

## Am I Called?

“Vocation” comes from the Latin verb *vocare*, which means “to call.” Through the Sacraments of Initiation, all Christians are called to holiness and to participation in the Church’s outreach to the world. Some men receive the more specific call to the diaconate, through which they are specially consecrated for Christian service (*diakonia*).

But how do I know if God is calling *me* to the diaconate? The gradual discovery of a vocation to the diaconate takes place through prayer and discernment.

A vocation traces its beginnings to one’s ongoing dialogue with God. On the personal level, then, men considering the diaconate should ask the Holy Spirit to disclose the Father’s will for them, not only through times of personal and liturgical prayer, but also in and through daily lives dedicated to God and neighbor.

As the overwhelming majority of applicants to the diaconate are married, discernment must involve one’s spouse and immediate family. How well do they understand the permanent diaconate and its impact on your family life? What are their thoughts and concerns? How would the diaconate affect your living out of the vocation to marriage?

Any vocation to ministry must involve the Church. Ultimately it is the local Church, under the leadership of the Archbishop, which calls forth men to the diaconate. The discernment of a diaconal vocation begins during the initial inquiry and application stage, but is continually tested and confirmed throughout the formation process.

Since inquirers to the diaconate have many commitments — to family, career, employment, community, and parish — the applicant must not only explore the call to the diaconate itself, but also his ability to respond to such a call at the present time.

## What Do I Do Next?

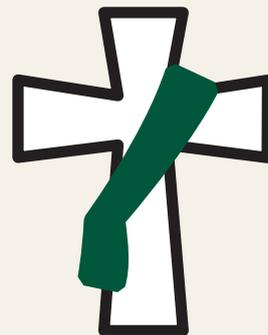
**First**, discuss the possibility of becoming a deacon with your wife, children, and pastor. Also seek the counsel of others whom you trust, including men already serving as deacons or deacon candidates.

**Second**, contact the Office of the Permanent Diaconate. We will sponsor information nights, evenings of recollection, and other opportunities to go deeper in your discernment.

The diaconate office will also take your basic information and answer any questions you might have. We will begin accepting applications in November 2018 for entrance into the next deacon cohort.

**Third**, if you have not already done so, seek out a qualified spiritual director or mentor. The diaconate office can help you in that regard. Regularly take this matter to prayer!

**Fourth**, prepare yourself in case the Lord does call you to enter the diaconate program. Continue to strengthen your basic understanding of the Catholic faith, and seek out ways to grow in your apostolic and charitable activities on the parish level.



<sup>1</sup> Web Gallery of Art, <http://www.wga.hu>

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Members of cohort 3 with Archbishop Emeritus James P. Keleher

For more information,  
please contact:



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2018–2019

# CALLED TO SERVICE



DEACONS  
IN THE  
THE ARCHDIOCESE  
OF KANSAS CITY IN KANSAS

## Who Is a Deacon?

A deacon is an ordained minister in the Catholic Church. Like bishops and priests, deacons have received the Sacrament of Holy Orders and are members of the clergy. At the same time, deacons live “in the world,” with typical family and work responsibilities.

While bishops and priests are ordained for ministerial participation in the high priesthood of Christ, deacons are ordained for ministry and service. They are “living icons” of Jesus Christ, who came not to be served, but to be the “deacon,” or servant, of all (see Mark 10:45).

At the direction of their bishop, deacons serve the Church through ministries of the word, liturgy, and charity. As ministers of the word, they advance the “new evangelization” — at home and work, and in the parish and local community. This ministry includes many forms of outreach, preaching, teaching, and catechesis, all done in the name of the Church.

The deacon’s liturgical ministry includes specific roles in the celebration of Mass, where he represents the faithful and helps them to unite their lives and concerns to the offering of Christ. Deacons also baptize, lead the faithful in prayer, witness marriages, and conduct wake and funeral services.

Deacons are especially known for their commitment to social concerns and works of charity. They identify the needs of others and then marshal the Church’s material and spiritual resources to meet those needs.

Deacons are ordained to identify the needs of others and then marshal the Church’s resources to meet those needs.



St. Sixtus II consecrates St. Lawrence as a deacon / Fra Angelico (1395–1455)

## History of the Diaconate

The Church has traditionally interpreted the selection of the “seven reputable men” in Acts 6:1–6 as marking the origin of the diaconate as a distinct ministry of Christian service. The Apostles were overwhelmed with the many needs of the growing Christian community, and the deacons, including St. Stephen, were called to help them.

In the early Church, the deacon assisted the bishop during the sacred liturgy, performed administrative tasks, and distributed alms to the poor. A praiseworthy example would be St. Lawrence, the beloved 3rd-century martyr.

After the 5th century, however, the diaconate experienced a gradual decline in the West, such that by 800 A.D. it had become merely a transitional stage for candidates on the path to priestly ordination.

The Second Vatican Council (1962–65) called for the reestablishment of the Order of Deacon to help renew the Church at the end of the 20th century and beyond. In 1967, Pope Paul VI issued norms for the restoration of the permanent diaconate, which has grown steadily ever since. There are now more than 18,000 deacons serving in the United States.

In April 2011, Archbishop Joseph Naumann ordained the first class, or “cohort,” of deacons for the Archdiocese of Kansas City in Kansas. The second cohort was ordained in 2017, with a third cohort still in formation. In September 2019, the Archdiocese will begin its formal training of the fourth cohort of deacon aspirants.

## Qualifications of a Prospective Deacon

In his First Letter to St. Timothy, St. Paul described the qualities of those who would serve as deacons:

*Deacons likewise must be serious, not double-tongued, not indulging in much wine, not greedy for money; they must hold fast to the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience. And let them first be tested; then, if they prove themselves blameless, let them serve as deacons. (1 Timothy 3:8–10)*

These requirements have undergone refinement through the centuries, so as to assist the Church in her discernment of deacon candidates.

At this time, men applying to the diaconate program for the Archdiocese of Kansas City in Kansas should meet the following criteria:

- ✦ Enthusiastic disciple of Jesus Christ
- ✦ Normally between the ages of 30 and 62 when classes begin
- ✦ Practicing Catholic known for his fidelity to Church teaching who believes he may be called to diaconal ministry
- ✦ Registered in a parish or mission in the Archdiocese, with the support of his pastor; already actively involved in apostolic or service outreaches
- ✦ Reputation in the Church and in the wider community as a man of good character and virtue
- ✦ Good physical and psychological health; human qualities such as good communication and leadership skills, responsible, balanced, and industrious; personal qualities such as prayerfulness,

Eucharistic and Marian devotion, love for the Church, apostolic zeal, openness to service, and fraternal charity

- ✦ Fluency in Spanish is a major plus; while applicants must be able to receive formation primarily in English, accommodations will be made to assist those for whom English is a second language
- ✦ If married, in a valid, stable marriage with the full support of his spouse, who must also be a practicing Catholic; an applicant who has been divorced will be considered only on a case-by-case basis (see deacon website for criteria and further clarification)
- ✦ If single or widowed, willing and able to embrace a commitment to celibacy
- ✦ Capable of academic theological studies; open to the entirety of the formation process
- ✦ Free from all canonical impediments to the reception of Holy Orders



In 2017, Archbishop Joseph Naumann ordained the second cohort of deacons for the Archdiocese of Kansas City in Kansas. In the fall of 2019, the Archdiocese will begin its formal training of the fourth cohort of deacons.