NORMS FOR THE FORMATION OF PERMANENT DEACONS

AND

GUIDELINES FOR THE MINISTRY AND LIFE OF PERMANENT DEACONS

Australian Catholic Bishops Conference

2016

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DECREE

Considering the increasing number of permanent deacons present in an increasing number of nations, the Congregation for Catholic Education considered it opportune to promulgate the document *Ratio fundamentalis institutionis diaconorum permanentium*, in order to provide a greater unity in their formation, so that they may more effectively meet the challenges facing Christians in the third millennium. This document not only sought to offer certain guidelines for the formation of permanent deacons, but also some general principles, which Episcopal Conferences should take into consideration when preparing their *Ratio nationalis*, in accordance with can. 236. In a similar way, this Congregation for the Clergy, for the purpose of establishing juridical norms for the ministry, spirituality and ongoing formation of permanent deacons promulgated the *Directorium pro ministerio et vita diaconorum permanentium*.

In the same way that the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council established for the *Rationes institutionis sacerdotalis*, Episcopal Conferences, who have established the permanent diaconate in their territories, should submit their own *Rationes nationales* for the *recognitio* and approval of the Holy See.

In order to comply with this obligation, and considering the precise and specific conditions of their particular Churches, the Australian Catholic Bishops' Conference has submitted to this Congregation the newly prepared *Norms for the Formation of Permanent Deacons and Guidelines for the Ministry and Life of Permanent Deacons*, for the purpose of receiving the required approval.

With these matters, therefore, having been considered and evaluated, in accordance with Art. 4 m.p. *Ministrorum institutio*, promulgated by Pope Benedict XVI on 23 January 2013, and Art. 15 *Ratio fundamentalis institutionis diaconorum permanentium*, this Congregation for the Clergy willingly **approves** the document entitled *Norms for the Formation of Permanent Deacons and*

Guidelines for the Ministry and Life of Permanent Deacons, **for a period of six years**, and orders that those matters to which it pertains are to be faithfully observed; fulfilling that which is to be fulfilled according to law; anything to the contrary notwithstanding.

Given at Rome, from the Palace of the Congregations, this 16 day of June in the year of Our Lord 2016.

Beniamino Cardinal Stella
Prefect

✠ Joël Mercier
Titular Archbishop of Rota
Secretary

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NORMS FOR THE FORMATION OF PERMANENT DEACONS

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 BASED ON UNIVERSAL GUIDELINES FROM THE HOLY SEE

These norms follow the universal guidelines promulgated by the Holy See in 1998.[1] The brevity of these norms for the Catholic Church in Australia indicates that the reader should, wherever appropriate, refer to the complete text of the Congregations for the Clergy and for Catholic Education.

In accordance with *Basic Norms* (1998) *n.10*, these norms for formation for the Catholic Church in Australia recognize both that "the inherent ministerial service is one and the same in every case" and that "the different pastoral situations of the single Churches" will influence the concrete exercise of the diaconal ministry. Consequently, in prescribing "the formation to be imparted", the differing pastoral situations "should obviously be taken into account."

1.2 PREVIOUS EDITIONS

The present text "Norms for the Formation of Permanent Deacons" (2016) for the Catholic Church in Australia supersedes all previous texts of guidelines or norms published with the authority of the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference[2], and is normative in all the archdioceses and dioceses of the Roman rite in Australia..

The Australian Catholic Bishops Conference petitioned the Holy See to introduce the permanent diaconate on 29th January 1970.[3]

The current document seeks to respond to the changed circumstances of the Catholic Church in Australia as noted below.

1.3 AUSTRALIAN CONTEXT

1.3.1 Urban Concentration

Australia is among the most urbanized societies on the planet. Preparation for ordained ministry is a resource intensive undertaking. The concentration of theological faculties and houses of formation in the capital cities of Australia favour the preparation of permanent deacons who reside in the metropolitan areas of the nation.

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[1] Congregation for Catholic Education and Congregation for the Clergy *Basic Norms for the Formation of Permanent Deacons* and the accompanying *Directory for the Ministry and Life of Permanent Deacons.* (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1998). [Hereafter: *Basic Norms* (1998) and *Directory* (1998)]

[2] *Draft National Guidelines for Permanent Diaconate in Australia,* Canberra: ACBC (2002); *Guidelines for the Permanent Diaconate in the Catholic Church in Australia* Canberra: ACBC (2005) [Hereafter *Guidelines* (2005)].

[3] As noted in *Draft National Guidelines* (2002), appendix A, authorisation was granted by the Congregation for the Evangelisation of Peoples (13th April 1970 - N 947170) to execute the prescriptions of Blessed Pope Paul VI's Apostolic Letter 'motu proprio', *Sacrum diaconatus ordinem* (18th June 1967). In August 1970, the Bishops Conference prepared Norms for the Permanent Diaconate, which were approved by the Congregation for the Evangelisation of Peoples on 23rd November 1970.

1.3.2 Rural ('Outback') Life

Australia has a complementary characteristic, its vast landmass in which deserts, great plains and long distances describe the greater proportion of the country. Notwithstanding the benefits of modern means of communication, this geography conditions the daily life of the minority of the population that inhabits the remote areas, even as it features in the imagination of urban dwellers.

Though the population is small, this reality affects the possibilities for formation in the majority of Australian dioceses.

1.3.3 Multicultural Nation and Church

Alongside a respected minority of indigenous Australians, Australia is a nation of migrants. Most of us are descended from voluntary settlers in search of a better life, some of us are descendants of the first convict European settlers of the second half of the eighteenth century, many of us are refugees from historic and present tyranny and crushing poverty.

The Catholic Church in Australia holds dear the rich and varied spiritual experiences and traditions of all who go to make up the communion of the baptized in this nation. Their traditional expressions of catholic life need to be tended to by a body of understanding and competent ordained ministers, some of whom will be bishops, priests and deacons from their own ethnic groups, others of whom will be Australian born clergy.

1.3.4 Secularization

Australia has seen the rapid spread of the secularized mentality that is found in all industrial societies. This is an attitude that affects believers, at times making a synthesis of faith and daily life difficult of achievement, even with the best of goodwill.[4]

1.3.5 Marriage and Family

Nowhere is this more evident in the structure of the family – the relationship of man and woman, the prevalence of pre-marital cohabitation, the incidence of marital breakdown and of remarriage – with the consequences for the well-being and education of children.

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[4] St. John Paul II, *'The Church in Oceania'*, Post-Synodal Exhortation (2002), 7: "Australia and New Zealand, has entered upon an era marked by increasing secularization.... Christianity is moved to the margin and by increasing secularization.... tends to be regarded as a strictly private matter... Religious convictions and the insights of faith are at times denied their due role in forming people's consciences."

The presence of permanent deacons who live faithfully and happily the vocation of marriage is a powerful witness of the Gospel to catholic and non-catholic alike. The experience of these 'diaconal' families may be a valuable contribution to the ministry to families that the Church seeks to provide to all its married members.

Though some are unmarried, most permanent deacons bring the wealth of the vocation of marriage and family life to the sacramental presence of Christ as a deacon in the Church. Their wives have explicitly consented to allow their husbands to follow this vocation of service outside the home and family. This is these women's gift to our local Church. The deacons' love of their family will give a different and fresh flavour to their preaching and to their sacramental ministrations at such significant moments in family life as baptism, marriage and funerals.

2. HISTORY

2.1 EARLY CHURCH

From the earliest decades, ordination by the laying on of hands was conferred on deacons, presbyters and bishops, these orders being three grades of one sacrament of Holy Orders.[5]

The Permanent Diaconate is integral to the sacramental dimension of the Church itself. Patristic authors repeatedly demonstrate the conviction that the vivifying presence of Christ in his Body is assured only where the threefold ministry of bishop, presbyters and deacons is present.[6] According to Clement of Rome, "the order of bishops and deacons was not an innovation, but was founded on the will of God." [7]

The earliest centuries of the Church's life were well served by the stable exercise of all three ordained ministries. By mid-third century, under Popes Fabian (235-250) and Cornelius (251-253), seven deacons were assigned to seven administrative districts of the city of Rome.[8]

St Lawrence (d. 258) exercised a ministry of exceptional renown among the poor, not to forget the example of his death. Having already distributed the Church's treasure to the poor, prepared for martyrdom, he presented the poor members of the Church to the authorities as themselves the true treasure of the Church.

In the age of persecution, the ministry of the deacon, in addition to the part they were assigned in the administration of the sacraments, in catechizing the catechumens and in the administration of the goods of the Church in caring for the poor, was extended by Cyprian of Carthage (d. 258) as a supportive ministry to Christians who had been imprisoned for their faithful witness. [9]

By the mid-fourth century in Egypt, an institutionalized *diakonia* was found within each monastery. The practice was adopted in the West. It is known at Naples in the sixth century; in Rome the seven *diakonia* flourished in the seventh and eighth centuries.[10]

2.2 DECLINE

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[5] Cf. I Tm 3:1-13.

[6] *Didache* 15:1-3, James A Kleist (trans.), *Ancient Christian Writers, no. 6* (Westminster, MD: Newman Bookshop, 1948), 24; Ignatius of Antioch *Magn.* 2; 6,1;13,1; *Trall.* 2.3 - 3,1 Johannes Quasten, Joseph Plumpe (edd.), James Kleist (trans.), *Ancient Christian Writers, no. 1* (Westminster, MD: Newman Bookshop, 1946), 69; 71; 73; 75-76; Polycarp of Smyrna *Phil.*5,2, Kleist, *Ancient Christian Writers, no. 6* (Westminster, MD: Newman Bookshop, 1948).

[7] Clement of Rome *I Clem.* 41,1; 42, 1-5; 44, 3. Kleist (trans.), *Ancient Christian Writers, no. 1*, 34-36.

[8] Eusebius *History of the Church* 6.43.11, Philip Schaff, Henry Wace (trans.) *Nicene and post-Nicene Fathers*, second series, vol. 1, 288.

[9] Cyprian of Carthage *De lapsis 25* (eucharist): M. Bevenot SJ (trans.) *De lapsis and De Ecclesiae Catholicae Unitate* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), 39; *Ep.12,1; 16,3.2; 18,1* (reconciliation in danger of death), *Ep.5.2* (ensuring peace while visiting prisoners): G. W. Clarke (trans.) *Ancient Christian Writers* (New York, NY: Newman, 1984) 81; 95; 98; 62.

[10] Pope Benedict VXI *Deus caritas est* Encyclical Letter (2005), n. 23.

The close ministerial relationship of the bishop to his deacons led to a perception that the diaconate had become a more influential order in the Church than that of the presbyters. Along with the adoption of imperial titles, vesture and privileges by the higher clergy, discontent with the power of the deacons led to the order's gradual demise, other than as a transitional moment in the minor cleric's advance in major orders.[11] The eclipse in the Middle Ages of the diaconate as a distinct permanent ordained ministry was a loss to the Church.

The Council of Trent needed to counter the tendency of the newly emergent Protestant communities to eliminate office in the Church. Thus, the divine institution of ecclesiastical office with the three orders of bishop, priest and deacon was reaffirmed. Office is received in ordination in which grace is conferred and a character imprinted. It was defined that the diaconate was of divine institution, but agreement was not reached to restore the diaconate.[12] This had to await another Council's inspiration.

2.3 RESTORATION AT VATICAN COUNCIL II

The bishops at the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) discussed the desirability of restoring the permanent diaconate. This office had not been exercised in the Western church for more than one millennium.

In 1967, Pope Paul VI decreed that the order of deacon could be conferred for a life-long ministry upon married or celibate men. Forty six years later, there are about 43,000 permanent deacons, 96.7% of whom serve in only two continents, 14,000 in Europe, 28,000 in the United States of America.[13] This has happened despite the fact that the discussions by the Council Fathers had concentrated on the benefit of the diaconate in missionary dioceses.

In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the diaconate was exercised in northern Europe within the Lutheran communion. It was conceived predominantly as an expression of Christ's command to his disciples to serve one another, and was exercised by both men and women deacons through systematic social work.

During the Second World War (1939-1945), the faith and reflection of Catholic priests who were imprisoned in the concentration camps alongside the Jewish people led them to recall the diaconate in the early Church. If it were to be restored, it seemed to them to be a way that the Church could develop effective strategies for a more versatile pastoral ministry, including service of oppressed groups such as those to whose cries they had been exposed in the camps. After their liberation, they met with theologians Karl Rahner and Jean Rodhain who undertook to study the sources of the permanent diaconate. Once the Second Vatican Council opened the way, their studies aided extensive theological reflections.

Notwithstanding that it is a threefold ministry of the Word, of the Sacraments and of charity, the genesis of the contemporary diaconate in the Catholic Church is rooted in this profound evangelical call to service.

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[11] International Theological Commission *From the Diakonia of Christ to the Diakonia of the Apostles. Historico-Theological Research Document* (English trans. London: Catholic Truth Society, 2003), 28-33.

[12] "If anyone says that in the Catholic Church a hierarchy has not been instituted by divine ordinance, which consists of the bishops, priests, and ministers, *anathema sit.*" Council of Trent, *De sacramento ordinis*, session 23, (15 July 1563), DS 1763 -1778. The International Theological Commission *From the Diakonia* … 39-42 discussed the exact import of the term "ministers" at the Council of Trent, concluding that the term includes deacons.

[13] *Annuario pontificio* 2015. Accessed 16 April 2015.
https://press.vatican.va/content/salastampa/it/bollettino/pubblico/2015/04/16/0277/00616.html

The discussion at the Second Vatican Council was initiated by some missionary bishops who saw in the permanent married diaconate a means to supplement the sacramental ministry of priests. However, theologians among the bishops at the Council rejected this approach, pointing to the origins of the diaconate in the divine constitution of the Church. If the Council were to recommend the reintroduction of the permanent diaconate, it should be so that the fullness of ordained ministry might be evident again in the Church. Some bishops were opposed to the innovation, lest it reduce esteem for the celibate state of presbyters and bishops. Their objection was unacceptable to the Council[14].

In accordance with the mind of the Fathers of the Second Vatican Council, Pope Paul VI indicated the functions that would be carried out through the ministry of permanent deacons under the direction of the bishop. The functions or duties are as follows:

- To assist the bishop and the priest during liturgical actions in all things which the rituals of the different orders assign to him;
- To administer baptism solemnly and to supply the ceremonies which may have been omitted when conferring it on children or adults;
- To reserve the Eucharist and to distribute it to himself and to others, to bring it as a
- Viaticum to the dying and to impart to the people.
- Benediction with the Blessed Sacrament with the sacred ciborium;
- In the absence of a priest, to assist at and to bless marriages in the name of the Church by delegation from the bishop or pastor, observing the rest of the requirements which are in the Code of Canon Law, with Canon 1098 remaining firm and where what is said in regard to the priest is also to be understood in regard to the deacon;
- To administer sacramentals and to officiate at funeral and burial services;
- To read the sacred books of Scripture to the faithful and to instruct and exhort the people;
- To preside at the worship and prayers of the people when a priest is not present;
- To direct the liturgy of the Word, particularly in the absence of a priest;
- To carry out, in the name of the hierarchy, the duties of charity and of administration as well as works of social assistance;
- To guide legitimately, in the name of the parish priest and of the bishop, remote Christian communities;
- To promote and sustain the apostolic activities of laymen;
- All these functions must be carried out in perfect communion with the bishop and with his presbytery, that is to say, under the authority of the bishop and of the priest who is in charge of the care of souls in that place;
- Deacons, as much as possible, should have their part in pastoral councils.[15]

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[14] Congregations for Catholic Education and for the Clergy *Basic Norms* (1998), nn. 5, 11 ; International Theological Commission *From the Diakonia of Christ* ..., 54-57; W. Kasper *Leadership in the Church. How Traditional Roles Can Serve the Christian Community Today* (New York: Crossroad, 2003), 13-15.

[15] Blessed Pope Paul VI, *Sacrum diaconatus ordinem* , n. 21.

3. THEOLOGY

3.1 SCRIPTURE

The terms "minister" ("deacon"), "to minister", "ministry" as used by the inspired writers of the New Testament are the foundation of the Church's understanding of the office of the diaconate.

In the books of the New Testament, deacons "gradually form a distinct category from the 'presbyter' and 'Episcopoi'".[16] The earliest mention is found in the letter to the Philippians (1:1). St Paul notes the presence of ministers of oversight ('episkopoi') and *diakonoi.* I Tim 3:13 is the only other mention of the office of *diakonos.*[17]

A better understanding of the deacon's three fold ministry of the word of God, of worship and of pastoral charity will come from considering St Paul's use of the 'ministry' words in a broader context, namely, his preaching of the mystery of Christ.

Writing to the Christians at Corinth around the year 56 or 57, St Paul calls himself a 'minister, envoy' (*diakonos)*, one given a 'ministry' (1 Cor 3:5 '*diakonoi*'; cf. 2 Cor 3:6 '*diakonous*' and 5:18 '*diakonian*'). The context is an assignment from God (1 Cor 3:5), a competency or qualification from God (2 Cor 3:6), 'ministry' given by God (2 Cor 5:18). In these texts, the 'ministry' (*diakonia*) essentially consists in a relationship of the 'minister' to God, the one who calls, qualifies, bestows.

The minister is sent to communicate in the power of the Spirit the good news that God in Christ offers reconciliation to all humankind. They are "ministers of a new covenant ... in the Spirit" (2 Cor 3:6). Their ministry is related to the love of Christ, revealed in his death, which brings about a new creation in an act of reconciliation of which the apostle is the 'minister' (2 Cor 5:12-20). Performing his 'ministry' (2 Cor 6:3) as 'minister' of God (2 Cor 6:4), Paul pleads with the Corinthians to accept the grace of God (2 Cor 6:1). Paul became a 'minister' of the gospel which the Colossians heard (Col 1:23); by a gift of God's grace he has been made a 'minister' of the gospel (Eph 3:7).

Other examples of 'ministry' refer to a gift of the Spirit (Rm 12:8, 1 Cor 12:5) and to a mission of aid undertaken from one church to another (Rm 15:25).

In a word, St Paul understood his *diakonia* as the proclamation of the good news of reconciliation (2 Cor 5:12-20). The inspired, though complex, portrayal in the four gospels of the life of Jesus of Nazareth unto death on the Cross, follows the normative paradigm preached by St Paul. This death is the necessary revelation of the purpose of the Incarnation of the Word become flesh (Jn 3:16-17). Those who are slaves to sin are offered freedom from sin and death as the gift of the love of God, present in his Son who lived each moment of his earthly existence as an habitual obedience to the Father's will. In this revelation of the glory of God in the death and resurrection of his Son (Jn 17:4-5), the fulfilment of Jesus' obedient living out of his mission (his *diakonia*) is achieved (Mk 10:45 parr., see below).

The synoptic gospels were composed later than the Pauline texts considered above. They tell how Jesus was teaching that he came from the Father, not to 'receive *diakonia*'

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[16] Saint John Paul II *Deacons Serve the Kingdom of God,* General Audience Rome (6 October 1993), n. 1.

[17] St Paul mentions deacon co-workers such as Timothy (I Th 3:2); Epaphras (Col 1:7); Tychicus (Col 3:7; Eph 6:2); Phoebe (Rm 16:1-2). See *Basic Norms* (1998) Introduction, n. 2, fn. 14.

(*diakonaithainai*) but to 'give *diakonia*' (*diakonaisai*) (Mk 10:45a). His *diakonia* consisted in giving his life for many (Mk 10:45 and parr; cf. Lk 22:14-30). During a general audience, Saint John Paul II succinctly summarized recent scholarship. "Jesus stated about his mission (that) 'The Son of Man has not come to be served but to serve---to give his life in ransom for many'".[18] . From within the ever-to-be-shared life of the Holy Trinity, Jesus' mission to announce and to realize the joyful news of salvation constituted the service for which he came.

In referring to himself as the Son of Man, Jesus adopts prophetic terminology. He was sent by the Father in order "to minister" ("*diakonaisai*") (Mk 10:45 parr.).[19] In a different vein, the letter to the Philippians (2:6-11) names Christ's abasement as his assumption of the condition of a "slave"(*'doulos'*), in continuity with the prophetic portrayal of the Suffering *doulos* in the four Isaian Servant Songs.

In the gospel according to John (chap.13), although Jesus' washing of the feet of his apostles is a symbolic action that gives an example of service to be followed by the disciples, it is not described as *diakonia*. However, the 'example' (v. 15) that Jesus sets before the twelve refers to the theme of exemplary death (*'hypodeigma')* found in Jewish texts. The disciples are to imitate his self-gift.[20]

Thus, in the context of the entire New Testament, Jesus is speaking of the sacred mission that he has received from the Father to reconcile alienated humanity to the Holy One through his redemptive death (cf. Mk 10:45). This does not detract in any way from the command that disciples love and serve one another in an ethical commitment in imitation of Jesus. (Mt 25:31-44; Mk 12:31 par.; Jn 13:34-35; Ep 5:1-21; Phil 1:6-11; Col 1:9-10; 1 Jn 3:11-18)

In Acts 6:1-6, Luke speaks "of seven 'ministers' for service at table. Although the question of a sacramental ordination of 'deacons' is not clear from the text, a long tradition has interpreted the episode as the first evidence of the institution of deacons."[21]

In the later books of the New Testament, there is evidence of a threefold office of bishops, presbyters and deacons in the Church. I Tim 3:8-13 mentions the office of deacon and describes essential qualities that are sought in a candidate even in our own day. He must be serious, not double-tongued, not a drunkard, not greedy, holding the mystery of faith with a clear conscience. His family life should be exemplary.

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[18] St John Paul II *Deacons are Called to a Life of Holiness,* General Audience Rome (20 October 1993), n.1. The original text twice (n.1, n.5) includes the dashes, indicating the epexegetical 'and'. The second phrase defines the service referred to in the first phrase. At n.5, the Pope is specific: "Deacons too, like priests and Bishops, who are committed to following Christ in the way of service, share most especially in his redeeming sacrifice, according to the principle Jesus formulated (in Mk 10:45)."

[19] In contrast to early translations which rendered the group of words that refer to *diakonia* as 'ministry', 'to minister', 'minister' etc, modern translations render the word group as 'service', 'to serve', 'servant'. Both in ancient Greek literature and in Christian writings, the word group has the connotation of the office of one who has received from a superior a commission, this most often being a sacred commission. Cf. J. N Collins *Diakonia. Re-interpreting the Ancient Sources* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 248-252. See note 21 below.

[20] F. J. Moloney *The Gospel of John* (=Sacra Pagina Series, vol. 4) (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1998), 376.

[21] St John Paul II *Deacons are Called to a Life of Holiness,* n.1. An exegetical and historical account of the diaconate is found in the encyclical letter of Pope Benedict XVI *Deus caritas est,* (2005), nn. 21-25. Using the traditional exegesis of Acts 6:1-6, the Pope stressed the care for the widows of the Hellenists in the apostolic community of Jerusalem. Prayer and the laying on of hands was conferred on the Seven men "full of the Spirit and wisdom". Despite the exegesis used, the Pope concurred with his predecessor, noting that, "Tradition sees in this group the seed of the future ministry of 'deacons', although this category is not present in the Book of Acts." Moreover, he added that "the act of the laying on of hands developed along the lines of a sacramental sign."

It is clear that 'service' modelled after the *diakonia* of Jesus himself is at the heart of the applications of the word-group when it refers to ministry and ministers, both in its use as verb (*diakonein)* and noun (*diakonia, diakonos)*.[22]

In two different accounts in the gospels according to Mark and to Luke in which Jesus teaches them what constitutes service after his example, the context is a dispute among the Twelve about power and authority. The episodes manifest the disciples' lack of understanding of the nature of the Master's mission.

Using a radical contrast to the pagans' habitually brutal exercise of power, Jesus teaches them that their greatness is to be a 'minister/servant' (*diakonos)* (Mk 10:43). Jesus then explains the nature of *diakonia*. It consists in his obedient surrender to the will of the Father in carrying out his salvific mission, named specifically at Mk 10:45 as his redemptive death.

The gospel according to Luke (22:24-30) relates that Jesus confirmed the apostles' faith at the Last Supper, naming himself as the trusted table waiter, the servant of rank, who perpetually prepares a welcome for them at his table. "For which is the greater, one who sits at table, or one who serves? Is it not the one who sits at table? But I am among you as one who serves."

Saint Paul repeatedly expresses his consciousness of the call that he had received from the risen Lord to proclaim the gospel, naming himself its servant. The nascent Church step by step builds up a structure of office that includes an assistant to the bishop - a deacon. Their service in the Church is not only in works of charity but, as we have seen with St Paul and the preaching of the Seven, equally in the work of the gospel (Ac 6:1-10).

3.2 FATHERS OF THE CHURCH

There are multiple indications that the church in many places included deacons in the group of ministers, alongside bishops and presbyters. The following testimonies demonstrate four principal theological insights. First, the fullness of visible structure in a local Church was assured with the presence of the orders of episcopate, presbyterate and diaconate. Second, the deacons' ministerial activity included sacramental, evangelising and pastoral ministry. Third, the relationship of the bishop with his deacon(s) was quite intimate. It was a benefit for, almost a condition of, the unity of the church and had for its goal a pastoral communication that assured the safety, stability and growth of the Church. The deacon was ordained "for the ministry (of the bishop)." Fourth, the motivation of the deacon's service is found in the example of Christ on the Cross, the fulfilment of the mission received from his Father.[23]

Saint Ignatius of Antioch (+107) taught that the deacons are "ministers of the church of God". He emphasizes this teaching by explicitly excluding them as deacons of food and drink. They were associated with the ministry of the bishop, a ministry of word, sacrament and pastoral

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[22] In addressing the 1990 Synod of Bishops on the Formation of Priests, Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger critiqued the 'desacralization' by some of the priestly office, frequently encountered at the time. Cf. Joseph Ratzinger *Called to Communion: Understanding the Church Today*, (San Francisco, CA: Ignatius Press, 1996), 106. Cardinal Ratzinger referred, in a footnote, to a paragraph of the doctoral thesis (1976) of J. N Collins in which the author concludes that *diakonia* in the Greek New Testament letters refers to a particular kind of service in the performance of a sacred commission, rather than to any act of service whatsoever, and, particularly, not to actions of 'menial service'. Cf. J. N. Collins *Diakonia…*, 251-252.

[23] The fulfilment of Christ's service (*diakonia*) culminated on the Cross (Mk 10:45). The episcopal order in apostolic succession therefore has a *'diakonia"*. The ministry of a deacon, though modelled on Christ's *diakonia,* is not included in the ministry of apostolic succession, but "recognized as apostolic in its foundation, and not in its theological nature." International Theological Commission *From the diakonia of Christ …* (2003), 91.

care. [24] Ignatius refers to the deacons as representatives of Jesus Christ.[25] In other letters, he calls for them to receive the respect due to God's law.[26] The deacon's ministry is nothing other than "the ministry of Jesus Christ who was with the Father before time began and returned at the end of time."[27]

The *Didache* ('*Teaching of the Twelve* Apostles') (150 ca.) lists *diakonoi* with *episkopoi.*[28] The deacons, who are by analogy with "your prophets, the high priests", honoured members of the Church,[29] are responsible for the Word of God, the Eucharist and ministry.[30]

The Shepherd of Hermas (ca. 140) joins bishops, presbyters and deacons as the 'fair stones' of which the church is built.[31] Deacons are engaged in charitable works, and in administration of property.[32]

Saint Polycarp of Smyrna (+156) exhorts deacons to moderation, diligence and mercy since they live "according to the truth of the Lord, who became the servant of all."[33]

In the mind of these representative theologians, the deacon is intrinsic to the foundation of the unity of the Church.

In the *Apostolic tradition* of Hippolytus (ca. 220), we find references to the deacon's function at the celebration of the Eucharist and the *agape* meal,[34] their assistance at baptism,[35] their praying daily with the bishop and presbyters.[36] In the ordination rite, the spirit – "the Holy Spirit of grace, attentiveness and zeal" - is entrusted under the authority of the bishop to the deacon.[37] He is ordained, not for priesthood, but for "the service of the bishop that he may do the things commanded him" and reporting whatever is necessary .[38] The deacon's functions

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[24] Ignatius of Antioch *Trall* 2,3; *Magn* 6,1; *Phil* 11,1. Johannes Quasten, Joseph Plumpe (edd.), James Kleist (trans.), *Ancient Christian Writers, no. 1* (Westminster, MD: Newman Bookshop, 1946), 75-76, 71, 89.

[25] Ignatius of Antioch *Trall* 2,3 – 3,1, Quasten, Plumpe, Kleist, *Ancient Christian Writers, no. 1*, 75-76, cited in *Catechism of the Catholic Church* n. 1554.

[26] Ignatius of Antioch *Smyrn* 8,1f. Quasten, Plumpe, Kleist, *Ancient Christian Writers, no. 1*, 93.

[27] Ignatius of Antioch *Magn* 6,1; *Phil* 4; *Smyr* 12,2. Quasten, Plumpe, Kleist, *Ancient Christian Writers, no. 1*, 86, 95, 71.

[28] *Didache*, 15:1. James A Kleist (trans.), *Ancient Christian Writers, no. 6*, 24.

[29] *Didache*, Kleist, *Ancient Christian Writers, no. 6*, 23: "Bishops and deacons ... render you the sacred service of the prophets and teachers."

[30] *Didache*, Kleist, *Ancient Christian Writers, no. 6*, 21.

[31] Hermas *Shepherd* vision 3,1. Alexander Roberts, James Donaldson (edd.), *Ante-Nicene Christian Library. Translations of the Writings of the Fathers down to A.D. 325*, vol. 2, The Apostolic Fathers (New York, NY: The Christian Literature Publishing Company, 1885) 38-39.

[32] Hermas *Shepherd* vision 3, 9, 26. Roberts, Donaldson, *Ante-Nicene Library* ...,vol. 2, 52.

[33] *Ad Philippenses* V.2. Alexander Roberts, James Donaldson (edd.), *Ante-Nicene Christian Library. Translations of the Writings of the Fathers down to A.D. 325*, vol.1, The Apostolic Fathers (New York, NY: The Christian Literature Publishing Company, 1885), 72.

[34] Hippolytus *Apostolic tradition* 4.2; 23.1, 7; 24.1, 2; at the *agape* feast 26.11,18, 29. Gregory Dix, *The Treatise on The Apostolic Tradition of St Hippolytus of Rome* (London: SPCK, 1937), 6, 40-41, 43-44; 48, 50, 51; also Cyprian of Carthage *De lapsis* 25. M. Bevenot SJ (trans.) *De lapsis and De Ecclesiae Catholicae Unitate* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), 39.

[35] Hippolytus *Apostolic tradition* 21.8,11; 26,14; Dix, *The Treatise*... , 34, 35, 49; cf. Council of Elvira, canon 77 (DH 121).

[36] Hippolytus *Apostolic tradition* 33; Dix, *The Treatise*... , 60.

[37] Hippolytus *Apostolic tradition* 9. 4,11; Dix, *The Treatise*... , 16, 17.

[38] Hippolytus *Apostolic tradition* 9. 2,3; Dix, *The Treatise*... , 15; The formula adopted by the Second Vatican Council omits "of the bishop", cf. *Lumen gentium*, n. 29. For a thorough discussion of contemporary theological

are many, though consistent with the typology of a ministry of the Word, of the Eucharist and of pastoral care.

In a striking phrase, *Didascalia apostolorum* (230-250) likens the deacons to the bishop's ear, mouth, heart and soul.[39] The image was alluded to by the bishop of Ostuni during the debate on the diaconate at the Council of Trent[40]; the *Roman Catechism* that implemented the decrees of the Council views the deacon as "the eye of the bishop". Thus, the bishop will be aware of conditions in the diocese.[41]

Thus, bishop and deacon must be "of one counsel and of one purpose, and one soul dwelling in two bodies." *Didascalia apostolorum* bases this intimacy on the obedience of Christ, the servant who laid down his life. "If then the Lord of heaven and earth *performed a service* for us, and bore and endured everything for us, how much more ought we to do the like for our brethren ... For we are imitators of him and hold the place of Christ."[42] Thus, the deacon's ministry is related to the specific service given by the Lord in fulfilling the paschal mystery.

Their function was important in the church at Carthage under Bishop Cyprian (248-258), particularly in the visitation of the prisoners.[43]

Testimonies such as these point not only to the intimate union at this time of the deacon with the bishop in service of the communion of the Church but also to the vigour of their ministry.

3.3 CONTEMPORARY MAGISTERIUM

Despite the lengthy period in which a permanent exercise of the deacon's office had not been present in the church's life, there is today, in the light of the Church's Tradition, fundamental agreement regarding the theology of the diaconate.

Serving the Mysteries of Christ in the Mystery of the Church

"The heart of the diaconate ... *to be a servant of the mysteries of Christ and, at one and the same time, to be a servant of your brothers and sisters.* ... two dimensions ... in one reality."[44]

3.3.1 Servant of the Church as Communion

As with any sacrament, the order of deacon has its source in the mystery of the Church. The Second Vatican Council adopted an ecclesiology of

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issues regarding the link of the deacon's ministry with the ministry of the bishop, cf. International Theological Commission *From the diakonia of Christ* ... , 83-91.

[39] *Didascalia apostolorum* XI, ii. 44, in R. Hugh Connolly (trans.) *Didascalia Apostolorum. The Syriac Version Translated and Accompanied by the Verona Latin Fragments,* (Oxford, The Clarendon Press, 1929), 109, "Let the deacon make known all things to the bishop ... let him be the hearing of the bishop, and his mouth and his heart and his soul."

[40] *Concilium Tridentinum: diariorum, actorum, epistolarum, tractatuum, nova collection,* 9 (*Freiburg:* Gorres-Gesellchaft, 1901), 558: "Omnes populi causae et res ad episcopum per diaconos perducebantur."

[41] *Catechismus ex Decreto Concilii Tridentini ad Parochos Pii Quinit Pont. Max. Iussu Editus,* II.VII.xx (Lipsiae, Bernh. Tauchnitz Jun., 1847), 268. (= Roman Catechism 2,7.20), "ad diaconum attinet, tanquam episcopi oculum, pervestigare .."("the deacon is, as it were, the eye of the bishop, ... in order to inform him (of the life of the church).")

[42] *Didascalia apostolorum* XVI, iii, 13, in R. Hugh Connolly, *Didascalia Apostolorum. The Syriac* ... , 148-150.

[43] See above, fn. 9.

[44] Saint John Paul II, *The Heart of the Diaconate – Servants of the Mysteries of Jesus Christ and Servants of Your Brothers and Sisters* Allocution to Deacons and their Wives, nn. 1, 2, Detroit, MI *Origins* 17(1987): 327-329 , n. 1. Italics original.

communion.[45] This ecclesiology, grounded in the organic unity of the inner reality of the Church and her visible elements, clarifies not only the sacramental nature of the Church, but also the Church's part in the divine plan of salvation as a sacrament of the salvific unity of humans with God and with one another. The Trinitarian communion has, in unity and diversity, the Church as its sacrament.

Deacons receive a special grace so that they "can permanently serve the mysteries of Christ and the Church."[46] The diaconate is a necessary element of the divinely ordained hierarchy. The presence of deacons 'at a lower level of the hierarchy', as a permanent ministry among the ordained[47], brings about a fuller expression of the Church's sacramental structure. Though circumstances related to the life of the young Churches, such as the diaconal nature of some of the ministries carried out by the lay faithful and the scarcity of priests, stimulated the discussions of the Fathers of the Second Vatican Council, nonetheless "the Holy Spirit ... was mysteriously working ... bringing about a new realization of the complete picture of the hierarchy."[48]

The deacon's service is given in the first place to the bishop, the chief shepherd of each local church.[49] The ministerial relationship of the deacon to the bishop is the visible expression of the "conformation to Christ, Lord and servant of all" received in ordination.[50] Their role is "to express the needs and desires of the Christian communities." [51] Insisting on the deacon's service, within the reality of ecclesial communion, of the "mysteries of Christ", Saint John Paul II spoke of the consequences of this teaching.

The deacon must be shaped by the communion with his bishop, the presbyterate and all the faithful.[52] Communion affects the deacon's relations with others. The ministry of a deacon does not compete with the rightful ministries of the faithful. "(Deacons') services are not carried out in isolation, but in communion. Permanent deacons have an obligation to respect the office of the priest and to cooperate conscientiously with him and with the parish staff."[53] More specifically, the Pope said: "according to the Council, the functions assigned to the deacon can in no way diminish the role of lay

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[45] Synod of Bishops – Second Extraordinary Synod *The Church, In The Word Of God, Celebrates The Mysteries Of Christ For The Salvation Of The World* (1985), II, C, 1. "The ecclesiology of communion is the central and fundamental idea of the Council's documents. Koinonia/communion, founded on the Sacred Scripture, have been held in great honor in the early Church and in the Oriental Churches to this day. Thus, much was done by the Second Vatican Council so that the Church as communion might be more clearly understood and concretely incorporated into life. What does the complex word "communion" mean? Fundamentally it is a matter of communion with God through Jesus Christ, in the Holy Spirit." Accessed 7 October 2015. https://www.ewtn.com/library/CURIA/SYNFINAL.HTM 07 October 2015. Cf. *Basic norms* (1998) n. 4: "the Church ... understood as a mystery of Trinitarian communion in missionary tension."

[46] Blessed Pope Paul VI, Apostolic Letter given 'Motu proprio' *Sacrum diaconatus ordinem* (June 18 1967), Introduction, n. 4, citing *Dogmatic Constitution on the Church*, n. 41. Cf. S. Ignatius M., *Trall.* 2, 3: Johannes Quasten, Joseph Plumpe (edd.), James Kleist (trans.), *Ancient Christian Writers, no. 1*, 75-76.

[47] Vatican Council II, *Lumen gentium*, n. 29 passim.

[48] Saint John Paul II, *Deacons serve ...* , n. 5.

[49] Cf. above, footnotes 8; 20-22: 'the ear, mouth, heart and soul of the bishop'.

[50] Vatican Council II, *Lumen gentium*, n. 29, cited in *Basic Norms* (1998), n. 5; fn.6.

[51] Blessed Pope Paul VI, *Ad pascendum*, Introduction.

[52] Saint John Paul II, *The Heart of the Diaconate ...* , n.1.

[53] Saint John Paul II, *The Heart of the Diaconate ...* , n. 5.

people ... on the contrary; the deacon's tasks include that of promoting and sustaining the apostolic activities of the laity."[54]

In his final address on the diaconate, Saint John Paul II called for "diligent respect for the various charismata and duties. Only when one keeps to one's own tasks does communion become effective, and each can fulfil his own mission."[55] That the order of deacon should not be a cause for any diminishing of the flourishing ministries of the lay faithful could not be clearer. Even so, "The deacon also has a right to be accepted and fully recognized by ... all (as) an ordained minister of the word, the altar and charity."[56]

On the question regarding the possibility of the diaconal ordination of women that was left open in the report of the International Theological Commission,[57] an authoritative note exists, issued during the pontificate of Saint John Paul II. [58]

3.3.2 Servant of the Mysteries of Christ

The Holy Trinity is a communion of expansive charity through which the three Persons offer, through the gift of sanctifying grace, a participation in their own life to all who, in faith, respond to this offer.

The diaconate, "as a participation in the one ecclesiastical ministry, ... is a specific sacramental sign, in the Church, of Christ the servant"[59], "a particular configuration to Christ .. who for love of the Father made himself the least and the servant of all."[60] The configuration to Christ that results from ordination by the laying on of hands and the gift of the Holy Spirit is not a participation in the priesthood of Christ as Head of the Church, but a conformation to Christ so as to be "empowered to serve the People of God in the ministries of the liturgy, the word and charity." [61]

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[54] Saint John Paul II *Deacon has Many Pastoral Functions*, General Audience, Vatican City (13 October 1993), n. 5.
[55] Saint John Paul II, *The Deacon's Ordination: Deacons are Configured to Christ the Servant*, Address to the Plenary Assembly of the Congregation for the Clergy (30 November 1995), n. 3.
[56] Saint John Paul II, *The Heart of the Diaconate* ... , n. 5.
[57] *From the Diakonia of Christ*... , 100.
[58] "Our Dicasteries have heard reports from some countries of programs and developments under way, aimed directly or indirectly at the diaconal ordination of women. Thus, certain expectations are being established, which are lacking in solid doctrinal formation and which, consequently, can generate pastoral confusion. Since ecclesial authority does not foresee the possibility of such an ordination, it is not licit to implement initiatives that, in some way, look to preparing female candidates for the diaconal Order. In keeping with the constant ecclesiastical Magisterium, with special reference to that of His Holiness John Paul II, the authentic promotion of woman in the Church opens other ample prospects of service and collaboration. Therefore, in the area of their own competence, the undersigned Congregations turn to the individual Ordinaries so that they will explain this to their own faithful and apply the foregoing directive diligently." Note signed by Cardinals Joseph Ratzinger, Medina Estevez and Castrillon Hoyos, respectively Prefects of Sacred Congregations for the Doctrine of the Faith, Divine Worship, and Discipline of the Sacraments (17 September 2001). Text supplied by Most Reverend Anthony Fisher OP, Archbishop of Sydney.
[59] Vatican Council II, *Lumen gentium*, n. 29, cited in *Basic norms* (1998) n. 5.
[60] Saint John Paul II, *The Deacon's Ordination: Deacons are Configured to Christ the Servant*. Address to the Plenary Assembly of the Congregation for the Clergy (30 November 1995); *Deacons serve the Kingdom of God*, (1993), n. 3.
[61] Pope Benedict XVI *Omnium in Mentem*, Apostolic Letter *motu proprio*, (26 October 2009), clarified that priests and bishops participate in the headship of Christ *'in persona Christi'*, whereas deacons serve the Church through the ministry of liturgy, word and charity. This clear distinction of diaconate and presbyterate is reflected in the

An outpouring of the gifts of the Spirit, the object of the essential form of the sacrament in ordination, animates the diaconal ministry.[62] A specific grace of the sacrament imparts a character and strength to be dedicated to the People of God.[63] This grace assists the deacon in carrying out his tasks, but acts intrinsically too as the well-spring of total dedication, "spurring him ... to give his whole self to serving the kingdom of God in the Church."[64] Exercising their ministry is formative and transfiguring; as incardination implies, the deacon experiences change at the "juridical, affective and spiritual levels."[65]

The sacramental empowerment to serve the Church constitutes the deacon as a sacrament of Christ the Servant and a driving force of the Church's service.[66] The deacon's service of the mysteries of Christ is service of "the central mystery ... : God the Father's plan ... to bring *all things ... into one under the headship of Christ.*"[67] The ministry of a deacon can be understood and correctly carried out only when it is situated theologically within the salvific mission of Christ. Christ's service is epitomized in and is fulfilled in his death. His service is service of the divine plan. It is charity expressed in priestly self-offering, in prophecy and in love.

The 'central mystery' illuminates the ministry of the deacon. The three ministries of the word, the altar and charity "*are inseparably joined together as one in the service of God's redemptive plan.*"[68] All three ministries are "intrinsically linked because together they are expressions of the nature of the

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"stability of this Order (whereby) ordination to the priesthood of non-married or widowed deacons must always be a very rare exception." Cf. *Directory* (1998) n. 5. Pope Benedict also decreed that modifications be made to the text of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* English trans. 2nd ed. (1997), n. 1581 and to canons 1008 and 1009 of the *Code of Canon Law*, hereafter *CIC*. Referring to the Sacrament of Holy Orders, the Catechism of the Catholic Church, teaches that "there are two degrees of ministerial participation in the priesthood of Christ: the episcopacy and the presbyterate. The diaconate is intended to help and serve them. ... Catholic doctrine teaches that the degrees of priestly participation (episcopate and presbyterate) and the degree of service (diaconate) are all three conferred by a sacramental act called 'ordination,' that is, by the Sacrament of Holy Orders."(n. 1554) There is a permanent "character" imparted to the ordained in ordination. Ordination "configures (deacons) to Christ, who made himself the 'deacon' or servant of all."(n. 1570)

[62] Cf. *Basic norms* (1998), n. 6: "Lord, send forth upon them the Holy Spirit, that they may be strengthened by the gift of your sevenfold grace to carry out faithfully the work of the ministry." *Rite of Ordination of Deacons* The Roman Pontifical, 184.

[63] Cf. *Basic norms* (1998), n. 7; cf. Saint John Paul II, *The Deacon's Ordination ...*, n. 3; *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, nn. 1581-1583.

[64] Saint John Paul II, *Deacons are Called to a Life of Holiness*, n.1; cf. Vatican Council II, *Dei verbum*, Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation (18 November 1965), n. 16; Blessed Paul VI, *Sacrum diaconatus ordinem*, II, n.8.

[65] Cf. *Basic norms* (1998), n. 8.

[66] Blessed Paul VI Apostolic Letter Containing Norms for the Permanent Diaconate, *Ad pascendum* (15 August 1972), Introduction: "a driving force for the Church's service or diakonia towards the local Christian communities, and as a sign, or sacrament, of the Lord Christ himself." Blessed Paul VI in *Hodie concilium* Address to the Council Fathers (7 December 1965), AAS 58 (1966), 57-64, declared on the penultimate day of the Second Vatican Council : "We stress that the teaching of the Council is channelled in one direction, the service of humankind ... The Church has declared herself a servant of humanity." Cf. Saint John Paul II *The Heart of the Diaconate ...*, n. 1, 2: "The service of the deacon is the Church's service sacramentalized ... living signs of the servanthood of the Church."

[67] Saint John Paul II, *The Heart of the Diaconate ...* n. 2. Italics original.

[68] Saint John Paul II, *The Heart of the Diaconate ...* n. 3. Italics original.

Church."[69] They build up the Church in its unique identity as the Body of Christ.

The service of a deacon being thus understood, it can happen that varying degrees of emphasis of one or the other ministry occur. The practice of diaconal ministry is not limited to "the simplest acts of charity", nor should there be a one-sided priority given to the ministry of charity directed to the poor and needy of the world.[70] This is because "the ministry of charity at the service of God's redemptive plan" is essentially a proclamation of the Gospel that is *"a positive influence for change"* in society.[71] The ministry of Steven (Acts 6:1-6; 8; 11-14) and Philip (Acts 8:26-40) demonstrates an essential link between 'service at tables' and evangelizing ministry.[72]

A married deacon's service of the redemptive plan involves the wife of the deacon in his public ministry in the Church as together they live in mutual sacrificial love. Their lived example of fidelity and indissolubility, together with the spirit of faith with which they confront the challenges that the life of their family places before them, constitute an authentic service of the Church's mission and of society.[73]

Saint John Paul II's taught that the diaconal order participates in the Church's mission to make known the "mysteries of Christ". This led him to insist that the deacon is an agent of the new evangelization and a witness to Christ amid the hostility shown to the truth of the Gospel. He emphasised that the presence of the deacon in the secular sphere, especially his living the vocation of marriage with his wife,[74] contributes to the effectiveness of his witness.

The Pope regularly recalled the missionary witness of a deacon. The radical demands of the Gospel demand heroic witness, for example, in addressing the spiritual poverty of brothers and sisters;[75] the deacon shares, in union with Christ, in the Church's sufferings imposed by the hostility she encounters;[76] in addition to the martyrdom of blood still present in the life of the Church, there is a martyrdom of "misunderstanding".[77]

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[69] Pope Benedict XVI *Deus caritas est*, nn. 21, 25. Cf. also Congregation for Bishops, Directory for the Pastoral Ministry of Bishops *Apostolorum Successores* (22 February 2004), 194, Vatican City 2004, p. 213: "Inspired by God's word and nourished by the sacraments, the faithful will endeavour to express that charity that gives authentic witness to the faith they profess."

[70] Saint John Paul II thus set the Catholic understanding of the diaconate at a remove from the historical re-emergence of diaconal ministry in the life of the separated ecclesial communities of northern Europe. In those circumstances, menial service of the needs of the poor had become the paradigmatic diaconal ministry.

[71] Saint John Paul II, *The Heart of the Diaconate* ... , n. 4. Italics original.

[72] Pope Benedict XVI *Stephen, the Protomartyr*, General Audience, Vatican City, (10 January 2007): "The first lesson we can learn from the figure of St Stephen (is that) charity and the proclamation of faith always go hand in hand.".

[73] Saint John Paul II, *The Heart of the Diaconate* ..., n. 5.

[74] Saint John Paul II, *The Heart of the Diaconate* ... , n. 1.

[75] Saint John Paul II, *The Heart of the Diaconate* ..., n. 3.

[76] Saint John Paul II, *Deacons are called* ... , n. 5.

[77] Saint John Paul II *Active apostles of the new evangelization* Address to permanent deacons and their families during Jubilee celebration in Rome (19 February 2000), n. 2.

The deacon, because he is a minister of the Church, and not a mere official or part-time employee, has a mission;[78] the Jubilee period of renewal and purification at the beginning of the third millennium revives the "missionary awareness inherent in the mystery of Christ and the Church" and makes a deacon an "active apostle of the new evangelization (who) lead(s) everyone to Christ."[79]

3.4 Conclusion

Through sacramental grace, the deacon receives a conformation to Christ the Servant. Christ's service (his *diakonia*) consists in pouring out himself, unto death, in obedience to the mission received from his Father. Christ's service is a service intent on reconciliation and peace between God and human beings.

The sacramental conformation received by God's gracious gift immerses the deacon in the service (*diakonia*) of Christ. He is equipped, by the gift of the Spirit in ordination, to serve both the communion of the Church and the mysteries of Christ.

In close relationship with the bishop, expressed in the incardination established by diaconal ordination,[80] he freely serves the Church's life of communion by his ministry of the Word of God, of the sacraments and of charity, dedicating himself to pastoral care. This relationship reflects the obedient relationship of Christ with his Father, from whom the Son of Man came to 'serve' (*diakonaisai*) the world. Thus he serves the Church's communion.

The central mystery that the deacon serves is the Paschal Mystery. Conformed to Christ, he lives a permanent condition – spiritual and incarnational - of 'being sent' for service (*diakonia*). The purpose of his being sent is that his ministry might constitute an offer of salvation to believer and unbeliever alike. Chosen by God and in close unity with his bishop who is the primary bearer of the good news of Jesus in the diocese, the deacon dedicates himself to evangelization in the Church and in the world. Thus, he serves the mysteries of Christ.

The deacon is the Church's service sacramentalised and a sign or sacrament of the Lord who came not to be served but to serve.

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[78] Saint John Paul II, *The Deacon's Ordination* … , n. 4.

[79] Saint John Paul II *Active apostles of the new evangelization*, n. 2. As already discussed, this missionary sensibility "inherent in the mystery of Christ and the Church" must have been in the Pope's mind in his first address to deacons. Cf. Saint John Paul II, *The Heart of the Diaconate* … , n. 3.

[80] *CIC* canon 266.

4. NORMS FOR FORMATION OF PERMANENT DEACONS

4.1 FORMATION PERSONNEL[81]

4.1.1 Bishop of the Diocese

The Bishop of each diocese builds up the communion of the local church with the assistance of men ordained into the first degree of the Sacrament of Order, the permanent deacons. After consultation with his Council of Priests, the bishop may decide to introduce the order of (permanent) deacon in the diocese entrusted to his pastoral care.[82]

He will provide support for those who show an interest in the diaconate and help them to discern whether or not God may be calling them to serve the Church in this way.

He will ensure a prudent programme of formation through the appointment of co-workers endowed with the human, spiritual and pastoral qualities needed. The principal collaborators will be the Diocesan Director of Vocations and the Director of Formation for the Permanent Diaconate. Acting on the bishop's behalf, these will identify suitable tutors and spiritual directors for the bishop's approval. Finally, professors and instructors in the academic institutions of the diocese, or in other dioceses, will provide the necessary intellectual formation. These professors must be qualified with at least a licentiate in their discipline and have received the approval of the bishop.

In due course, the bishop will forge an acquaintance with a man who is in formation and with his wife, as the case may be. [83] In the case of married applicants, consideration must be given to the dispositions of the wife and of any children who may be still living in the family home.

4.1.2 Director of Vocations

Taking into account the conditions of the diocese, the Director of Vocations, in collaboration with the Director of Formation, will decide upon the specific manner of promoting vocations to the diaconate.[84] They will collaborate in the initial accompaniment of the men and their wives. They may, at this stage or later, seek from a psychological practitioner skilled in methods of psychological evaluation an opinion as to the suitability of an enquirer.[85] The cost and funding of the formation program may vary from diocese to diocese. Such arrangements should be explained and agreed upon before the applicants are accepted into the program.[86] An applicant is to provide to the Bishop evidence of his ability to support his family financially during his life time.

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[81] See APPENDIX ONE. INDEX OF OFFICIALS AND THEIR RESPONSIBILITIES arranged according to the successive stages of formation, pages 66 – 71.

[82] *Basic Norms* (1998), n. 18.

[83] *Basic Norms* (1998), n. 19.

[84] *Basic Norms* (1998), n. 13.

[85] Congregation for Catholic Education *Guidelines for the Use of Psychology in the Admission and Formation of Candidates for the Priesthood* (2008), especially n. 5. See Appendix Two below, page 65.

[86] *Guidelines* (2005), n. 37.

The Director of Vocations (or, if delegated to do so, the Director of Formation) concludes the period of enquiry by presenting a formal report on the suitability of the enquirer to the bishop and the director of formation. This report will demonstrate that canonical requirements for acceptance into a programme of diaconal formation have been met, that the enquirer's wife consents in writing to her husband's intention, that the enquirer shows solid indications of an authentic vocation such as a right intention, necessary human qualities, a developing life of prayer and participation in the sacraments of the Eucharist and Penance, an ecclesial sense and a devotional life that reflects a true ecclesial sense.[87]

Promotion of vocations to the diaconate will be done in such wise as to be respectful of the variety of charisms of the lay faithful, of religious men and women, and of the office of presbyter. In this way, the harmonious building up of the communion that characterizes the life of the Church will be assured.

4.1.3 Director of Formation

The Director of Formation has the responsibility of establishing an adequate programme of formation according to the universal norms[88] and these norms for Australia.

He will have a coordinating role among all who contribute to the formation of deacons. He is responsible for the supervision of all the elements of formation.[89]

He has suitable pastoral contact with members of the aspirants' and candidates' families and with members of their community of origin.[90]

At the appropriate times, after customary consultation, he will furnish a report to the bishop of the diocese regarding the promotion of the men in formation to the following stage of their preparation for ordination.[91]

He may be a priest or a deacon, distinct from the moderator of ordained deacons, endowed with well proven ecclesial capacities and pedagogical preparation.[92] In the case where there is a genuine scarcity of competent personnel, the roles of Director of Formation and Moderator of Ordained Deacons may be fulfilled by the same person.

4.1.4 Tutor

The tutor has a mentoring role with regard to all aspects of the formation with the exception of spiritual direction. The tutor's role may be filled with difficulty in a diocese where the presbyterium is reduced. *Basic Norms (*1998*)* envisions that circumstances may require adaptation of the ideal, normative programme established therein. "The different pastoral situations of the single

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[87] *Basic Norms* (1998), Chapter Two "Characteristics of Candidates for the Permanent Diaconate" nn. 29-45.
[88] *Basic Norms* (1998), Chapter Three "The Path of Formation towards the Permanent Diaconate" nn. 46-65, and Chapter Four "The Dimensions of the Formation of Permanent Deacons" nn. 66-88.
[89] *Basic Norms* (1998), n. 21.
[90] *Basic Norms* (1998), n. 21.
[91] *Basic Norms* (1998), n. 21.
[92] *Basic Norms* (1998), n. 21.

Churches ... (may be taken into account) in preparing the formation to be imparted."[93]

His goal is both to encourage the aspirant or candidate and to ensure that the formation is genuinely adapted to each person's situation.[94]

Where this ministry would be impossible to fill, the Director of Formation will implement it to the extent that he is able, either personally or through a delegate. The human, academic and pastoral aspects of the tutor's ministry could be delegated to a suitably qualified member of the lay faithful, including consecrated religious.

4.1.5 Spiritual Director

The Spiritual Director carries out this ministry endowed with the customary qualifications and in observance of customary protocols. He is chosen by the aspirant or candidate, usually from a cohort approved in advance by the bishop.[95]

The Director of Formation may laudably provide opportunity for a man's wife to access spiritual direction. He may too provide spiritual formation in common, such as retreats and times of reflection led by qualified guides, for the group of wives of the men in formation.

4.1.6 Parish Priest

The Parish Priest is the priest who acts as a mentor and guide in the aspirant's or candidate's practical pastoral experience. As for the tutor, the supply of pastors may be limited. In this case, it merits consideration that the two roles may be combined.

4.1.7 Professors

The Professors will usually be drawn from the pool of instructors in the various theological faculties, both metropolitan and provincial.

In the conditions of remote dioceses in Australia, it will be necessary to seek academic formation through distance learning, either online or by more traditional methods where they are still available. In this case, the role of the tutor and of the parish priest will be more evident than in the metropolitan situation.

4.1.8 Pastoral Director

In formation programmes where there is a considerable enrolment of aspirants and candidates, it may be necessary that the Director of Formation, in consultation with the bishop, find a suitable priest for the role of Pastoral Director.

Where the number of men in formation is small, the Pastoral Director's role may be performed through a team, involving the cooperation of the Director

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[93] *Basic Norms* (1998), n. 10, 13; *CIC*, canon 236.

[94] *Basic Norms* (1998), n. 22.

[95] *Basic Norms* (1998), n. 23.

of Formation, the candidate's parish priest, and other priests with pastoral responsibility at the sites where a candidate has been assigned for pastoral formation.

The role requires that the director of pastoral formation, or the pastoral formation team, arranges sufficiently varied assignments that give the candidate an overview of the Church's pastoral care and administrative processes in proclamation (*'kerygma'*), liturgy (*'leitourgia'*), the community life of a parish (*'koionoonia'*), and missionary outreach to the unevangelized and the poor (*'diakonia'*).

The director or team will find experienced and prudent supervisors, both ordained and lay people, who will accompany the candidate during the pastoral assignments.

At least one person from among the formation team and one at the pastoral site will ensure that adequate reflection and reporting will take place about the pastoral realities that the candidate will have encountered.

4.1.9 Parish Community and Family

The parish community, or another ecclesial grouping, that has nurtured the discipleship of an enquirer should remain prayerfully conscious of the discernment that the man has made. There should be an appropriate catechesis imparted to the community about the vocational path that lies ahead. There should be an atmosphere within the community that permits the man to freely follow his call so that no impediments to ecclesial communion can arise.[96]

The participation of a prospective candidate's wife at all stages of his preparation and ministry is an important element of formation. The consent of the wife is required, her participation in the process of discernment is strongly encouraged, and her contribution to a deacon's ministry is acknowledged.[97]

4.1.10 Candidate and Formation Community

Since "all formation ... is ultimately a self-formation", the man himself is his own formator.[98] Ecclesial formation poses interior demands for growth in humanity, in spirituality and in an informed faith that expresses itself with pastoral prudence. The Director of Formation will propose this formative goal to the aspirants and candidates. He will assist them in understanding and encourage them in achieving a harmonious synergy of the formation programme with their own attentiveness to the demands of formation.[99] Creativity and docility are hallmarks of one who serves the communion, sourced in the Trinitarian life, which is the Church.

This dynamic unfolding of formation will be pre-eminently found in the formation community itself. The growth in relationship and charity, the progress in a spiritual life and discernment, the mutual assistance and

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[96] *Basic Norms* (1998), n. 27.
[97] *Basic Norms* (1998), nn. 27, 42, 56, 61.
[98] *Pastores dabo vobis*, n. 69.
[99] *Basic norms* (1998), n. 28.

cooperation in studies, seminars, retreats and pastoral experiences are each formative moments in the life of the diaconal community in formation.[100]

4.2 THE PILLARS OF ECCLESIAL FORMATION

In the Apostolic Exhortation *Pastores dabo vobis (On the Formation of Priests)* (1992), the universal Church received from St John Paul II a precious heritage of fundamental guidelines for ecclesial formation, adapted to the contemporary situation in the Church and in society. Drawn from *Pastores dabo vobis* and *Basic norms* (1998), the principal orientations that are applicable to formation for the permanent diaconate are summarized below.

4.2.1 Human

Human formation is the basis of all (ecclesial) formation.[101] As the deacon is "an icon of Christ the servant", he "should seek to reflect in himself, as far as possible, the human perfection which shines forth in the incarnate Son of God and which is reflected with particular liveliness in his attitudes towards others as we see narrated in the Gospels." This attitude renders ministry "as credible and acceptable as possible" to other men and women. [102]

The capacity to relate to others respectfully, adequate affective maturity and inner freedom are fundamental requirements that are enunciated in the documentation.[103]

Particular traits describe a suitable candidate. There are "certain specific human qualities ... necessary for (diaconal service). Among the human qualities that should be highlighted are: psychological maturity, capacity for dialogue and communication, sense of responsibility, industriousness, equilibrium and prudence. Particularly important (are): ... a humble and strong sense of the Church, love for the Church and her mission, spirit of poverty, capacity for obedience and fraternal communion, apostolic zeal, openness to service, charity towards the brothers and sisters."[104]

Affective maturity in a married candidate is reflected in the relationship of the man and his wife. Where there is a sacramental marriage, the couple radiates to others the love of Christ for the Church in a daily exchange that, in turn, is the sacramental presence of Christ's love for them both. This love is present in the reciprocity, totality, fidelity and indissolubility of their married love.[105]

Always, when the married couple has been blessed with a family, the love and care that they lavish on their children are integral to the vocation of marriage that they have undertaken.

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[100] *Basic norms* (1998), n. 26.

[101] St John Paul II *Pastores dabo vobis*, Apostolic Exhortation (1992), heading to nn. 43-44.

[102] St John Paul II, *Pastores dabo vobis*, n. 43.

[103] St John Paul II, *Pastores dabo vobis*, nn. 43-44; *Basic norms* (1998), 66-69.

[104] St John Paul II, *Pastores dabo vobis*, n. 32; *Basic norms* (1998), n. 72. See also Appendix Two, page 65.

[105] *Basic norms* (1998), n. 68.

4.2.2 Spiritual

Spiritual formation is the unfolding in the concrete circumstances of each Christian's life, and according to the particular vocation and charism of each, of the gracious gift of new life and incorporation into the Church which the person received in the rebirth of baptism.[106]

The church's life of prayer and charity, exemplified particularly in the saints, reveals characteristic traits of a spiritual life. A humble stance before the gracious God who calls the baptized to baptismal holiness is the beginning. The art of spiritual discernment is the daily practice that is necessary so that one chooses the thoughts, words, attitudes, actions and vocation that correspond to the divine will. Faithful discernment passes through the arms of the Cross.[107]

Participation in the Church's liturgy in such a way that "the (candidates) take part fully aware of what they are doing, actively engaged in the rite, and enriched by its effects"[108] as well as prudent adoption from among the multitude of sound traditional practices of devotion[109] together will lead to a personal devotional life, apt for the personality and vocation of each, which bears fruit in a manner of life that bears "witness to the hope that is in us." (1 Pet 3:15)

In the vocation of one called to the diaconate, spiritual formation that has been imparted will be validated by the active charity, expressed in diaconal service according to the church's understanding, to be found in the man's life as an ordained, and possibly married, disciple of Jesus Christ. "Without spiritual formation pastoral formation would be left without foundation."[110]

Intimate union with Christ, lived in the liturgy, in meditation on the word of God, with the aid of devotional practices, is consolidated in and shaped by the communion of the Church, lived in the candidates' relationship with "the bishop by whom they are sent and in the people to whom they are sent."[111]

Spiritual formation of aspirants and candidates of mature age will build upon the spirituality of marriage and family, as well as the spirituality that will have been formed by their participation in ecclesial life, in the community present in their parish or ethnic chaplaincy or other ecclesial service in which they

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[106] St. John Paul II, *Pastores dabo vobis*, n. 45

[107] St. John Paul II, *Pastores dabo vobis*, n. 45: "Spiritual formation has its roots in the experience of the cross, which in deep communion leads to the totality of the paschal mystery."

[108] Vatican Council II *Sacrosanctum concilium* Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy (4 December 1963), n. 11, in *Vatican II: The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents*, ed. A. Flannery (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1980).

[109] See Appendix Four and Appendix Five, pages 68-71, for an example of a programme of formation that aims to embrace all these elements.

[110] St. John Paul II, *Pastores dabo vobis*, n. 45; *Basic norms* (1998), n. 76.

[111] St. John Paul II, *Pastores dabo vobis*, n. 45, citing Vatican Council II *Optatam totius* Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests (28 October 1965), n. 8, in *Vatican II: The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents*, ed. A. Flannery (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1980). Also, *Pastores dabo vobis*, n. 46: there is "a triple path to be covered: a faithful meditation on the word of God, active participation in the Church's holy mysteries and the service of charity to the 'little ones'."

have taken part.[112] The contribution to their spirituality of their secular profession and social undertakings will also be significant. This part of life is a privileged forum that requires the ability to discern right from wrong, and the better course among several good ones. In order to favour a healthy spirituality in the aspirants and candidates, the Director of Formation will ensure that they have the opportunity of recourse to a suitable spiritual director, with whom, or with another priest, they will regularly receive absolution of their sins in the Sacrament of Confession.

Since the pastoral ministry of the deacon has both its "source and summit" in his ministry of the Eucharist, the aspirant and candidate will be steadily developing a love for Christ both in the celebration of the Eucharist and in devotion to the Real Presence of Christ. The liturgy of ordination of a deacon and the third edition of *The Roman Missal* testify to this unity.[113] It would be most appropriate for those in formation for the diaconate to participate daily, or at least frequently, in the Eucharist.

"Carrying out ministerial and apostolic activities, fulfilling possible family and social responsibilities, and, lastly, practising an intense personal life of prayer require of the deacon ... that unity of life which can only be attained through deep union with Christ."[114]

In keeping with the rich tradition of piety of Catholics who invoke the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God, the spiritual formation of an aspirant to the diaconate will acquaint the man in formation with multiple resources from the spiritual traditions and theological writings, including the recent teachings of the Second Vatican Council, and the encyclical letters and preaching of Blessed Pope Paul VI, Saint John Paul II, and emeritus Pope Benedict XVI. These sources provide him with the inspiration and comfort that derives from theologically informed devotion to the Mother of God. In this way, he will be equipped and ready to share the Church's authentic perception of the place of the Mother of God in the salvation of men.

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[112] *Basic norms* (1998), n. 71.

[113] Homily in *Rite of Ordination of a Deacon*: "My son ... prepare the sacrifice, and give the Lord's body and blood to the community of believers." In continuity with *Sacrosanctum concilium* n. 112, the *General Instruction on the Roman Missal* English Translation 3rd ed [Hereafter *GIRM*], n. 94: "After the priest, the deacon has first place among those who minister in the celebration of the Eucharist." The preceding is new to the third edition of the Roman Missal. *GIRM* describes just two basic forms of Mass: Mass without a Deacon and Mass with a Deacon.

[114] Saint John Paul II, *The Deacon's Ordination*, n. 6.

4.2.3 Intellectual

The intellectual formation of a deacon is, alongside his human and spiritual formation, the essential foundation of the ministry of the Word of God that he will exercise in his vocation to serve the Church. In order to "Witness to the hope that is in us" (1 Pet 3:15), the deacon needs a thorough theological preparation which is "solid and effective."[115]

Succinctly, *Pastores dabo vobis* on the formation of priests, holds that "the commitment to study ... is not in fact an external and secondary dimension of their human, Christian, spiritual and vocational growth. (...) Through study ... the future priest (substitute here 'deacon') assents to the word of God, grows in his spiritual life and prepares himself to fulfil his pastoral ministry." [116]

Usually, the intellectual preparation will be imparted in an approved theological faculty, whether face to face, or, in case of necessity, in a form of distance education,[117] including the opportunity of 'online' instruction that is commonly found in higher education as a normal form of instruction. In the latter case, given the necessity of an integration of all dimensions of formation, the role of the parish priest and the tutor in their capacity of mentor is vitally important.

'Online learning' is characteristic of educational opportunities for mature age learners. The style and means of adult learning should be incorporated in the instruction wherever it is deemed to be appropriate.

Urban dioceses should enrol the aspirants and candidates in the local faculty of theology. Rural dioceses in proximity to urban dioceses may be able to enrol their aspirants and candidates in at least the core topics[118] at a theological faculty in a metropolitan city. The particular circumstances of the remote dioceses require careful planning of an aspirant's and candidate's intellectual formation.

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[115] *Basic norms* (1998), n. 79.

[116] St John Paul II *Pastores dabo vobis*, n. 51.

[117] *Basic norms* (1998), n. 82; cf. also n. 79 taking "account of the different situations, personal and ecclesial."

[118] Indications are found throughout chap. 1 of *Pastores dabo vobis*, arising from its discussion of the contemporary culture of the West, in particular, and the necessity and methods of the new evangelization: (1) the study of philosophy is necessary to evangelize in the contemporary context, as it is necessary to stress the capacity of human reason to be reconciled with affirmations of faith (n. 52); (2) the study of Christology and of ecclesiology has a strong pastoral dimension, acting to nourish the spiritual life and engendering a generous spirit of service, since the study of Christ's person and work and serious engagement with the presence of the risen Christ in his Church cannot but lead to nourishment and growth in a spiritual life and a commitment to charity (n. 53); (3) the fundamental law of evangelization is found in the relationship of God's revealed word, that needs scientific study, to the capacity of the human person to respond implicit in dogmatic, moral and spiritual theology, canon law and pastoral theology (n. 54); (4) in moral theology, the study of the church's social doctrine "is to be counted among the 'essential components' of the 'new evangelization'." (n. 54). *Pastores dabo vobis* had begun with an analysis of the cultural situation in the Western world, noting its serious deficits for any evangelization and acknowledging the ideals for justice and solidarity that characterize many people, especially the young.

In every case, a solid theological formation in philosophy, scripture, systematic, sacramental, pastoral and moral theology, and church history, spirituality, and liturgy is necessary, not to omit canon law and practical questions related to the celebration of the sacraments and worship.[119]

The ministry of the deacon, exercised in proclamation, in liturgical worship and in pastoral charity, is a significant responsibility for the spiritual good of the faithful. In justice, well-prepared ministers are sought by the faithful.

The deacon is entitled to stand among the communion of the ordained ministers knowing that his preparation has been adequately provided for by the Church and knowing too that he has been faithful in fulfilling the reasonable expectations of him for his doctrinal formation.

The bishop of the aspirant and candidate, through his delegates, ensures that this formation is comprehensive, doctrinally sound, pastorally apt, and methodologically adapted to the circumstances of the diocese, whether with regard to its geography or to the available personnel. The *Basic Norms (1998)* n. 80 provides guidance for the bishop in approving the programme of studies.

4.2.5 Pastoral

Pastoral formation "is formation for an ever greater identification with the *diakonia* of Christ."[120]

Pastoral experiences that are gradated, organic manifestations of the inner nature of the Church as a sacrament of salvation and as a community of faith, whose structure and activities make visible its mission of *leitourgia, koinonia, didache* and *diakonia* in the midst of the world, will prepare the aspirant and candidate for effective pastoral ministry.

The pastoral service of the deacon, deriving from and respecting communion, is one that itself contributes to the building up of communion. The deacon has special care for his service of the 'font and summit' of the Church's life in the liturgy; the deacon proclaims the Good News of Jesus Christ with reverence for the revealed word of God of which the preacher is a servant, and with deep compassion for the hearts of the hearers who need the living bread that is Christ, the incarnate divine Wisdom; the deacon places his pastoral presence at the disposal of the dynamic presence of the Holy Spirit who animates the missionary presence of the Church to men and women of all faiths and none.

As well as having experienced the gradual unfolding of the pastoral dimensions of the life of the local and universal church, the aspirant and candidate should receive instruction in core elements of the discipline of pastoral theology.

Liturgical praxis, homiletic and catechetical studies, familiarity with the Church's action for social justice, pastoral care of the family, and other

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[119] For more detail, cf. *Basic norms* (1998), n. 80, and Appendices Four and Five below, pages 68 - 71.
[120] *Basic norms* (1998), n. 85.

necessary pastoral studies should always be included in the curriculum of studies.[121]

The Director of Pastoral Formation (or the Director of Formation) will work with the Parish Priest to provide ongoing supervision of the aspirant's or candidate's pastoral praxis. A key element of pastoral formation is to ensure that the aspirant or candidate becomes aware of the resources of the pastoral ministers of the parish who serve within the local community of faith, and that he demonstrates in practice that he possesses the human maturity and diaconal generosity that will give promise of fruitful collaboration once he is ordained deacon.

Once the aspirant or candidate has received the instituted ministries of lector and acolyte, he will exercise these ministries regularly. His execution of them will be periodically evaluated for its liturgical accuracy and pastoral sensitivity.

[121] *Basic norms* (1998), n. 86.

4.3 THE FORMATION PROCESS

DIACONATE FORMATION DESIGN
A SUMMARY

A. PRE-ADMISSION STAGE (Enquiry prior to Formal Admission)
(i) Process; (ii) Conditions for Acceptance as an Enquirer

B. PROPAEDEUTIC PERIOD – Formal Enquiry
(i) Process; (ii) Conditions for Acceptance as an Aspirant to the Formation Program

C. FORMATION PROGRAM, YEARS 1-3
(i) Process; (ii) Conditions for Admittance as an aspirant into each Year of the Formation Program

D. CANDIDACY
(i) Process; (ii) Conditions Required for the Call to ORDINATION

4.3.1 PRE-ADMISSION STAGE - SELECTION PROCESS

Normally, a man who wishes to discern a vocation to the diaconate will be acquainted with his parish priest, especially considering that a suitable enquirer would be already engaged in one or more services in the parish community. After this informal discernment, contact will be made with either the Director of Vocations or the Director of Formation.

4.3.1.1 Promotion of Vocations

Through the Director of Vocations or, as the case may be, the Director of Formation, the man will be assigned a suitable Companion from among the priests of the diocese. The *Companion* meets with the *Enquirer* on a regular basis when informal conversations are directed towards such matters as his image of church, spiritual direction and his reasons for showing interest in the diaconate.

Adequate information about the diaconate will be provided from the office for the diaconate in the diocese.

Before admission to the propaedeutic year, an initial interview, or several, will ascertain the man's ability to grow in human formation. Keeping in view the capacity for change that any person has as one grows older, it will be necessary to carefully ascertain that this man possesses the desired human qualities. Should there be any doubt, it will be necessary to weigh a man's possibility of further human formation. If there is not a well-founded reason that further growth is likely, it is better to prudently guide the man to a fruitful apostolic life in the lay state.

It is desirable that a comparable, confidential, role should be exercised by a spiritual director. Prudent assessment of an enquirer's capacity for progress, under grace, in a spiritual life is necessary at this stage. A confessor or spiritual director should also recommend to the man that no step forward be taken if the enquirer is experiencing marital or moral challenges, particularly the contemporary pervasive influence of pornography.

During this time the *Wife of the Enquirer* is also consulted by the *Vocation Director* who will also arrange for her to receive Spiritual Direction if she wishes.

Having passed through such a period of discernment with a personal priest companion that includes some form of endorsement of the prospective candidate by his local parish community[122], they proceed through a propaedeutic stage with the community of candidates. Formal studies will continue for a substantial period, according to the circumstances and previous experience of each one.[123]

The following requirements should be satisfied before an enquirer's application to enter the Propaedeutic Year is accepted.

The *Enquirer*:
Is a Catholic man of sound moral character and mature faith with a vocation to service;
Demonstrates prayerfulness and openness to further spiritual formation;
If married, must be at least 30 years of age;[124]
Usually no older than the commonly accepted retirement age;
If not married, he must have completed at least twenty-five years of age;[125]
Is actively supported by his wife and family if married;
Is of sound mental and physical health;
Is supported by his parish priest or other equivalent church leaders;
Is involved in parish or other apostolic life;
Has the ability to undertake undergraduate theological studies to degree level, or the equivalent;
Is able to devote time for formation without detriment to family or work responsibilities;
If not married, or if widowed in the future, accepts the lifelong commitment to celibacy;
Is not under any irregularity or impediment.[126] This fact is to be attested to in writing, after due enquiry, by the Director of Formation.

4.3.1.2 Interviews

The Director of Formation will meet the man with his wife, unless they are already acquainted. The Director will endorse the recommendation of the Director of Vocations and inform the man and his wife of the documentation

[122] Cf. *Basic Norms* (1998), n. 40.
[123] Cf. *Basic Norms* (1998), n. 41-44, 49-56.
[124] *CIC*, can. 1031, § 2: ordination cannot occur until the completion of his 35th year.
[125] *CIC*, can. 1031, § 2.
[126] *CIC*, canons 1025, 1040-1042, 1044-1049. Cf. the prerequisites for ordination *CIC*, nn. 1033-1037, 1039.

that he will need to compile and present to the office for the diaconate. As already noted above, the Director will ascertain that the man is under no impediment or censure and record a written attestation to the fact.

The Bishop of the diocese will acknowledge the man's request for admission to the Propaedeutic Period, either in an interview or in writing.

As early as this, or at a time judged to be suitable, but no later than prior to admission to the three years of aspirancy/candidacy, the man will undertake a psychological screening under a suitably qualified psychologist. Before the screening is arranged, the information in Appendix Two should be explained to the man and his wife.

4.3.1.3 Documentation Required for Admission to the Propaedeutic Period

Civil:

- Birth Certificate
- Residency Status/Certificate of Citizenship
- Marriage Certificate(s)
- (Wife's death certificate where applicable)
- (Decree of Divorce Absolute where applicable)
- Academic Transcript(s)
- According to the policy of the diocese, a Police Check and Working with Children check

Ecclesiastical:

- Baptism Certificate
- Record of Confirmation
- First Communion Certificate
- Marriage Certificate(s)
- (Decree of Nullity where applicable)
- Recommendation of Parish Priest
- Attestation of freedom from irregularity or impediment from Director of Formation.[127]

Personal:

- Initial agreement of the man's wife
- A brief autobiography, concluding with request for admission
- The names of two (2) Referees

[127] Cf. fn. 126.

4.3.2 PREPARATORY ('PROPAEDEUTIC') PERIOD

This stage of formation varies in length according to personal circumstances, but it lasts at least one year. Since it will be necessary to have gained the Degree of Bachelor of Theology (or equivalent) prior to ordination to the Order of Deacon, a man's ability to undertake full-time or part-time study will have a bearing upon when he may begin the canonical minimum of three years of formation. Until it is foreseen that he will complete the formation requirements and the academic studies within three more years, it is recommended that he not be admitted to the canonical three years of formation,[128] but continue in the preparatory period.

The bishop will decide the appropriate moments to institute the aspirant in the liturgical ministries of lector and acolyte, as he will decide when it is appropriate to call a man to candidacy for ordination as a deacon.[129]

The goal of the propaedeutic period is to consolidate the spiritual and human readiness of the man for diaconal formation. It will be beneficial to establish a stable site for regular meetings. The meetings would last for half a day, or a whole day, depending upon the content and the time needed from one meeting to the next for reflection. Time spent together promotes the development of a communal spirit of prayer, cooperation and friendship. The wives of the enquirers could be invited to participate whenever it would be appropriate.

4.3.2.1 Human Formation

The priority in human formation is to ensure that, as far as possible at this early stage, the aspirant and his wife and family consider the implications of the formation programme for their marriage and family life. At least one meeting should be dedicated to this endeavour, preferably with the help of a skilled facilitator.

The human qualities elaborated in *Norms* (1998) nn. 66-68 should be evident in the members of the group of aspirants. The capacity to be truthful, loyal, respectful, compassionate, balanced, and at ease with the demands of open and clear communication in relationship with others is foundational for the entire formative period.

Generosity and selflessness are good indicators of affective and sexual maturity and balance. They should be practised consistently, and verified, eventually, as part of a psychological assessment.

4.3.2.2 Spiritual Formation

The emphasis is upon the basic structure of a Christian spiritual life. Accordingly, meetings will regularly include time for instruction in the Prayer of the Church, *lectio divina,* and at least one respected method of personal contemplative prayer.

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[128] *Norms,* (1998), n. 49.

[129] Cf. *Norms,* (1998), nn. 57-59, 45-48 respectively.

Throughout this period, it is recommended that a growing familiarisation with the richness of spiritualities present in the Church be undertaken. This occurs through visits to or from religious communities of men and women, by select readings, and by the time which the gathered group of aspirants devotes to prayer. Some extended periods of half to one day should be devoted to a recollection.

It would be valuable to include the celebration of the Eucharist on some occasions, and for the aspirant to frequent regularly both Mass and the Sacrament of Penance.

The aspirant's experience of the life of the church, for example, in his own parish, and any experience of spiritual direction or retreats or prayer groups all contribute to his participation in these experiences.

4.3.2.3 Academic Formation

The academic emphasis is minimal in the first year that the man spends in the propaedeutic period. Even in the first year, if it seems advisable, an aspirant could undertake one unit of study each semester or term. The longer the period that is needed to complete studies on a part-time basis will result in the extension of the propaedeutic period.

In being introduced to formation for diaconal ministry, each man should gain familiarity with the structure and most important content of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church.*

4.3.2.4 Pastoral Formation

Pastoral formation occurs in the existing apostolic commitments that an aspirant has in his own parish community or in another apostolic group of which he forms a part. From this time on, he is accountable as an enquirer or aspirant for ordained ministry.

Gradually, meetings will be dedicated to an introduction – in theory, witness and practice - to the Church's 'preferential option for the poor'.

4.3.2.5 Documentation for Recommendation to Advance

The enquirer and the Director of Formation have a formal discussion at the end of each year about what will be the stage of formation to be undertaken in the following year. For all but those who have the possibility of full time study, the propaedeutic period will continue for several years.

If a man is to continue in the propaedeutic programme, it will suffice each year for

- a request, written in the man's own hand, to advance;
- testimony of suitability from the *Vocations Director* and/or the *Director of the Formation Programme* to advance;
- if it is deemed opportune to complete the psychological assessment during the propaedeutic period, the following are required:
    - letters of consent from the man and his wife that his psychological report may be shared with the bishop and Director of Formation;
    - psychological assessment usually provided for the bishop, with confidential copy given to the *Director of Formation* alone.

When it is time to enter the three year period of canonical formation, in addition to those required before admission to the propaedeutic period, and in addition to those mentioned in the previous paragraph, there will be required:

- a request, written in the man's own hand, to advance;
- testimony of suitability from the *Vocations Director* and/or the *Director of the Formation Programme* to advance;
- if not already attended to, letters of consent from the man and his wife that his psychological report may be shared with the bishop and Director of Formation;
- if not already attended to, psychological assessment, usually provided for the bishop, with release of confidentiality to the *Director of Formation* alone;
- medical assessment.

4.4 FORMATION OF ASPIRANTS AND CANDIDATES YEARS 1, 2 AND 3

4.4.1 Administration

The Director of Formation will monitor the workload of the aspirants and candidates and liaise appropriately with other educators throughout the years of formation.

Each aspirant and candidate will be assigned at the opportune moments to the care of the officials already referred to, namely, spiritual director, tutor, parish priest at pastoral placement(s), pastoral supervisor.

Enrolment in supervised study and/or online, or enrolment in a recognised theological faculty make it necessary that the structure of the diaconal formation programme accommodate the requirements of the aforementioned paths of study.

The formation programme, as distinct from academic study, will comprise meetings or seminars of substantial length, such as an entire evening every week or two weeks, or most of a weekend once each month. In remote dioceses, a different arrangement may be needed.

Unless there is a sufficient number in each year of formation, it will not be practical to provide a sequential programme of formation, even though this should be the goal as much as possible. Generally, aspirants and candidates from each of the propaedeutic years (after the first year) and from the three years of formation will be grouped together for the seminars and meetings. The meetings regarding the administration of the sacraments would generally be offered only to candidates in the third and final year of formation.

4.4.2 Human Formation

Their presence and participation, the cooperation and leadership that they exercise, their sociability and mutual support are crucial elements of the human formation expected of mature men.

Human formation topics to be included in the regular seminars or meetings:

- Relationship of married couples
- Preparation of couples for marriage
- Experiences of grief and loss
- Professional Standards, including the Church's national and diocesan procedures relating to Sexual Abuse, diocesan policies relating to Privacy, to the Use of Social Media, to Work Place Safety

4.4.3 Spiritual Formation

There will be an annual retreat, beginning in the first year with at least one weekend retreat at a recognised centre of spirituality, or led by an approved presenter, increasing in length year by year, culminating in a full week of retreat before ordination.

It would be desirable to begin and end each year with a period of recollection marking the seasons of Lent and Advent. Most of the time should be devoted to reflection on the mysteries of the liturgical seasons. As attendance by the wives is more likely on these occasions, the opportunity for some socializing over refreshments will help to consolidate a spiritual and fraternal community of future deacons and their wives.

Spirituality topics to be included in the regular seminars or meetings[130]

- *lectio divina*
- discernment of spirits
- vocational discernment
- introduction to praying the Divine Office
- Mariology

4.4.4 Academic Formation

Generally, foundational courses will be the first to be studied in every area, namely, sacred scripture, philosophy, systematic theology, moral theology, pastoral and spiritual theology, church history and liturgy. For the purpose of formation of deacons, it may suffice for a synthetic treatment of certain matters. Suggested topics are listed below.

Terminology may vary between faculties. The list below is offered as a template only.

Provided statutory privacy is not violated, the Director of Formation will liaise with the Dean of Studies of the institute in order to learn of the student's progress. He could be invited to the periodic "Marks Meeting".

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[130] Cf. Appendix Five, p. 71.

4.4.4.1 Curriculum[131]

Sacred Scripture:

- Introduction to the Old Testament
- Introduction to the New Testament
- The Pentateuch
- Prophetic Literature
- At least one Synoptic Gospel
- The Johannine writings
- Pauline Literature.

Thus, the deacon will have studied most of the selection of Sacred Scripture that is found in the Lectionary for Mass.

Philosophy:

- Introduction to Philosophy for Theology
- Philosophy of God, or
- Philosophy of the Human Person and Society, or
- Contemporary Philosophy

Thus, the deacon will have studied the philosophical topics that impinge most directly upon the challenges to evangelisation.

Systematic Theology:

- Foundational Theology
- Ecclesiology and Ecumenism
- Christology and Trinity
- Sacramental Theology
  - Introduction
  - Sacraments of Initiation
  - Eucharist
  - Marriage and/or Holy Orders

Thus, the deacon will have studied the theological topics that most directly affect his readiness to serve in sacred office in the Church, and to serve as an ordained minister in the liturgy of the Church. He will also be grounded in the major topics that undergird effective preaching.

Moral Theology:

- Fundamental Moral Theology
- Marriage and sexuality
- Catholic Social Teaching and/or Bioethics and Health Care Ethics

Thus, the deacon will have studied the topics that prepare him to become a pastoral guide, and to serve as an informed evangeliser in contemporary society.

Pastoral and Spiritual Theology and Church History:

- at least one foundational course in each area.

Liturgy:

[131] Cf. Appendices Four and Five, pp. 68 - 71.

- Introduction to Liturgy
- Liturgical presidency
- Homiletics
- Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults

Academic topics to be included among the regular seminars or meetings[132]

- Canon Law for deacons
- History and theology of the diaconate
- Sacrament of Holy Orders (if not studied in the theological institute)
- Practical Ecumenism and Interfaith Relationships
- (The new) Evangelisation

4.4.5 Pastoral Formation

The aspirants and candidates will keep a journal to enable adequate reports to be presented periodically for discussion and evaluation with the parish priest and pastoral supervisor, and other agreed parties engaged in the pastoral activities of the parish.

The parish priest and pastoral supervisor will report on the aspirant's or candidate's progress to the Director of Formation

Regarding suitable experiences and commitments that the men would undertake, the aspirants and candidates will be guided by the pastoral director and the parish priest who is assigned for their pastoral experience.

Examples might be:

- participation in prayer groups, including reflection groups in the seasons of Advent and Lent
- supervised visitation of sick, hospitalised and bereaved persons participation in key meetings, such as Parish Pastoral Council, Parish Liturgy Committee, Parish Social Justice Group; Rite of Christian of Adults and/or of Children; Catechetics
- training of lectors, acolytes and altar servers
- participation in significant ecclesial events, such as conventions about social justice, liturgy, evangelisation, ecumenical and interfaith gatherings, pastoral care, youth days

Pastoral topics to be included in the regular seminars or meetings[133]

- Speech
- Homiletic practice
- Catechetics
- Administration of the Sacraments (possibly 'off site' with an experienced priest as guide):
  - Baptism
  - Eucharist, Eucharistic devotions
  - Care of the sick and liturgy of Christian Burial
  - Marriage

[132] Cf. Appendix Five, p. 71.
[133] Cf. Appendix Five, p. 71.

4.4.6 Annual Documentation for Recommendation to Advance

- Reflective report from the aspirant or candidate relating to the four pillars of formation, and stating his current understanding of his vocational discernment.
- Transcript of academic study for the current year.
- Report from Parish Priest at Pastoral Placement.
- As applicable, a letter to the bishop requesting advancement to the next year of formation or applying to be instituted as a lector or acolyte, or to be accepted as a candidate for ordination. The letter will be handwritten, stating the aspirant's or candidate's understanding of the step that he seeks to take, and expressing his freedom in doing so, and, in applying for ordination, stating his intention to devote himself permanently to the ecclesiastical ministry.[134]
- Affirmation by the Director of Formation to the bishop of the man's request.

4.5 CONFERRAL OF MINISTRIES OF LECTOR AND ACOLYTE

The provisions of canon 1035 are to be observed.

The liturgical provisions regarding instituted lectors and acolytes should be explained to the parish community.[135] Preparation of the lectors and acolytes for the exercise of the ministry must precede their institution in the ministry.[136]

4.6 CANDIDACY FOR ORDINATION

The provisions of canons 1034 and 1036 are to be observed.

The Director of Formation will consult the records to be certain that all requirements are documented. He must ensure that the existence of documents listed above as required prior to admission to the Propaedeutic period[137] and to admission to the years of formation,[138] as well as the absence of any irregularity or impediment, are verified.[139]

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[134] *CIC*, can. 1036.

[135] Australian Catholic Bishops Conference *The General Instruction of the Roman Missal* (Canberra 2007, 2012), no. 98, 99. Hereafter *GIRM* (2012).

[136] *GIRM* (2012), no. 187-193 (for acolytes), no. 194-198 (for lectors).

[137] Cf. above p. 35.

[138] Cf. above p. 37-38.

[139] Cf. above fn. 126.

DIRECTORY FOR THE MINISTRY AND LIFE OF PERMANENT DEACONS

5. INTRODUCTION

The Directory for the Ministry and Life of Permanent Deacons opens with the words:

> *"The origin of the diaconate is the consecration and mission of Christ, in which the deacon is called to share. Through the imposition of hands and the prayer of consecration, he is constituted a sacred minister and a member of the hierarchy. This condition determines his theological and juridical status in the Church."*[140]

What follows are the practical implications of that status in terms of ministry and relationships in the life of the diocese and the parish from day to day.

5.1 CANONICAL MATTERS

5.1.1 Incardination and Diocesan Communion

By ordination, Deacons are admitted to the sacramental communion of the ordained ministers in the Church. With their bishop and the other members of the presbyterate, they constitute a sacramental fraternity, marked by unity with their bishop and one another, by charity, prayerfulness and zeal for the mission entrusted to the Church by Christ.[141]

As an expression of their participation in this sacramental communion of the ordained, deacons will be prompt to observe what is provided in the Code of Canon Law regarding their rights and responsibilities.[142] These are referred to in what follows.

This Directory frequently specifies what is sought in the ministry of a married deacon. However, younger men, who promise life-long celibacy, and widowers who promise to remain celibate, present themselves for formation to the diaconate.[143] *Mutatis mutandis,* all that follows with respect to married deacons applies also to celibate deacons.[144]

The bishop inspires his deacons to build up perseveringly their fraternal communion through providing opportunities for spiritual growth and for human, pastoral and intellectual formation.[145]

Accordingly, a deacon's presence is encouraged at annual retreats; at inservice training offered to clergy, together with the presbyterate or with only his brother deacons; at liturgical and social gatherings where the ordained ministers are customarily to be found, such as ordinations, the Chrism Mass, funerals, and the fraternal meals shared by the clergy of the diocese.

These are expressions of the incardination arising from ordination. They derive from the intention once made to give lifelong service in the diocese or

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[140] *Directory* (1998), n. 1.

[141] *Directory* (1998), n. 6.

[142] *CIC* canons 273-289. Canon 288 states some exemptions for married deacons.

[143] *CIC* canon 277 specifies the cleric's obligation and prudential practice of celibacy.

[144] *Directory* (1998), nn. 59-62.

[145] *CIC* canon 276 §2, canon 279. In the Australian cultural setting, the temptation can exist to turn to a corporate manner of relating to authority. Such constitutes an expression of the very lust for power that characterized "their great men (who) lord it over others" (Mk 10:42) and which contradicts Jesus' teaching the Twelve that one who is great among them is a servant, and that one who is first among them is the slave of all (v.44).

institute.[146] That intention to dedicate oneself creates also a spiritual bond that can be externalized in the aforementioned fraternal realities.

The bishop will welcome the deacon into the mission of the diocese, he will ensure that the canonical requirements for incardination of one already ordained or, as the case may be, of excardination are met.[147]

Lest the stability of the Order of Diaconate is diminished, in exceptional cases of promotion of a widowed permanent deacon to the Order of Presbyter, the "decision of admission to the Order of Presbyters rests with the diocesan bishop" [148] following upon consultation with the Congregation for Catholic Education and the Congregation for the Clergy.

A deacon's participation in the mission of the Church will be expressed in his fraternal collaboration with other ordained ministers,[149] in a respectful and encouraging recognition of the gifts of the lay faithful,[150] and in the witness of his dedicated life. As for any cleric in the ecclesial community, a lavish lifestyle is unbefitting of a deacon.[151] Church discipline does not require that a deacon wear clerical garb, though it would not be unusual that the bishop would suggest its appropriateness for specific circumstances.[152]

Always consistent with its responsibility to preserve and consolidate ecclesial communion, the diaconal community has the right to form approved associations for the promotion of its mission.[153] In Australia, approved associations exist for presbyters and deacons.[154] In Australia, with its far-flung dioceses and presbyterates among whom the deacons minister, such associations have particular value because they provide opportunities for annual assemblies of priests and deacons and, as the case may be, of deacons alone. Through visitation by the elected leadership, the associations offer supportive initiatives that laudably will continue to reach even the most remote locations.

The presence of deacons gives a powerful witness in the secular work-place where daily decisions are taken that, implicitly or explicitly, militate for or against the building up of God's Reign on earth. The very fact that the deacon is not held to clerical garb indicates that the ordained man has real and practical responsibility also for the realities of secular life which, when the Lordship of Jesus Christ will be made manifest, is destined for transformation.[155] Because the deacon is called to be a witness in every aspect of his life, he will prudently assess, in communion with his bishop, how

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[146] Cf. *CIC*, canons 265, 266.

[147] Cf. *CIC*, canons 267, 268.

[148] *Directory* (1998), §5. Where impediments exist that are reserved to the Holy See, the decision pertains to the Holy See alone, cf. *CIC* canon 1047. See footnote 9 to *Directory* (1998), n.5.

[149] *CIC* canon 275 §1.

[150] *CIC* canon 275 §2.

[151] *CIC* canon 282.

[152] *CIC* canon 284; *Directory* (1998), nn. 9-10.

[153] Cf. *CIC*, canons 278; 298 §1; 299 §3; 304; 305.

[154] The National Council of Priests; National Association of Deacons.

[155] Vatican Council II, *Gaudium et spes*, Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World (7 December 1965), nn. 39, 45, in *Vatican II: The Conciliar and Post-conciliar Documents*, ed. A. Flannery (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1980).

this is best to be achieved.[156] Guided by an ecclesial spirituality of communion, the deacon will engage in his secular commitments without detriment to the mission of the lay faithful.[157] Just as the lay faithful serve the mission of the Church in their engagement in the workplace and in other social undertakings, so too deacons exercise their ordained ministry as they exercise their profession or occupation, or engage in worthy social projects.

A deacon's absence from the diocese is permitted as for other clerics.[158]

5.1.2 Loss of Clerical State

Should the loss of the clerical state be necessary, the usual norms are to be followed.[159]

5.1.3 Upkeep and Insurance

The norms for the upkeep and insurance of deacons and their families will vary according to local and personal circumstances.

It is only just that expenses incurred in the exercise of the ministry, such as travel when engaged on ministerial duties, annual retreat and inservice education, liturgical garb, and justified additions to the deacon's professional library, would be met by the parish or diocesan agency where the deacon ministers. Partial assistance, at least, could be given to a deacon who attends, where it exists, an annual conference of deacons.

Stipends offered by the faithful on the occasion of the administration of the sacraments are the property of the parish. According to diocesan custom, particularly in those dioceses where the equalization recommended at Vatican Council II[160] exists, the principle may be followed whereby the minister of the sacrament receives all or part of the offering as and at the moment decided by legitimate custom. [161]

In Australia, the principle of equalization has found partial expression in a voluntary assistance fund[162] so that clerics in remote, impoverished dioceses may be supported by their brothers in ministry in dioceses that are better off. Where a need is established, it may be necessary that a diocese assists in

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[156] Cf. Saint John Paul II, *Deacons are configured* ..., (1995), n. 4: "The exercise of the diaconal ministry ... requires *per se* of all deacons ... *a spiritual attitude of total dedication.* ...(I)n certain cases it is necessary to make the ministry of the diaconate compatible with other obligations ... (T)he deacon is not a part-time employee or ecclesiastical official, but a minister of the Church. His is not a profession, but a mission! ... the circumstances of his life ... should, if necessary, be adapted to the exercise of his ministry." *Directory* (1998), nn. 12, 13 spell out, with reference to the relevant Canons 285 - 289, detailed conditions for commercial and professional engagement, for the exercise of civil authority, including legitimate involvement in political parties and trade unions, always in communion and with the goal of exercising pastoral charity.

[157] *CIC* canon 275 §2; *Directory* (1998), n. 12.

[158] *CIC*, canon 283.

[159] *CIC*, canons 290-293.

[160] Second Vatican Council, *Presbyterorum ordinis*, Decree on Priestly Life and Ministry (7 December 1965), n. 20, in *Vatican II: The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents*, ed. A. Flannery (Collegeville, Liturgical Press, 1980).

[161] *CIC*, canon 531.

[162] Australian Catholic Clergy Remuneration Fund (ACCRAF).

meeting the ministerial expenses of individual deacons through a provision in the budget of the Office for the Permanent Diaconate.

A deacon who has been appointed by his bishop to a full-time ministry should receive a stipend in keeping with the rightful needs of his family.[163] A deacon who has a full-time, remunerated employment or profession, or who is in receipt of the superannuation or other benefits due to him upon retirement, will not receive a stipend for the part-time ministry to which his bishop has appointed him.

The principle should always be respected that a cleric has a right to fitting remuneration and social security. The custom in Australia is that candidates, who have insured their families for private health care, will continue to do so after ordination. In some dioceses deacons are reimbursed the cost, or part thereof, of single cover for medical benefits.

5.2 MINISTRY

5.2.1 The Word

The Second Vatican Council based the ordained ministry upon the mission of Christ himself.[164] This fundamental orientation of the renewal espoused by the Fathers of the Council permeates a deacon's ministry of the word of God, even showing forth in his openness, according to his circumstances, to a share in the *missio ad gentes*. [165]

Having become a 'herald of Christ' at his ordination by the bishop,[166] the deacon equips himself, both spiritually and with the necessary rhetorical skills, for the ministry of preaching the word of God and for catechizing those who have heard it preached. The liturgical ministry of preaching will occur both at the celebration of the sacraments and at other celebrations of the word of God. His ministry will be exercised with at least tacit agreement of the parish priest, in accordance with the faculty given to preach everywhere and the prerogative of the presiding priest to preach at Mass.[167]

Responding to the call to a new evangelization,[168] deacons will be at once conscious of the mentality, as well as the spiritual and social desires and needs, of the men and women of this time and place that is contemporary Australia. In this way, by employing the more plausible and persuasive contemporary forms of expression, including so-called 'social media', and being conscientiously prepared for the task by prayer, study, loyalty to the Church, and by dedicating sufficient time to the task, they will be authentic preachers of divine mercy and truth revealed once for all in Christ. [169]

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[163] *Directory* (1998), n.16; cf. *CIC*, canon 281 §3.
[164] Vatican Council II, *Presbyterorum ordinis*, n. 2.
[165] *Directory* (1998), n. 27.
[166] Cf. *Rite of ordination of a deacon* Roman Pontifical n. 210, 185: "Receive the gospel of Christ whose herald you now are. Believe what you read, preach what you believe and practise what you preach."
[167] *Directory* (1998), nn. 23 and 24; *GIRM* (2012), n. 66. Current practice in Australia sanctions preaching by the deacon at Sunday Mass on at least one Sunday each month.
[168] *Directory* (1998), n. 26.
[169] Cf. *Directory* (1998), n. 23: "careful study of Sacred Scripture, of Tradition, of the liturgy and of the life of the Church. ... directed by the Magisterium ... so as to teach and propose the mystery of Christ fully and faithfully."

A deacon's presence in professional associations, and in ecclesial movements on behalf of the family and life, constitute priority spheres in which the catechetical ministry can be exercised. Deacons' participation in the life of the academy and in the writing and publishing of works that promote the Christian vision and way of life is to be commended, according to the norms of law.[170]

5.2.2 The Liturgy

Introduction

Through ordination by the laying on of hands and the invocation of the Holy Spirit, the deacon is conformed to Christ so as to be "empowered to serve the People of God in the ministries of the liturgy, the word and charity."[171] By this, their specific title, deacons give sacramental assistance to the bishop and priests who represent sacramentally Christ the Head of the Church. By the same title, their ministry differs essentially from liturgical ministry exercised by the lay faithful.

Empowered to serve as a sacramental representation of Christ who came to serve, the deacon, in his liturgical ministry, "helps the Church to participate in the fruits of the (Eucharistic) sacrifice." Empowered to serve as a representative of the people of God, he "helps them to unite their lives to the offering of Christ."[172] As a Catholic Christian and ordained minister, a deacon commendably assists daily at Mass, at which he exercises his office.[173]

The specific grace of this sacrament received by a deacon enables his entire ministry, firstly, in worthy participation in the sacraments of which he is a minister, [174] and, secondly, by supplying for his inadequacy since the source of grace in the sacraments is not the minister but Christ himself. [175]

In serving the people of God in the sacramental ministry, a deacon is conscious that these actions of Christ and his Body the Church "are sacred actions surpassing all others". Accordingly, he will strive to promote the full, conscious and active, faith-filled, participation of the faithful in the sacraments, bearing fruit in love of God and neighbour. With this as his goal,

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[170] Cf. *Directory* (1998), n. 26, citing *CIC*, canons 804, 805, 810, 823, §1; 831, §1 and §2.

[171] Pope Benedict XVI, *Omnium in mentem* Apostolic letter given *motu proprio* (2009), art. 2. This decree effected a revision of certain canons of the Code of Canon Law. Canon 1009 §3 now reads: "Those who are constituted in the order of the episcopate or the presbyterate receive the mission and capacity to act in the person of Christ the Head, whereas deacons are empowered to serve the People of God in the ministries of the liturgy, the word and charity." This canon clarifies the effects of the sacrament of holy orders contained in Canon 1008. Referring to the indelible character of the sacrament by divine institution, this canon continues: "They are thus consecrated and deputed so that, each according to his own grade, they may serve the People of God by a new and specific title."

[172] *Directory* (1998), n. 28.

[173] The *GIRM* gives adequate guidance. Cf. *GIRM*, 94, 116: "If a deacon is present at any celebration of Mass he should exercise his office." *GIRM*, 171: " … a deacon should exercise his ministry wearing sacred vestments."; *GIRM* 338; "The vestment proper to the deacon is the dalmatic, worn over the alb and stole. The dalmatic may however be omitted out of necessity or on account of a lesser degree of solemnity." For Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament and Benediction, a deacon may wear the cope over the alb and stole.

[174] A deacon is an ordinary minister of Baptism (*CIC* canon 861 §1) and Eucharist (*CIC* canon 910 §1) according to the liturgical norms. He may officiate as the Church's official witness at the celebration of the sacrament of Marriage (*CIC* canon 1108 §1).

[175] *Directory* (1998), n. 29.

the deacon catechizes the faithful, promotes the dignified, beautiful performance of the sacred actions, and duly observes the liturgical norms, including wearing the liturgical garb of a deacon.[176] These duties could be suitably carried out in the preparation of other ministers such as lectors, extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion and altar servers.

Baptism

A deacon is one of the ordinary ministers of baptism, though the exercise of the ministry, except in the case of necessity, requires the permission of the parish priest whose prerogative it is to baptize those entrusted to his pastoral care. Preparation for the reception of this sacrament is a fitting diaconal ministry.[177]

Eucharist

At the celebration of the sacramental sacrifice of the Eucharist, the deacon exercises his service of the people of God in representing both the service of Christ and the participation of the faithful.

Thus, close to the presiding bishop or priest, the deacon carries the Book of the Gospels in the entrance procession and serves at the lectern and at the altar. He proclaims the Gospel, assists the priest in receiving the gifts from the faithful and setting the altar, prepares the chalice, shows the Precious Blood to the faithful at the doxology, assists if needed at the fraction, receives Holy Communion under both kinds, and ministers Holy Communion to the faithful, particularly as the minister of the chalice when the sacrament is offered under both kinds, and purifies the sacred vessels. He joins the recessional procession with the presiding priest and other ministers.

Representing the faithful, the deacon may lead them in the Penitential Act, he proposes to them the intentions of the General Intercessions, he invites them to share the sign of peace, and he dismisses the assembly so that its participation in the Mass may bear fruit in the world. After the Post Communion Prayer, he may be asked to make announcements to the faithful.

In more solemn celebrations, he incenses the presiding priest and the faithful. When there is to be a Solemn Blessing pronounced, he invites the people to bow their heads beforehand.

The deacon's ordinary ministry of the Eucharist extends beyond the celebration of the Mass to bringing Holy Communion to the sick and, in the form of Viaticum, to the dying; to exposing the Blessed Sacrament for adoration and to blessing the faithful in Eucharistic Benediction. Should there be a need of Sunday celebrations in the absence of a priest, the deacon is the ordinary minister at either Morning or Evening Prayer, or at a Liturgy of the Word, with or without Holy Communion, according to the custom in each diocese. [178]

Marriage

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[176] Cf. *Directory* (1998), nn. 29-30.
[177] *CIC* canons 530 1°; 862; *Directory* (1998), n. 31.
[178] *Directory* (1998), n. 32.

The pastoral care of families offered by a deacon will be the richer in the measure of the deacon's and his wife's daily living of their vocation in Christian marriage.[179]

Families starting out may receive the warm, understanding support of a deacon at the birth, particularly if it is a difficult one, and at the subsequent baptism, of their children.

As families encounter trials and challenges, the deacon who is himself married will be able to offer to them the gift of personal experience informed by the Church's wisdom. In general, any forum for a catechesis of marriage that is imparted by a married deacon will be distinguished not only by its faithfulness to and clarification of the Church's teaching about marriage and the family, but also by a gracious understanding, gained from personal experience alongside his wife, of forming and nurturing their family in faith and human growth.

Deacons, possibly with the valued participation of their own wives, help a couple to prepare for marriage with counsel enlightened by their personal experience of commitment, fidelity, the birth and nurturing of children, and loving communication between the members of their family.

With due delegation, even general delegation given by their bishop, and without prejudice to the prerogative of the parish priest to officiate at marriages, deacons are the church's official ministers at marriages.[180] Preferably, the same priest who celebrates the nuptial Mass receives the consent of the couple and preaches the homily.[181] Therefore, deacons officiate at marriages celebrated without Mass.[182] They are not to omit the nuptial blessing.[183]

There may come a time when a deacon and his wife may need to nourish their own marriage, particularly if the tension arises from the exercise of the diaconal ministry by the husband. It would be prudent, and entirely consonant with the diaconal service of the husband, that they might seek a period of leave from the husband's ministry. Turning without delay to a trusted person (Parish Priest; Director of the Diaconate in the diocese; spiritual director, counsellor or psychologist) could further their desire to honour and practise both their vocation in marriage and the husband's vocation as deacon.

Pastoral Care of the Sick

Though the administration of the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick is reserved to bishops and priests,[184] the ministry of a deacon to the sick and dying Christian is valuable and necessary where the availability of a priest is

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[179] Cf. *Directory*, (1998) n. 33.

[180] *CIC*, canon 530 4°; canon 1111, §1, §2; canon §1114; canon 137, §3, §4.

[181] *The Order of Celebrating Matrimony* English Translation According to the Second Typical Edition (2015), Introduction. II. Duties and Ministries, nn. 23, 24.

[182] *Order of Celebrating Matrimony* (2015), n. 79.

[183] *Order of Celebrating Matrimony* (2015), n. 24; *CIC* canon 1108 §§1-2.

[184] Council of Trent, Sess. XIV, *De extr. unct.*, chapter 3, canon 4: CT, VII, 1, 356; Denz.Schon, 1697, 1719; *CIC*, canon 1003 §1.

limited. This may be the case relatively frequently in the remote areas of the rural dioceses of Australia wherever deacons are found.

A deacon's ability to catechize in preparation for the Sacrament of the Sick, his presence as a chaplain in hospital settings, his availability to accompany a dying person, particularly one remote from any other ordained minister, as well as any way in which he devotes his energy to sick and suffering persons are both a *diaconia* of charity and a *diaconia* that extends the reach of the comfort and strength of the Sacrament of the Sick.

A deacon serves the sick members of the community of the faithful as an ordinary minister of Holy Communion.[185] Although the administration of Holy Communion as Viaticum is the prerogative of the parish priest, in the absence of a priest it is an expression of a deacon's sacramental ministry.[186]

Prayer of the Church

Not omitting to encourage the faithful in the practice, deacons are obliged to celebrate the Liturgy of the Hours in which, in union with the prayer that Christ offers to the Father, the Church praises God and intercedes for the needs of all.[187] The norms for the celebration of the Divine Office are determined by the Episcopal Conference.[188] In Australia, the norm is that deacons celebrate the Principal Hours, namely, Morning and Evening Prayer, unless their circumstances permit a more extensive recitation of the Prayer of the Church.[189]

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[185] *Cf. GIRM* (2012), n. 94.

[186] Cf. Paul VI, *Sacrum diaconatus ordinem,* Apostolic Letter *motu proprio* (1967), II, 10. The administration of Viaticum is especially entrusted to the parish priest. Cf. *CIC* canon 530 3°.

[187] *General Instruction on the Liturgy of the Hours,* (1970), nn. 3, 6, 7.

[188] Cf. Paul VI, *Sacrum diaconatus ordinem,* VI, 27; *CIC,* canon 276 §2, 3°.

[189] This norm maintains the previous legislation for Australia. Cf. Australian Catholic Bishops' Conference *Norms for the Permanent Diaconate, August* 1970 (approved by the Sacred Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples, 23 November 1970); idem, *Guidelines for the Permanent Diaconate in the Catholic Church in Australia,* November 2005, n.10.

Sacramentals, Blessings, Funeral Rites

As the Church's minister, according to the norms of law,[190] a deacon serves the faithful by those forms of intercession known as blessings, either the blessing of the persons themselves or the blessing of objects of devotion. At gatherings of the faithful, such as Liturgies of the Word and parish meetings, a deacon fittingly gives a concluding blessing.

In the absence of a priest, he leads the form of the Funeral Liturgy outside of Mass, and gives the consolation of faith in leading the rites of Christian burial. "The church calls each member of Christ's Body – priest, deacon, layperson – to participate in the ministry of consolation: to care for the dying, to pray for the dead, to comfort those who mourn." [191]

5.2.3 Pastoral Charity

"May there abound in him every Gospel virtue:
unfeigned love, concern for the sick and poor,
unassuming authority, the purity of innocence,
and the observance of spiritual discipline.
Imitating on earth your Son who came not to be served but to serve."[192]

Though the ordained in the Church, as sanctifiers, teachers and pastors, share in the *tria munera* of Christ, each order does so according to their specific title. Deacons serve the people in the name of Christ by serving and assisting the bishop and his priests. Works of charity have, as Tradition shows, been entrusted by bishops to assistants, that is, to deacons.[193]

Globally, including Australia, the ministry of charity has assumed fresh proportions. The migrations of the past century and rapid cultural change give rise to the necessity of a pastoral awareness that is capable of dialogue with persons from separated Churches and other ecclesial communions, of other faiths, and of no faith.

Deacons may be called by the bishop to particular offices that administer the temporal goods of the church.[194] They "discharge the duties of charity and administration in the name of the hierarchy, and also provide social services."[195]

Deacons carry out the ministry of charity in such a way as to build up the church in communion. Having grown in discipleship of Him who came to

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[190] Cf. *CIC* canon 1169 §3. See Congregation for Divine Worship *Book of Blessings*, (1989), nn. 661, 1205, 1261, 1326, 1390, 1465.

[191] Cf. Paul VI, *Sacrum diaconatus ordinem*, V, 21, 5; The Roman Ritual revised by Decree of the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council and published by authority of Pope Paul VI, Prepared by the International Commission on English in the Liturgy, *Order of Christian Funerals* nn. 8, 14, in *The Rites of the Catholic Church* vol. 1, (Collegeville, MN: Pueblo, 1990).

[192] *Prayer of Consecration, Rite of ordination of a deacon*, Roman Pontifical, 184.

[193] Cf. *Directory*, (1998), nn. 37-38 passim. The *Directory* cites Hippolytus, *Traditio Apostolica*, 8, 24; *Didascalia Apostolorum*, III (19), 1-7; Vatican Council II, *Christus Dominus*, Decree on the Pastoral Office of Bishops in the Church (28 October 1965), n. 13.

[194] Regarding the service of diocesan bursar and membership of the diocesan financial council, cf. *CIC* canons 494, 493 respectively.

[195] Paul VI *Sacrum diaconatus ordinem*, V, 22, 9. Note that the text at www.vatican.va omits the marginal number 22. Accessed 29 September 2015.

serve, they practice virtues that commend them as prudent, compassionate, reasonable, temperate, and humble in the estimation of men and women. They are eminently men of communion, never protagonists of factionalism of any kind.[196]

It is evident that the *diakonia* of liturgy and the *diakonia* of the word of God are also ministries that express the charity of Christ acting in his minister in the Church. Respect for the interrelationship and unity of all three services of a deacon is the key to a life in ordained ministry that is both faithful and fruitful.[197]

This unified ministerial service is the rich ground from which the spiritual life of the deacon will flower. Every possible element of a regimen of spiritual growth – prayer, Eucharistic and Marian piety, regular confession, *lectio divina* and spiritual reading, fraternal conversations and spiritual accompaniment, biannual retreat [198] – depends upon a deacon's ability to relate his practice of a deacon's ministry to his spiritual practices and vice versa.[199]

5.2.4 The Canonical Mission of Permanent Deacons

The bishop has the responsibility of assigning the deacon to a canonically recognized responsibility. This action is the juridical counterpart to the theologically significant exercise of the threefold *munera*. Serving as minister of liturgy, the word of God and pastoral charity, it becomes clear that the specific title deriving from ordination constitutes an authentic "spiritual empowerment to serve the People of God." The integral exercise of the threefold ministry reduces any cause for confusion about the identity of the deacon within the Church. His is not a ministry of "marginal duties", nor is the deacon a "substitute" where there is a paucity of priests, nor is it legitimate that a deacon undertakes services that properly pertain to the lay faithful.[200]

Practice evolves with the benefit of lived experience. Ordinarily, the canonical assignment will be to service in a parish, whereby the deacon assists the bishop in his ministry by accepting the assignment to minister alongside the presbyter canonically appointed as the parish priest.

Exceptions to the norm rightfully exist, such that a deacon with specific competence might be appointed to a specialized ministry in the diocesan administration,[201] in the educational ministries of the diocese, or in the diverse chaplaincies to families, the sick, prisoners, migrants and refugees, or to

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[196] *Directory* (1998), n. 38: "They must be able to transcend all ideologies and narrow party interests, lest they deprive the Church's mission of its strength which is the love of Christ."

[197] Cf. Saint John Paul II *The Heart of the Diaconate* ..., n. 3: "The three ministries are inseparably joined together as one in the service of God's redemptive plan ... because the word of God inevitably leads us to the Eucharistic worship of God at the altar; in turn, this worship leads us to a new way of living which expresses itself in acts of charity."

[198] *Directory* (1998), n. 70.

[199] Cf. *Directory* (1998), n. 51: "Progress in the spiritual life is achieved primarily by faithful and tireless exercise of the ministry in integrity of life." Each of the spiritual practices is discussed in some detail in nn. 54 – 58.

[200] Cf. *Directory* (1998), n. 40.

[201] Cf. *Directory* (1998), n. 42: members of "diocesan pastoral councils, and diocesan finance councils, and ... diocesan synods"; exercising "the office of chancellor, judge, assessor, auditor, promotor iustitiae, defensor vinculi and notary." With respect to these responsibilities, *Directory* refers respectively to *CIC* canons 512 §1; 463 §2; 482; 1421 §1; 1424; 1428 §2; 1435; 483 §1.

professional sectors such as the academy, the law and medicine, commerce, industry, entertainment and the arts. In such cases, it is necessary that a letter or decree of appointment be drawn up. Notwithstanding his being assigned a specialised ministry, the deacon will be zealous in exercising, in a practical, regular manner, the threefold ministry of the ordained.

5.5 SPIRITUALITY

5.5.1 Sacramental Life and Prayer

The fundamental call to holiness and the aids to becoming holy according to the spiritual tradition of the Church have been recalled in the Norms for Formation of Permanent Deacons in the Church in Australia.[202]

In addition to what is contained in those Norms, some foundational considerations follow.

Through ordination a sacramental grace has been conferred upon the deacon that affects his inner being in a graced relationship with Christ the Servant of God. Though it shares with any other Christian life the same basic attitudes and practices, a deacon's spiritual life is shaped by the empowerment to serve the People of God received in his ordination by the laying on of hands and the invocation of the Holy Spirit. "Progress in the spiritual life is achieved primarily by faithful and tireless exercise of the ministry in integrity of life. Such ministry not only develops the spiritual life but promotes the theological virtues, a disposition to selflessness, service to the brethren and hierarchical communion."[203]

The heart of a deacon is fundamentally open to the inspirations and shaped by the circumstances that daily invite him to trustingly conform himself to the will of God for him. This orientation is deepened and broadened by ordination to service in the rank of deacon.[204] Though every Christian is called to serve God and their neighbour in love, as Christ taught,[205] even to the point of heroic self-sacrifice,[206] the deacon's service is a graced expression and externalization of his being "configured to Christ in his servant role", indeed, it is "the Church's service sacramentalised."[207]

In pastoral discussions, the focus may be on the question of what services does a deacon offer that a lay person could not. Prior to this concern, however, the sacramental presence of a deacon is a benefit in itself. "Who is a deacon?" is a question about the grace and the sacramental character given to the deacon.

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[202] Australian Catholic Bishops Conference *Norms for the Formation of Permanent Deacons*, (ACBC, Canberra, 2016), 28-29.

[203] *Directory* (1998), n. 51. The first part of the quotation repeats Second Vatican Council *Presbyterorum ordinis*, nn. 14 - 15.

[204] Cf. *Directory*, (1998), n. 45: "The deacon should accept with gratitude the invitation to follow Christ the Servant and devote himself to it throughout the diverse circumstances of life. The character received in ordination *conforms to Christ to whom the deacon should adhere ever more closely*." (italics added)

[205] Mt 22:36-40; Mk 12:28-31; Lk 10:25-28. Cf. Mk 9:35-37.

[206] Mk 8:34-35, Mt 16:24-25, Lk 9:23-24; Mk 10:43-45, Mt 20:26-28.

[207] Saint John Paul II, *The Heart of the Diaconate* ... , n. 2.

The depth of the deacon's service is not in the quantity or distinctiveness of his actions - if there indeed be diaconal action distinct from service performed by any Christian - but in the sacramental representation of Christ the *diakonos* whose *diakonia* reached fulfilment in the gift of his life on the Cross for the ransom of many.[208]

In his faith-filled response to his vocation, the deacon becomes a 'sacramental embodiment' of the obedience of the supreme 'deacon', Christ himself. The deacon's acts of service may be altogether ordinary, routine even, or they may reach the degree of total self-emptying of the first martyr, deacon Stephen. As portrayed by the author of the gospel of Luke and the Acts of the Apostles, Stephen's death recalls the death of Christ, the goal and fulfilment of his call to serve, his *diakonia.*[209]

Just as Jesus was sent to carry out *diakonia,* Saint Paul, apostle of the gentiles, understood his call, his missionary work and his preaching as *diakonia.* "God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself" and "we are ambassadors *('diakonoi')* for Christ, God making his appeal through us".[210]

The spirituality of the deacon emerges from these fundamental orientations.[211] A deacon's growth in the life of the Holy Spirit is safeguarded by a disposition to drink regularly from the fonts of spiritual riches present in, on the one hand, his ministerial roles in the ministry of the Word and of the sacraments of baptism and the eucharist,[212] and, on the other hand, in traditional practices.[213] Deacons will discern, among the manifold duties of their ministry, their family life, their daily work and their relaxation, what is to be done from day to day in order to remain authentic instruments of the sanctifying Spirit that they received in Baptism and Ordination.

Diaconal spirituality necessarily is lived in three dimensions that have been constantly evoked in this text. The spiritual life of a deacon is a relationship with Christ,[214] a relationship of communion in the Church,[215] and a missionary

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[208] Mk 10:45.

[209] Cf. Ac 7: 59-60, with Lk 23:46.

[210] 2 Cor 5:19-20. In a felicitous formulation, the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales, *Directory for the Formation of Permanent Deacons in England and Wales,* (2010), page 15, sums up: "So the service that truly defines *diakonia* is akin to the noble service rendered by a faithful ambassador, totally dedicated to his master, his mission, his message; and the message in this case, carried in the name of Christ, is one of reconciliation and peace." His obedience to 'noble service' (Mk 10:45a) led the Incarnate Word, who was sent by the Father (Jn 10:36), to death on the Cross. His death, his "giving his life as a ransom for many" (Mk 10:45b), brought the reconciliation and peace to which Paul, as *diakonos,* gave witness.

[211] *Directory* (1998), n. 45: "For deacons the call to holiness means 'following Jesus by an attitude of humble service which finds expression not only in works of charity but also in imbuing and forming thoughts and actions.'" The citation is of Saint John Paul II *Deacons are called* ..., n. 2.

[212] Cf. *Directory* (1998), nn. 52-53.

[213] Cf. *Directory* (1998), nn. 54- 58. See above, **5.2.3 Pastoral Charity,** final paragraph on p. 53.

[214] *Directory* (1998), n. 47.

[215] *Directory* (1998), n. 48. *Directory* (1998), nn. 52 -53 stress that, integral to living in communion with the Church, an affective and practical bond with the Church's Magisterium manifests itself in preaching the word of God, including readiness to hand on the teaching of the Church, and in remaining aware that he is a minister of the Church, mystical and ecclesial, in the service of the liturgy and the sacraments.

relationship of service to human beings, for the salvation of whom Christ was sent by the Father.[216]

5.5.2 The Vocation of Marriage

The deacon's state of life also contributes to his sanctification. Let those celibate deacons give thanks for the spiritual gift they have received, safeguarding it prudently and nourishing it with active loving concern for their neighbour.[217] Let a married deacon, with his wife, share generously with the Church the fruits of persevering faith and practical love that accompany their growth in the vocation of marriage. Alongside other clerics, married deacons have a complementary contribution to make, based on their own experience of marriage and family life, in promoting the Christian family.[218]

The vocation of a deacon is a response to God's call. Through the consent freely given to his ordination by his wife, the man's vocation is, in a real sense, his wife's response to God too. The Church gratefully acknowledges her part, particularly through the personal communication which the bishop has with the couple throughout the formation and ministry of the husband.[219]

Should a deacon be widowed, the local church must see that he and his family are not left alone to navigate the disturbed waters of their grief. As one who preached the gospel to others, the local church supports him in whatever trial of faith he may experience. Special attention to the needs of a deacon's wife who becomes a widow is the duty of clergy and faithful among whom her husband's service was given. In making arrangements for the funeral, a respectful mutuality should mark the respective parts played by the deacon's widow and family and the parish priest of the parish where he served, as well as other officials of the diocese.[220] According to the "constant discipline of the Church in

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[216] Cf. *Directory* (1998), n. 49.

[217] *Directory* (1998), n. 60. Speaking with bishops at the conclusion of the World Meeting of Families in Philadelphia (28 September 2015), Pope Francis spoke thus of a celibate consecration of one in pastoral ministry: "By our own humble Christian apprenticeship in the familial virtues of God's people, we will become more and more like fathers and mothers ... and less like people who have simply learned to live without a family. Our ideal is not to live without love! A good pastor renounces the love of a family precisely in order to focus all his energies, and the grace of his particular vocation, on the evangelical blessing of the love of men and women who carry forward God's plan of creation, beginning with those who are lost, abandoned, wounded, broken, downtrodden and deprived of their dignity. This total surrender to God's agape is certainly not a vocation lacking in tenderness and affection. We need but look to Jesus to understand this". Accessed 29 September 2015. www.visnews.org English edition 150928.

[218] Cf. *Directory* (1998), nn. 60, 61.

[219] Cf. *Directory* (1998), n. 61: "The nurturing and deepening of mutual, sacrificial love between husband and wife constitutes perhaps the most significant involvement of a deacon's wife in her husband's public ministry in the Church."; and, "a living example of fidelity and indissolubility in Christian marriage before a world which is in dire need of such signs ... deacons and their wives and children can be a great encouragement to others who are working to promote family life."

[220] In keeping with the custom at funerals of bishops and priests who served the community of faith, the deacon's body is placed facing the faithful during the funeral liturgy.

the East and West", a widowed deacon is to be supported in living perfect and perpetual continence.[221]

5.6 CONTINUING FORMATION

The initial appointment to a parish is of crucial importance for the future ministry of the deacon. The pastor should be an exemplary priest and mentor. The welcome given by the parish, and in particular by the leaders among the faithful, influences the collaborative exercise in the parish of the diverse ministries and charisms present in the members of the Body of Christ. When these conditions prevail, it augurs well for the contribution of so many, ordained and baptized faithful, in the service of the mission of the Church.[222] Thus, the deacons will exercise the ministry of deacon, while the lay faithful will continue to serve according to their gifts. They will not at all be supplanted by the deacon but will, over time, benefit from his ministry among them and by his contribution to their readiness for service in the parish.

Various consultative bodies could assist the bishop in deciding upon the appointment of a deacon. It may be possible and opportune to institute in a consultative capacity a separate Appointment Board for Deacons, or it may be preferable to extend the consultation of the Personnel Advisory Board to include consideration of deacons' appointments. In any case, the Director of Formation, and, in the case of the second appointment and those following, the Moderator of Ongoing Formation should be consulted.

The bishop of the diocese, together with the Board of Consultors and other advisers, will decide upon the length of first and subsequent appointments. In the case of a married deacon, they will consider the balance necessary between the needs of the diocese and the needs of the life of the family in deciding the location to which he will be sent.

In those dioceses in Australia where a shortage of priests makes itself more keenly felt, it may be opportune to consider the several ways of deacons' participation in pastoral care of parishes that are provided for in ecclesiastical law.[223]

The ongoing formation of the deacon is vital for life-long, fruitful ministry. The four pillars of formation – human, spiritual, intellectual and pastoral – should be represented in the curriculum that suggests itself in the light of local circumstances. [224]

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[221] *Directory* (1998), n. 62.

[222] Cf. *Directory* (1998), n. 71: "They can become effective promoters of communion"; 73: "In collaboration with the bishop and the priests of his diocese, (they) promote the mission of the laity in the world"; 77: "The community ... can have a ... formative effect, especially when (the deacon) realizes the importance of respect for well-proven traditions and knows how to listen, discern, serve and love as Jesus Christ did."

[223] Cf. *Directory* (1998), n.41; *CIC*, can. 517 §1, §2; Blessed Paul VI, *Sacrum diaconatus ordinem* V,22,10.

[224] Cf. *Directory* (1998), nn. 68 - 73.

5.7 MODERATOR OF CONTINUING FORMATION

Consideration needs to be made of the appointment of a priest or deacon who will be responsible for coordinating the ongoing formation of the deacons in the diocese. Effective liaison between the Director of Formation and the Moderator of Continuing Formation and with the Director of the Office for Clergy Life and Ministry in the diocese will prove to be beneficial. [225]

These relationships will foster the communion of all the clergy in the diocese, though not in such a way as to act to the detriment of the fraternity of deacons. They make it possible to reduce unnecessary duplication of resources and of demands upon personnel engaged for the formation curriculum.

Should a deacon have the gifts that equip him for specialized service in the diocese, the Moderator of Continuing Formation will present the possibility to the bishop. Should the bishop see a benefit for the diocese, he will use the usual channels to prepare the deacon to undertake specialized studies.

The Moderator of Continuing Formation would liaise with other responsible persons so that access to a spiritual director and a retreat at least every other year are offered to each deacon.

Provision of ongoing formation in the large dioceses will have numerous resources upon which to draw, given the presence of centres of both academic study and of spiritual growth.

In Australia, the work of continuing formation will be difficult in the remote dioceses. Nonetheless, the provision of at least an annual period of spiritual renewal and ministerial formation is desirable. Taking into account all the circumstances of ministry, family, distance and climate, this could be relatively short. This may also be a sphere in which several dioceses could collaborate, or, on a longer rotation of several years, a renewal of ministry and spiritual life could be offered to deacons nationally.[226]

5.8 CURRICULUM

Having regard for the four pillars of life-long formation, the Coordinator of Ongoing Formation will ensure that opportunities for formation are offered regularly. The ongoing formation programme will take into consideration available personnel and budget.

Some areas, such as retreats, seasonal assistance with liturgy and preaching, updating on current ethical and social discussions, availability of psychologists and counsellors will be provided for year in, year out.

Liaison with other providers of ongoing formation, such as the Office for Clergy Life and Ministry, departments of Catholic Education, diocesan Offices

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[225] Cf. *Directory* (1998), nn. 3, 80.

[226] Cf. *Directory* (1998), nn. 74, 82.

for Evangelisation, CatholicCare and Catholic Social Services, will assure the human, spiritual, intellectual and pastoral formation of deacons throughout their years of active service.

5.9 CONCLUSION

These Norms and the Directory have been adopted by the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference at the plenary meeting of Conference held at Sydney, ... May 2016. They are to be observed in all Archdioceses and Dioceses of the Roman Rite of the Catholic Church in Australia.

They were submitted to the Congregations for the Clergy and for Catholic Education for recognition which was granted on ..... 2016.

They remain in effect for a period of ..... years.

The bishops thank God for the presence of permanent deacons in our local churches and pray that the community of deacons, though small in numbers, may flourish in persevering faith and generous service.

Through our ministry of ordination by the laying on of hands and the invocation of the Holy Spirit, the deacon is conformed to Christ so as to be "empowered to serve the People of God in the ministries of the liturgy, the word and charity." We pray that the deacons in our dioceses will be strengthened each day by this grace of the sacrament of Holy Orders so that the Church in Australia may be blessed with their lives of service and, in all its members, be able better to serve our neighbour.

+Denis J Hart DD

Archbishop of Melbourne

President

Australian Catholic Bishops Conference

6. APPENDICES

6.1 APPENDIX ONE:
INDEX OF OFFICIALS AND THEIR RESPONSIBILITIES ARRANGED ACCORDING TO THE SUCCESSIVE STAGES OF FORMATION

6.1.1 BISHOP

Enquirers pre-admission

Appoint officials: director of vocation; director of diaconal formation. 23

Approve collaborators: tutors; spiritual directors; professors. 23

Support enquirer. 23

Assist discernment. 23

Acquaintance with wife and family. 23

Acknowledge request for admission. 35

Receives completed record of psychological assessment. 35, 38

6.1.2 DIRECTOR OF VOCATIONS

(In collaboration with, or delegated to, DIRECTOR OF DIACONAL FORMATION)

Promotion of diaconal vocation. 23

Initial accompaniment of enquirer and his wife. 23, 34

Appoint priest who accompanies enquirer. 33

Recommend spiritual director for enquirer. 33

Conduct initial interviews pre-admission. 33

Ascertain criteria of suitability are present. 34

6.1.3 DIRECTOR OF FORMATION

6.1.3.1 (A: in collaboration with, or delegated by, director of vocations)

Promotion of diaconal vocation. 23

6.1.3.1.1 ENQUIRER: PREVIOUS TO ADMISSION TO PROPAEDEUTIC PERIOD

Initial accompaniment of enquirer and his wife. 23, 34

Appoint priest who accompanies enquirer. 33, 38

Recommend spiritual director for enquirer. 33, 38

Conduct initial interviews pre-admission. 33

Ascertain criteria of suitability are present. 34

Inform man and wife of necessary documentation. 35

Arrange psychological assessment at suitable time. 35

Receives confidential copy of psychological assessment that was provided to the bishop. 35 38

Ascertain presence of, and document, any irregularity or impediment to ordination. 35

6.1.3.2 (B: acting in his own right)

6.1.3.2.1 ENQUIRER: SEEKING CONTINUATION IN THE PROPAEDEUTIC FORMATION

Informs man and wife of necessary actions and documentation. 37 – 38

Sees to the provision of the pillars of formation according to the circumstances in from year to year. 38

6.1.3.2.2 ASPIRANT: SEEKING TO COMMENCE THE THREE YEAR CANONICAL PERIOD OF FORMATION

Informs man and wife of necessary actions and documentation. 38

Monitors workload of aspirants and candidates. 38

Sees to the provision of the pillars of formation according to the circumstances from year to year. 38

6.1.3.2.3 INSTITUTION AS LECTOR AND ACOLYTE

Provide practical preparation for each of the ministries. 42

See to the observance of the prescriptions of canon 1035. 42

6.1.3.2.4 CANDIDATE:

Prior to the aspirant's admission to Candidacy, confirm that all documentation is complete. 42

See to the observance of the prescriptions of canons 103 and 1036. 42

6.1.4 SPIRITUAL DIRECTOR

Spiritual direction is required throughout the formation, including the pre-admission period

Approved by Bishop 23

Recommended by Vocations Director or Director of Formation. 25, 34

Meets with enquirer during pre-admission period. 25, 34

May be requested by an enquirer's wife for her accompaniment. 25, 34

6.1.5 PRIEST COMPANION for Initial Enquiry

Recommended by Director of Vocations or Director of Formation. 33

Assists enquirer to clarify vocational interest, image of church, understanding of spiritual direction. 33

6.1.6 TUTOR

After formal admission to propaedeutic period assists enquirers, aspirants and candidates

Mentor role regarding human, intellectual and pastoral formation. 24

Ensures that formation is suitably personalised for an enquirer. 25

POSSIBILITY OF APPOINTMENT OF ALTERNATIVE PERSONNEL:

May be combined with role of Parish Priest. 25

May be a consecrated religious or lay person where the scarcity of priests makes it necessary. 25

6.1.7 PARISH PRIEST

Upon commencement of practical pastoral experience

Pastor at the site of the various pastoral experiences. 25, 32

Arranges appropriate catechesis on the ministry of a permanent deacon and prepares parish community to receive the aspirant or candidate. 26

Collaborates with Director or Pastoral Team in appointing **Supervisor**, ordained or lay, to accompany aspirant or candidate at the pastoral site. 26, 32

Attends to preparation for and execution of ministries of lector and acolyte. 32

6.1.8 DIRECTOR OF PASTORAL FORMATION

Appointed when there is a larger number of aspirants and candidates. 25

Appointed by Director of Formation after consultation with the bishop. 25, 38

POSSIBILITY OF APPOINTMENT OF ALTERNATIVE PERSONNEL:

> In a diocese with a scarcity of priests, or few aspirants and candidates, this role may be undertaken by a parish team drawn up by the Director of Formation in collaboration with the Parish Priest. 26, 38

Director or team plans range of pastoral experiences and finds suitable sites. 26

Director or team appoint **Supervisor**, ordained or lay, to accompany aspirant or candidate at the pastoral site. 26, 32

Usually, the supervisor oversees aspirant's or candidate's personal reflection upon pastoral experience. 26, 32

6.1.9 PARISH COMMUNITY AND FAMILY

Receives and welcomes an aspirant or candidate who has been assigned for pastoral experience to the parish. 26

The wife of an aspirant or candidate is encouraged to participate in her husband's programme of formation. 26

6.1.10 MODERATOR OF CONTINUING FORMATION

Appointed by the bishop.

Liaises with the Director of Formation and with the Director of the Office for Clergy Life and Ministry. 58

Is responsible for ongoing formation of permanent deacons according to the "four pillars" of human, spiritual, intellectual and pastoral formation. 59

Proposes to the bishop the names of deacons who may be suited to specialised ministry. 58

6.2 APPENDIX TWO:
PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT FOR APPLICANTS FOR THE PERMANENT DIACONATE FORMATION PROGRAM.

Desired outcomes

- current psychological states
- predictive tests for pathological behaviour
- ability to live celibate in event of becoming a widower
- ability to live marriage with level of stress associated with church service
- an evaluation of where the person sits on a power-nurturance scale
- ability to maintain professional boundaries

Explanatory letter to the aspirant

In order for the Church to assess your suitability to participate in the Permanent Diaconate Formation Program you are required to undergo a psychological assessment. The psychological assessments will be conducted by independent health service providers contracted by the Catholic Archdiocese/Diocese of ....

All costs associated with the assessments will be borne by the Church.

Assessment:

The assessments will be quite comprehensive occurring over 3 or more sessions of approximately 1 - 2 hours duration each (outline of session content provided below). With their permission, wives of married applicants will also be included in the initial phase of the assessment. The assessment will include both clinical interviews and psychometric assessment and will cover attitudes and capacities with particular regard to the "evangelical virtues" of the essential qualities that are listed in the "Basic Norms for the Formation of Permanent Deacons" (Rome I998) para, 32 .

Provision of report:

Following the assessment, with the applicant's written consent, a report will be written for the Archbishop of the Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne. The report is based upon the Consulting Psychologists interviews with the applicant (and spouse if applicable), test results and other relevant material that may be provided. Prior to the report being forwarded, the Consulting Psychologist will review the content of the report with the applicant and they will be provided an opportunity to correct any factual errors. The report is prepared by the Consulting Psychologist.

The reports are prepared specifically for the Permanent Diaconate Formation Program Assessors and are not to be used for any other purpose.

Confidentiality:

As part of providing a psychological service on behalf of the Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne we will need to collect and record personal information from you that is relevant to your situation. Your records are kept secure and not released to a third party without your approval or unless this arrangement is part of the referral agreement. Note that in this instance there is a requirement that a report is forwarded to the Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne at the completion of the assessment process.

All information collected from you by the health service providers will be treated in accordance with the National Privacy Principles and Health Privacy Principles.

Outline of Assessment Sessions:

Session 1

- Introduction and overview of assessment process – Applicant and Spouse.
- Psychometric testing - Applicant.
- Spouse interview.

Session 2

- Psychological Assessment - applicant.

Session 3

- Feedback of findings and report content to Applicant.

Following the initial screening process by the Permanent Diaconate Program Office, you will be provided with contact details for the relevant health service provider. You will then negotiate a suitable time with the provider to begin the assessment.

6.3 APPENDIX THREE:
6.3.1 MANDATORY CHECKS

1. Police Check

Preliminary

If an enquirer wishes to proceed, he will need to complete an application for a Police Check, the cost of which will be met by the Diocese. The form can be downloaded from the internet. The completed form **is to be sent to the Office for Permanent Diaconate (OPD)** for processing. **DO NOT** send the form to either the Department of Justice or the Vicar General.

The enquirer will also need to obtain a Working with Children Check (WCC) at his own expense, unless he is a registered teacher with the Victorian Institute of Teaching. When applying for WCC the directions on reverse side of the form are to be followed.

Acceptance

Those accepted into the programme will be interviewed by the Archbishop before the programme begins.

The Director will communicate with each enquirer the fact of his acceptance into or inability to be accepted into the programme.

2. Working with Children Check (WCC)

Instructions to Enquirers for the Permanent Diaconate Completing the form

At question 1, mark the employee box. You are not an employee. However, the word employee, when read in context of the Legislation as a whole appears to be a shorthand reference to a person engaged in child related work other than as a volunteer.

1. At question 11, write code 64 and any others you are likely to be engaged in (see page 15 of the application form)
2. At question 12, write "The Catholic (Arch)diocese of ..... – attention *The Vicar General*" as the name of the primary organisation. The Vicar General's address is ..... and telephone is .....

If you have any other queries, or if the Department contacts you, please contact this Office – ..... By arrangement, the (Arch)diocese has a nominated contact in the Department who is working with us to address issues as they arise. Please do not contact the Department directly.

6.4 APPENDIX FOUR:
PROGRAMME OF STUDIES PERMANENT DEACONS, Archdiocese of Melbourne

NORMATIVE COURSE FOR THE DEGREE OF BACHELOR OF THEOLOGY

(Catholic Theological College, a member college of University of Divinity, Melbourne)

A **major** unit sequence consists of 90 points in the same discipline over all three levels including at least 30 points at level 3 and no more than 30 points at level 1.
A **sub-major** unit sequence consists of 60 points in the same discipline including at least 30 points at level 2.
A minor unit sequence consists of 30 points in the same discipline.

Major in Field B	**Subject**
BS1001C	The Biblical World: Texts and Traditions
BS1002C	Interpreting the Bible: Critical Approaches to the Text
	One Synoptic Gospel
BN2120C or	The Gospel of Matthew
BN2140C or	The Gospel of Mark
BN2160C	The Lukan Narrative
BN2180C	The Gospel of John
BA3100C	Pentateuch
BA3300C	The Prophetic Literature
or	
BA2330C/3330C	The Book of Isaiah
or	
BA3320C Winter Intensive	Ezekiel's God
BN2200C/3200C	Letters of Paul
or	
BN3210C	Letter to the Romans

Major In Field C	
CT1000C	Theology and Revelation
CT1001C	Ecclesiology and Ecumenism
Prerequisite to all below this line -	**CT 1000C, CT 1001C**
CT2102C/3102C	Liturgical and Sacramental Theology
CT2104C/3104C	Liturgical Leadership in a Ministry Context
CT2131C/3131C	Baptism, Confirmation and Penance
or	
CT2111C/3111C	Sacramental Theology of the RCIA
CT2201C/3201C	Jesus Christ: Revealer of the Triune God A
CT2202C/3202C	Jesus Christ: Revealer of the Triune God B
CT2121C/3121C	Eucharist and Anointing
or	
CT2141C/3141C	Marriage and Orders
Sub Major in Field D	
DL2100C	The Art of Preaching
DT1000C	Fundamental Moral Theology
DT1020C/2020C/9020C	Human Sexuality
DT2040C	Virtue of Justice and Catholic Social Teaching
or	
DT2060C	Bioethics and Healthcare Ethics
Minor Sequence 1: Church History	
CH1001C	The Early Church, Middle Ages, Renaissance
CH2200C	The Church in Australia
Minor Sequence 2: Philosophy	
AP1000C	Introduction to Philosophy for Theology
AP1002C	Philosophy of the Human Person and Society

or	
AP2210C	Philosophy of God
or	
AP26160C/3160C	Twentieth-Century Philosophy: Existentialism, Phenomenology, and Hermeneutics

To bring the total subjects to 24	
DL1000C	Introduction to Liturgy
DP1001C/2001C	Pastoral Studies I
DP1002C/2002C	Pastoral Studies II
	Spirituality Courses
DS1001C or	Christian Spirituality A
DS1002C or	Christian Spirituality B
DS2141C or	The English Spiritual Tradition A
DS2121C	The English Spiritual Tradition B

PROGRAMME OF STUDIES FOR GRADUATE STUDENTS

May vary in light of previous studies

All the B Theol subjects would be studied, but with award of following degrees:

Grad Dip Theol Grad Dip Bib Studies MA (Theol) Grad Cert Lit

6.5 APPENDIX FIVE:
FORMATION PROGRAM FOR ALL ASPIRANTS AND CANDIDATES

SYNTHETIC STUDIES

and

HUMAN, SPIRITUAL AND PASTORAL FORMATION COURSES

Synthetic Presentations		
Canon Law	30 hours	Rev Assoc Prof Ian Waters JCD
Evangelisation	30 hours	Archbishop's Office For Evangelisation
Sacrament of Order (If not unit for B Theol)	10 hours	Rev Michael McEntee STD
Theology of Diaconate	10 hours	Rev Michael McEntee STD
Human Formation		
Grief, personal and pastoral issues	20 hours	Mrs Lorraine McCarthy, (Psychotherapist)/
Grief, personal and pastoral issues	10 hours	Mrs Marea Richardson (Music therapist)
Spiritual Formation		
Discernment: Introduction, Vocational Discernment, Spiritual Direction	20 hours	Rev Michael McEntee STD/ Sr Elizabeth Teggelove RSM (Accreditted Spiritual Director, Heart of Life Spirituality Centre, Yarra Theological Union, Box Hill.
Divine Office, Liturgical Prayer	10 hours	Sr Margaret Smith SGS (Benedictine liturgist)
Carmelite Spirituality	7 hours	Discalced Carmelite Convent, Kew (OCD)
Professional Standards	20 hours	Rev. William Attard, Ms Maria Kirkwood
Weekend Retreat (year 1 & 2)	40 hours X 2	Centre of Ignatian Studies, Campion College, Kew
Five Day Retreat		'Currajeen' House of Prayer, Doreen Sisters of Charity (RC)
Ordination Retreat		'Tarrawarra' Cistercian Abbey, Yarra Glen Cistercian monks (OCSO)
Pastoral Formation		
Introductory Catechetics	20 hours	Rev John Magri PP
Spiritual and Pastoral Care for Deacon and Family	10 hours	Symposium, deacons and wives CatholicCare marriage educators
Marriage Preparation	10 Hours	CatholicCare marriage educators FOCCUS programme
Practical Liturgics		
Wedding planning & liturgy	5 hours	in regions with Parish Priests
Funeral planning & liturgy	5 hours	
Infant baptism planning & liturgy	5 hours	
Eucharistic ministries & liturgical norms	10 hours	