of evangelization. The candidate will need to discern his vocation in light of specific challenges for the Church in the United States including:

- a) the perspective of family with the social, philosophical and political confrontations against the family
- b) a respect for and understanding of multicultural diversity and the incorporation of the Gospel into all aspects of society
- c) the social dimension of the Gospel taught by the Magisterium, particularly in the papal encyclicals as well as instructions from the USCCB

- d) the study of the beliefs and practices of other religions and denominations, the deepening of a spirit of ecumenism and interreligious dialogue, as well as the theology of evangelization which promotes witness, sincere dialogue, and cooperation in the works of charity and justice

57. Content. Candidacy will introduce the candidate to an overview of the academic and theological content required for the intellectual formation of candidates to the diaconate. The candidate will need to demonstrate ability and readiness to undertake the academic rigors of the candidate formation program. The following areas of study will be presented:

- a) Sacred Scripture and its right interpretation; the theology of the Old and New Testaments; the interrelation between Scripture and Tradition; the use of Scripture in preaching, catechesis and pastoral activity
- b) Study of the Fathers of the Church and an elementary knowledge of the history of the Church
- c) Fundamental Theology with illustration of the sources, topics and methods of theology, presentation of the questions relating to Revelation and the formulation of the relationship between faith and reason, which will enable the future deacon to explain the reasonableness of the faith
- d) Dogmatic Theology with its various treatises: Trinity, Creation, Christology, Ecclesiology and Ecumenism, Mariology, Christian Anthropology, Sacraments, and Eschatology
- e) Christian morality in its personal and social dimensions and, in particular, the social doctrine of the Church

58. For admission to the candidate formation program the candidate will need to demonstrate his ability to study the various disciplines of theology and satisfy the academic requirements of the program.

### Pastoral Dimension of Formation (see Appendix C)

59. In a general sense, the pastoral dimension of formation coincides with the spiritual of dimension formation. Pastoral formation is an ever greater identification with the person of Christ. The focus of the pastoral dimension of the permanent diaconal formation in the candidate path is ultimately the discernment of the candidate's gifts for the threefold ministry of word, liturgy, and charity, and of his capacity to make a lifelong commitment to these ministries.

60. The candidate will be introduced to the practical ministries of the diocesan Church supplying the candidate with sufficient information about the possibilities of diaconal ministry in the future.

61. The Holy See's document on the *Basic Norms for the Formation of Permanent Deacons* highlights the primary goals of the pastoral dimension of formation. The candidate and formation team will evaluate and determine how to integrate these goals in the context of the candidate's discernment of the diaconate (see *Basic Norms*, 85-88).

62. The goal of the pastoral formation of the candidate during candidacy is to relate the human, spiritual and intellectual dimensions to pastoral practice. Within this context, the pastoral dimension in formation is not merely an apprenticeship to familiarize the participant in diaconal formation with some pastoral techniques, its aim is to initiate the candidate into the sensitivity of what it means to be a disciple of Jesus who "came not to be served but to serve." *Mark 10:45*

63. The pastoral dimension in diaconal formation should strengthen and enhance the candidate for the exercise of the prophetic, priestly and servant-leadership functions - deriving from their baptismal consecration - already lived and exercised by their participation in diaconal formation.



64. The demonstration of pastoral skills is a crucial element in the assessment of fitness for ordination. The qualities to be developed for these tasks include a spirit of pastoral responsibility, servant-leadership, generosity, perseverance, creativity, respect for ecclesial communion, and filial obedience to the diocesan bishop. The candidate will discern his confidence in abilities consistent with the permanent diaconate as well as the realistic sense of his limitations.

65. The pastoral dimension of diaconal formation during candidacy involves a program of pastoral theology that is not necessarily a formal theological exercise but rather a formation program which offers workshops and conferences in those areas or fields which are eminently diaconal including:

- a) liturgical practices: administration of the sacraments and sacramentals, service at the altar, sacred music and sacred liturgy
- b) canon law and proclamation of the Word in the varied contexts of ministerial service: catechesis, preparation for the sacraments, homiletics
- c) Church's commitment to social justice and charity
- d) life of the community

66. Care will be taken to introduce the candidates to the various pastoral activities of the Steubenville diocesan Church in order to make clear the potential assignments a permanent deacon of the Steubenville diocese might receive upon ordination.

### Integrated Formation Program

67. Candidacy will introduce the candidate to the qualities, characteristics, and qualifications of diaconal formation, which primarily involve the four pillars - human, spiritual, intellectual, and pastoral. At the conclusion of each quarter the candidate will be asked to demonstrate his ability to synthesize information and offer appropriate theological and pastoral reflections based on the conferences and workshops.

68. The permanent diaconate formation team will assist the candidate primarily through formation advising and spiritual direction to integrate the pillars of formation into his life. The discernment process, therefore, is a process not disassociated with active formation.

### Formation Advising

69. The diocesan bishop will approve formation advisors to assist with the discernment, formation and selection of candidates for ordination to the Order of Deacon. The Director of Formation is responsible for coordinating the Formation Advisors, explaining the role of the advisor to the candidates, and assuring the integrity of the formation advising process.

70. The candidate will be assigned a Formation Advisor by the Director of Diaconal Ministry. It is expected that the candidate meet with his advisor at least every six weeks.

71. It is the responsibility of the candidate to make contact with the Formation Advisor, to schedule meetings, and to discuss formation matters.

72. The Formation Advisor serves in the external forum and reports to the Deacon Advisory Board (DAB). The Formation Advisor will share with the Deacon Advisory Board his judgment concerning the suitability of the candidate to continue as a candidate in the formation program (cf. *Basic Norms*, 22).

73. The formation advisor may be asked by the Director of Formation to share concerns, if the need arises, with the candidate throughout candidacy.

74. While the formation advising component is an external forum and is a dimension of the evaluative process, the candidate should approach this relationship with openness, trust, honesty, and humility. The Formation Advisor should consider the relationship highly confidential, discussing information on an as-needed basis only.

75. If the Formation Advisor and/or candidate discover an irresolvable conflict in the formation advising relationship, the Director of Formation should be contacted immediately to explore resolutions and if necessary a possible change in advisors.

### The Formation Advisor Relationship

76. The Formation Advisor assists the candidate in his relationship with God. The advisor enables the candidate to learn that Christ calls through the Church, and it is the Church that affirms the diaconal vocation.

77. The Formation Advisor will:

- a) oversee, on a regular basis, the development of a Formation Plan (see Appendix A) that will serve as the basis for the formation meetings;
- b) monitor, with the candidate, his progress in accomplishing the objectives set forth in the formation plan by meeting with the candidate at least every six weeks
- c) assist the candidate in addressing issues related to his formation that may arise during the course of his discernment including, but not limited to, concerns about family, parish, academics, pastoral experiences, or readiness
- d) inform the Director of Diaconal Ministry of concerns and issues facing the candidate
- e) submit to the director a written report on the progress of the candidate at the conclusion of each year

### Developing a Formation Plan

78. The permanent diaconate formation program is predicated on the candidate's successful integration of four formational dimensions, namely, the human, spiritual, intellectual, and pastoral. One who will exercise diaconal ministry requires a formation that promotes the development of the whole person. The Church has identified these four areas of formation as the primary focus of the permanent diaconate formation program since they are interrelated so as to achieve a continual integration of certain objectives in order that the candidate can prepare adequately for the life and ministry of a permanent deacon.

79. Each candidate develops a formation plan following the guidelines of the Steubenville Diocese Formation Plan enclosed in this handbook. The formation plan is a contract between the candidate and his formation advisor and a guide for spiritual direction. In this contract, the candidate to the diaconate identifies areas for growth and development as he discerns all the dimensions of the permanent diaconate. Because each individual develops a formation plan unique to his own discernment, the process promotes personal-accountability allowing each candidate to consider ways to grow in his formation. It also provides the encouragement and accountability necessary for success. The formation plan developed by the candidate in consultation with the formation advisor will take into consideration the four areas of diaconal formation (see appendix).

80. Determine and Assess. Formation involves openness and honesty since the candidate will be asked to assess developmental needs. The candidate is discerning the life and ministry of a permanent deacon and, therefore, will need to form his life towards this potential vocation. Moreover, certain abilities and expectations are required of an ordained minister. The candidate will measure those expectations alongside his abilities to determine areas of needed growth. The candidate will be asked to assess the following five areas: 1. Relational (family, friends, co-workers, etc.) 2. Intellectual (knowledge, skills, etc.) 3. Physical (health, exercise, diet, leisure, etc.) 4. Ministerial (apostolic experience, pastoral service, etc.) 5. Spiritual (liturgical and private prayer, formative reading, etc.)

81. Candidates may already be aware of certain formation needs as a result of their own experiences and self-appraisals. The formation advisor will assist the candidate to articulate those formation needs as well as those areas of exceptional ability. Even so, candidates should reflect on the abilities required of a permanent deacon in each of these five areas by consulting with priests, fellow candidates, parishioners, family and friends.

82. The four areas of diaconal formation will guide this part of the process. While candidacy will provide workshops and conferences, the candidate should be able to identify in advance, areas of needed growth, based on the four areas of diaconal formation and the five areas of assessment.

83. Specify Formation Objectives. In this step, candidates translate each formation need, into a formation objective. These objectives should describe what the candidate can learn or accomplish during candidacy. For example, "to read the following books ..." or "to attend the meetings of ..." are not objectives but resources for achieving an objective. The objective statement should describe what the candidate will be able to do as a result of reading or attending. Each objective should be written in the formation plan.

84. Specify Formation Resources and Strategies. Once the candidate's list of formation objectives is complete, the candidate should describe how he proposes to go about accomplishing each objective. The proposal should include the resources (material and human) he plans to use and the strategies (techniques and tools) he will employ in making use of them. Here is an example:

*Improve my ability to communicate effectively with people whose cultural background is significantly different from my own.*

- 1. Find at least one book and/or three articles on communication and cultural diversity and read them.*
- 2. Interview three people in Church ministry who work in settings different from my own and discuss how they experience and overcome cultural barriers.*
- 3. Select two or three techniques learned from the reading material and interviews, and practice the techniques on a colleague who will give me feedback on my performance.*

85. Specify Target Dates. While the formation plans will be developed, monitored and evaluated throughout candidacy, the candidate and the formation advisor will want to discuss the practical timelines for accomplishing the goals of the formation plan.

86. Specify Measurement of Achievement in Accomplishing the Objective. In this step, the candidate is to describe what evidence he will collect to indicate the degree to which he has achieved each objective. Examples of evidence include, but are not limited to, written reports, oral presentations, action projects, performance exercises, role-playing, or critical incident cases. Measurement of achievement would include, but not limited to, feedback from participants or observers, and ratings from colleagues and peers.

87. Specify Criteria for Describing How Well the Objective Was Achieved. After specifying what evidence will be gathered for each objective, the candidate is to specify what criteria will be used for judging how well the objective was achieved. This criteria will help him assess whether his mastery is merely "adequate" or truly "distinguished." The criteria will vary according to the type of objective.

88. Review the Formation Plan with the Formation Advisor. Once the candidate and his formation advisor are satisfied with the plan, both sign and date it. Some questions to explore in reviewing the formation plan include:

- Is the formation plan clear and understandable?
- Is the formation plan inspiring and motivating?
- Is the formation plan realistic yet challenging?
- Are the objectives related to the priority areas for growth and development?
- Are the resources and strategies reasonable, appropriate and achievable?
- Are the evidence and criteria for judging whether and how well the objectives were achieved clear and relevant?

89. Implement, Monitor, and, As Necessary, Adjust the Formation Plan. A candidate will meet with his formation advisor to monitor his progress, receive encouragement and to make any necessary changes to the plan.

90. Evaluation. At the conclusion of each year of candidacy, the formation advisor will write a report, which is to be submitted to the Director of Diaconal Ministry detailing the candidate's areas of growth, as well as limitations. The report is to be shared with the candidate before it is submitted.

### Spiritual Direction

91. The diocesan bishop will approve spiritual directors to assist with the discernment and formation of a candidate for ordination to the Order of Deacon. The Director of Diaconal Ministry is responsible for coordinating the spiritual directors, explaining the role of the spiritual director to the candidate, and assuring the integrity of the spiritual direction process.

92. The candidate will choose a spiritual director from the approved list maintained by the Office of the Diaconate Ministry. It is expected that the candidate meet with his spiritual director at least once a month.

93. It is the responsibility of the candidate to make contact with the spiritual director, to schedule meetings, and to discuss all matters dealing with formation and life.

94. The spiritual director serves in the internal forum and, therefore, is not a member of the Deacon Advisory Board (DAB). The Director of Diaconal Ministry may communicate information to the spiritual director for his benefit but the spiritual director must maintain the boundaries of the internal forum and never compromise the director/candidate relationship.

95. If the spiritual director and/or candidate discovers an irresolvable conflict in the spiritual director relationship, the Director of Diaconal Ministry should be contacted immediately to explore resolutions, and if necessary a possible change in spiritual director.

96. The task of the spiritual director is to assist the candidate in discerning the workings of the Holy Spirit and accompany the candidate on his journey of conversion. He must give concrete suggestions to help bring about an authentic diaconal spirituality and offer effective incentives for acquiring the associated virtues.

97. The spiritual director will:
- a) assist the candidate in the development of a spiritual formation plan that can serve as the basis for spiritual direction meetings
  - b) monitor with the candidate his progress in accomplishing the objectives set forth in the spiritual formation plan by meeting with the candidate at least every four weeks
  - c) assist the candidate in addressing issues related to his formation that may arise during the course of his discernment including, but not limited to, concerns about family, parish, academics, pastoral experiences, or readiness
  - d) provide regularly the occasion for the sacrament of Penance to be celebrated at the desire of the candidate;
  - e) encourage the candidate:
    - to attend daily Mass (if possible)
    - to pray the Liturgy of the Hours
    - to develop a healthy spirituality with a focus to service,
    - to encourage popular piety, support devotion to our Blessed Mother, and assist the candidate in discerning a proper diaconal spirituality
  - f) challenge the candidate to evaluate each of the four pillars of diaconal formation with an aim to discerning capability and suitability for ordained ministry. In particular to freely promise:
    - to live a chaste life according to the candidate's state of life
    - to be obedient to ecclesial authority
    - to live in fraternity among the ordained ministers of the diocesan Church
    - to live a life of prayer modeled on Christ the Servant with special attention to the Liturgy of the Hours

### Assessment for Nomination to Ordination

98. The candidate path of formation concludes with a formal assessment conducted by the Deacon Advisory Board (DAB). This occurs when the candidate (with the consent of his wife, if married) petitions the Bishop of the Diocese of Steubenville asking to become ordained as a permanent deacon.

99. It is required that the candidate successfully complete candidacy before any consideration can be made for the candidate to proceed on to ordination.

100. The Director of Diaconal Ministry will convene a meeting of the Deacon Advisory Board (DAB) to review the progress of the candidate and to determine the candidate's recommendation for Holy Orders.

101. The wife of the married candidate must once again sign a consent form offering her support for her husband's desire for ordination.

102. The candidate must write, in his own hand, a one-page letter to the Bishop petitioning to be ordained. The letter should contain the following information:

- a) identify reasons for desiring ordination
- b) demonstrate sufficient understanding about the ministry of deacon
- c) confirm his wife's/family's support of his petition
- d) consent to the obligations and commitments required in ministry

103. The Deacon Advisory Board (DAB) will review information including the report given by the Formation Advisor, the psychological report, and the family interview report and offer a general

evaluation on the candidate's participation in the program. At the completion of this work the committee will make its recommendations to the Bishop.

104. The candidate's pastor and formation advisor will also be interviewed by the Director of Diaconal Ministry to ascertain the suitability of the candidate for ordination.

105. The Director of Diaconal Ministry will ask each member of the Deacon Advisory Board (DAB) to cast a vote on each candidate. The vote of each member and the rationale for the vote is to be recorded.

106. The Director of Diaconal Ministry after having consulted and received final recommendations will prepare a declaration, which outlines the profile of the candidate and a judgment of suitability. This declaration, accompanied by the individual vote and rationale of each member of the board, is prepared for the diocesan bishop who selects those to be admitted to ordination (cf. *Basic Norms*, 44).

107. Once the diocesan bishop has made his decision regarding the acceptance or rejection of the petitions, the Director of Diaconal Ministry shall notify each candidate by letter announcing:

- to the candidate who has been accepted, to begin plans for the sacrament of Holy Orders
- to the candidate who has not been accepted, a suggestion to re-apply for a future permanent diaconate class, or whether the rejection was not the result of any significant formation concerns

**APPENDIX A**

<b>Formation Plan for Permanent Diaconate</b>	
Candidate	
Formation Advisor	
Spiritual Director	
(Note: Signatures indicate that all parties have reviewed the formation plan.)	
<i>Signature of Candidate</i>	<i>Date</i>
<i>Signature of Formation Advisor</i>	<i>Date</i>
<i>Signature of Spiritual Director</i>	<i>Date</i>

**General Assessment**

*On a separate sheet of paper, please type a description assessing your current experience or status in the following areas.*

A) Relational

- Describe current relationships with family, friends, and co-workers.
- What areas need improvement and what areas are most supportive?

B) Intellectual

- Describe your overall abilities, work skills, knowledge in certain areas, issues of interest, and what areas need improvement.

C) Physical

- Describe your current health, exercise habits, diet, leisure and what areas need further attention.

D) Ministerial

- Describe your interests in ministry, your current apostolic and pastoral experience and in what areas you need more experience.

E) Spiritual

- Describe your overall spiritual practices and what disciplines you enjoy, i.e. liturgical and private prayer, formative reading, devotions, *lectio divina*, etc., and what areas need further development.

Formation Plan, Candidacy, Office of the Permanent Diaconate Ministry					
HUMAN DIMENSION OF FORMATION					
Objective	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td style="height: 20px;"> </td></tr> <tr><td style="height: 20px;"> </td></tr> <tr><td style="height: 20px;"> </td></tr> </table>				
Resources & Strategies	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td style="height: 20px;"> </td></tr> <tr><td style="height: 20px;"> </td></tr> <tr><td style="height: 20px;"> </td></tr> </table>				
Evidence of Accomplishments	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td style="height: 20px;"> </td></tr> <tr><td style="height: 20px;"> </td></tr> <tr><td style="height: 20px;"> </td></tr> <tr><td style="height: 20px;"> </td></tr> </table>				
Criteria for Evaluating Quality of Accomplishment	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td style="height: 20px;"> </td></tr> <tr><td style="height: 20px;"> </td></tr> <tr><td style="height: 20px;"> </td></tr> </table>				
SPIRITUAL DIMENSION OF FORMATION					
Objective	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td style="height: 20px;"> </td></tr> <tr><td style="height: 20px;"> </td></tr> <tr><td style="height: 20px;"> </td></tr> </table>				
Resources & Strategies	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td style="height: 20px;"> </td></tr> <tr><td style="height: 20px;"> </td></tr> <tr><td style="height: 20px;"> </td></tr> </table>				
Evidence of Accomplishments	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td style="height: 20px;"> </td></tr> <tr><td style="height: 20px;"> </td></tr> <tr><td style="height: 20px;"> </td></tr> <tr><td style="height: 20px;"> </td></tr> </table>				
Criteria for Evaluating Quality of Accomplishment	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td style="height: 20px;"> </td></tr> <tr><td style="height: 20px;"> </td></tr> <tr><td style="height: 20px;"> </td></tr> </table>				

Note:



Formation Plan, Candidacy, Office of the Permanent Diaconate					
<b>INTELLECTUAL DIMENSION OF FORMATION</b>					
Objective	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td style="height: 20px;"> </td></tr> <tr><td style="height: 20px;"> </td></tr> <tr><td style="height: 20px;"> </td></tr> </table>				
Resources & Strategies	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td style="height: 20px;"> </td></tr> <tr><td style="height: 20px;"> </td></tr> <tr><td style="height: 20px;"> </td></tr> </table>				
Evidence of Accomplishments	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td style="height: 20px;"> </td></tr> <tr><td style="height: 20px;"> </td></tr> <tr><td style="height: 20px;"> </td></tr> <tr><td style="height: 20px;"> </td></tr> </table>				
Criteria for Evaluating Quality of Accomplishments	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td style="height: 20px;"> </td></tr> <tr><td style="height: 20px;"> </td></tr> <tr><td style="height: 20px;"> </td></tr> </table>				
<b>PASTORAL DIMENSION OF FORMATION</b>					
Objective	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td style="height: 20px;"> </td></tr> <tr><td style="height: 20px;"> </td></tr> <tr><td style="height: 20px;"> </td></tr> </table>				
Resources & Strategies	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td style="height: 20px;"> </td></tr> <tr><td style="height: 20px;"> </td></tr> <tr><td style="height: 20px;"> </td></tr> </table>				
Evidence of Accomplishments	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td style="height: 20px;"> </td></tr> <tr><td style="height: 20px;"> </td></tr> <tr><td style="height: 20px;"> </td></tr> <tr><td style="height: 20px;"> </td></tr> </table>				
Criteria for Evaluating Quality of Accomplishment	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td style="height: 20px;"> </td></tr> <tr><td style="height: 20px;"> </td></tr> <tr><td style="height: 20px;"> </td></tr> </table>				

Notes:

**Appendix B**

<b>Spiritual Direction Agreement For Permanent Diaconate</b>		
<p>I agree to meet with my spiritual director at least once every _____.</p> <p>I understand this relationship will be bound by the confidentiality of the internal forum. I further understand this form must be submitted to the Director of Diaconal Ministry within the first couple of weeks of the candidacy. At that time, the bottom portion will be completed, signed, and returned to the Director of Diaconate Ministries.</p>		
<i>Signature of Candidate</i>	<i>Date</i>	
<i>Signature of Spiritual Director</i>	<i>Date</i>	
<i>Street Address</i>	<i>State ZIP</i>	<i>Telephone</i>
<i>Email</i>		

**APPENDIX C**

**MODEL STANDARDS FOR PERMANENT DIACONATE READINESS  
FOR ADMISSION INTO THE CANDIDATE PATH**

<b>Appreciation/Knowledge of</b>	<b>Demonstrated Ability/Skill</b>
<i>Human Dimension of Formation</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♦ His personality (strengths and limitations), appropriate boundaries, and his talents and gifts; collaboration.</li> <li>♦ A model of faith and moral development through discussion and action.</li> <li>♦ The necessity of ongoing spiritual and academic development.</li> <li>♦ The role of respectful listening and tolerance in dialogue with others whose point of view may differ from his.</li> <li>♦ A family perspective and all of its aspects.</li> <li>♦ The benefit of having a support group in maintaining this perspective.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♦ To be self-reflective; to reveal himself appropriately, sharing his experiences and attitudes with others as verified in the formation community, mentor group, pastoral ministry placement, and self-evaluation; to be both a leader and follower.</li> <li>♦ To use his knowledge to encourage others to reflect and share their experiences in dialogue and action.</li> <li>♦ To demonstrate the use of appropriate resources for his physical, emotional, and spiritual development; to take initiative in self-study and in completing home assignments.</li> <li>♦ To be a good listener, respect each person, and be accepted as a trusted participant who keeps confidences; to be open to change through reflective growth in understanding; to express his position candidly in sharing, study and dialogue, neither intimidating nor being intimidated in doing so.</li> <li>♦ To integrate and prioritize his personal boundaries relating to the family, recreation, work, ministry, and time alone.</li> <li>♦ To contribute to and utilize a support team.</li> <li>♦ To demonstrate appropriate conduct toward individuals, maintaining proper personal boundaries, and a commitment to protecting young people.</li> </ul>
<i>Spiritual Dimension of Formation</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♦ God's redeeming activity in his lifestyle, experiences, and ministries.</li> <li>♦ The <i>lectio divina</i> formation of a strong Christian spirituality.</li> <li>♦ His commitment to Christian ministry as rooted in the baptismal call.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♦ To reflect theologically on his faith experience through regular spiritual direction.</li> <li>♦ To pray the Scriptures, meditating on the mystery of God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.</li> <li>♦ To foster an appreciation of his baptismal vocation among others, enabling others to</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♦ A personal and communal prayer life.</li> <li>♦ His state in life, responsibilities, and role in diaconal discernment; diaconal celibacy and other commitments.</li> <li>♦ An ecumenical perspective in formation.</li> </ul>	<p>reflect upon their faith journey in relationship to this call.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♦ To fulfill a regular commitment to a pattern of personal and communal prayer through: frequent praying of the Liturgy of the Hours, especially Morning and Evening Prayer; to participate frequently in the Eucharist and the sacrament of Penance, personal prayer, reading of the Bible, devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary and the saints; to plan and lead communal prayer.</li> <li>♦ To ascertain, if married, the quality of his relationship with his wife and children and the need for dialogue and mutual consent to continue in formation and move forward toward ordination; to make, if unmarried, a commitment to perpetual celibacy and to live a single lifestyle in an appropriate manner.</li> <li>♦ To practice in prayer and action an attitude of discipleship to Christian unity, desiring to know more about other Christian denominations and other faith experiences and finding ways for mutual action in serving human needs.</li> </ul>
<p><i>Intellectual Dimension of Formation</i></p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♦ The <i>Catechism of the Catholic Church</i>.</li> <li>♦ The sacraments of Christian initiation and the sacrament of Holy Orders, especially the Order of Deacon.</li> <li>♦ The Eucharist as the summit and center of the Christian communal life, especially in his formation community.</li> <li>♦ The Church's spiritual tradition, including its various paths of spirituality.</li> <li>♦ Pastoral resources.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♦ To articulate the primary teaching of the Church and discuss contemporary issues in the light of the Church's teaching.</li> <li>♦ To speak informally on Christian vocations and ordained ministry, particularly the Order of Deacon and its threefold ministries of liturgy, Word and charity; to relate this knowledge to personal and communal vocation discernment.</li> <li>♦ To actively participate in the Eucharist, visitation to the sick and homebound, funeral vigils, and any other liturgical event where one may lawfully serve as a lector or extraordinary ministry of Holy Communion.</li> <li>♦ To experience and invite others into meaningful expressions of prayer and forms of Christian spirituality.</li> <li>♦ To refer others to appropriate pastoral resources as needed.</li> </ul>

<i>Pastoral Dimension of Formation</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♦ Theological sources that ground, interpret and guide the activity that constitutes the pastoral life of the Church.</li> <li>♦ Effective communication skills.</li> <li>♦ A multicultural perspective in formation; a cultural communication pattern and impact on goals and programming and resources for ethnic, racial and cultural groups.</li> <li>♦ Approach theological study from within the context of his pastoral experience and ministry.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♦ To study and read appropriate theological resources useful to ministerial service.</li> <li>♦ To communicate effectively in spoken and written word.</li> <li>♦ To effectively use different cultural communication patterns whenever appropriate; to use and guide others to appropriate multicultural resources.</li> <li>♦ To discern how God is calling him into ministry; to link and reflect on pastoral and personal experiences to theology – apprehending God’s presence through ministry to the needs of the poor and afflicted; to be an advocate for people in need; to be a facilitator of the community’s resources in response to human needs.</li> </ul>
<i>Permanent Diaconal Vocation &amp; Ministry</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♦ His ongoing relationship with God as the source of his ministry and discernment of a permanent diaconal vocation.</li> <li>♦ His call and his personal commitment to live the Good News in all aspects of his life.</li> <li>♦ The role and ministry of the permanent deacon within the faith community.</li> <li>♦ The teaching of the Church that “calls” and affirms the vocation to an ordained ministry.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♦ To articulate his relationship with God and reasons for believing he has a call to the Order of Deacon within the formation community.</li> <li>♦ To articulate his call and commitment to his spiritual director and to the formation personnel; to identify this call and commitment through self/peer formation and pastoral/family assessments.</li> <li>♦ To articulate his understanding in ways that are life-giving and empowering within his family, place of employment, parish, and formation community; to identify, call forth and affirm the giftedness, strengths, and talents of others.</li> <li>♦ To participate collaboratively in all aspects of formation; to be cooperative, open, and respectful to all who journey with him; to be receptive of insights offered by the formation personnel, his wife and family, peers and pastor.</li> </ul>

## **APPENDIX E - Terms of References for Permanent Diaconate Formation**

### **Deacon Advisory Board (DAB)**

Appointed by the Diocesan Bishop with specified terms of service. Advises and supports the work of the Director of Diaconate Ministry. Threefold purpose: (i) procure all application materials; (ii) evaluate and recommend (rejection/acceptance to aspirancy, candidacy and diaconate ordination) to the Director of the Office of Diaconate Ministries who then brings his own recommendations to the Diocesan Bishop for action; (iii) plan and implement ongoing post-diaconate ordination formation and support. The committee functions as a (i) Committee of the Whole and as (ii) various subcommittees with specified mandates.

### **Committee of the Whole**

By definition this group includes all members of DAB. Its principle task is to evaluate recommendations of subcommittees and make final recommendations to the Director Diaconate Ministry who brings these forward to the Diocesan Bishop for approval and action. The Director of Diaconal Ministry is the functioning head of this committee.

**Internal Forum:** Place of discussion of private (personal) matters that affect our pastoral and spiritual lives. Spiritual Direction is Internal Forum.

**External Forum:** Place of discussion of public matters and actions that indicate and externalize the acceptance of living in the Spirit with Christ as our Head. This forum is used to evaluate the readiness of a candidate for further training and Holy Orders.

**Director of Diaconate Ministry:** Person in charge of organizing and the operation of the Formation program.

**Formation Team:** The Formation Team consists of members of the DAB. The Formation Team members come from sections one (aspirancy) and two (candidacy). This group is responsible for the comprehensive oversight of the formation program under the direction of the Director of Diaconate Ministry. Internal Forum issues are not discussed in this group.

**Formation Advisor:** Personal advisor to a candidate, who assists the candidate in developing the four required areas of growth and integration (human, spiritual, intellectual, pastoral). This Formation Advisor is the candidate's advocate at all Formation Team meetings.

**Spiritual Director:** Advisor to the candidate in spiritual growth and ongoing conversion. The Spiritual Director assists the candidate in discernment of the spirit in regards to a holistic life prepared for the duties and challenges of ordained ministry.