

THE ROMAN CATHOLIC
ARCHDIOCESE OF ATLANTA

OFFICE OF THE PERMANENT DIACONATE



**SAINT STEPHEN
DEACON & MARTYR**

**PERMANENT DIACONATE
FORMATION DIRECTORY**

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Preface

Jesus the Christ, on the night He was betrayed, established the sacramental and communal Church with the First Eucharist. In the first generation of the Church, the Holy Spirit led the Apostles to select seven men as “deacons” who could free the bishops of their more secular and temporal duties. Historical testimony of the generations that followed shows that the deacon had a special link with the bishop, as the diaconate quickly became a recognized and important office in the Church.

In the centuries that followed, the Church continued to grow under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Likewise, the work of the deacons evolved into three major areas: liturgical, doctrinal, and charitable. In regard to liturgy, they fulfilled such roles as proclaiming the Gospel at Holy Mass and exhorting the faithful, directing the Prayers of the Faithful, assisting the celebrant at the altar, and distributing Holy Communion. In regard to doctrine, teaching duties for deacons included giving instructions to prospective converts for initiation into the Christian community. In regard to charity, the work of the deacons consisted of reporting the needs of the community to the bishop and bringing his response and assistance to those in need and want.

Over the centuries, the diaconate was displaced by seminarians in their final year of preparation for the priesthood. These were termed “transitional” deacons.

In Rome, in 1959, Caritas International requested that the “permanent” diaconate be restored and from 4-16 October 1963, the subject was discussed during the deliberations of the Second Vatican Council. On 29 September 1964, in four separate votes, the Council Fathers approved the restoration of the diaconate as a permanent Order, in its own right, a full part of the three-fold hierarchy of Holy Orders: bishop, priest, and deacon.

On 18 June 1967, Pope Paul VI issued “*Sacrum Diaconatus Ordinem*,” a document that re-established the permanent diaconate for the Western Church. In May of 1968, the Roman Catholic bishops of the United States petitioned the Holy See for permission to restore the diaconate in our country. The Apostolic Delegate informed our bishops on 30 August 1968 that Pope Paul VI had acceded to their request. The National Conference of Catholic Bishops created a standing committee on the diaconate in November 1968. Beginning in 1971, with *Permanent Deacons in the United States: Guidelines on their Formation and Ministry*, the committee published a lengthy series of monographs as a national catechesis on the diaconate. Following the direction of the Second Vatican Council, the Archdiocese of Atlanta re-established the diaconate with the ordination of its first deacons in 1977.

This *Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Atlanta Policies and Procedures Manual for Deacons (PPM)* reflects many hours of prayer, discussion, study, and collaboration among many people within the Archdiocese of Atlanta. This PPM was created to bring into compliance a diaconate that reflects the *Basic Norms for the Formation of Permanent Deacons* and *The Directory for the Ministry and Life of Permanent Deacons Second Edition*, two documents given to the Universal Church (respectively) by the Congregation for Catholic Education and the Congregation for the Clergy (1998).

With the promulgation of the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* (19 March 2003), the *National Directory for the Formation, Ministry and Life of Permanent Deacons in the United States, Second Edition* (June 9, 2022), and the installment of Archbishop Gregory J. Hartmayer, OFM

Conv.as the 7th Archbishop of the Archdiocese of Atlanta May 6, 2020 the *Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Atlanta Policies and Procedures Manual for Deacons* has been developed and published. It is a living document, to be revised as the diaconate continues to evolve in our diocese and continues to strengthen the ministerial life of the Universal Church.

This Manual, along with the Directory of Policies and Procedures, represent a total plan for the diaconate in the Archdiocese of Atlanta.

Chapter I. Inquiry, Discernment and Selection

Section A. Norms

- The inquirer who seeks consideration for ordination to the permanent diaconate needs to enter into dialogue with his parish
- It is the pastor who is required to initially present him for diaconal formation. ¹
- A formal application process, as well as a committee on admission and scrutiny, should be in place to review and nominate applicants.
- As part of the application process, those charged with admission must – with appropriate care for confidentiality and manifestation of conscience – explore for the presence of canonical impediments to ordination. If canonical dispensations are required, these must be obtained before admission to aspirant formation.
- Required application documents are listed in paragraph.
- With acceptance into aspirant formation, the admission process continues with an assessment of readiness for entrance into the candidate path in formation.

Section B. Overview and Structure:

The recruitment and selection of qualified men as candidates for the diaconate is a collaborative ministry between the Office of Permanent Diaconate, the Archbishop, and the respective Pastors in the Archdiocese of Atlanta.

The first personal stir of a possible vocation to the diaconate often begins with the seeking of information about the diaconate and formation. The Inquirer usually enters into dialogue with his parish since it is the pastor who is required to initially present him for diaconal formation. The Office of Permanent Diaconate coordinates all the activities of the inquiry path - from promotion and recruitment, to clarifying criteria and diaconal roles, and eventually to recommending successful inquirers to the Archbishop.

It is critical that sufficient time be allowed for in depth discernment, not only on the part of the potential applicant but also for his Pastor, before any recommendations are made to the Diaconate Advisory Board. Pastors should be alerted at least six months prior to a formal request from the Diaconate Advisory Board for a list of potential candidates.

The assistance of the Parish Community in this process is absolutely necessary. In many cases the Pastor may know very little about the potential candidate, especially in the case of a newly appointed pastor. This can be accomplished by soliciting input from the Pastoral Council and the leaders of the various ministries. Input from other clergy in the parish is also important. There should be particular emphasis on sacramental activities and on service activities - both within and outside the Parish.

The pastor should personally invite those recommended to receive information regarding the diaconate.

¹ Numbers in () refer to *The National Directory for the Formation, Ministry and Life of Permanent Deacons in the United States, Second Edition*.

What is the Diaconate....What is expected of the Deacon....What is involved in becoming a Deacon....What is expected of the Deacon's spouse and family, etc.

Upon nomination by the pastors of the Archdiocese, inquirers and their wives are invited to a series of discernment gatherings and workshops. These sessions are two all day sessions of information and discernment that require attendance of both husband and wife. The content and processes associated with the discernment experiences are driven by the *Demonstrated Standards of Readiness* recommended by the NCCB Bishop's Committee on the Diaconate. These are minimum standards established for successful inquirers. Figure I (in the Table of Figures) outlines these expectations.

The Information and Inquiry period leads ultimately to a formal application and interview process for the applicant and his wife. The Admissions and Selection Committee then makes nominations to the Archbishop. The Archbishop makes the final decision whether to admit an applicant into the Aspirant path.

Section C. Plan for Learning – Inquiry/Discernment

The information/inquiry sessions are designed to create a climate in which both the Inquirer and the Archdiocesan Church are able to enter into an intensive mutual screening process.

This process consists of two (2) all day sessions as indicated below that are attended by both husband and wife. All sessions typically end in reflection with suggestions for journaling during the intervening time period.

Topics to be addressed in Discernment Gatherings:

- The Inquirer is introduced to the role and function of the deacon in the church.
- Given a focus on The History, Theology, and Doctrine of the Diaconate
- The Inquirer and his wife begin to deepen their understanding of the will of God for themselves as they share feelings about the challenges and opportunities for the post-Vatican II Church and the diaconate in the third millennium.
- Inquirers and wives explore the life and ministry of the deacon from the pastoral contexts of Word, Liturgy, and Charity.
- Inquirers and their wives will be exposed to the spirituality of the Permanent Diaconate
- A review of the impact of formation and the vocation of the Permanent Diaconate on wives and families will be presented and discussed
- An overview of the spiritual, intellectual, and pastoral dimensions is presented.
- The Inquirer and his wife are presented with a view of the deacon as person of God, called to fulfill a specific role within the church.
- A detailed review of the application and formation process.

Section D. Assessment and Documentation

Documentation

An electronic database has been established to manage the body of necessary information that is obtained from the various sources cited above. In addition, interviewers complete the Standards of Readiness Rating Form (Figure 3) for each applicant and an interviewer

Assessment of the Dimensions of Formation (Figure 4), thus producing an estimate of the attainment of the projected minimum outcomes.

Pastor Participation

At every level of formation, it is imperative that good input is received from the Pastor of the Inquirer, Aspirant or Candidate.

Failure to receive the requested endorsement form (Figure 2) from Pastors, or their delegate, will result in the individual not proceeding to the next level of formation.

Judgments and Nominations

The Archdiocesan Admissions and Selections Committee develops a process for reviewing the application and all the other assembled information on the applicants. Having collated the assembled information, the Admissions and Selections Committee enters a period of study and review. The Committee then nominates to the Archbishop only those applicants whom they have judged as possessing the necessary qualities for entrance and successful completion of the aspirant path.

Decision

The Archbishop is the one who makes the final decision whether to admit an applicant into the Aspirant path. Acceptance into the aspirant level does not presume admittance Candidacy.

Chapter 2. Aspirant Path

Section A. Norms

- The aspirant path is primarily a time to discern the readiness of the aspirant to be nominated to the diocesan Ordinary for acceptance into the candidate path in diaconal formation.
- A handbook should be available to aspirants detailing the components of the program, rationale and guidance for assessment, and the expectations and responsibilities of the aspirants, including the wife of a married aspirant.
- The aspirant phase, which will ordinarily last two years, involves discernment with emphasis on spiritual readiness, intellectual capacity, and pastoral abilities.
- The aspirant path must create an environment in which the wife of a married aspirant can give her consent to her husband's continuance in formation. More essentially, it must ascertain her compatibility with her husband's diaconal vocation and eventual ministry.
- The objectives and content for intellectual formation at the aspirant level should communicate a deeper knowledge of the faith and church tradition, as well as diaconal theology and spirituality, and should include meetings for prayer, instructions, and moments of reflection that will ensure the objective nature of vocational discernment.
- The conclusion of the aspirant path in formation is determined through a formal assessment conducted by the Scrutiny and Evaluation Committee.
- After the aspirant path is completed, the aspirant is selected by the Archbishop. The aspirant then begins the candidate path in formation with the Rite of Admission to Candidacy, which is to be celebrated as soon as possible and in a proper manner.
- A retreat should precede the Rite of Admission to Candidacy.
- A certificate indicating the reception, date, place, and the name of the presiding prelate must be prepared and signed by the chancellor and officially sealed. This document is to be maintained carefully in the candidate's personal file and recorded in the diocesan book on ministries and ordinations.

Section B. Requirements and Screening Procedures

Who Can Apply for Admission to Aspirancy

- A man in good standing in the Church, having been a member for not less than five (5) years and in the Archdiocese of Atlanta not less than three (3) years.
- He must be at least 35 years of age at ordination; and no more than 65 years of age at ordination.
- A citizen of the United States of America or a Permanent Resident holding a valid "Green Card."
- Have stable employment and a fiscally sound financial history.
- Be without a criminal record.

- Possess a minimum of a high school diploma and be capable of college level studies.
- Must be able to read, write and speak English. However, papers may be written and submitted in Spanish or the applicant's first language.
- If married, there must be evidence of a stable and growing marriage relationship. The applicant must be in a valid Sacramental marriage recognized by the Roman Catholic Church. His spouse must be willing to support her husband actively through formation and in his ministry.
- Married men should be married at least five (5) years and living examples of the Sacrament of Marriage.
- Married men with young children must not deprive their children of adequate quality time with their father, nor place an undue burden on their wives.
- Single men must be committed to a life of celibacy subsequent to ordination.
- The applicant should possess a history of active participation in pastoral ministry in his parish.
- The applicant must be capable of committing a minimum of two (2) Saturdays per month to formal classroom studies and not less than ten (10) hours per week for additional studies.
- The applicant must be committed to serving the Archdiocese of Atlanta after ordination.

Application and Screening Procedures

Upon reaching the application stage, the assessment of an inquirer's readiness is accomplished through processing the following:

- Completion of the Application for Admission to Aspirancy (Appendix A)
- Pastor Endorsement Form (Figure 2)
- Letters of Reference
- Completion of Applicant Personal Narrative within the Application which the applicant describes his faith journey
- Interview of applicant and wife with a Deacon, his wife and a third interviewer in the applicant's home. The interviewers will complete the Interview Standards of Readiness Rating Form (Figure 3) and the Assessment of the Dimensions of Formation (Figure 4)
- A second interview will be conducted if necessary.
- Assurance of ministry opportunities for an applicant by his Pastor
- Assurance of cooperation from the applicant's Pastor
- Informal assessments offered by members of the diaconal community throughout the inquiry/discernment experience
- Completion of a psychological evaluation and follow-up conference for applicant (and his wife, if married) with an accredited clinical psychologist approved by the Co-Directors of Formation. The psychological evaluation becomes part of the applicant's personnel file, which is to be maintained by the Diaconate Office.

- Completion of other evaluation instruments as deemed necessary;

Section C. Plan for Learning – Aspirancy

Overview

The *National Directory for the Formation, Ministry and Life of Permanent Deacons in the United States*, Second Edition stipulates:

“Although some aspects of the aspirant path may be linked with other lay apostolate formation programs in a diocese, the aspirant path must be a distinctive program that provides for a thorough discernment of a diaconal vocation. Therefore, it must provide an appropriate initiation into diaconal spirituality; supervised pastoral experiences, especially among the poor and marginalized; and an adequate assessment of the aspirant’s potential to be promoted to candidate formation, and ultimately to ordination. The aspirant path also must enable the formation personnel to create an environment in which a wife of a married aspirant can be appropriately prepared to give her consent to his continuation, and more essentially, to ascertain her compatibility with her husband’s diaconal vocation and eventual ministry.

During this period of discernment, the aspirant is to be introduced to the study of theology, to a deeper knowledge of the spirituality and ministry of the deacon, and to a more attentive discernment of his call. This period is also a time to form an aspirant community with its own cycle of meetings and prayer. Finally, this period is to ensure the aspirant’s regular participation in spiritual direction, to introduce him to the pastoral ministries of the diocesan Church, and to assist his family in their support of his formation.”

The formation team of the Archdiocese of Atlanta organizes meetings to accommodate the secular employment, personal, and family commitments both of students and of instructors involved in the aspirant path.

Structure of Aspirancy Years

In order to foster the appropriate atmosphere for the attainment of the objectives of the Aspirancy Year must be properly structured. This means that:

- Aspirants will meet with their formation team twice per month.
- The core formation team working with the Aspirants is different from the core team responsible for the formation of Candidates
- The Co-Directors of Formation remain responsible for the Aspirants
- Aspirants are to be given an Aspirant/Candidate Notebook upon admission to Aspirancy. The Aspirant/Candidate Notebook will contain the information found in the (class year) version found in Appendix B. This Aspirant/Candidate Notebook will foster journaling, reflection and self-assessment
- The formation team’s efforts are to be directed at promoting and assisting discernment for each man
- Aspirants should receive instruction on the need for Spiritual Direction and provided assistance in the selection of a qualified Spiritual Director from the list of Spiritual Directors appointed by the Archbishop

Course Curriculum

The course curriculum for the Aspirancy Years shall include those courses listed in the Permanent Diaconate Formation Curriculum Catalog.

The intellectual dimension of formation during the Aspirancy phase is intended for the benefit of the Aspirants. In order to foster an environment that promotes inquiry, learning, collegiality and dialog, the only people permitted in the classroom during instruction are: the Aspirants and their wives, the instructor and any guest speakers requested by the instructors and the formation team directly responsible to the Archbishop for the formation program. Any other visitors to the classroom must have a specific purpose for their participation in the class and must receive prior approval from the Associate Co-Directors of Formation.

Section D. Assessment and Documentation

Collecting Information

Considerable information is already within the student's record once they have reached the Aspirancy. The Aspirant period provides even more opportunity for collecting information toward the core issue - discerning the capability and the readiness of the Aspirant to be nominated to the Archbishop for acceptance into Candidacy.

Sources of information required during the Aspirant path include:

- An endorsement provided by the pastor which includes a reaction of the parishioners (Figure 2)
- Assessments from organized programming in spirituality, basic theology, and social justice, especially faculty (Figure 5)
- Rating responses (Figure 6) from formation team members, class deacon, mentors, and others
- Deacon Mentor's Candidate Evaluation Form in the second year of formation (Figure 7)
- Formal assessments of the Scrutiny and Evaluation Committee
- Other anecdotal or incidental information that the formation team may collect

It is significant to note that the Demonstrated Standards of Readiness are established as minimums to be attained and completed during the Aspirant period. These performance outcomes are constant as demonstrations of readiness for Candidacy

Documentation:

An electronic database is maintained to manage the information that is obtained from the various sources cited above. For instance, all members of the formation team complete rating forms (Figure 2) for each Aspirant. This produces a broad-based documental estimate of the Aspirant's attainment of the projected minimum outcome.

Judgments and Nominations:

The Archdiocesan Scrutiny and Evaluation Committee will utilize a defined process for reviewing all the assembled information on the Aspirants. The Co-Directors of Formation, on behalf of the committee, prepares a declaration for the Archbishop that outlines the profile of the Aspirant's personality and a Judgment of Suitability.

Decisions:

The Archbishop selects those who will be admitted to Candidate formation. Enrollment into Candidate formation does not constitute any right necessarily to receive diaconal ordination.

Chapter 3. Candidacy Path

Section A. Norms

- The Candidate path is composed of three years of formation following Aspirancy.
- A substantial number of hours of lectures, seminars, and related educational activities are established as specified in the Basic Norms for the Formation of Permanent Deacons. The objective of this requirement is to guarantee the planning and implementation of an integral and substantive program of formation that adequately prepares a candidate to represent the Church as an ordained minister.
- See Figure 8 for Hourly Requirements
- See the Permanent Diaconate Formation Curriculum Catalog for the Course Listing by Candidacy Year
- The human dimension of the path in formation continues to develop the human qualities already discerned during the aspirant path, adding necessary skills for an effective and responsible diaconal ministry. In addition to the parish environment, this development extends to the community and into the marketplace realizing that the deacon's role is not limited to the parish, nor it is limited to Catholics but extends to all those in need.
- The spiritual dimension of this path happens through the candidate's meeting regularly with his priest spiritual director, his deacon mentor and those responsible for formation. The goal is for the candidate to increase in holiness; to deepen his prayer life through the Eucharist, the Sacrament of Reconciliation, the Liturgy of the Hours, and devotions; and to acquaint himself with the Catholic spiritual tradition reflected in classic and modern spiritual writings. Mentors and course instructors provide periodic feedback for each candidate. In addition, each candidate provides feedback on his mentor. Feedback from or to the spiritual director is held confidential.
- The intellectual dimension of this path in formation introduces the candidate to the essentials of Christian doctrine and practice, including the core areas of theology faithful to the Magisterium of the Church and based on Scripture and Tradition, the documents of the Second Vatican Council, the Catechism of the Catholic Church, and the General Directory for Catechesis.
- See Appendix C for the full course catalog (including Aspirant courses)
- From Scripture, the core studies include the major themes and content of the Old and New Testaments: Christian Scriptures, their stages of formation, and their place at the heart of Scripture. Attention is given to the biblical themes of justice and peace that root and foster Catholic social teaching.
- From dogmatic theology, the core studies include fundamental theology, God as trinity, Christology, creation and the nature of sin, redemption, grace and the human person, ecclesiology (both the Latin and Eastern Catholic Churches), ecumenism and interreligious dialogue, sacraments (especially the Sacrament of Holy Orders and the theology and the relationship of the diaconate to the episcopate, the presbyterate, and the laity), eschatology, Mariology, missiology, and Catholic evangelization.
- From moral theology, the core studies include fundamental moral theology, medical-

moral ethics, sexuality, and social-ministerial ethics. The social teaching of the Church is presented substantially.

- From historical studies, the candidate is introduced to the history of the Church through the ages with an emphasis on patristics. The candidates become familiar with the multicultural origins of the Church in the United States and develop an appreciation for the cultural makeup of his archdiocese and his parish.
- From Canon Law, the core studies include a general introduction and those canons specific to the exercise of the diaconate; in particular, marriage legislation and case sponsor training as well as the obligations and rights of clerics. Additional instruction is offered for specific areas, e.g., marriage preparation, Prepare & Enrich facilitator, etc.
- From spirituality, the core studies include an introduction to spirituality, to spiritual direction, and to a selection of classic spiritual writers. Candidates are encouraged to read especially the lives of the saints and doctors of the Church.
- From liturgy, the core studies include an introduction to liturgy and to the historical, spiritual, and juridical aspects of liturgy. As the candidates are instituted lectors and later acolytes, they are encouraged to exercise their ministry regularly if possible. Pastors are contacted at these stages to promote their incorporation into liturgies as opportunities arise.
- Practicum for the ministry of liturgy include specific training in the functions of the deacon during the Eucharist, Baptism, RCIA, marriage, the rites of Christian burial, and other liturgical ministries of the diaconate. These practicums extend to select special situations, e.g. two deacons serving at the same rite, assisting a bishop, etc.
- From homiletics, candidates have courses specifically aimed at preparing and delivering homilies with several opportunities for practice and critiques.
- Pastoral formation includes a wide diversity of pastoral services, including opportunities for theological reflection. Attention is given to the study of the role of culture in human and spiritual formation.
- Each instructor makes a formal report and evaluation of the candidate's academic achievement at the end of the semester. The report is sent to the candidate, the candidate's pastor and kept on file at the Office of the Diaconate for review by the Director and the Candidate Review Board.
- The responsibility of formation personnel culminates in the preparation of a yearly written report on each aspirant and candidate that is presented to the archbishop through the Co-Directors of Formation.
- The Co-Directors of Formation verbally transmit a yearly report to each candidate and reports discrepancies and faults, along with remedial action, as they occur.
- Scrutiny takes place prior to installation into the ministries of lector and acolyte and prior to ordination to the diaconate. [N.B. The term SCRUTINY in the Concise Oxford Dictionary of The Christian Church reads as follows — In the early Church a term applied to the formal testing to which "catechumens were subjected before their baptism" The word came also to be used of the examination of candidates for Holy Orders.]

- A retreat or day of reflection precedes the reception of the ministries of lector and acolyte.
- An interval of at least six (6) months takes place between the conferring of the ministry of acolyte and ordination to the diaconate.
- A five-day canonical retreat precedes ordination.
- After the installation into each ministry and after ordination, a certificate is prepared containing the date, place, and name of the installing/ordaining prelate. It is signed and sealed by the chancellor. This information also is recorded in the diocesan book of ministries and ordinations. The Co-Directors of Formation also notify the church in which the newly ordained was baptized so that the information regarding the ordination may be included in that church's baptismal/sacramental records. The parish of Baptism should notify the Co-Directors of Formation when the information has been recorded. All of these canonical documents are transferred as soon after the ordination as is convenient from the formation office to a permanent location among the curia records in the diocesan chancery.

Section B. Overview and Structure

The Candidate continues his discernment of a diaconal vocation and prepares for ordination at this level. In this path the Candidate, himself, is expected to assume the major responsibility for his discernment and development. He progresses deliberately toward the goal of demonstrating an appropriate level of preparedness for nomination to the Archbishop for ordination to the diaconate.

While there is a common goal for the candidacy period, the Roman and national documents describe dimensions of the formation program in which goals are outlined for each of the dimensions. As introduced in Chapter One, there are four organizational and development dimensions which characterize the program for the Archdiocese of Atlanta - Human, Spiritual, Intellectual, and Pastoral. The expected goals within each dimension form the basis for learning plans as well as the basis for annual assessments of growth and development.

Dimensional Goal During Candidacy

Human Dimension - Continue to build on the human qualities already discerned, developing them and adding necessary skills for an effective and responsible diaconal ministry.

Spiritual Dimension - Build a foundation upon which the Candidate may continue his spiritual growth after ordination.

Intellectual Dimension - Obtain the knowledge and appreciation of the faith needed to carry out the ministry of word, liturgy, and charity while giving prominence to sacred Scripture and evangelization.

Pastoral Dimension - Increase awareness of the needs and mission of the diocesan Church while engaging in limited pastoral services and opportunities for theological reflection. Increase awareness and knowledge of the particular and distinctive ministry of the deacon.

Section C. Plan for Learning – Candidacy

The formation program for permanent deacons in the Archdiocese of Atlanta promotes the development of the whole person. While presented separately, the four dimensions of formation are interrelated to achieve the intended objectives for the Candidates both through traditional courses and other means. The following sections describe elements of (1) Spiritual and Human Dimensions, (2) Academic or Intellectual Dimension, (3) Pastoral and Diaconal Dimensions,

Formation for ministry begins with human formation and development that aims to enhance the personality of the minister in such a way that he becomes a bridge and not an obstacle for others in their meetings with Jesus Christ. The formation processes are structured to nurture and encourage the participants to develop a series of human qualities which will permit them to enjoy the trust of the community, to commit themselves to pastoral ministry, and to facilitate encounter and dialogue.

Human formation leads to, and finds its completion in, the spiritual dimension of formation, which is the heart and unifying center of every form of Christian formation. Both the Roman documents and the *National Directory* state that a man should not be admitted to diaconal formation unless it is demonstrated that he is already living a life of mature Christian spirituality. The major goal for the Candidate becomes the establishment and nourishment of attitudes, habits, and practices that will set the foundation for a lifetime of ongoing spiritual disciplines.

The formation program of the Archdiocese of Atlanta provides a priest who serves as the program's Spiritual Director. His chief functions include orienting those who serve as Spiritual Directors and offering opportunities for candidates to regularly receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

The intellectual dimension of formation during the Candidacy phase is intended for the benefit of the Candidates. In order to foster an environment that promotes inquiry, learning, collegiality and dialog, the only people permitted in the classroom during instruction are: the Candidates and their wives, the instructor and any guest speakers requested by the instructors and the formation team directly responsible to the Archbishop for the formation program. Any other visitors to the classroom must have a specific purpose for their participation in the class and must receive prior approval from the Associate Director of Formation.

The course curriculum for the Aspirancy Year shall include those courses listed in the Permanent Diaconate Formation Curriculum Catalog.

Section D. Assessment and Documentation

Academic Assessment

A primary opportunity for assessment of the candidate is within an actual pastoral setting. Can the candidate do that which his training is preparing him to do? Does the way in which he presents himself in pastoral ministry show, for example, an integrated and balanced sense of the ecclesiology of the Second Vatican Council and an understanding of his role within the Church and in its mission of service? Does the way he participates in and leads prayerful gatherings of his community give evidence of liturgical knowledge and cultural sensitivity? Can he demonstrate a properly formed conscience and moral sensitivity? Can he form others in

a convincing, sound manner? This is best accomplished by the Pastor's Endorsement Form (Figure 2)

Another assessment opportunity is theological reflection on his pastoral practice. Here the role of the peer community is of utmost importance. The candidate reports on his field education experience and the community enables him to reflect upon the human, spiritual, intellectual, and pastoral dimensions of his actions. This format greatly fosters the sense of partnership in assessment.

Another opportunity for assessment lies in the classroom imitation of pastoral practice, whether through case study, role-playing, or some other form of pastoral problem solving. Although not empowered by the sense of immediacy or by connection to a real incident, such simulations can be designed to explore any number of competencies in a structured and progressive program.

For the assessment of the candidate's intellectual formation, traditional examinations or academic papers are necessary, as prescribed by the *Basic Norms for the Formation of Permanent Deacons* of the Congregation for Catholic Education.

A sense of partnership can be fostered by allowing the candidate to present a portfolio of his accomplishments, to design a variety of ways in which he may demonstrate his readiness, or to engage in a collaborative study venture with those charged with his formation. The portfolio developed by Aspirants and Candidates in the Archdiocese of Atlanta is known as the Aspirant/Candidate Formation Notebook. The 2023 version of this Notebook may be found in Appendix B.

A comprehensive and integrative seminar, such as those used in professional education, is recommended as a model to determine the level of assimilation and achievement of the candidate at the completion of his theological course of study. This model fulfills the requirement of a comprehensive review as required by the *Basic Norms for the Formation of Permanent Deacons*. The faculty facilitators of the seminar evaluate how effectively the individual candidate is "able to explain his faith and bring to maturity a lively ecclesial conscience," how he has acquired "the capacity to read a situation and an adequate enculturation of the Gospel," and how successfully he has used "communication techniques and group dynamics, the ability to speak in public, and [the ability] to give guidance and counsel." In such seminars, typically formatted around case studies of a pastoral nature, the candidate has an opportunity to explore pastoral solutions in the presence of his peers, formation faculty, and pastoral supervisors. In the seminar, he is called upon not only to demonstrate an intellectual understanding of theology, but also its application in pastoral practice. He gives and receives feedback, thus demonstrating his competency in such areas as communication and his ability to work constructively within a group. In addition, his pastoral worldview is exposed and assessed and his "pastoral intuition" is honored and challenged. The goal of this comprehensive and integrative seminar is always to project how the candidate will live a diaconal lifestyle and ministry.

Vocational Assessment

Interviews should be scheduled regularly with the candidates and their families, their pastors and pastoral supervisors, members of the faculty, and mentors. The Co-Directors of Formation and those who collaborate with him should gather at regularly scheduled times to

stay informed about a candidate's progress. They should address concerns and become collectively aware of their common collaborative role in assisting, counseling, and assessing the candidate. This responsibility should be regarded as their most important task. Due care must be taken, however, to preserve the confidentiality of spiritual direction in these proceedings.

The responsibility of formation personnel culminates in the preparation of a yearly written report on each candidate. This report, which is to be presented to the diocesan bishop, provides a synthesis of the candidate's achievements and limitations, particularly in reference to his human, spiritual, intellectual, and pastoral readiness for continuation in the formation process and, ultimately, for nomination to ordination. The written report is to be maintained in the candidate's personal file, where accumulated reports can be compared to ascertain patterns of growth or regression, as well as new areas for affirmation or concern.

The Co-Directors of Formation must transmit this report verbally to the candidate. It should be made available to the candidate's spiritual director, whose "task is that of discerning the workings of the Spirit in the soul of those called and, at that same time, of accompanying and supporting their ongoing conversion." It may be helpful to share the report with the candidate's pastor, if he did not participate in the formal review. Finally, the Co-Directors of Formation also will share this report with the Admission and Scrutiny Committee, especially in its deliberations regarding admittance to the ministries of lector and acolyte, and ordination to the diaconate.

If a candidate does not possess the necessary human, spiritual, intellectual, or pastoral qualities that will allow him to minister as a deacon in a collaborative and effective way, it is only just to the individual and to the Church to communicate this to him as early as possible and in a constructive manner. Sometimes the evaluation consensus clearly indicates termination of formation or a refusal of recommendation for ordination. Candidates who lack positive qualities for continuing in the formation process should not nourish false hopes and illusions that could damage themselves as individuals, their families, their peers, or the Church. A general guideline for the process to be followed by the Co-Directors of Formation in dealing with these and similar cases may be found in Appendix C. (review)

When necessary, while using those guidelines and with the approval of the Archbishop, the candidate should be advised to leave formation. Although no one has an inherent right to continue in formation or a right to be ordained, the reasons for this decision should be shared with the candidate with pastoral sensitivity and a fair hearing should be given to his own assessment of the situation, as well as to that of others who may wish to speak on his behalf.

In situations of doubt about the readiness of a candidate to be called to ordination, or about his progress in achieving appropriate levels of adult formation, the Archbishop may consider a period of probation or a pastoral year. This time, however, should be specifically limited, not left open-ended. Likewise, appropriate supervision is necessary during this period to bring about needed growth and provide suitable information on which to base a judgment. It will be helpful, therefore, to prepare a written plan of action indicating the goals to be achieved, the actions that will be followed to meet the goals, and the means of evaluating and verifying the achievement of the goals.

This written plan should further specify the supervisor who will accompany the candidate through the process. It must be understood that in such situations, the burden of proof of readiness for ordination rests with the candidate, and doubt is resolved in favor of the Church.

Paralleling the process indicated for the external forum, spiritual direction is similarly crucial to the candidate's discernment. The individual's spiritual director should receive the information regarding this period of probation, and through internal forum, he should assist the individual through regularly scheduled meetings.

Scrutiny for Installation into the Ministries of Lector and Acolyte and Ordination to the Diaconate

In accord with the Circular Letter from the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, Scrutiny is to take place prior to installation into the ministries of lector and acolyte and prior to ordination to the diaconate.

Making use of the formation database, the Scrutiny and Evaluation Committee shall be given secured access to the content of all of the Candidate's files. Each Committee member has the responsibility to review the entire contents of each file and to have any questions that arise answered as best they can. Each Committee member must come to their own independent conclusion regarding the suitability for a Candidate to be installed or ordained. Following the review of the Candidate's files, a collegial session of the Scrutiny and Evaluation Committee is to be scheduled for discussing the Candidates and the findings of each Committee member. Having consulted the committee, the Archbishop will select those to be admitted to the specific ministry and those to be called to ordination.

Rite of Institution into the Ministry of Lector and Ministry of Acolyte

It is appropriate for a retreat or a day for reflection to precede the reception of each specific ministry. It will usually be helpful to wives to participate in the retreat, although during portions of the retreat it will usually be helpful to provide the opportunity for separate treatment of the respective roles of each in the vocation of the husband to the diaconate. The conferral of the ministry should be celebrated on a Sunday or feast day if possible, according to the rite of *The Roman Pontifical*. These rites are public celebrations with ecclesial significance. Special attention should be given to the participation of the wives and children of married candidates.

Generally the Institution of Lector will occur during the first year of Candidacy and the Institution of Acolyte will occur during the second year of Candidacy. These two institutions (for separate formation candidate classes) will generally occur at the same Mass.

For each candidate, the ministry of lector is to be conferred first. "It is appropriate that a certain period of time elapse between the conferring of the lectorate [rite of lector] and acolytate [rite of acolyte] in such a way that the candidate may exercise the ministry he has received."

After the reception of the ministry, a certificate indicating the ministry received, date, place, and conferring prelate should be prepared and signed by the chancellor of the diocese and officially sealed. This document is to be kept in the candidate's personal file and noted in the diocesan book of ministries and ordinations.

The Rite of Ordination to the Diaconate

An interval of at least six months must elapse between the conferring of the ministry of acolyte and ordination to the diaconate. Further, a canonical retreat must precede the ordination. It will usually be helpful to wives to participate in the retreat, although during portions of the retreat it will usually be helpful to provide the opportunity for separate treatment of the respective roles of each in the vocation of the husband to the diaconate. Prior to ordination to the diaconate, the ordinand must make the Profession of the Faith in the presence of the bishop or his delegate and must sign it by his own hand. He must take the Oath of Fidelity and make a personal declaration concerning his freedom to receive sacred ordination, as well as his own clear awareness of the obligations and commitments implied by that ordination.

An unmarried candidate must make a declaration regarding the obligation of sacred celibacy. This declaration must be written in the candidate's own handwriting and expressed in his own words. All of these documents are to be carefully preserved in the candidate's personal file.

It is preferable to celebrate the ordination in the cathedral church on a Sunday or feast day, according to the rite of *The Roman Pontifical*, inviting the diocesan Church's full participation. "During the rite special attention should be given to the participation of the wives and children of the married ordinands."

After the ordination, a certificate should be prepared containing the date, place, and name of the ordaining prelate. It should be signed and sealed by the chancellor. This information also should be recorded in the diocesan book of ministries and ordinations. The certificate, together with the letter of petition and the bishop's letter of call to ordination, should be enclosed in the newly ordains personal and permanent file. This file should be transferred as soon after the ordination as is convenient from the formation office to a permanent location among the curia records in the diocesan chancery. The Co-Directors of Formation or someone designated by the bishop should also notify the church in which the newly ordained was baptized so that the information regarding the ordination may be included in that church's baptismal-sacramental records. The parish of Baptism should notify the Co-Directors of Formation when the information has been recorded.

Annual Reports. The Co-Directors of Formation prepare a yearly written report on each Candidate to be presented to the Archbishop.

Decisions. The Scrutiny and Evaluation Committee will meet prior to installation into the ministries of Lector and Acolyte and prior to ordination to the diaconate. The role of the committee is to review all information and assessments while preparing a recommendation on each Candidate for the Archbishop.

The Archbishop selects those to be admitted to the specific ministry and those to be called to ordination.

Chapter 4. Post – Ordination Path

Section A. Norms

- A program should be planned for the first five years of their diaconal ministry. They should be supervised by a pastor appointed to this ministry by the diocesan bishop. The program should be coordinated by the director for deacon personnel and/or the co-directors of diaconate formation.
- Each diocesan Church should establish a basic minimum of continuing education hours to be fulfilled annually by all diocesan deacons in active ministry.

Section B. Overview and Structure

For their first five (5) years post-ordination, deacons will exercise their initial ministry assignment under the supervision of the Director of Deacon Personnel and the pastor of the parish where they are assigned. Newly ordained deacons also enter into a mandatory, directed period of post-ordination formation. This is to ensure a smooth transition from pre-ordination formation to post-ordination formation, which is a life-long process. It is also designed to provide the novice deacon with support during the early years of his ministry.

Section C. Plan for Learning – Post Ordination

Newly Ordained Five (5) Year Structured Program

- Meeting with newly ordained deacons six months post ordination
 - Focus on continued spiritual direction
 - Communications within the parish
 - Review continuing education needs
- Continuing Education Guidelines set by Archbishop (Figure 11)
- Classes and Seminars for deacons
 - Regularly scheduled classes at the formation center
 - Concentrated weekend seminars and classes covering specific topics
 - Convocation
 - Communications Workshop
 - Homiletics
- Distance Learning Opportunities
 - Pontifical College Josephinum
 - Aquinas Center for Continuing Education at Emory
- Annual Retreat

Six Years and Beyond

- Convocation
- Annual Retreat
- Continuing Education Guidelines (Figure 11)

Section D. Assessment and Documentation

- Annual Report on Spiritual Development and Continuing Education (Figure 11)
- Updated Parish Agreement with pastor due every three years or when there is a new pastor.

Figures

Figure 1. Demonstrated Standards of Readiness – Inquiry Level

When searching for possible deacon candidates the following dimensions should be used as guidelines.

Human Dimension

- Good Interpersonal communication skills
- A realistic perspective on his life
 - Able to speak appropriately of his personal limitations with a sense of how these affect his life, family, employment and present service ministry
 - Able to successfully balance and prioritize his commitments to family, work, leisure, and ministry to demonstrate self-discipline in his life

Spiritual Dimension

- God's Redeeming activity in his state of life, experience, and ministry
- The importance of a personal and communal prayer life
 - Able to reflect/meditate with faith on his life with a sense of discovering God's will for him
 - Conveys examples of God's presence in his life
 - Has or will commit as a reader or extraordinary minister of the Eucharist, to serve his parish community, especially in charity and outreach to the needy; to be responsible and confident
 - Demonstrates a commitment to a consistent pattern of prayer; participates frequently in the Eucharist and the Sacrament of Reconciliation; participates in retreat experiences or a renewal group
 - Can support others' growth in prayer; to show interest in sharing and serving with others

Intellectual Dimension

- The basic teachings of the Church
 - Demonstrates familiarity with the Bible and the Catechism of the Catholic Church
 - Sufficient intellectual capacity to complete the academic work of the formation program and to carry out diaconal tasks

Pastoral Dimension

- Living the Gospel in his life, home, place of employment, and neighborhood
 - Able to connect the teachings of the Church to daily living and his personal/communal (family, church, civic) responsibilities
 - Able to be flexible in attitude and behavior; to be open to change; to analyze situations in light of the Gospel and the Church's teachings
 - Able to be a good leader and a good follower

Diaconal Vocation and Ministry

- Feels a personal call to diaconal ministry within the Church and a realistic sense of his capacity to commit himself to it in fidelity to his state in life and employment, with sufficient time for formation
 - Witnesses to Gospel values in ways that are life-giving; to articulate his sense of a call to the diaconate primarily because of the needs of the Church, as well as for personal growth; and articulates reasons that support his desire to be a deacon
 - Is interested in and attracted to the diaconal ministry of word, liturgy, and charity
 - A desire to be of service, beyond liturgical ministries
 - Can support and assist his pastor, as a representative for the parish community
 - Can be docile to the presence of the Holy Spirit throughout the application and screening processes, acknowledging it is the Church that verifies the call

Figure 2. Pastor Endorsement Form

PASTOR'S ENDORSEMENT OF FORMATION APPLICANT

Office of the Permanent Diaconate

(Note: please use one form for each applicant you endorse: fill in completely)

Applicant's Name: _____

Parish: _____

1. How long have you known the applicant? ____ His wife? ____
2. How long has this applicant been registered in your parish? ____ .
If less than three (3) years, was he previously registered in another parish in the Archdiocese?
Yes No .
If so, how long was he registered at his prior parish? _____ .
3. Is the applicant active in parish ministries? Yes No . If yes, in what ministries and to what extent?

4. Describe the community, professional, or other interests the applicant may have outside the parish and of which you are aware (e.g. service clubs, professional organizations, charitable works, etc.).

5. If married, does the applicant's wife evidence support in having her husband enter formation and his potential ordination to the Diaconate? Yes No .
6. Please describe any marriage or family difficulties of which you are aware.

7. Please comment upon wife's interest and involvement in parish ministries:

8. How does the applicant relate to parish staff and other parishioners?

9. How do you see this applicant assisting you in your parish as a deacon?

10. Why do you feel this applicant will make a good deacon?

11. Please check **one** of the following statements:

- I strongly endorse;
- I recommend;
- I recommend with reservations (explain in comments section below);
- I do not recommend (explain in comments section below)

12. Other Comments:

Pastor's Signature: _____ Dated: _____

Pastor's Name (printed): _____

Please note that all newly ordained Deacons receive parish assignments from the Archbishop in accordance with the needs of the Archdiocese. There is no guarantee that any specific Candidate will be assigned to the recommending parish following ordination.

Please return this form to:

**Associate Co-Directors of Formation
Office of the Permanent Diaconate
Archdiocese of Atlanta
2401 Lake Park Drive
Smyrna, GA 30080-7609**

Figure 3. Ratings on Demonstrated Standards of Readiness - Inquiry Level

As a result of the inquiry and discernment experiences the successful inquirer will be able to demonstrate the following abilities or skills. On a scale of 1 to 5, rate the extent to which you estimate that each ability has been demonstrated (1 = low, 5 = high).

Human Dimension

- _____ 1. Speak appropriately of his personal limitations and known boundaries with a sense of how these affect his life, family, employment, and present service ministry.
- _____ 2. Balance and prioritize his commitments to family, work, leisure, and ministry; to be self-disciplined.

Spiritual Dimension

- _____ 3. Reflect/meditate in faith on his life with a sense of discovering God's will.
- _____ 4. Convey examples of God's presence in his life.
- _____ 5. Commit to serve his parish community, especially in charity and outreach to the needy; to be responsible and confident.
- _____ 6. Be both a leader and a follower.
- _____ 7. Fulfill a commitment to a pattern of prayer, to participate frequently in the Eucharist and the Sacrament of Reconciliation and to participate in retreat experiences or a renewal group.
- _____ 8. Support others' growth in prayer, to show interest in sharing and serving with others.
- _____ 9. Demonstrate familiarity with the Catechism of the Catholic Church.

Intellectual Dimension

- _____ 10. Demonstrates familiarity with the Holy Bible and the Catechism of the Catholic Church.
- _____ 11. Sufficient intellectual capacity to complete the academic work of the formation program and to carry out diaconal tasks.

Pastoral Dimension

- _____ 12. Connect the teachings of the Church to daily living and his personal/communal (family, church, civic) responsibilities.
- _____ 13. Be flexible in attitude and behavior; to be open to change; to analyze situations in light of the Gospel and the Church's teaching.

Diaconal Ministry

- _____ 14. Witness to gospel values in ways that are life-giving; to articulate his sense of a call to the diaconate primarily because of the needs of the Church, as well as for personal growth; and to articulate reasons that support his desire to be a deacon.
- _____ 15. Be interested in and attracted to the diaconal *munera* of word, liturgy, and charity.
- _____ 16. Be of service, beyond liturgical ministries, through church or civic involvement.

- ____ 17. Support and encourage his pastor, as a representative for the parish community and staff.
- ____ 18. Be docile to the presence of the Holy Spirit throughout the application and screening processes, acknowledging that ultimately it is the Church that verifies the call.

Name of Applicant _____

Name of Interviewer _____

Interview Date _____

Overall Impression of Interviewer (Rate 1 to 5) _____

**Figure 4. Interview Assessment of the Dimensions of Formation
In Home Interview with Applicant**

{Provide a brief summary of interview conducted in applicant's home}

1. Human Dimension

{Provide Interviewers impression of how Applicant and wife meet the requirements of this dimension of formation and any particular elements that will require attention.}

2. Spiritual Dimension

{Provide Interviewers impression of how Applicant and wife meet the requirements of this dimension of formation and any particular elements that will require attention.}

3. Intellectual Dimension

{Provide Interviewers impression of how Applicant and wife meet the requirements of this dimension of formation and any particular elements that will require attention.}

4. Pastoral Dimension

{Provide Interviewers impression of how Applicant and wife meet the requirements of this dimension of formation and any particular elements that will require attention.}

Figure 5. Academic Evaluation Form
Office of the Permanent Diaconate
Diaconate Formation
Academic Evaluation Form

Name of Candidate: _____

Subject: _____

Instructor: _____

Report Period: First Semester Second Semester Interim

I. Candidate Performance:

1. What grade has the Candidate earned in this course?

- Student should be Commended (with the reason)* - The student demonstrates an exemplary grasp of the subject matter and a demonstrated ability to apply it.
- Student has grasped the material* – The student demonstrates a thorough understand of the subject matter and ability to apply it.
- Student has not grasped the material (with reason)* – The student demonstrates a good understanding of most areas of the subject matter but needs improvement in certain areas. The needed areas of improvement will be noted.

2. Do you have any other comments regarding this Candidate?

II. Recommendation for advancement in formation

Do you have any reservations about this Candidate's continuation in formation?

No reservation

My reservation is:

Please note that your answers will be held in the strictest of confidence and will not be shared with the Candidate without your prior consent.

Figure 6. Deacon Mentor Evaluation Form
DEACON MENTOR – CANDIDATE EVALUATION FORM
Office of the Permanent Diaconate
Candidate Evaluation

Name of Candidate: _____

Name of Deacon Mentor: _____

The mentor plays an important role in the preparation of the candidate as he progresses through the formation. You and the candidate should interact in many ways throughout his formation providing a strong basis for assessment.

1. Have you met at least bi-monthly with the candidate? If not, why have the meetings not taken place?

2. Formation is intended to develop the candidate along human, spiritual, intellectual and pastoral dimensions. Have your discussed focused on any one of these particular areas and what subjects have dominated your discussions?

3. Have you and your wife met with the candidate and his wife? In what ways is the Candidate’s family adjusting to formation and preparing for his ministry as a Deacon?

4. Describe the ways the candidate has assisted you in you in your ministerial activities (i.e., helping teach, at Baptisms, Weddings, Vigil Services, Funerals, charitable work, etc.)? What recommendations do you have for improving his ability to be “present” to people in these activities?

5. What are the specific ministries at your parish and/or within the community that you have observed the candidate performing? Please elaborate on your impressions of his ministerial approach.

6. Based on your own observation and the comments of others, how would you judge his progress in preparation for ordained ministry?

7. Describe how the candidate is coping with the demands of family, work, ministerial activity in the parish and community and formation? In what ways does his formation need to be augmented (i.e., assistance from a pastoral, spiritual, academic or human development perspective)?

8. Describe any assistance that the formation team could provide to help further the candidate's formation.

9. Describe the candidate's greatest strengths as they pertain to potential ministry as a Deacon.

10. Describe the areas that the candidate should be concentrating on over the next six to twelve months.

11. Please provide any other information that you would like to share regarding the candidate's formation.

Signature_____

Date_____

Please return this evaluation form to:

Associate Co-Directors of Formation
Office of the Permanent Diaconate
2401 Lake Park Drive
Smyrna, GA 30080-7609

Figure 7. Ratings on Demonstrated Standards of Readiness - Aspirant Level

As a result of continued discernment during the Aspirant phase emphasizing spiritual readiness and pastoral abilities, the successful aspirant will be able to demonstrate the following abilities and skills:

Rate the extent to which you judge that each ability has been demonstrated (1=low, 5=high).

Human Dimension

- _____ 1. Be self-reflective; reveal himself appropriately, sharing his experiences and attitudes with others as verified in the formation community, mentor group, pastoral ministry placement, and self-evaluation; be both a leader and follower.
- _____ 2. Use his knowledge to encourage others to reflect and share their experience in dialogue and action.
- _____ 3. Demonstrate the use of appropriate resources for his physical, emotional, and spiritual development; to take initiative in self-study and in completing home assignments.
- _____ 4. Be a good listener, respect each person, and be accepted as a trusted participant who keeps confidences.
- _____ 5. Be open to change through reflective growth in understanding; to express his position candidly in sharing for study and dialogue, neither intimidating nor being intimidated in doing so.
- _____ 6. Integrate and prioritize his personal boundaries relating to family, recreation, work, ministry, and time alone.
- _____ 7. Contribute to and utilize a support system.

Spiritual Dimension

- _____ 8. Reflect theologically on his faith experience through regular spiritual direction.
- _____ 9. Pray the scriptures, meditating on the mystery of God as our Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
- _____ 10. Enable others to reflect upon their faith journey in terms of their Baptismal call and ministry.
- _____ 11. Fulfill a regular commitment to a pattern of personal and communal prayer through frequent praying of the liturgy of the hours, especially morning and evening prayer; to participate frequently in the Eucharist and the Sacrament of Reconciliation, personal prayer and reading of the Bible, and devotion to Mary and to the saints.
- _____ 12. Plan and lead communal prayer.
- _____ 13. Ascertain, if married, the quality of his relationship with his wife and children and the need for dialogue and mutual consent to continue in formation and move forward toward ordination; to make, if unmarried, a commitment to perpetual celibacy and live a single lifestyle in an appropriate manner.

- _____ 14. Practice in prayer and action an attitude of discipleship to Christian unity, desiring to know more about other Christian denominations and other faith experiences and finding ways for mutual action in serving human needs.

Intellectual Dimension

- _____ 15. Articulate the primary teachings of the Church and discuss contemporary issues in light of this teaching.
- _____ 16. Speak informally on Christian vocations and ordained ministry, particularly the Order of Deacon and its threefold ministries of word, liturgy, and charity; to relate this knowledge to personal and communal vocation discernment.
- _____ 17. Participate in the Eucharist as a lector or extraordinary minister of the Eucharist and in ministry to the sick.
- _____ 18. Experience and invite others into meaningful expressions of prayer and forms of Christian spirituality.
- _____ 19. Refer others to appropriate pastoral resources as needed.

Pastoral Dimension

- _____ 20. Name appropriate theological resources useful to ministerial study and service.
- _____ 21. Communicate effectively in spoken and written word.
- _____ 22. Use different cultural communication patterns whenever appropriate, and to use and guide others to appropriate multi-cultural resources.
- _____ 23. Link in reflection, his pastoral and personal experiences to theology - apprehending God's presence through touching the needs of the poor or afflicted, to be an advocate for people in need and a facilitator of the community's resources in response to human needs.
- _____ 24. Discern how God is calling him into ministry.

Diaconal Ministry

- _____ 25. Articulate his relationship with God and reasons for believing he has a call to the Order of Deacons within the formation community.
- _____ 26. Articulate his call and commitment to his spiritual director and to the formation personnel and to communicate this through self/peer/formation/pastoral/family assessments.
- _____ 27. Articulate this understanding in ways that are life giving and empowering within his family, place of employment, parish, formation community; to identify, call forth, affirm, and support the gifts, strengths, and talents of others.
- _____ 28. Participate collaboratively in all aspects of formation; to be cooperative, open and respectful to all who journey with him; to be receptive of insights offered by the formation personnel, his wife and family, peers, and pastor.

Name of Aspirant _____

Name of Interviewer _____

Interview Date _____

Overall Impression of Interviewer (Rate 1 to 5) _____

Figure 8. Formation Hourly Requirements

Academic Class Hours	540
Academic Study Hours	1125 (Average)
Parish Ministry Hours	600
Summer Assignments	150
Social Justice Ministry Work	26 Days
Retreats & Days of Reflection	25 Days
Spiritual Direction	Monthly
Mentoring	Bi-monthly



Figure 9. Ratings on Demonstrated Standards of Readiness - Candidacy

As a result of continued discernment during the Aspirant phase emphasizing spiritual readiness and pastoral abilities, the successful candidate will be able to demonstrate the following abilities and skills. Rate the extent to which you judge that each ability has been demonstrated (1=low, 5=high).

Human Dimension

- _____ 1. Be self-reflective; reveals himself appropriately, sharing his experiences and attitudes with others as verified in the formation community, mentor group, pastoral ministry placement, and self-evaluation; be both a leader and follower.
- _____ 2. Use his knowledge to encourage others to reflect and share their experience in dialogue and action.
- _____ 3. Demonstrate the use of appropriate resources for his physical, emotional, and spiritual development; to take initiative in self-study and in completing home assignments.
- _____ 4. Be a good listener, respect each person, and be accepted as a trusted participant who keeps confidences.
- _____ 5. Be open to change through reflective growth in understanding; to express his position candidly in sharing for study and dialogue, neither intimidating nor being intimidated in doing so.
- _____ 6. Integrate and prioritize his personal boundaries relating to family, recreation, work, ministry, and time alone.
- _____ 7. Contribute to and utilize a support system.

Spiritual Dimension

- _____ 8. Reflect theologically on his faith experience through regular spiritual direction.
- _____ 9. Pray the scriptures, meditating on the mystery of God as our Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
- _____ 10. Enable others to reflect upon their faith journey in terms of their Baptismal call and ministry.
- _____ 11. Fulfill a regular commitment to a pattern of personal and communal prayer through frequent praying of the liturgy of the hours, especially morning and evening prayer; to participate frequently in the Eucharist and the Sacrament of Reconciliation, personal prayer and reading of the Bible, and devotion to Mary and to the saints.
- _____ 12. Plan and lead communal prayer.
- _____ 13. Ascertain, if married, the quality of his relationship with his wife and children and the need for dialogue and mutual consent to continue in formation and

move forward toward ordination; to make, if unmarried, a commitment to perpetual celibacy and live a single lifestyle in an appropriate manner.

- _____ 14. Practice in prayer and action an attitude of discipleship to Christian unity, desiring to know more about other Christian denominations and other faith experiences and finding ways for mutual action in serving human needs.

Intellectual Dimension

- _____ 15. Articulate the primary teachings of the Church and discuss contemporary issues in light of this teaching.
- _____ 16. Speak informally on Christian vocations and ordained ministry, particularly the Order of Deacon and its threefold ministries of word, liturgy, and charity; to relate this knowledge to personal and communal vocation discernment.
- _____ 17. Participate in the Eucharist as a lector or extraordinary minister of the Eucharist and in ministry to the sick.
- _____ 18. Experience and invite others into meaningful expressions of prayer and forms of Christian spirituality.
- _____ 19. Refer others to appropriate pastoral resources as needed.

Pastoral Dimension

- _____ 20. Name appropriate theological resources useful to ministerial study and service.
- _____ 21. Communicate effectively in spoken and written word.
- _____ 22. Use different cultural communication patterns whenever appropriate, and to use and guide others to appropriate multi-cultural resources.
- _____ 23. Link in reflection, his pastoral and personal experiences to theology - apprehending God's presence through touching the needs of the poor or afflicted, to be an advocate for people in need and a facilitator of the community's resources in response to human needs.
- _____ 24. Discern how God is calling him into ministry.

Diaconal Ministry

- _____ 25. Articulate his relationship with God and reasons for believing he has a call to the Order of Deacons within the formation community.
- _____ 26. Articulate his call and commitment to his spiritual director and to the formation personnel and to communicate this through self/peer/formation/pastoral/family assessments.
- _____ 27. Articulate this understanding in ways that are life giving and empowering within his family, place of employment, parish, formation community; to identify, call forth, affirm, and support the gifts, strengths, and talents of others.
- _____ 28. Participate collaboratively in all aspects of formation; to be cooperative, open and respectful to all who journey with him; to be receptive of insights offered by the formation personnel, his wife and family, peers, and pastor.

Name of Candidate _____

Name of Interviewer _____

Interview Date _____

Overall Impression of Interviewer (Rate 1 to 5) _____

Figure 10. Continuing Education Guidelines for Permanent Deacons
Archdiocese of Atlanta
Office of the Permanent Diaconate

CONTINUING EDUCATION GUIDELINES FOR PERMANENT DEACONS

I. GENERAL PRINCIPLES

- A. In order to enhance the life of faith and further the quality of their diaconal ministry, all permanent deacons are required to participate in a regular program of continuing education and spiritual formation.
- B. Each deacon is expected to earn a minimum of thirty-six (36) clock hours of continuing education (excluding time on retreat) in a two-year period, with at least eight (8) hours in any given year. Fifteen hours are required in each of Category 2 and 3 below and the other six (6) hours can be from either of the two Categories.
- C. Hours of continuing education shall be reported on a special Continuing Education data form supplied for this purpose and forwarded to the Office for the Permanent Diaconate within two (2) weeks of completion of courses, or no later than December 31 of each year. An acknowledgment form will be returned to the deacon.
- D. The Director of Deacon Personnel will regularly provide information on available courses and spiritual growth programs and opportunities and will encourage deacons to attend. Spouses of deacons will also be encouraged to participate whenever possible.

II. CATEGORIES

- A. **CATEGORY 1 - Renewal/Spiritual Formation**
 - 1. Requirements: A minimum of one (1) retreat each calendar year as required by Canon Law.
 - 2. The cost of the annual retreat is to be paid by the deacon's place of ministry. The place of ministry is not obligated to provide more than the cost of the Archdiocesan sponsored retreat for the deacon himself.
 - 3. The hours on retreat are not included in the continuing education hours required.
 - 4. This category includes days of reflection, spiritual direction and other retreats.
- B. **CATEGORY 2 - Studies**
 - 1. Requirements: A minimum of fifteen (15) hours within a two-year period.
 - 2. Informal studies include auditing courses at any of the colleges and/or institutes as well as attendance at workshops, seminars and conferences that do not require anything from the participant beyond attendance.
 - 3. To accommodate the deacons' schedules, and in order to promote attendance at Regional Meetings, each quarterly regional meeting will include a speaker on a topic of interest and importance to the deacon. Those presentations should last approximately one (1) hour, and the deacon would be given two (2) credit hours for attendance at that meeting. The Regional Representative will report the attendance to the Office for the Permanent Diaconate for compilation.

4. To allow for “long-range” planning, One-half (1/2) day sessions are offered at the St. Stephen’s Center on seven (7) Saturdays during the year, and each deacon will have the option of attending one or more of those sessions. Each deacon attending will receive four (4) credit hours for each session attended. These schedules will be distributed to each pastor as information. The instructor/presenter will be responsible for turning those hours into the Office for the Permanent Diaconate for compilation.
5. The deacon could attend other programs at his option, including, but not limited to, LIMEX, Spring Hill, Southern Catholic, programs from an Archdiocesan Office such as from Family Life Office, Pro-Life Office, etc. Distance learning programs such as those offered by Pontifical College Josephinum would also qualify in this category. The deacon himself would be responsible for reporting the hours to the Office for the Permanent Diaconate for compilation, with credits given as appropriate for the courses taken.
6. The deacon may not be absent from a significant portion of the program and still claim credit.
7. Studies in this category are reported on the Continuing Education Data Form.
8. Sessions at the St. Stephen’s Center, and at Regional Meetings will be approved for credit by the Office of the Permanent Diaconate prior to offering to the diaconate community.
9. Qualifying programs are those presented by a Catholic seminary operating under the Program for Priestly Formation, a Catholic Diaconate formation program operating under the National Directory for the Formation, Ministry, and Life of Permanent Deacons in the United States, a Catholic college or university operating under the norms of *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, or an instructor affiliated with one of the aforementioned institutions, or a program separately approved by the Director of Deacon Personnel

C. CATEGORY 3 - Practicum

1. Requirements: A minimum of fifteen (15) hours within a two-year period.
2. This category includes:
 - a. Personal study of books, major articles or other reading materials, viewing video tapes or films, or listening to audio tapes that have a close relationship to one's ministry.
 - b. Preparation work for teaching a class, preparation for conducting a retreat, day of recollection, etc. and preparation for other related ministerial responsibilities.
 - c. Practicum in this category is reported on the continuing education data form.

III. ENFORCEMENT OF GUIDELINES:

- A. The Director of Deacon Personnel is responsible for the following:
 1. Recording all credits completed and successful completion of the retreat requirement by each deacon.

2. Notification of each deacon no later than November 30 of each calendar year of Credits received in the respective year; and any deficiency needed to complete the requirements.
3. In February of each year, the Director of Deacon Personnel notifies the pastor of the deacon of the number of hours of continuing education completed in each of the three Categories along with the number of hours yet to be completed. If the deacon is not complying with the requirements for continuing educations, it is suggested the Pastor take corrective action such as requiring a schedule of Continuing Education for the upcoming calendar year.

Figure 11. Annual Report on Spiritual Development and Continuing Education

ARCHDIOCESE OF ATLANTA

Office of the Permanent Diaconate

Annual Report on Spiritual Development and Continuing Education

This report is due on December 31st of each year.

SPIRITUAL FORMATION:

Retreat:

Date(s) of Retreat _____

Conducted by _____

Where? _____

Note: Deacons are required by canon law to make at least one (1) retreat each year. The retreat must be at least twenty-four (24) consecutive hours in duration.

CONTINUING EDUCATION

Category 2: Studies

1. Requirements: A minimum of fifteen (15) hours within a two-year period.
2. This category includes items listed under Category 2 of the Continuing Education Guidelines.

Course Title _____

Date(s) _____ Hours _____

Name and Location of Institution _____

Course Title _____

Date(s) _____ Hours _____

Name and Location of Institution _____

Category 3:- Practicum

1. Requirements: A minimum of fifteen (15) hours within a two-year period.
2. This category includes items listed under Category 3 of the Continuing Education Guidelines.

Please use an additional sheet to describe activity in this category. Your description should include book title/publication, author, when the activity was performed and how it relates to your ministry and any other information you deem pertinent.

Deacon Name _____

Date _____

Appendices

Appendix A. Application to Aspirancy

Available after attendance at two all day Information and Inquiry Sessions attended by both the Inquirer and his Wife (if he is married)

1. – *Appendix C: Guidelines for Addressing Aspirant/Candidate Issues*

The Co-Directors of Formation shall use the following guidelines in addressing Aspirant/Candidate issues or when an Aspirant/Candidate lacks the qualities to continue in formation. For the purpose of simplicity, the term ‘Candidate’ below may be applied to either Aspirants or Candidates.

1. Review the file of any candidate for which a problem has been reported.
2. Contact or meet with candidate’s instructors to try to understand if the problem is isolated to one or two classes or is more widespread. The idea is to develop and consensus view of the faculty if possible.
3. If the problem is minor, meet with the candidate face to face and discuss the concern, recommend amended behavior and note the discussion in the candidate’s file; including any specific action taken or commitment made by the candidate.
4. If the problem is not minor, call or meet with the candidate to discuss the situation in detail and advise the candidate that a meeting will be required.
5. Call the candidate’s Pastor to discuss the situation and to find out if there are some mitigating circumstances that we should know about. The Pastor will be advised that a meeting with the candidate will be scheduled.
6. Draft a summary report outlining the specific concern, the view of the instructors, Pastor as well as a recap of any previous matters that are contained in the candidate’s file.
7. After the meeting with the Aspirant/Candidate, the Scrutiny and Evaluation Committee will be presented with information to discuss the candidate, his position on the subject and recommend a course of action (if any).
8. Meet face to face with the Aspirant/Candidate to review and implement the recommendations. This meeting may take place either before or after the Scrutiny and Evaluation Committee recommendations.
9. In the case of any serious matter, none of the above discussions will take place on a Saturday class day. The meeting to review the recommendation should take place at the Chancery or the candidate’s parish. Minor matters can be addressed at the St. Stephen Center on a Saturday class date or other convenient times.

Appendix D: Process for Readmission to Formation from a Leave of Absence.

From time to time Aspirants or Candidates may be on leave from active formation for the Permanent Diaconate in the Archdiocese of Atlanta. The reason for the leave may originate with the Aspirant/Candidate as a result of his ongoing discernment, illness in his family, unstable job situation or a host of other causes. The reason for a leave may also be as a result of an action taken by the Archbishop through the Formation team to provide the Aspirant/Candidate with time to address matters that relate to his Human, Spiritual, Intellectual or Pastoral formation; without the pressure of regular formation class and ministry participation.

Regardless of the catalyst for the leave from formation, the normative process by which an Aspirant/Candidate is readmitted to active formation for the Permanent Diaconate shall be as follows:

1. The aspirant/candidate must write a petition to the Archbishop for reinstatement giving the reasons for his requested reinstatement;
2. The aspirant's/candidate's pastor must provide an updated Pastor Endorsement Form indicating his continued support for the man's formation;
3. The aspirant's/candidate's deacon mentor must provide an updated Deacon Mentor Evaluation Form indicating his continued support for the man's formation;
4. When deemed appropriate the aspirant/candidate must undergo additional evaluation(s) with the clinician of the Archdiocese' choice;
5. Those with whom the aspirant/candidate has been working during his leave, whether in a ministerial or other capacity will have the opportunity to provide written statements supporting the aspirant's/candidate's reentry into formation. These people may include deacons, priests, ministry leaders, community leaders, etc.;
6. Equipped with the information collected, the Co-Directors shall make recommendation to the Archbishop regarding the petitioner to readmit him, continue his leave from formation pastoral year or dismiss him from formation;
7. Once the Archbishop has rendered his decision regarding the Aspirant's/Candidate's petition for readmission, the Associate Co-Directors of Formation will arrange a meeting with the Aspirant/Candidate and his pastor (if deemed necessary) to convey the decision and any other relevant information;
8. The Archbishop's decision will then be communicated to the Aspirant/Candidate in writing;
9. The Aspirant's/Candidate's petition, supporting material and the Archbishop's decision as represented in the letter to the Aspirant/Candidate will be placed in the Aspirant's/Candidate's permanent file.

Appendix E: Permanent Diaconate Formation Curriculum

Admissions Criteria

Admission to the Diaconate formation Program of the Archdiocese of Atlanta is coordinated by the Office for the Permanent Diaconate. In order to determine a candidate's level of academic preparedness, the following pieces of information are requested:

- Woodcock-Johnson III instrument (to measure academic aptitude and English skills) I I.0
- College Transcripts or highest level of education attained
- A short statement listing any other lived and learned experiences that may impact a candidate's academic preparedness

Student Evaluation

Students will be evaluated on the following scale:

- *Student has adequately grasped the material*
- *Student has not grasped the material because ...*
- *Student should be commended for his performance because ...*

Instructors may use whatever means they deem appropriate to evaluate students. If examinations are used only one exam may be given per semester.

Instructor Expectations

A syllabus will accompany each course, explaining the specific requirements and structure of the course. Each course will make use of one principal text, and include recommendations for secondary texts. Church documents, especially the documents of Vatican II, will be used extensively. Instructors are expected to begin and end their classes on time since the time allotted for breaks during the day is limited. If an instructor cannot be present on a given class date it is requested that the instructor locate a suitable substitute and notify the Associate Director of Formation at the earliest time possible. If no substitute can be found the instructor should develop an in-class assignment that the Associate Director of Formation may administer.

Assignments that are given to the students must be given during the class period prior to the due date at the very latest. This addresses the problem of instructors sending assignments by email mid-week with a due date on Saturday (since the students work and some travel, often the resources they need to complete such an assignment are simply not available to them).

Student Expectations and Course Work

Each course that requires student writing shall be limited to a maximum of five written pages per Semester and one test per semester if tests are in addition to the written assignments. **No assignments are to be given over the summer break.** Reading assignments must be reasonable considering the students generally work on a full time basis.

Course Listing

Theology (8 Semesters)

THE A01: Introduction to Theological Studies. (1 Semester)

This class will explore the relationship between philosophy and divine revelation in the theological task of understanding and articulating our Christian faith. Students will learn how theology differs from but supports both catechesis and apologetics, and they will consider the pastoral implications of their upcoming theological studies.

THE 101: Fundamental Theology (2 Semesters)

This course employs philosophical reasoning to consider the relationship between faith and philosophy. Additionally, it will provide an account of faith from reason and expound those truths concerning God which are naturally knowable and demonstrable. This knowledge is fundamental to theology in the sense that “an acceptance of God’s revelation necessarily presupposes knowledge of these truths.” (*Fides et Ratio* #67) After considering our natural knowledge of God, the course will explain how human language can speak truly and meaningfully about God. It will also examine God’s creative and providential presence in the world and in history.

THE 102: God’s Plan for Humankind (1 Semester)

This course will examine the Christian view of humanity: made in God’s image, redeemed by Christ and destined for eternal communion in God’s kingdom. Drawing upon both Christian anthropology and eschatology, it will analyze the development of Christian thought regarding our origins and our ultimate destination, giving strong emphasis to relevant biblical texts. The nature of the human person, the problem of sin, and the relationship between divine grace and human freedom will be explored from the perspective of the Vatican II constitution *Gaudium et Spes*.

THE 201: Christology and Trinity (2 Semesters)

This course will focus on our Christian faith in Jesus Christ, true man and true God, Son of the Father in the fellowship of the Holy Spirit. It will examine scriptural texts related to the nature of Christ and trace the development of Christological dogma and Trinitarian theology. The contribution of the Church Fathers and the early ecumenical councils in resolving Christological controversies will be reviewed, as well as the implications of our understanding of God as a communion of persons for contemporary mystical, moral, and especially pastoral theology.

THE 501: Ecclesiology (2 Semesters)

This course will consider the self-understanding of the Catholic Church in the light of *Lumen Gentium* and other conciliar documents, of the ongoing quest for Christian unity, and of the rapidly developing global community. We will explore the implications for sacramental communion of diversity in theological understandings and ecclesiastical practices, especially those which led to divisions in the past. Emphasis will be placed on the role of deacons and other ordained ministers in ensuring that the faith handed down to us will bear increasingly lively witness to the presence of Christ in the contemporary world. Catholic teachings about the Virgin Mary will be discussed, as well as the place of Marian devotion and popular spirituality in fostering fidelity to Christ and harmony within the global Church of the future.

Moral Theology (8 Semesters)

MORA01: Social Doctrine I: Just Faith (2 Semesters)

This course will provide an introduction to the major themes of Catholic Social Teaching and help to prepare the student for the work of social ministry. The key focus is on discipleship lived through justice and compassion. The intent is to demonstrate the demands of justice and compassion as found in scripture, Church tradition, history and teaching and faithful witnesses. The course will set the foundation for the Social Justice Ministry that each Candidate must engage in during formation and in diaconal ministry.

MOR 201: Moral Theology (2 Semesters)

This course focuses on the basic principles of Christian morality and their application to specific moral issues. Students study the Scriptural foundations of morality, the teaching of the Church and the thought of St. Thomas Aquinas. The course is taught from the natural law perspective as embodied in the *Summa Theologica* of St. Thomas Aquinas. It follows the basic structure of the Christian moral life in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, i.e., fundamental moral theology, the Ten Commandments and the Beatitudes.

MOR 301: Pastoral Approaches to Bioethical Issues

In this course candidates will consider how to address concerns arising in pastoral ministry about beginning- and end-of-life questions as well as gender/sexuality issues. The course will not only examine the principles underlying the relevant Church teachings but explore the most appropriate ways to share those teachings in ministry.

MOR 401: Social Doctrine II (2 Semesters)

This course examines the Church's teaching and tradition of social justice as proclaimed in *Gaudium et Spes*, delineated in the social encyclicals, and codified in the *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*. The course will help the future deacon to be a more effective advocate for justice, able to relate the rich tradition of Catholic social teaching to the practical problems of modern people and to promote that teaching in the marketplace, the parish, and the diocese.

MOR 501: Family Life and Sexuality (2 Semesters)

Beginning with biblical foundations, the course will explore our Catholic understanding of sexuality as a divine gift allowing us to build up the human community through loving marriages and healthy family lives. Examining the historical development of Catholic teaching on the ethics of human life and sexuality should provide a framework within which to understand contemporary issues, especially the debate surrounding *Humanae Vitae*. Specific moral and medical concerns will be addressed with attention to the pastoral aspect of these questions. Placing sexual morality in the context of our broader responsibilities to family, contemporary society and future generations should help students promote this teaching in pastoral ministry.

Liturgy and Sacramental Theology (5 Semesters)

LST 201: Sacramental Theology (2 Semesters)

This course will explore the sacramental nature of the Church, the visible sign of our communion with one another in Christ, and the sacramental life we share in the Church through our baptism, our participation in the Eucharist, and our other encounters with God by way of material signs and human actions. Consideration will be given to the origins and development of Catholic sacramental practice, to guidelines for the proper administration of sacraments and sacramentals, and to sacramentality in other

Christian churches and ecclesial communities.)

LST 401: Liturgical Practicum (1 Semester)

Reading the General Instruction of the Roman Missal will be required during this course, as well as the Ordo, but other texts regarding the liturgy may also be required by the instructor. The student will be given instruction and direction on liturgical service including but not limited to service as an acolyte, sacristan and assisting at Mass. Students will be familiar with the liturgical books including the Lectionary and Roman Missal. Attention will also be devoted to presiding at Funeral Vigils, Funerals, Baptisms and Weddings.

LST 501: Liturgy (2 Semesters)

This course will consider the development and theology of Christian liturgy in both East and West, with a focus, however, on the Roman rite. The grounding of liturgy in Christian theology and anthropology will be considered, together with principles of Christian liturgy and the role of liturgy within the life of the believer and the life of the Church. Individual liturgies considered will include both sacramental and non-sacramental liturgies, with an eye to their nature and historical development. The constitution *Sacrosanctum Concilium* will be considered in depth.

Sacred Scripture (11 Semesters)

SS A01: Reading Scripture in Context (1 Semesters)

This course introduces students to the foundations of the Catholic understanding of sacred scripture as divine revelation and the soul of sacred theology. It considers questions of scriptural authorship, inspiration, and inerrancy, as well as the relationship between the divine and human authors, and the reception and transmission of the bible in the Church. It will consider the relationship between the Old and New Testaments within God's plan of salvation. It will also provide an introduction to methods of scriptural interpretation, including the four senses of Scripture and the historical-critical method, considering questions of literary genres and textual traditions. Sources include scripture itself, as well as magisterial and patristic documents, particularly the Constitution *Dei Verbum*.

SS 101: The Old Testament Story of Salvation History (2 Semesters)

This course will examine the historical books of the Old Testament, including the Pentateuch. The course will attempt to familiarize students with the major outline of the Old Testament narrative, as seen in the light of the Gospel. It considers the question of authorship, composition and central themes. Major pericopes will be highlighted and their meaning explored.

SS 102: The Prophetic Nature of Scripture (1 Semester)

This course will provide an introductory look at the prophetic literature in the Old Testament. It will review the topics of prophecy, the Major Prophets, and the Minor Prophets. It will review each of the prophetic books, examine relevant passages and discuss major themes found in their writings. Candidates will consider the ancient Israelite world in which the prophets wrote and begin to draw meaning from Scripture for today.

SS 201: The Epistles of the New Testament (2 Semesters)

This course provides an introductory look at the epistles of St. Paul and the Catholic Epistles in the New Testament. It will examine the topics of Paul's life, conversion, missionary travels and apostolic ministry. It will consider each of the epistles, study relevant passages and discuss major themes. Students will consider the first century world and begin to draw meaning from Scripture for today.

SS 301: The Wisdom of Scripture (1 Semester)

This course will examine the wisdom literature in the Old Testament. We will look at each book, placing it in its historical context, examine its literary structure and study major passages for their meaning in context, within the later New Testament and patristic traditions and in contemporary biblical theology.

SS 302: Introduction to the Synoptic Gospels (2 Semesters)

This course will look at the gospels of St. Matthew, St. Mark and St. Luke, as well as the Acts of the Apostles. It will seek to examine the life and teachings of Jesus Christ as shown through the synoptic gospels, and the Church's continuation of His ministry as shown in the book of Acts. It will also consider the development of the gospels, and their literary interconnectedness. The theology of each evangelist will be outlined and major passages from each gospel studied.

SS 401: Introduction to the Writings of St. John (2 Semesters)

This course will consider the Johannine Corpus: the gospel and epistles attributed to St. John the Apostle, as well as the book of Revelation. The unique character and theological significance of Saint John's work will be examined. Significant passages will be prayerfully studied.

Church History (3 Semesters)

HP 101: Survey of Church History (2 Semesters)

The course is a survey of Catholic history from Apostolic times through Vatican II. Candidates will focus on historical dates, events and personalities that shape the Church of today. Students will understand the natural historical progression of Church history which has shaped its temporal structure today. At its conclusion, students should be able to relate historical events with the major shifts in Church thought throughout the ages and reinforce the traditional aspects of Church structure which tie today's Church to its Apostolic origins

HP 201: American Church History (1 Semester)

This course will explore the history of the Catholic Church in the United States of America from colonial times to the present. The unique contributions that various cultures and nationalities have brought to the American church will be examined, as will leading figures in the Church in the United States. The specific character of the Church in the United States will be considered, as well as its relationship to the Church in other parts of the world.

Catholic Spiritual Theology (4 Semesters)

CST A01: Discernment and Direction (1/2 Semester)

This course deals particularly with the discernment of our own vocation as Catholic men, and gives us the tools to discern that call properly, and to respond with obedience to that call. This course also challenges us to fully avail ourselves of the gift of spiritual direction, so that we are able to truly grow through the gift of being directed in the spiritual life.

CST A02 The Psalms and the Prayer of the Church (1/2 Semester)

This course will review the Psalms, their development and meaning as part of the Jewish Scripture and their place in Sacred Scripture in Catholic Tradition. Students will be taught how to pray and to lead Morning and Evening Prayer in the Liturgy of the Hours when prayed alone or in common.

CST 101 Prayer and Prayer Forms (1 Semester)

A deacon within the Archdiocese of Atlanta is a man called to be in the world, but not of the world. Furthermore a deacon's ministry to God's holy people will necessarily be about helping our faithful to live

out their own covenantal lives here in this city and in this state. This course will explore the nature of prayer within a spiritual life and examine various prayer forms that are common in the Church. This course will also help the deacon to develop a spirituality of service, especially of service to the poor.

CST 102: Introduction to Catholic Spirituality I (1 Semester)

This course serves as an introduction to theory behind and the practice of the techniques of the Catholic spiritual tradition: prayer, asceticism and alms giving. We will look at biblical and doctrinal foundations of the spiritual life.

CST 103: Catechism of the Catholic Church (2 Semester)

Faith draws us to contact with Christ. Without this contact, we will not know Christ and be effective ministers in evangelization. Knowledge of the beliefs of the Catholic Church: the Eucharistic Mystery, Sacred Liturgy, the Sacraments and the basics of the Catholic Tradition are essential for conversion, evangelization and involvement in the mission of the Church for a Deacon. This course will examine the difference between faith and belief, and the necessity of each in the Deacon's ministry to the people of God.

CST 301: Survey of Catholic Spirituality & Spiritual Traditions (1 Semester)

This course serves as an overview of some of the doctors of the spiritual life in our Catholic Tradition, giving us a sense of the span of history, and of the various developments of the spiritual and devotional life of the Church, from the catacombs to our current times. We will look at some of the giants of the spiritual life in our tradition, and consider various primary sources. The course will examine the variety of Spirituality found in the Church today.

Pastoral Theology (7 Semesters)

PTH 302: History of Theology (2 Semesters)

This course will examine patterns of early Christian thinking in the formative centuries of the Church. The course will expose students to the early Church Fathers, focusing on how Christians thought about what they believed and demonstrating how the intellectual tradition of Christianity came into being. Students will recognize that the Christian intellectual tradition, the theology and dogma of the Church, arose from the ongoing life of faith in the Christian community. Emphasis will be placed on the Church Fathers' insistence that their thinking was not aimed simply at the development of theology or doctrine but instead directed toward greater appreciation of the mystery of Christ and fuller practice of Christian living.

PTH 401: Ecumenism and Interreligious Dialogue (1 Semester)

Following the Vatican II decree *Unitatis Redintegratio* and the declaration *Nostra Aetate*, Catholics today recognize the importance of ecumenism and interreligious dialogue. Focusing on these conciliar documents and on the encyclical *Ut Unum Sint*, this course will explore the call to Christian unity and increased human solidarity through cooperation within and among faith communities, as well as practical approaches to ecumenism and interreligious dialogue. Attention will be given to illuminating the way ahead while avoiding the pitfalls enunciated in *Dominus Iesus*.

PTH 501: Missiology and Evangelization (2 Semesters)

This course will enable deacons to distinguish between Evangelization in its broadest sense, the essential

mission of the Church, and aspects of this Evangelization like initial proclamation of the gospel which raises up faith, as well as catechesis. Students will distinguish between the mission *ad gentes* and the New Evangelization as distinct pastoral initiatives. Students will understand the essential content of the kerygma, explore the connection between spirituality and evangelization, and look at some successful methods of evangelization from the tradition and from modern ministries.

Canon Law (2 Semesters)

LAW 301: Canon Law (1 Semester)

This course introduces students to the study of canon law beginning with an introduction of the historical development of canon law, its foundations and an overview of the 1983 *Code of Canon Law*. Special consideration will be given to the pastoral, theological and legal context of specific canons from the seven books of the Latin Code, including those concerning marriage. Emphasis will be placed on the theological foundations and pastoral praxis of canon law.

LAW 302: Marriage Law (1 Semester)

This course is a presentation of the canons on marriage in Book IV of the Latin Code and *Dignitas Connubii*, with particular attention devoted to their theological foundations, marriage preparation and pastoral praxis. Introduction to tribunal practices, procedures and personnel.

Homiletics (5 Semesters)

HOM 101: Proclaiming the Word of God (1 Semester)

This course serves as an introduction to the lectionary, as well as it seeks to prepare the man to be instituted as a lector, when he will proclaim the Word of God among the assembly of the faithful. Particular importance will be placed on the comfort with which the student can read, pronounce and project, developing skills that are crucial to his future ministry.

HOM 201: Homiletic Models and Methods (1 Semester)

This is an introduction to some techniques of public speaking and of homily preparation, which includes the discussion and review of various models and methods of preparation. Emphasis should be given to the underlying differences between preaching at daily masses and Sunday masses. Attention will be devoted to the preparation of concise, effective and cogent homilies.

HOM 301: Homiletics for All Occasions (1 Semester)

Students continue to hone their skills of preparing homilies by focusing on the differences in homily preparation and delivery dependent upon the liturgy. Homily preparation for masses (daily and Sunday), weddings, funerals and baptisms will be reviewed. Opportunities will be provided to prepare and deliver homilies on a difficult theological subject or moral issue: Pro-Life homilies, Natural Family Planning, The Church's Social Doctrine, or on the readings on Divorce.

HOM 401: Homiletic Practicum (2 Semesters)

Students continue to hone their skills of preparing and preaching homilies, with ample opportunity to practice before not only their instructors, but also their peers. Particular emphasis should be given to preaching on Sundays during this course.

Permanent Diaconate Review (1 Semester)

PDR 401: Permanent Diaconate Review (1 Semester)

This is a final survey course that examines the student's knowledge of the Church's teaching, Sacred Scripture, Cultural Diversity, the vocation of the Permanent Diaconate and the Life and Ministry of Permanent Deacons in the United States. The course will examine the integrated formation of each student from a Human, Intellectual, Spiritual and Pastoral perspective.

Other Required Ministry Preparation Courses

MIN 101: Clinical Pastoral Care (10 Weeks)

This course, conducted at St. Joseph's Hospital in Atlanta provides an opportunity for students to engage in a supervised experiential model of training and learning. The primary focus will be on learning the art of providing pastoral care to the ill, bereaved and dying and their families by: 1) actual visitation with patients; 2) reflection on the ministry provided; 3) engagement in a peer group under supervision; 4) learning through didactic instruction; and, 5) self-reflection through the tools that comprise the course.

MIN 201: Prepare & Enrich (1 Day)

This course, conducted by the Office of Formation and Discipleship certifies the student to utilize the Prepare & Enrich marriage preparation instrument. The course reviews the process of marriage preparation, the efficacy of the instrument and its limitations. Case studies form a major portion of this class.

MIN 302: Practicum in Pastoral Counseling (1 Semester)

This course will clarify the role of deacons as it differs from pastoral counseling, psychological counseling and spiritual direction. Candidates will discuss and practice empathetic listening skills and the pastoral journey, including: grief care, marriage/family care, and crisis intervention. They will also identify resources for referral available in the community, the archdiocese, and their own parishes. (*cf. National Directory, 15*)

Distribution of Courses by Year

1. Aspirancy Year I

THE A01 Introduction to Theological Studies (2 Semester)
MOR A01 Social Doctrine I: JustFaith (2 Semesters)
SS A01 Reading Scripture in Context (2 Semester)
CST A01 Discernment and Direction (1 Semester)
CST A02 Psalms and the Prayer of the Church (1 Semester)
CST 102 Introduction to Catholic Spirituality (2 Semester)
CST 103: Catechism of the Catholic Church (2 Semester)

(10 Semesters Total)

2. Aspirancy Year 2

THE 101 Fundamental Theology (2 Semesters)
THE 102 God's Plan for Humankind (1 Semester)
SS 101 The Old Testament Story of Salvation History (2 Semesters)
SS 102 The Prophetic Nature of Scripture (1 Semester)
HIS 101 Survey of Church History (2 Semesters)
CST 101 Prayer and Prayer Forms (1 Semester)
HOM 101 Proclaiming the Word of God (1 Semester)
Elective Course (2 Semesters)

(12 Semesters Total)

3. Candidacy Year I

THE 201 Christology and Trinity (2 Semesters)
MOR 201 Moral Theology (2 Semesters)
LST 201 Sacramental Theology (2 Semesters)
SS 201 The Epistles of the New Testament (2 Semesters)
HIS 201 American Church History (1 Semester)
HOM 202 Homiletic Models and Methods (1 Semester)
Elective Course (2 Semesters)

(12 Semesters Total)

Candidacy Year 2

SS 301 The Wisdom of Scripture (1 Semester)
SS 302 Introduction to the Synoptic Gospels (2 Semesters)
CST 301 Survey of Catholic Spirituality & Spiritual Traditions (1 Semester)
MOR 301 Pastoral Approaches to Bioethical Issues (1 Semester)
PTH 302 History of Theology (2 Semesters)
LAW 301 Canon Law (1 Semester)
HOM 301 Homiletics for All Occasions (1 Semester)
MIN 302 Practicum in Pastoral Counseling (1 Semester)
Elective Course (2 Semesters)
(12 Semesters Total)

Candidacy Year 3

MOR 401 Social Doctrine II (2 Semesters)
LST 401 Liturgical Practicum (1 Semester)
SS 401 Introduction to the Writings of St. John (2 Semesters)
PTH 401 Ecumenism and Interreligious Dialogue (1 Semester)
LAW 302 Marriage Law (1 Semester)
HOM 401 Homiletic Practicum (2 Semesters)
PDR 401 Permanent Diaconate Review (1 Semester)
Elective Course (2 Semesters)
(12 Semesters Total)

Elective Courses

Taken in any year – One must be taken in each year of Candidacy and in the Second Year of Aspirancy

THE 501 Ecclesiology (2 Semesters)
MOR 501 Family Life and Sexuality (2 Semesters)
LST 501 Liturgy (2 Semesters)
PTH 501 Missiology and Evangelization (2 Semesters)

MIN 101: Clinical Pastoral Care (10 Weeks)
MIN 201: Prepare & Enrich (1 Day)