



*"Were not our Hearts burning within us."*

*Luke 24:32*

## *Continuing Diaconal Formation*

*Archdiocese of Denver*

*January 2008*

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# SECTION I

## THE IDENTITY OF THE DEACON

- ♦ **Philippians 2: 5-11**
- ♦ **The Sacrament of Holy Orders**
- ♦ **Restoration of the Diaconate**

*Philippians 2: 5-11*

Have among yourselves the same attitude that is also  
yours in Christ Jesus,  
Who, though he was in the form of God,  
did not regard equality with God something to be grasped.  
Rather, he emptied himself,  
taking the form of a slave,  
coming in human likeness;  
and found human in appearance,  
he humbled himself,  
becoming obedient to death,  
even death on a cross.  
Because of this, God greatly exalted him  
and bestowed on him the name  
that is above every name,  
that at the name of Jesus  
every knee should bend,  
of those in heaven and on earth and under the earth,  
and every tongue confess that  
Jesus Christ is Lord,  
to the glory of God the Father.

## *THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY ORDERS*

24. "Holy Orders is the sacrament through which the mission entrusted by Christ to his apostles [and their successors] continues to be exercised in the Church until the end of time. Thus, it is the sacrament of apostolic ministry: "The mission of the Apostles, which the Lord Jesus continues to entrust to the Pastors of his people, is a true service, significantly referred to in Sacred Scripture as "*diakonia*," namely, service or ministry." This *diakonia* "is exercised on different levels by those who from antiquity have been called bishops, priests and deacons." "The ordained ministries, apart from the persons who receive them, are a grace for the entire Church."
28. The Sacrament of Holy Orders marks deacons "with an imprint ('character') which cannot be removed and which configures them to Christ, who made himself the 'deacon' or servant of all." For this level of Holy Orders, Christ calls and the Church asks the bishop to ordain deacons to be consecrated witnesses to service. In his post-synodal exhortation *The Church in America*, Pope John Paul II makes his own the words of the bishops of that gathering: "We see with joy how deacons sustained by the grace of the Sacrament, in the ministry (*diakonia*) of the liturgy, of the word and of charity are at the service of the People of God, in communion with the Bishop and his priests."

*National Directory for the Formation, Ministry Life and of Permanent Deacons in the United States*

## THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY ORDERS

29. Ordination confers an outpouring of the Holy Spirit. It configures the deacon to Christ's consecration and mission. It constitutes the deacon as "a sacred minister and a member of the hierarchy," with a distinct identity and integrity in the Church that marks him as neither a lay person nor a priest; rather, the deacon is a cleric who is ordained to *diakonia*, namely, a service to God's People in communion with the bishop and his body of priests. "The principal function of the deacon, therefore, is to collaborate with the bishop and the priests in the exercise of a ministry which is not of their own wisdom but of the Word of God, calling all to conversion and holiness."
30. Referring to the traditional description of the deacon's *diakonia* to the Church and the bishop, Pope John Paul II observes that in an ancient text, the deacon's ministry is defined as a "service to the bishop." This observation highlights the constant understanding of the Church that the deacon enjoys a unique relationship with his bishop...

*National Directory for the Formation, Ministry, and Life of Permanent Deacons in the United States*

## *THE DIACONATE IN THE SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL*

29. At a lower level of the hierarchy are deacons, upon whom hands are imposed "not unto the priesthood, but unto a ministry of service." For strengthened by sacramental grace, in communion with the bishop and his group of priests they serve in the diaconate of the liturgy, of the word, and of charity to the people of God. It is the duty of the deacon, according as it shall have been assigned to him by competent authority, to administer baptism solemnly, to be custodian and dispenser of the Eucharist, to assist at and bless marriages in the name of the Church, to bring Viaticum to the dying, to read the Sacred Scripture to the faithful, to instruct and exhort the people, to preside over the worship and prayer of the faithful, to administer sacramentals, to officiate at funeral and burial services. Dedicated to duties of charity and of administration, let deacons be mindful of the admonition of Blessed Polycarp: "Be merciful, diligent, walking according to the truth of the Lord, who became the servant of all.

*Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, Vatican II, Lumen Gentium*

# SECTION II

## CONTINUING FORMATION OF A DEACON

- ♦ According to Pope John Paul II
- ♦ According to the National Directory for Deacons
- ♦ Policy for the Archdiocese of Denver
- ♦ CDF Requirements
- ♦ CDF Guidelines
- ♦ Reporting Procedure
- ♦ Receiving the Gospel
- ♦ Prayer to the Blessed Virgin Mary

## ***DIACONATE FORMATION***

“Those who are ordained to the diaconate are obliged to ongoing spiritual and doctrinal formation which perfects and completes what they received prior to ordination...On the part of both the Church which provides ongoing formation and of deacons who are its recipients, such formation should be regarded as a mutual obligation and duty arising from the nature of the vocational commitment which has been assumed.”

*Pope John Paul II, October 1993 General Audience*

“Each diocesan Church is to establish a basic minimum of continuing education hours to be fulfilled on an annual basis by all diocesan deacons in active service. This would be in addition to time allocated for the annual diaconal community retreat.”

*National Directory for the Formation, Ministry, and life of Permanent Deacons in the United States, Para. 254*



## *POLICY CONCERNING CONTINUING DIACONAL FORMATION*

### *Purpose:*

An increasingly educated society demands that Roman Catholic Deacons be knowledgeable and reliable witnesses of Gospel faith who proclaim the Church's teachings. The purpose of annual continuing diaconal formation is to ensure that every deacon of the Archdiocese pursues a reasonable and prudent plan of continuing education throughout his life and ministry in order to remain current on the Church's teaching, law, theological, moral and pastoral development, along with other aspects of the Church's life. In this way they form themselves in their role as clergy and are better enabled to act "in persona Christi, the Servant".

The National Directory requires that the Archdiocese establish a program of on-going formation for deacons. This program of on-going formation is in addition to time allocated for an annual spiritual retreat or diaconal community retreat. Deacons are afforded many opportunities to obtain and complete the required contact hours through archdiocesan offerings in addition to on-going formation sponsored by the Office of the Diaconate.

*Deacons are required to complete continuing education each fiscal year. The particular norms determining sufficiency of CDF are issued by the Archbishop of Denver in cooperation with the Director of Deacons and the Diaconate Personnel Board. Hours are calculated on the basis of contact hours.*

## *CDF REQUIREMENTS*

- 1.** Each deacon in active ministry, regardless of age, is to complete 30 hours of continuing formation every fiscal year.
- 2.** Hours are to be reported via a Form sent out during the quarter by the Continuing Formation for Clergy Manger. Since attendance is required at 3 regional meetings per fiscal year, this is recorded on the quarterly Form also .
- 3.** Since regional meetings include formation training, a Deacon is able to accrue 3 hours of Continual Deacon Formation credits per meeting.
- 4.** Deacons are also required to attend a Convocation Day with the Archbishop. During this session, Deacons are given specialized training designed to assist them in their ministry. These sessions usually include 4 hours of information for the Deacon that can go towards his annual requirement.
- 5.** While each deacon is free to select the formation materials/ sessions which will enhance his ministry, the content of the continuing formation is to adhere to the models of formation for deacons which include human, pastoral, spiritual, and academic formation. *(Refer to the National Directory for guidance.)*
- 6.** Credit which can be claimed for participation in formation activity will typically consist of one contact hour for each continuing education hour reported.
- 7.** As a guide for determining the credit for self study, the following can be used:
  - a. One hour of credit for 100 pages of reading material
  - b. One hour of credit for two hours of viewing videotapes or listening to audiotapes.

## *GUIDELINES FOR CDF CREDIT*

Reporting of CDF activities is done on an honor basis and the deacon's report is accepted as accurate and truthful.

### *POSSIBLE SOURCES:*

- ◆ CDF Days offered by Archdiocesan Offices
- ◆ Other Archdiocesan programs (refer to [www.archden.org](http://www.archden.org) /master calendar or the [www.deaconden.org](http://www.deaconden.org) Events page)
- ◆ Annual Region XIII Diaconate Conference
- ◆ Courses on the Internet
- ◆ Other distance learning programs
- ◆ Self-guided study
- ◆ Archdiocesan Biblical School
- ◆ Archdiocesan Catechetical programs
- ◆ College Courses
- ◆ Audit of courses at St Frances School of Theology for Deacons

### *ACTIVITIES NOT ACCEPTABLE:*

(These include activities which are normally part of the deacon's ministry)

- ◆ Homily preparation time
- ◆ Retreats
- ◆ Meetings/parish social gatherings
- ◆ Prayer Services
- ◆ Spiritual Direction sessions
- ◆ Conducting classes/workshops
- ◆ Travel time

## *REPORTING OF CDF HOURS*

The Continuing Formation for Clergy Manager sends out an email on a quarterly basis with an electronic Form attached to record hours and Regional Meeting attendance and then submit.

## ***GUIDELINES FOR TRACKING CDF CREDIT***

Deacons shall track their own CDF hours and report/record them on a quarterly electronic Form. The accountability belongs to the individual deacons to submit them on a quarterly basis.

The Associate Director will review the hours of each Deacon in his Region on a quarterly basis and contact any individuals who have not completed or provided their hours during the meeting.

The Continuing Formation for Clergy Manager will provide the completed spreadsheets to the Chairman of the Deacon Council and will identify those Deacons that are delinquent in their hours.

Prior to the Deacon's assignment, the Director of Deacon Personnel review the CDF spreadsheets provided by the CFC Manager. If the Deacon is delinquent in his hours, the Director will consult with the Personnel Board for their recommendations and consideration. Continuing delinquent behavior will be forwarded to the Archbishop for his review. The Deacon will be required to provide an explanation of the delinquencies and an action plan to correct the delinquent behavior

Deacons in Post-Ordination Formation are exempted from attending regional meetings, but are nevertheless encouraged to attend. However, attendance at Post-Ordination sessions is mandatory; therefore, these hours need not be tracked and recorded.

## CATEGORY OF HOURS

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There are 3 categories of instruction that can be allocated to CDF credits. Each of these categories must, in some way, relate to the vocational responsibilities of the Deacon's ministry.

Category 1: *Archdiocesan or Diaconate sponsored events taught in a classroom environment or college or university courses, including on-line courses, Regional Conferences, or Seminary Classes. Elements of this category are usually approved or initiated by the Diaconate Personnel Office and are directed to the Deacons of the Archdiocese of Denver for emphasis.*

Category 2: *Classes or seminars focusing on the development of ministerial skills, taught by recognized teachers in the corresponding fields. These events are typically secondary managerial or organizational classes and don't have a direct relationship to the deacon's responsibilities, yet are important to developing his vocational skills such as communication, counseling, and time management.*

Category 3: *This category applies primarily to self study that utilizes video or audio cassettes, books, periodicals, magazines or other materials which relate to spiritual formation or ministerial skills. These are materials that help enhance the personal development of the Deacon, such as: books on prayer, church history or other substantive spiritual reading.*

***RECEIVE THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST***  
***WHOSE HERALD YOU HAVE BECOME***  
***BELIEVE WHAT YOU READ***  
***TEACH WHAT YOU BELIEVE***  
***AND***  
***PRACTICE WHAT YOU TEACH***

***PRAYER***  
***TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY***

***MARY,***

Who as teacher of faith, by your obedience to the word of God, has co-operated in a remarkable way with the work of redemption, make the ministry of deacons effective by teaching them to hear the Word and to proclaim it faithfully.

Teacher of charity, who by your total openness to God's call, has co-operated in bringing to birth all the Church's faithful, make the ministry and the life of deacons fruitful by teaching them to give themselves totally to the service of the People of God.

Teacher of prayer, who through your maternal intercession has supported and helped the Church from her beginnings, make deacons always attentive to the needs of the faithful by teaching them to come to know the value of prayer.

Teacher of humility, by constantly knowing yourself to be the servant of the Lord you were filled with the Holy Spirit, make deacons docile instruments in Christ's work of redemption by teaching them the greatness of being the least of all.

Teacher of that service which is hidden, who by your everyday and ordinary life filled with love, knew how to co-operate with the salvific plan of God in an exemplary fashion, make deacons good and faithful servants, by teaching them the joy of serving the Church with an ardent love.

***Amen***