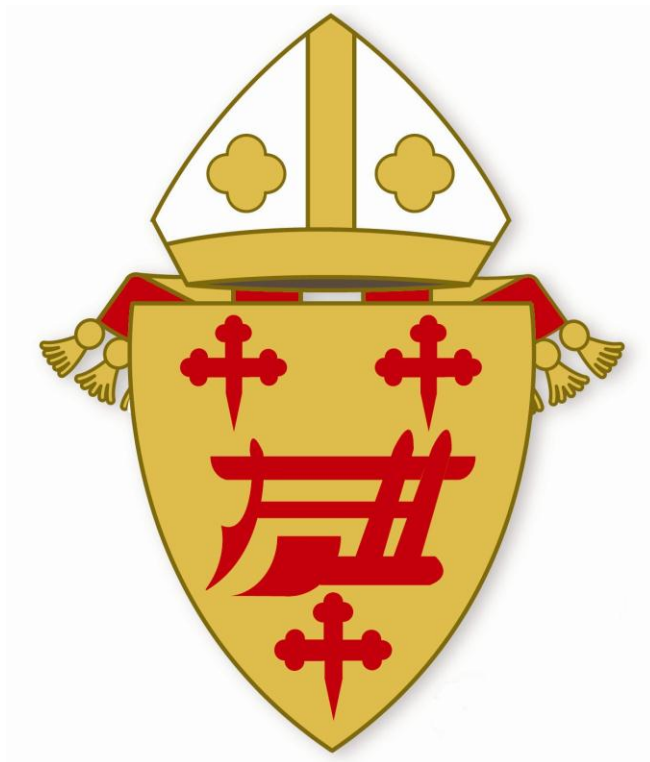


**Inquiry
Information Packet**



**Office of the Permanent Diaconate
Archdiocese of Cincinnati**

OFFICE OF THE DIACONATE

VISION STATEMENT

The Office of the Diaconate will be seen as providing an environment in which the permanent diaconate can thrive in the Archdiocese of Cincinnati.

MISSION STATEMENT

The Office of the Diaconate of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati is committed to supporting diaconal ministry by being present to the deacon community and those in formation to the diaconate: to be responsive to their needs and concerns; to provide opportunities for ongoing growth and formation; to maintain the vision of the diaconate.

Some of the ways in which this can be accomplished are:

- Through being available for general information meetings at parishes to answer such questions as: *Who is a deacon? What does he do? How do pastors and parishes help in the discernment of men for the diaconate? How does the training take place?*
- By assisting men in the process of formally applying to the Formation Program.
- By aiding in the discernment throughout the four years of formation.
- By supporting the deacon community after ordination through:
 - regular regional meetings;
 - personal visits with each deacon (wife) and pastor;
 - regular communication;
 - continuing formation opportunities (retreats and education);
 - being available to respond to the needs of the deacons and pastors.
- By carrying out archdiocesan administration & management responsibilities (e.g., policy & procedure development and promulgation, staffing recommendations, assignment planning, etc.).

**Office of the Diaconate
100 East Eighth St.
Cincinnati, OH 45202
513-421-3131**

E-Mail Address: deaconoffice@catholiccincinnati.org
Web: www.catholiccincinnati.org

DIACONATE IN THE ARCHDIOCESE OF CINCINNATI

In 1967 Pope Paul VI took the first step in restoring the ancient order of Permanent Diaconate in the Roman Catholic Church. In the spring of 1968 the Bishops of the United States petitioned the Holy Father to revive the diaconate in this country. For twenty-five years the Permanent Diaconate has grown and flourished, so that there are now well over 17,000 permanent deacons in the United States. The Archdiocese of Cincinnati has ordained permanent deacons since 1976 and has over 170 ordained men serving God's people.

The model for the work of the Permanent Diaconate is found in the Gospel of John when Jesus got up from the table, removed His outer garment and began to wash the disciples' feet, instructing them to go and do likewise. Deacons in this diocese carry out that mandate of service in ministries of the Word of God and of Liturgy and by providing witness in the marketplace of Christian love and justice.

Deacons in our Archdiocese perform ministries of the Word of God by proclaiming the Gospel at the liturgy, catechetical instruction, reaching out to non-Catholics and alienated Catholics in evangelization, participating in parish renewal programs and Bible studies. In their secular occupations they bring the Gospel to bear on the concrete circumstances of everyday individual and social life.

Deacons often have a high visibility in the local church community as a result of the Ministries of the Liturgy which they undertake. Through baptizing, witnessing marriages, presiding over funerals and burials, leading parish Liturgy of the Hours and other ministries of the liturgy, the deacon finds the source from which he draws his own Christian life and the grace to carry out his ministry.

The diaconate has been from ancient times primarily a ministry of love and justice. In the early church, the deacons served widows and orphans, the sick, the grieving as well as immigrants and exiles. In our day and in our archdiocese, deacons can be found ministering to prisoners, the handicapped, the divorced, those who are addicted, the homeless and poor. Some deacons participate in programs to rehab housing while others are trained to provide counseling to the physically, economically and spiritually needy. It is the ministry of love and justice particularly which prompts the deacons to not only do good works themselves, but enliven and enable their fellow parishioners to become involved in these labors of Christian caring.

The service of deacons' wives to the community is often no less significant. Many minister competently in our parishes and communities themselves. Perhaps their greatest gift to the Church is their willingness to take on added family responsibilities in order to devise family structures which support and empower their husbands in carrying out the obligations of their ordination.

The Permanent Diaconate in the Archdiocese of Cincinnati is truly a blessing to the church and to our local communities and continues to grow and thrive with the help of the Lord.

INQUIRY

Once a man requests information about the diaconate and begins the discernment process, he is considered to be an **Inquirer**. If a man feels called to the diaconate, he is expected to work to meet the standards required for admission to Aspirancy. (See *Basic Standards for Readiness for Admission into the Aspirant Path in Formation* which is included.)

Having successfully completed 5 of the required courses in the LPMP (or its equivalent), a man may formally apply for admission to the Aspirancy phase of the Permanent Deacon Formation Program. When an Inquirer and his pastor feel that he has met the standards for admission to Aspirancy, his pastor must submit a letter to the Office of the Diaconate requesting that the Inquirer be considered for Aspirancy in the format required by the *National Directory for the Formation, Ministry, and Life of Permanent Deacons in the United States* and indicating his support for the Inquirer through the process of formation to the diaconate. The letter should also include the address and phone number of the Inquirer. Upon receiving this letter of introduction, request and support, the Director of the Office of the Diaconate will contact the Inquirer in order to begin the process for Application to Aspirancy.

Selection to Aspirancy includes the receipt of all application forms, transcripts, references, etc. as required. Each man also takes a battery of psychological inventories and participates in an interview with a counseling professional. A home visit and extended interview with the applicant (and wife if married) is conducted by the Director of the Office of the Diaconate. All of this information is then evaluated by the Admissions Team (both clergy and lay members) and letters indicating whether a person has been accepted or not are then mailed. **Acceptance to Aspirancy does not guarantee admission to Candidacy.**

ASPIRANCY

Aspirancy is the beginning of the Formation Process. It is “primarily a time to discern the capability and readiness of an aspirant to be nominated to the bishop for acceptance as a candidate for diaconal ordination” (*National Directory for the Formation, Ministry, and Life of Permanent Deacons in the United States*). It is a period of **continued discernment** in which a man grows in his faith (human, spiritual, intellectual, and pastoral dimensions as well as diaconal vocation and ministry) through study, prayer and service. One of the requirements for acceptance to Candidacy is a certain level of theological and ministerial education. In the Archdiocese of Cincinnati this education is most easily obtained through the Lay Pastoral Ministry Program (LPMP), but may be accomplished through another equivalent program in consultation with the Director of the Office of the Diaconate.

In the year prior to Candidacy, the Aspirants (and their wives if they are married) are required to participate in special **Aspirancy workshops** which are offered by the Office of the Diaconate.

Once an Aspirant nears completion of this part of the formation process, he may request, in writing, admission into Candidacy.

CANDIDACY

“The candidate path in diaconal formation is the occasion for **continued discernment** of a diaconal vocation and immediate preparation for ordination” (*National Directory for the Formation, Ministry, and Life of Permanent Deacons in the United States*). **Acceptance to Candidacy does not guarantee ordination to the Permanent Diaconate.**

Once a man is accepted into this phase of Deacon Formation, there are **three additional years of preparation** for ordination. The program takes place on fifteen weekends at the Athenaeum of Ohio throughout the academic year. The formation for the diaconate is not only academic but also spiritual and ministerial. A Deacon Candidate meets monthly with a **spiritual director**. He (and his wife if married) also develop(s) a **mentoring relationship** with a permanent deacon (and his wife).

Candidates are installed as lector and acolyte in due time. For each installation the candidates carry out ministerial projects in their parish correlating to the Word, Liturgy, and Charity/Justice.

Candidacy formation occurs on a three year cycle corresponding to the length of the program and the need to give adequate attention to the candidates in formation and their families. A class was begun in September of 2013. Another class will begin in 2016, 2019 and so forth.

QUALIFICATIONS

In order to be accepted as an applicant for the Aspirancy program the individual must:

- 1) Be a resident of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati and a Catholic male in good standing in the Catholic Church and fully initiated in the faith and, if a neophyte, must have lived the faith for three years prior to application;
- 2) Be at least 35 but not more than 69 years of age at the time of ordination;
- 3) May be either single or married. If single at the time of ordination the candidate will make a promise to remain celibate for the rest of his life. If married the applicant must be able to give evidence of being in a stable and growing marriage relationship, and his wife must be willing to support her husband actively through formation and ministry;
- 4) If divorced and remarried, have obtained a declaration of nullity or a canonical dissolution of the prior marriage. If more than one declaration of nullity (including lack of form cases) or canonical dissolution of the marriage is needed (for husband & wife), the man may not be considered for the diaconate. If a man marries civilly prior to having obtained a declaration of nullity or a canonical dissolution of the prior marriage, he may not be considered for the diaconate.
- 5) Never have procured or helped another person procure and effective abortion.
- 6) Never have undergone an effective vasectomy nor will the applicant's wife have undergone an effective tubal ligation.
- 7) Never have been involved in any activity that would be unbecoming to the clerical state or that would bring scandal to the Church.
- 8) Be keeping the needs of his family as a priority;
- 9) Be at least a high school graduate and be able to complete the academic requirements of the formation program;
- 10) Be physically, psychologically and emotionally sound and be able to function without the need for constant support or counseling;
- 11) Have demonstrated ability and a willingness to minister to the needs of fellow parishioners and to the wider community;
- 12) Have completed at least 5 of the required courses in the LPMP (or its equivalent);
- 13) Be endorsed by his present pastor and parish pastoral council.

AFTER ORDINATION

Permanent deacons in this archdiocese are granted the faculties to:

- 1) Assist the parish priest during liturgical services according to approved liturgical norms;
- 2) Administer solemn Baptism and to supply ceremonies according to approved liturgical rites;
- 3) Distribute Holy Communion at Mass and bring Communion to the sick and dying;
- 4) Expose and repose the Blessed Sacrament and to impart the Eucharistic blessing to people with the Ciborium or Monstrance;
- 5) Administer sacramentals and officiate at funeral and burial services according to approved liturgical rites;
- 6) Assist validly at any marriage within the limits of the parish to which he is permanently assigned and to do so licitly when no priest is available;
- 7) Assist the parish priest in his efforts to promote and sustain the cooperation of the laity in the parish apostolate.

A deacon wishing to have the faculty to preach at Eucharistic liturgies must take additional classes and apply for that faculty after ordination.

In general, permanent deacons are assigned to the parish in which they live. They carry out their ministry at that parish and in their place of employment. Ordinarily the permanent deacon comes under the supervision of the pastor of the parish to which he is assigned.

A permanent deacon is not ordinarily reassigned from parish to parish as the priests are, but would remain assigned to the parish in which he lives for as long as he chooses to live there or until his pastor or the Archbishop should request, for very serious reasons, a change of assignment.

The above is an overview of selection, formation and ordination of a permanent deacon in the Archdiocese of Cincinnati.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

WHAT IS A PERMANENT DEACON?

Deacons are best described by **who they are** rather than by what they do. Men who are ordained to the permanent diaconate promise to live out the charism of **service** to God's people through **the Word, Worship/Sacrament and Charity/Justice** for the rest of their lives. The role of the deacon is to be a helper of the bishops and priests and to proclaim by his life the Church's call to serve the needs of others. The deacon is the animator and promoter of what the community of faith must be: a community of service.

WHAT QUALITIES DOES THE CHURCH LOOK FOR IN A MAN WHO IS A POTENTIAL DEACON CANDIDATE?

- Emotional maturity
- Personal integrity/appropriate self-knowledge
- Christian holiness/an active prayer life
- Generosity for service **already being demonstrated**
- Good physical and psychological health (both candidate and wife, if married)
- Ability to work as part of a team/works well with people
- Good communication skills (both as a speaker and as a listener)
- Ability to speak publicly and proclaim the Gospel effectively
- Need in the community for his service and leadership
- Acceptance by the Christian community as evidenced by his ministry in the parish

IF A MAN'S PASTOR AND PARISH COMMUNITY BELIEVE HE IS CALLED TO THE PERMANENT DIACONATE, CAN HE BE TURNED DOWN WHEN HE APPLIES FOR ADMISSION INTO THE DEACON FORMATION PROGRAM?

A deacon is called by the Archbishop, not the local parish community. Though a man is normally assigned to his home parish by the Archbishop, at the Archbishop's discretion he may also be asked to serve somewhere else in the archdiocese where there is a need for his ministry. Therefore, the question in the selection process is whether or not the archdiocese in the person of the Archbishop is calling a man to the diaconate.

The Archbishop entrusts the Office of the Diaconate with the responsibility of discerning whether a man has the appropriate **motives, abilities, attitude and personality traits** which are called for by Canon Law and the Guidelines of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops for permanent deacons.

ONCE A MAN IS ACCEPTED INTO THE DEACON FORMATION PROGRAM CAN HE BE RELATIVELY SURE THAT HE WILL BE ORDAINED A PERMANENT DEACON?

No. Like the Seminary Formation Program, the Deacon Formation Program constitutes **one more period of discernment**. The candidate may find, as he learns more about himself and the diaconate, that ordained ministry is not his calling. Periodic evaluation of each man by his pastor and teachers, in addition to regular self-evaluation, allow the formation staff to assist each individual in his vocation journey. These may result in either the candidate or the formation staff suggesting that the formation relationship is terminated.

HOW OFTEN ARE THE NEW FORMATION CLASSES BEGUN?

Deacon Formation consists of two processes, Aspirancy and Candidacy.

Aspirancy is a period of continued discernment in which a man grows in his faith through study, prayer and service. Application for Aspirancy is ongoing. One of the requirements for acceptance into Candidacy is a required level of theological and ministerial formation which takes place during Aspirancy. In the Archdiocese of Cincinnati, this formation is most easily obtained through the Lay Pastoral Ministry Program (LPMP), but may be accomplished through another equivalent program in consultation with the Director of the Office of the Diaconate.

The **Candidacy** classes are held on a **three year cycle** corresponding to the length of the program and the need to provide adequate attention to the men in formation and their families. A class was begun in September of 2010. Other classes are scheduled to begin in 2013, 2016 and so forth. Request for admission into Candidacy are accepted from Aspirants in July preceding the beginning of a new Candidacy class starting in September. (Keep in mind that those requesting admission into Candidacy will have successfully completed Aspirancy prior to starting Candidacy.) Once a man is accepted into **Candidacy** there are **three additional years of preparation** for ordination.

WHAT ROLE DOES A DEACON STUDENT'S PASTOR AND PARISH STAFF HAVE AFTER HE HAS BEEN ACCEPTED INTO THE DEACON FORMATION PROGRAM?

The most important thing a man in formation can do is to **keep in conversation** with his pastor and parish staff. The man needs to elicit **honest feedback on his ministry**. The student needs to be **challenged to grow**, to become accustomed to doing both self-evaluation and engaging in evaluation in the context of a ministry team or parish staff. Because he is geographically close to his parish, this is the best arena for the man in formation to experience different ministries, to continue to enable other parishioners to respond to the needs for service in the community and to sharpen his team ministry skills.

FOLLOWING ORDINATION IS THE DEACON ASSIGNED TO HIS HOME PARISH?

Yes. According to the current Archdiocesan policy, a newly ordained permanent deacon is ordinarily assigned to his parish of registration for three years following ordination. A deacon may request assignment to a different parish if he so wishes. Such a request would be processed in consultation with the Archbishop and all concerned parties.

DO ALL DEACONS HAVE THE FACULTY TO PREACH AFTER THEY ARE ORDAINED?

No. In the Archdiocese of Cincinnati a Permanent Deacon is not granted faculties to preach by reason of ordination. He may apply for faculties if he successfully completes the required post-ordination courses and a preaching internship and has the approval of his pastor. Some deacons are called to give a short reflection when they are the witness of a Marriage or the principal presiders at Baptisms, Funerals, Liturgy of the Hours and prayer services.

INQUIRY PREREQUISITES FOR APPLICATION TO ASPIRANCY:

FAMILY SUPPORT

PARISH INVOLVEMENT

- Support of pastor and parish
- Leadership functions

BASIC STANDARDS FOR READINESS FOR ADMISSION INTO ASPIRANCY

APPLICATION TO ASPIRANCY

When a man has successfully completed 5 of the required courses in the LPMP (or its equivalent)

ASPIRANCY PREREQUISITES FOR ADMISSION TO CANDIDACY:

LPMP (or the equivalent of the Certificate Option)

- Training for parish ministry
- Must be completed by August 15, 2016

TRIBUNAL TRAINING COURSE

- Understanding of Annulment process
- Certification to handle annulments not required

SPIRITUAL DIRECTOR

MENTOR

ASPIRANCY SERIES OF WORKSHOPS

- Offered by the Office of the Diaconate (Oct., 2015 - May, 2016)

CANDIDACY: (Training for ordained ministry as a permanent deacon)

RETREATS

- Family
- Couples
- Canonical

WEEKEND FORMATION PROGRAM

- September - May
- Weekend schedule available in February for the following year
- Dimensions: Human, Spiritual, Intellectual, Pastoral, Diaconal
- Spiritual Director (priest)
- Deacon Mentor (couple)

CANDIDACY

- Day of Reflection
- Acceptance Ceremony

INSTALLATION AS LECTOR & ACOLYTE

- Days of Reflection
- Installations

ORDINATION

A WIFE'S ROLE

Various levels of support

- **Retreats (Family & Couples)**
- Days of Reflection
- Spirituality of Marriage Workshop
- Weekend/Class attendance is optional
- Home front
- Personal support system

**BASIC STANDARDS FOR READINESS FOR ADMISSION INTO THE ASPIRANT
PATH IN FORMATION**

Appreciation/Knowledge of

Demonstrated Ability/Skill

Human Dimension

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• His emotional, intellectual, physical, and personal limitations
• A family perspective in his life | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• To speak appropriately of his personal limitations and known boundaries with a sense of how these affect his life, family, employment, and present service ministry
• To balance and prioritize his commitments to family, work, leisure, and ministry; to be self-disciplined |
|---|---|

Spiritual Dimension

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• God's redeeming activity in his state of life, experience, and ministry

• The importance of a both personal and communal prayer life | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• To reflect/meditate in faith on his life with a sense of discovering God's will
• To convey examples of God's presence in his life
• To commit as a reader or extraordinary minister of the Eucharist; to serve his parish community, especially in charity and outreach to the needy; to be responsible and confident
• To be both a leader and a follower
• To fulfill a commitment to a pattern of prayer; to participate frequently in the Eucharist and the Sacrament of Reconciliation; to participate in retreat experiences or a renewal group
• To support others' growth in prayer; to show interest in sharing and serving with others |
|--|--|

Intellectual Dimension

- The basic teachings of the Church
- To demonstrate familiarity with the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*

Pastoral Dimension

- Living the Gospel in his life, home, place of employment, and neighborhood
- To connect the teachings of the Church to daily living and his personal/communal (family, church, civic) responsibilities
- To be flexible in attitude and behavior; to be open to change; to analyze situations in light of the Gospel and the Church's teaching

Diaconal Vocation and Ministry

- A personal call to diaconal ministry with the Church and a sense of his capacity to commit himself to it in fidelity to his state in life and employment, with sufficient time for formation
- To witness to Gospel values in ways that are life-giving; to articulate his sense of a call to the diaconate primarily because of the needs of the Church, as well as for personal growth; and to articulate reasons that support his desire to be a deacon
- To be interested in and attracted to the diaconal *munera* in word, liturgy, and charity
- To be of service, beyond liturgical ministries, through church or civic involvement
- To support and encourage his pastor, as a representative for the parish community and staff
- To be docile to the presence of the Holy Spirit throughout the application and screening processes, acknowledging that ultimately it is the Church that verifies the call

LAY PASTORAL MINISTRY PROGRAM

The Lay Pastoral Ministry Program is one of three divisions within the Athenaeum. Alongside the priestly formation programs of Mount St. Mary's Seminary and the Special Studies Division programs, the LPMP provides options for ministerial training to lay persons, religious, and men responding to a possible call to the diaconate.

The goal of the Lay Pastoral Ministry Program is to provide participants with the experiences they need:

- To become a more effective minister
- To enable others to minister
- To learn to minister with creativity and adaptability to the evolving needs of a changing Church and society

In order to accomplish these ends, the program experience provides participants with a general theological education as well as the opportunity to develop ministerial skills under the supervision of experienced ministers. Through the program, participants are helped to grapple with mature faith questions and to develop a faith stance and spirituality supportive of their role as ministers.

ADMISSIONS

To be considered for admission to the Lay Pastoral Ministry Program, applicants must submit a written application, including an autobiography and a set of references from which recommendations are then requested. Those applying for admission to study for the Master of Arts in Religion degree must submit as well, evidence of completion of a Bachelor's degree at an accredited institution.

The process for formal application includes a personal interview with the staff and personality profiling. Dimensions of a candidate's background conventionally assessed are these: orientation toward service, emotional maturity, evidence of prayer life, moral development, experience ministering, openness to personal change.

The Athenaeum Admissions Committee reviews applications after the assessment experience and makes the final decision regarding admissions. Participants are notified by July 1 of the decision. A participant may be admitted for study either toward the MAR or toward the Certificate in Lay Ministry.

EXPENSES

Since rates vary they will be published yearly.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Mount St. Mary's Seminary
Lay Pastoral Ministry Program
6616 Beechmont Avenue
Cincinnati, Ohio 45230
Ph: (513) 231-1200
Fax: (513) 231-3254
www.athenaeum.edu

**OFFICE OF THE DIACONATE
ARCHDIOCESE OF CINCINNATI
100 EAST EIGHTH STREET
CINCINNATI, OH 45202-2193**

(This is not an application)

In order to more effectively provide you with information on the Diaconate, please fill in this form and return it as soon as possible.

NAME: _____ DATE: ____ / ____ / ____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____ ZIP: _____

HOME PHONE: (____) _____ WORK PHONE: (____) _____

EMAIL ADDRESS: _____

MARITAL STATUS: Single Married Separated Divorced

Wife's Name: _____

Children's Ages: _____

BIRTH DATE: ____ / ____ / ____

Baptized as Infant Convert (Date: ____ / ____ / ____)

Parish: _____ City/State: _____

PARISH WHERE REGISTERED: _____

CITY: _____ ZIP: _____

PASTOR: _____ PHONE: (____) _____

HAVE YOU APPLIED TO THE DIACONATE BEFORE? NO YES

If yes, where: _____

HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION COMPLETED AND DEGREE AND MAJOR:

LIST PASTORAL MINISTRIES IN WHICH YOU ARE PRESENTLY ENGAGED:

IN PARISH

IN COMMUNITY/WORK PLACE

Use back of this sheet for any additional information you feel we should have at this point.