

8 How do men become deacons?

In the Diocese of Buffalo, when a man perceives a call from God to be a deacon, he spends one year on the Inquiry Path, discerning his call and learning about the diaconate and the formation process. He petitions the bishop to enter the one-year Aspirant Path, where he tests the waters through further discernment and participation in formation activities. With the bishop's approval, he enters the three-year Candidate Path of learning and formation. At the end of this formation process—having been transformed on the human, intellectual, pastoral and spiritual levels—he seeks the bishop's final approval, and having received it, is ordained a permanent deacon.

9 Who pays for the man's formation as a deacon?

The diocese pays for most of the man's formation. The man himself pays for his books and incidental expenses.

10 What role does the wife of a permanent deacon play?

All along the way of formation, his wife must certify to the bishop her support for her husband's call. During the formation process, the wife is required to participate with her husband in some parts of the process. (The wife is welcomed—and encouraged—to participate in all the classes and activities her husband takes in the formation process.)

After her husband's ordination, the wife is free to support and participate in her husband's ministry to the extent each couple finds most appropriate. Many deacon couples find the job of balancing the deacon's ministry work and his participation in family life to be the greatest challenge of his vocation as a permanent deacon.

11 What are the initial qualifications?

In the Diocese of Buffalo, to be considered for Inquiry into the permanent diaconate, a man must be between the ages of 30 and 55. He must be a confirmed, practicing Catholic. If married, he must have been married according to the laws of the Catholic Church, and if not married, living a life of celibacy.

12 If I'm interested, what is the first step?

Questions and inquiries may be directed to the Office of the Permanent Diaconate at (716) 652-4308 or gfeary@cks.edu. Deacon Ted May, Director of Deacon Personnel, or Deacon Greg Feary, Director of Formation, will be happy to assist you.

Before being considered for admission to the first year of the process (the "Inquiry Year"), a man must attend one of the information sessions offered by the Office of the Permanent Diaconate. The dates and locations of these sessions, offered in various places around the diocese, can be obtained by contacting Deacon Ted May or Deacon Greg Feary.

Text courtesy of Deacon Matthew Skulicz.



B E C O M I N G A D E A C O N

Frequently Asked Questions
about
DEACONS

1 Who is a deacon?

Deacons are ordained ministers of the Church. Like bishops and priests, deacons receive the Sacrament of Holy Orders. They are members of the clergy.

2 Why do we need deacons?

Deacons are living, public symbols of the fundamental mission of the Church and all the faithful—to serve the needs of God’s people and of the world.

3 What do deacons do?

Deacons assist the bishop in his role of teaching, sanctifying, and servant-leadership.

The hallmark of the deacon’s ministry is service. Deacons are assigned a ministry of charity, usually outside the parish, such as ministering to those in hospitals, nursing homes, or prisons.

Deacons are also usually assigned to a parish, where they assist the priest at Mass by proclaiming the Gospel, preaching the homily at times, voicing the needs of the people, receiving and preparing the Gifts, and ministering Holy Communion to the people. Deacons also baptize, witness marriages, conduct funeral services, offer Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament, and serve the material and spiritual needs of the people.

Men of Service



4 Are deacons paid?

No, deacons are not paid. They offer their ministry as a free gift to God. But the parish reimburses them for their yearly retreat, continuing education, and some out-of-pocket expenses.

5 Can deacons marry?

Married men may be ordained as deacons. A married man whose wife dies cannot marry again without Vatican permission. A single man cannot marry after he is ordained.

6 Where did deacons come from?

From its earliest days, the Church has always had deacons. The Apostles instituted the Order of Deacons to serve the needy of the Church. The account of this is given in Chapter 6 of the Acts of the Apostles.

In the early Church, deacons were always separate from priests. During the sixth century, the Order of Deacons lost its separate identity and became one of the preliminary stages leading to priesthood. Now, as then, all candidates for the priesthood are first ordained as deacons (“transitional deacons”). However, in the twentieth century, the bishops in the Second Vatican Council reinstated permanent deacons, as in the early Church. Called and ordained permanently to the Order of Deacons, permanent deacons do not aspire to the priesthood. Their ministry is unique from that of priests.

7 Why do men become deacons?

God calls men to the vocation of deacon. When a man hears God’s call, he presents himself for service to the Church. The Church discerns the man’s call with him and his family, and if the Church deems so, ordains him to serve in an official capacity as servant-minister to the people.