

retreats, and complete four 10-week pastoral experiences in hospitals, prisons, parishes and other settings. Once their coursework and examinations are completed, the candidates for the permanent diaconate will be nominated for ordination, which will occur during January 2013.

Are there any financial obligations?

The applicant is responsible for all financial matters related to the application process namely in securing documentation, transcripts, etc. During the Propaedeutic Period, aspirants will be responsible for the psychological testing fees and, during the formation process, will be required to pay a nominal fee for each course. The candidate will be responsible for all books required for the courses.

How can I learn more about the diaconate?

Men interested in the permanent diaconate should contact their pastor or the diocese's Office for the Diaconate at 412-456-3048.

Over the summer, the diocese will host two listening sessions at Saint Paul Seminary: July 25, 7:00 p.m. and July 28, 10:00 a.m.

Timeline

Summer-Fall 2007: Men inquire about the diaconate

Fall 2007: Pastors nominate men who express interest to the Office for the Diaconate

Fall 2007: Inquirers formally accept their nomination, consult with their pastor and complete application materials

Spring 2008: Inquirers interview with diocesan officials

May 2008: Selection of Aspirants for Propaedeutic Period

June-December 2008: Propaedeutic Period

December 2008: Selection of Candidates for Formation Program

January 2009-December 2012: Diaconate Formation Program (24 courses, eight workshops, eight Days of Recollection, five Retreats, four 10-week pastoral experiences)

January 2013: Ordination



OFFICE FOR THE DIACONATE
Saint Paul Seminary
2900 Noblestown Road
Pittsburgh, PA 15205
412-456-3048

What is the Deacon Formation Program?



DIOCESE OF PITTSBURGH

Bishop Paul J. Bradley has announced that the Diocese of Pittsburgh has established a deacon formation program to prepare interested and qualified men for ordination to the diaconate. This brochure answers questions for those interested in learning more about the application process and deacon formation program.

What are the qualifications for the diaconate?

In the Diocese of Pittsburgh, the formation program is open to both married and unmarried men between the ages of 31 and 60 with a strong Catholic faith and a solid reputation and character. They must be in full communion with the Church and have a bachelor's degree (B.A. or B.S.) or the equivalent. The diocese will also look for men with qualities and skills that meet pastoral needs, such as counseling or management skills.

If they are converts, or if they have returned to the Church, men should wait three years before applying to the program. Recently married or widowed men should also wait two years before beginning the process. Inquirers, with the help of their pastor, will also determine whether they are free of any canonical impediments and irregularities that would hinder them from being ordained.

Because they will be asked to take leadership positions, permanent deacons need to be responsible, prudent and self-directed. They should be able to work well with others, listen to other points of view, and work comfortably with diverse peoples.

What about my family?

Once ordained, deacons cannot marry or remarry. Men considering their call should look at their marriage or their singleness. If they are married, their marriage should be stable. If they are single, they should be capable of living a celibate life.

Becoming a deacon requires five years of study, reflection and pastoral experience that involve several nights and weekends. Married men will need the consent of their wives to participate, and some of the programs will include their wives as well. For this reason, men discerning a call to the diaconate should include their families throughout the decision making process.

How will the formation process work?

The inquirer should first speak with his family to consult and determine their support. A married inquirer will need written consent from his wife throughout the process. Next, the inquirer should speak with his pastor who will conduct an interview and submit a nomination form to the Office for the Diaconate. The inquirer will then be given an application packet of materials to be completed by December 2007. In early Spring 2008 interviews and evaluations will be conducted by the Deacon Application Board who will review all applications to determine who can proceed in the program in late Spring 2008.

What special considerations should I be thinking about?

The application process and the eventual formation program require that all inquirers commit to the process of discernment required by the Church. The formation program will involve a commitment of study, prayer, frequent meetings, weekly courses, and weekends for retreats and days of recollections. Since a deacon takes a promise of obedience to the diocesan bishop he needs to pray about being at the disposal of the Church and the needs of the people. The inquirer should pray about his primary responsibilities to family and career, reflecting if this is the right time to proceed with the application and formation processes.

What is the Propaedeutic Period?

From June through December 2008, the men will deepen their understanding of the diaconate during a period of preliminary instruction called the "propaedeutic period," 30 weeks of courses emphasizing the human, spiritual, intellectual and pastoral prerequisites for candidacy for the diaconate. In December 2008, the diocese will confirm who will continue into the Candidate Formation Program.

What is the Candidate Formation Program like?

From January 2008 through December 2012, the candidates for the diaconate will complete 24 academic courses, participate in eight one-day pastoral workshops, eight Days of Recollection and five