

I. Initial Inquiry Process

- Begin the discernment of your interest in pursuing a possible vocation to the Permanent Diaconate by an in depth discussion with your wife (if married), family and parish priest.
- Then ask your pastor to forward (in writing) your inquiry, along with your name and contact information to the Director of Formation who will then arrange an initial conversation with you.
- If the decision is made to proceed, the Director of Formation will advise you how to proceed and assist you in the process.

II. Formation

- The Inquiry Period includes the admission process and begins the discernment of your sense of call.
- The full period of formation is five (5) years comprising of an initial preparatory (*Aspirancy*) year, followed by the formation program which is four (4) years in duration.
- During the following four-year formation program, candidates acquire a Certificate in Theology from Newman College in Edmonton. This is accomplished through a weekly online format in five-week sets.

In addition, the candidates and their wives (if possible) gather from Friday evening through Saturday afternoon one weekend every month from September to June. On these weekends they receive the spiritual, human development and pastoral training elements of their formation as well as further academic reflections.

III. Discernment and Evaluation

- Progress in formation is assessed in May of each formation year.
- Continuation in the program and the final call by the Archbishop to ordination is decided based on this yearly evaluation.



For additional information contact:

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PERMANENT DIACONATE

Archdiocese of Winnipeg



*"Anyone who wants
to be great among you
must be your servant"*
MT. 20: 26-27

History of the Diaconate:

The origins of the diaconate can be traced back to the *Acts of the Apostles* (6.1-6). Stephen and his six companions, “**full of the Spirit and wisdom**”, were called forth by the apostolic community to serve the needs of the

marginalized among them. Deacons have always been associated with the ministry of the Bishop (*Father of the Poor*), in



whose name they serve.

In the *Apostolic Tradition of Hippolytus*, it is recorded that deacons are “**not ordained to the priesthood but to the service of the bishop ...**”

After the 5th century, however, the diaconate experienced a gradual decline in the West such that by 800 CE it had become merely a “**transitional**” stage for candidates on the path to priestly ordination.

However, at the Second Vatican Council (1962—1965), the diaconate was restored as an equal and distinct order within the Church and was opened up, to both single and married men, as a permanent ministry.

In 1969, the Canadian Catholic Conference of Bishops approved the establishment of the Permanent Diaconate in Canada.

How The Permanent Deacon Serves:

*In whatever he does, the permanent deacon serves as not only an ordained minister of the Church, but must be an effective image the unique icon of **Christ the Servant**.*

Ministry of Charity

The **pre-eminent ministry of a deacon is to personally serve the poor**, the aged, the sick, and the imprisoned. To bring the Gospel to those most in need. At all times, he preaches, lives and breathes the message of charity.

Ministry of Word

The permanent deacon exercises this ministry through proclamation of the Gospel, and may preach at liturgical celebrations. He may assist with catechetical instruction, adult faith formation, and sacramental preparation.

Ministry of Liturgy

The permanent deacon assists the priest at Mass and may preside at other liturgies. He may baptize outside Mass, witness the vows of marriage outside Mass, preside at funeral services, officiate at adoration / benediction and lead community prayer services.

Diaconate Mission Statement:

*“The permanent diaconate manifests, through its threefold ministry of Word, Liturgy and Charity a preferential love for the poor, and so serves as both exemplar and animator for the Church’s own baptismal mission of compassion and loving service (*diakonia*) in the world.”*

Admission Requirements:

- Canonically, males who have attained the age of 35 and older when classes begin.
- Practicing Catholic for at least 5 years in a parish of the Archdiocese.
- Written recommendations from his pastor and from a parish representative will be required.
- Single men are required to make solemn public commitment to celibate life.
- Married candidates must be married for at least 7 years and obtain spousal consent for ordination. If wife predeceases, ordained deacon is not normally permitted to remarry and therefore commits himself to the celibate life.
- Of sound physical and psychological health, able to demonstrate intellectual ability to complete the formation study program.
- A candidate should already demonstrate a history of service in the church and/or community beyond liturgical ministries. Evidence of works of charity are highly desirable.
- Free from canonical impediments to the reception of Holy Orders.
- Economically stable and self-sufficient. Permanent deacons are not paid for their diaconal services.