

## What is Formation?

Diaconal formation consists of a five-year program focusing on the human, spiritual, intellectual, and pastoral dimensions of the human person. Discerning a vocation to the diaconate is a profound journey of faith and service, requiring prayerful reflection, guidance, and active involvement in your faith community.

The process begins when one expresses interest—the “Inquiry” period. The inquirer is invited to gain a better understanding of the permanent diaconate and what it means to be sacramentally configured to Christ the Servant. After the inquiry phase, he makes a formal application to enter formation.

If accepted, the inquirer begins the formal stages of formation beginning with Aspirancy. The aspirant stage is two years in duration and centers on the assessment and discernment of one’s call to the diaconate.

After Aspirancy, men are formally accepted as “Candidates,” and formation continues for an additional three years with an emphasis on scripture, spirituality, theology, and diaconal service.

Diaconal formation is first and foremost a process of continual conversion. Once ordained, ongoing formation strengthens the consciousness and willingness to live in informed, active, and mature communion and participation with the divine call to serve the Church in her ministry.

“When you serve at the table of the Eucharist, there you will find the presence of Jesus, who gives himself to you so that you can give yourselves to others.”

— POPE FRANCIS

## Taking the Next Step

Discerning a vocation to the diaconate is a profound journey of faith and service, requiring prayerful reflection, guidance, and active involvement in your faith community.

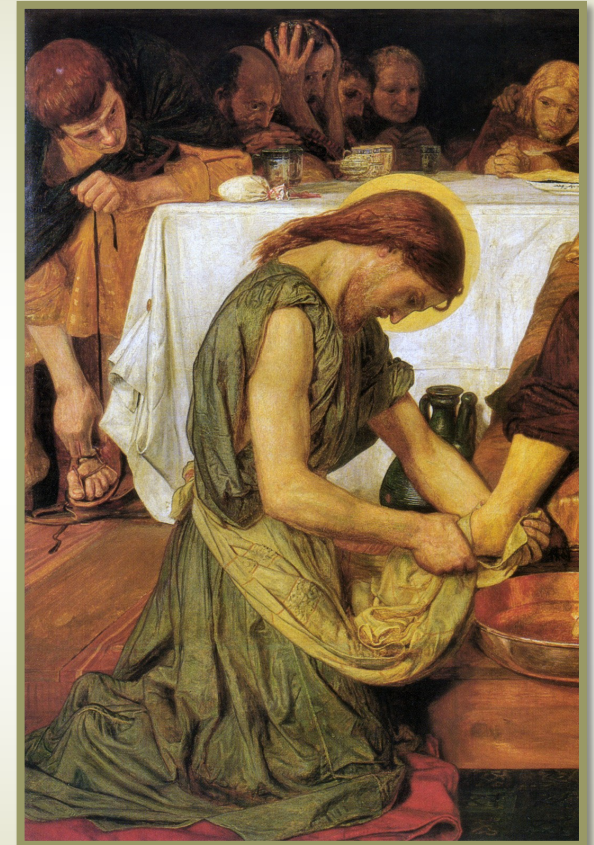
Understanding your vocation to holiness and service is an ongoing journey—it’s not a one-time occurrence, nor is it always simple. It takes time, prayer, and commitment to truly listen to how God intends to utilize your distinctive gifts and talents to benefit His people. The insights of your spouse, family, pastor, deacon, and faith community enrich the discernment process.

If you would like more information, contact the Permanent Deacon Formation Office at:

- 317-489-9461, ext. 6335
- [deaconformation@archindy.org](mailto:deaconformation@archindy.org)



# ARE YOU CALLED TO BE A DEACON?



ARCHDIOCESE OF INDIANAPOLIS  
Office of the Permanent Diaconate



**“Those who serve well as deacons gain a good standing for themselves and great boldness in the faith that is in Christ Jesus” — 1 Timothy 3:13**

In the early Church, the Apostles called some men to become deacons, ordained ministers who served the people of God under the direction of the bishop. The title “deacon” comes from the Greek word “*diakonos*,” which means “servant.”

Though all Christians by their baptism are called to “*diakonia*,” deacons serve as a public sacramental sign of Christ in and at the service of the world.

Like a priest, a deacon, through the sacrament of Holy Orders, is an ordained member of the clergy who shares in the ministry of the bishop. Unlike a priest, he may also have a wife, family, and secular job. The diaconate is a distinct vocation, or calling, to imitate Christ in His service to all humanity, to bring the world to Christ and Christ to the world. The Permanent Deacon is ordained as a living icon of Christ the Servant within the Church.

“...the service of the deacon is the Church’s service sacramentalized.”  
— ST. POPE JOHN PAUL II

## **Is a Deacon Ordained for the Parish or the Archdiocese?**

Whenever a priest is ordained, he is to serve the diocesan Church. Deacons are no different in this regard: they are assigned by the bishop to ministries for which the bishop perceives a great need, and for which the deacon may have special gifts or talents. Most often, this will be within a parish setting, just as most priests serve in a parish.

Once assigned to the parish, the deacon and any other clergy assigned to the parish minister under the immediate supervision of the pastor.

However, this assignment may be changed at the request of the deacon or the initiative of the bishop.

“The link between the lay world, the professional world, and the world of priestly ministry.”

— POPE BENEDICT XVI

“Deacons share in Christ’s mission and grace in a special way. The sacrament of Holy Orders marks them with an *imprint* (‘character’) which cannot be removed and which configures them to Christ, who made himself the ‘deacon’ or servant of all.”

— CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH #1570

## **What is the Ministry of a Deacon?**

### **Word**

Deacons proclaim the gospel and preach at liturgical celebrations. They provide faith formation and sacramental preparation.

### **Sacrament**

Deacons assist priests during Mass, celebrate baptisms, witness marriages, preside at funeral rites, lead benedictions and community prayer services.

### **Charity**

Deacons serve the poor, aged, sick, incarcerated; bringing the gospel to those in need. They preach and practice the social teachings of the Church.

“...you will recognize them as disciples of Him who came not to be served, but to serve.”

— RITE OF ORDINATION OF DEACONS