

## Deacons' Biblical Qualifications

*“Deacons likewise must be serious,  
not double-tongued,  
not indulging in much wine,  
not greedy for money;  
they must hold fast to the mystery  
of faith with a clear conscience.*

**And let them first be tested;  
then, if they prove  
themselves blameless,  
let them serve as deacons.**

*Let deacons be married only once,  
and let them manage their children  
and their households well;  
for those who serve well as deacons  
gain a good standing for themselves  
and great boldness in the faith  
that is in Christ Jesus.”*

**Timothy 3:8-10,12-13**

**Please contact us!  
Office of the Deaconate**

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-OR-

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## In the Diocese of Yakima Personal Qualifications /Requirements for Applicants at the Time of Application

- Be at least 35 years of age but not older than 62 at the beginning of the *four-year plus formation program*; exceptions are considered on case basis.
- Be a practicing Roman Catholic and a resident within the Diocese of Yakima, active in his parish, for five consecutive years or more.
- Have the endorsement of parish pastor
- **For married men:** have been married in the Catholic Church at least five years, a positive and stable marriage, have the affirmative consent of his wife, and acceptance of his children, and a well-adjusted family life.
- **For unmarried or widowed men:** have a mature celibate state of life.
- Be sensitive to the times and needs of his family and have sufficient time for diaconal formation and ministry.
- Be in good physical and emotional health, and be willing to be scrutinized.
- Applicants must be able to pass legal background checks.
- Have no irregularities & other legal or mental impediments.
- Committed to stewardship of talent, time and treasure.
- Have demonstrated leadership ability either within his parish or community organizations; be a believer of a “Shared” ministry with ability to be a “team” worker.
- Applicants who are accepted must agree to the formation process and the requirements established by the Diocese
- Possess an eagerness for prayer and acceptance of spiritual formation and be faithful to the traditions / teachings of the Church.
- Possess the desire and capacity for growth, continued education, and developing skills for ministry.
- Have a Basic Catechist Certificate, or the equivalent, and/or have or are participating in the *Magnificat* Program, or other accredited programs by the beginning of formation.
- Have sufficient financial and employment stability.

### PLEASE NOTE:

**Acceptance in the formation program is not a guarantee of ordination; no one has a right to ordination; each diocese — sets its own criteria for ministry.**



## IS GOD CALLING “YOU” TO BE A PERMANENT DEACON?



### Permanent Diaconate Ministry?

The title, “deacon,” comes from the Greek word for service, “*diakonia*.”

Through the Sacrament of Holy Orders, deacons are configured to Jesus “the Servant” who “did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many” (Mark 10:45).

The ordained Diaconate Ministry is the first rank of Holy Orders in the Catholic Church, whether Roman Catholic or Eastern Catholic.

Permanent deacons serve God in the Church in the threefold ministry of Word, Liturgy and Charity. Permanent deacons are ordained to a life-long ministry of service.



## A Brief History of the Permanent Diaconate

The beginning of the order of deacons is traced back to the story in Acts of the Apostles, **Acts 6: 1-6.**

Very early in the history of the Church, deacons were under-

stood to hold a special place in the community, along with bishops and presbyters. The role of all ordained ministries is to be modeled on the life of Christ, and of deacons especially was and still is, that of Christ the servant. Perhaps the earliest reference to deacons in this sense occurs in St. Paul's letter to the Philippians in which he addresses "all the saints in Christ Jesus who are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons".

However, it would be a mistake to interpret the servant role too literally as one of "waiting on tables." One of the seven first deacons, Stephen, was stoned to death because of his bold preaching of the Gospel, Acts 6: 8-15, 7: 54-60. He is the first recognized martyr of the Church, and his feast day is celebrated on December 26. Of the remaining seven, those of whom we have historical knowledge, it is clear that their ministry also quickly broadened to preaching and spreading the Gospel message.

The Second Vatican Council in 1963, called for the restoration of the diaconate as a permanent level of Holy Orders. In June 1967 Pope Paul VI implemented this decree of the Council when he published the Apostolic letter *Diaconatus Ordinem*, in which he re-established the permanent diaconate in the Latin Church. Thus the ministry of the Diaconate returned in permanent service to Christ's Church.

And so we have come full circle. The permanent diaconate has proved to be a resounding success, growing at an astounding rate throughout the world, but nowhere so much as here in the United States.

### In the USA

In November, 1968 the American bishops appointed the first Standing Committee on the Permanent Diaconate of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops. The Committee was charged with drawing up a program of studies for the diaconate and in May and June of 1971, it saw the first fruits of its labors with the first ordinations of permanent deacons since the Conciliar reform had been mooted. Numerically, deacons have been one of the successes since Vatican II. There are more than 18000 permanent deacons in the United States, including more than 15000 in active ministry.

### In the Diocese of Yakima

We are currently blessed with about 42 deacons in ministry, serving our communities throughout the Diocese. While the number of permanent deacons keeps growing, those ordained to the permanent diaconate are steadily reaching retirement age, with a need to replenish their ranks.

As the diaconate has developed in the United States and other countries, it is hard to find a single category of needy people in Church and society who are not being served by deacons: the homeless, the ill, prisoners, refugees, immigrants, the rural poor, street people, victims of racial and ethnic discrimination, the aged, the bereaved, battered women, the blind, the deaf, the divorced, drug addicts, the dying, the handicapped, abused children, etc. Deacons are ministering to these people, in the name of the church, and representing the care of Jesus Christ the Servant.

Among such people the deacon speaks about Christ and to offer them the Church's varied assistance. But in the Church, he is also to speak about the needy, to articulate their needs, and to inspire and mobilize the whole community's response. He thus becomes the link through which the Church reaches out to the needy and the needy challenge the church.

### Interested?

- **Please talk to your pastor first and prayerfully discuss it him.**
- **Then together — you can officially apply to the program.**
- **Please use the official application as found in the Diocesan Website, or your pastor should have such application in the parish.**
- **Please send application and other pertinent documents to the Office of the Diaconate.**



### Admission Process

The selection of diaconate candidates for the Diocese of Yakima follows the guidelines presented by the National Conference of Catholic Bishops. An essential principle indicated by the NCCB is that the diaconate is a ministry, a way of generously serving the Mission of Christ in the Church.

**The call to the diaconate is both a call from God to serve, and a call from the community of faith which is to be served.** This call does not come to the individual alone, nor for his own sake. It is not a right but rather a call affirmed and recognized by his community of faith. Anyone who hears such a call must have the gift validated by the Church.

The Diaconate Formation is a comprehensive ministry formation process involving the four pillars of theological, pastoral, spiritual, and human formation.

### **The process consists of four paths: Inquiry, Aspirancy, Candidacy and Post-Ordination.**

**INQUIRY:** The inquiry process provides information to those men who feel they are being called to the Order of Permanent Diaconia. An official invitation will be sent to each individual who has expressed an interest in learning more about the diaconate.

**ASPIRANCY:** 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. The goal of Aspirancy is to enable the aspirant to demonstrate the possibility of a diaconal vocation and an appropriate level of readiness for eventual selection into the candidate formation. This process takes about a year.

**CANDIDACY:** This is a process for continued discernment of a diaconal vocation, and a deepening theological and pastoral formation in preparation for ordination. The formational and transformative period must last at least three years, in addition to the period of inquiry and Aspirancy.

**POST-ORDINATION:** This is a follow-up process to check and sharpen pastoral and sacramental skills and encounters. The goal is to responsibly address the various aspects of a deacon's ministry, the development of his personality and, above all, his commitment to spiritual growth and pastoral service. The primary source for post-ordination formation is the ministry itself with spiritual reflection.