

INTRODUCTION TO DIACONATE MINISTRY

Course Description

The deacon is described as "a minister of Word, Altar, Charity and Justice." In this online seminar course, an exposition of the official teachings of the Catholic Church will bring to light the dogmatic foundations of the Diaconate. By researching the liturgical and social history of the Order, students will be encouraged to develop theological descriptions of the Diaconate that are consistent with the official teachings of the Magisterium.

Course Objectives

Successful completion of this seminar will provide the student:

- An awareness of the Church's doctrine on the Order of Deacon, most especially that which is contained in the documents of the Second Vatican Council.
- Knowledge of the various forms of the Diaconate throughout history.
- An understanding of the re-emergence of the Order of Deacons as a ministry permanently exercised.

Course Expectations

Successful completion of this course requires the following:

Participation at all Module sessions by listening to the PowerPoint presentations

Reading material as assigned: The reading material for this course will consist of various materials (both sources and studies on the seminar subject) as assigned by the instructor. During the course the instructor will present several lectures on the theology of the Diaconate according to its biblical, historical, sociological, liturgical, and dogmatic foundations. **Please see the asterisk (*) books that each student should have and read throughout this course**

Hopefully, the student will acquire familiarity with the official teachings of the Church on the Diaconate (*Lumen gentium; Ad gentes, Sacrum diaconatus ordinem; Ad pascendum; Basic Norms* and the *Directory on the Life & Ministry of Permanent Deacons/ Catholic Catechism, etc.*), and be cognizant of the fruits of recent scholarship, including the summary document by the International Theological Commission: *From the Diakonia of Christ to the Diakonia of the Apostles*.

Presentation of a topic: Each student is required to present a 5-10 minute lecture on an approved topic concerning the Diaconate and its possible future orientation. All students will give a critical analysis to the presenting student. The presenting student will be graded according to his selection of sources and studies; his appropriate use of these writings; the clarity and organization of his presentation; and his creative conclusions about the Diaconate. The other students will also be evaluated according to the constructive criticism that they will provide the presenting student in class.

Theological reflection (3-5 pages): Following the successful completion of their in-class presentation, students will continue the development of their thesis by incorporating the constructive criticisms of their class and instructor. A 3-5 page written theological reflection on a specific issue related to the diaconate will be submitted to the professor by the end of the last regular class period. All topics must be approved by the professor in advance. We will discuss possible topics during the various modules of the course. Since this is a seminar course, no exams will be given.

Grade Assessment

The student who successfully completes this seminar course will be given a grade calculated in the following manner:

Class participation:	30%
In-class presentation:	30%
Final Exam/Thesis:	40%

Module Two: *Diakonia* in the New Testament; Reading Assignment: *Diakonia of Christ to Diakonia of the Apostles*

Module Three: Christological and Pneumatological Character of Christian *Diakonia*; Reading Assignment: see power point for Scripture passages

Module Four: The History of the Diaconate; Early Church; Golden Age; Diaconal Functions; Deacon Popes and Saints; Reading Assignment: *The Order of Deacon Past and Present*

Module Five: The Decline of the Diaconate as a permanent order and historical roots of the restoration

Module Six: The historical beginning of the Renewal; Vatican II and the Diaconate; begin reading: *Catechism of the Catholic Church regarding any references to the Diaconate; Basic Norms; National Directory; Recent Scholarship*

Module Seven: The Deacon of the Word; Assignment: Develop a PowerPoint presentation explaining the deacon's unique ministry of the Word of God at Mass using the *General Instructions of the Roman Missal*

Module Eight: The Deacon of the Altar; Assignment: Develop a PowerPoint explaining the deacons unique ministry around the Altar at Mass using the *General Instructions of the Roman Missal*

Module Nine: The Deacon of Charity and Justice; Assignment: Write a 3-5 page essay explain how the deacon must "preside" over the ministry of peace and justice of the church

Module Ten: The Deacon and the Code of Canon Law

Module Eleven: The Wife of the Deacon: How Marriage and Holy Orders complement each other

Module Twelve: Strengths, Challenges and Opportunities facing the Diaconate today; The Rite of Ordination/Concluding to the Course

BIBLIOGRAPHY ON THE DIACONATE

Sources - * and bold are the required reading – you must have access to these during the course.

* ***Catechism of the Catholic Church. 1st English edition based on the original French.* Washington, D.C.: United States Catholic Conference, Inc. Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1994.**

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* **Congregation for Catholic Education and Congregation for the Clergy. *Basic Norms for the Formation of Permanent Deacons/Directory for the Ministry and Life of Permanent Deacons.* Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1998.**

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* **Second Vatican Council. *Decree on the Church's Missionary Activity [Ad gentes]* (7 December 1965) in A. Flannery (ed.), *Vatican Council II Volume 1***

* **Second Vatican Council. *Dogmatic Constitution on the Church [Lumen gentium]* (21 November 1964) in Flannery, 350-440.**

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Studies - *required reading

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* Bishops' Committee on the Permanent Diaconate. *Foundations for the Renewal of the Diaconate*. David Bourke, Karl H. Kruger, William F. Schmitz, (trns.). Washington, D.C.: United States Catholic Conference, 1993.

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* Ditewig, William T. *The Deacon at Mass: A Theological and Pastoral Guide* Paulist Press New York/Mahwah, N.J. 2007

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