

V: EVALUATION AND ADVANCEMENT

Aspirants and candidates are evaluated on an ongoing basis in each area of formation. Progress in human and intellectual formation for an aspirant or candidate and his wife should be noted by the Director of Formation in his regular contact with them, by the pastor, mentor, and spiritual director, and by the instructors. Progress in spiritual formation should especially be noted by the spiritual director, and by the Director of Formation and those responsible for the Spiritual formation forums. Progress in pastoral formation should be noted by the pastor, the deacon mentor, and the mentor/director(s) of the annual pastoral practicum. Progress in vocational discernment should be noted by the spiritual director and the pastor, and as far as possible by the Director of Formation.

V.1: ANNUAL RECORD OF EVALUATION

At the end of each academic year, the Deacon Formation Review Board (DFRB) shall meet to review all the available information on each aspirant or candidate; and to consider the applications of new applicants in alternate years. The Director of Formation will oversee the collection and distribution of the relevant documentation in a timely manner, prior to the DFRB's deliberations.

The following information is to be assembled in written form on each aspirant or candidate:

V.1.a: Instructors' assessments: Each instructor involved in formation forums should complete the "Instructor's Evaluation" form as fully as possible. The Director of Formation will provide the forms to the instructors throughout the year (see *National Directory* #222, 223).

V.1.b: Pastor's Evaluation: The pastor of each aspirant or candidate will be asked to provide an annual assessment of the progress, especially in human and spiritual growth, of each aspirant or candidate. During the annual review which includes consideration for advancement to Acolyte (typically, Year 4), the Pastor's Evaluation shall be much more extensive; and during the final annual review, must also include an evaluation of the Liturgical Practicum of the candidate.

V.1.c: Pastoral Director's Evaluation: For each year of candidacy, the mentor or director of the pastoral practicum should evaluate the ministerial performance and promise of the candidate, his vocational discernment, and his ability to bring into pastoral use the human, spiritual, and academic formation he has received (see *National Directory* #220).

V.1.d: Spiritual Director's Attestation: In order to protect the integrity of spiritual direction and the internal forum, the spiritual director of each aspirant or candidate will be asked to attest simply to the assiduity of meetings (see *National Directory* #226).

V.1.e: Self-Assessment: Each aspirant or candidate will be asked to provide a candid self-assessment of their progress in each area of formation (see *National Directory* #221, 224).

V.1.f: Interview by DFRB representative: A member of the DFRB will interview each aspirant or candidate, to assess their progress in each area of formation (see *National Directory* #226).

V.1.g: Interview of the wife by DFRB representative: A member of the DFRB will interview the aspirant or candidate's wife (and family, if reasonable), to assess their understanding of the

Formation Handbook for Permanent Deacons

aspirant/candidate's progress in formation and discernment, and their own progress in formation and "support and consent" (see *National Directory* #226).

V.1.h: Interviews by the Director of Formation: At least once in the course of the academic year, and again in preparation for the annual review, the Director of Formation should interview each aspirant or candidate. At least one of these interviews must be in person; if necessary, one may be a telephone interview. The results of these interviews should be recorded separately (see *National Directory* #226).

V.1.i: Deacon Mentor's (or Couple's) Evaluation: Wherever a formal mentoring relationship has been established, the mentoring deacon or deacon-couple should submit their observations of progress in formation, in writing, to the Director of Formation, to be used in the annual review process. The Director of Formation may provide a form or outline to be followed.

V.1.j: Summary of the Director of Formation: As a separate document, the Director of Formation should prepare a thorough presentation of the achievements, shortcomings, strengths, and weaknesses of each aspirant or candidate in each area of formation (see *National Directory* #227).

The DFRB will consider all this evaluative information in light of the distinct goals of each area of formation. The Scrutinies below, which are derived explicitly from the *National Directory's* "Model Standards of Readiness," should be helpful to the DFRB. The DFRB will summarize its deliberation on each aspirant or candidate, noting:

- Particular areas of improvement or achievement,
- Particular areas of weakness, and
- Its recommendation to the Bishop to advance to the next stage or year of formation; to delay in formation (hold in the same year, temporarily remove from formation, or assign individual means of formation to address significant shortcomings); or to dismiss from formation.

After the deliberations, the Director of Formation will prepare a detailed summary of the total evaluation of the DFRB, noting especially areas of weak achievement, and suggesting concrete steps that might be taken to demonstrate adequate improvement over the following formation year. This summary should be preserved in the personal file, and shared with the aspirant or candidate, at least orally. It may also be useful to share the summary with the pastor, spiritual director, and/or mentor (see *National Directory* #228). The Director of Formation will also prepare a separate recommendation to the Bishop, to advance, delay, or dismiss the aspirant or candidate.

It is the decision of the Bishop to advance an aspirant or candidate in the formation program. Decisions on the status of each aspirant or candidate for the coming academic year should be communicated in as timely a fashion as possible.

V.2: DISMISSAL FROM FORMATION

"If a candidate [or aspirant] does not possess the necessary human, spiritual, intellectual, or pastoral qualities that will allow him to minister as a deacon..., 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" (*National Directory* #229). The annual review, with its interviews, self-assessment, and Director's summary, is a primary vehicle of information for the aspirant/candidate. Each one should take very seriously his apparent status, and

reflect deeply on the consideration of the formation team and the DFRB as to his progress. “Although no one has a right to continue in formation or a right to be ordained, ...the reasons [for dismissal] should be shared with the candidate, 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” (*National Directory* #229). The candidate may, finally, appeal a dismissal, humbly requesting that the Bishop reconsider his decision. However, “the burden of proof of readiness for [or good progress toward] ordination rests with the candidate, and doubt is always resolved in favor of the Church [emphasis added]” (*National Directory* #230).

V.3: LEAVE OF ABSENCE AND PROBATIONARY PERIOD

A candidate who is otherwise in good standing in his formation may, for a serious reason (e.g., health, job or family duties, etc.) request a leave of absence from the formation program. If this leave is relatively short, or less than one academic year, it may be possible to remain on schedule, making up any missed classes in spiritual and intellectual formation over the summers. For such a short period, the permission of the Director of Formation is adequate to begin and end the leave of absence. If this leave is one academic year or longer, the candidate may effectively be required to join the following cohort. For such longer periods, the permission of the Director of Formation is required to begin the leave, and the consent of the DFRB also is required to return to formation. If, due to serious emergency or similar circumstances, a leave of absence of longer than two academic years is required, the permission of the Bishop to return to formation will be necessary.

“In situations of doubt about the readiness of the candidate to be called to ordination or about his progress in achieving appropriate levels of adult formation, the diocesan bishop may consider a period of probation. This time, however, should be specifically limited, not left open-ended. Likewise, adequate supervision is absolutely necessary during this period...” (*National Directory* #230). For the probationary period, the Director of Formation will prepare:

- A written plan of action to address the shortcoming(s) of the candidate;
- Concrete goals to be achieved;
- Means of evaluating the achievement of the goals;
- Those responsible for supervision and evaluation of the plan of action;
- A clear deadline by which the plan must be complete.

The candidate’s spiritual director should be fully informed about the plan, and should assist the candidate in the internal forum as far as possible.

V.4: SCRUTINIES FOR DFRB ASSESSMENT OF PROGRESS

The following scrutinies, derived from the “Model Standards of Readiness” in the *National Directory* (pp. 154-182), are intended to guide the DFRB’s assessment of the progress of each aspirant or candidate, and the suitability for formation of each applicant. As formation proceeds, the expectations on those in formation become increasingly detailed and demanding. The scrutinies are designed to reflect this necessary growth. The areas which the yearly review suggests are weak or significantly lacking in growth should be communicated to the aspirant or candidate by the Director of Formation.

V.4.a: Aspirant Scrutiny I: for application to the Aspirant Path; for Year 1 annual review

Does the aspirant show evidence of strong self-knowledge:

- Does he know his own limitations?

Formation Handbook for Permanent Deacons

- Is he willing to challenge those limits in his formation?
- Does he respect the reality of those limits in his home life and family, his work, and his formation and ministry?
- Does his self-discipline support further formation?
- Is his work or family life benefiting or suffering from his formation?

Does the aspirant show evidence of thorough and faithful discernment:

- Can he articulate his faith experience?
- Can he connect divine action in his life with the Gospels and the Church?
- Does he show some zeal for the kerygma (i.e., proclamation of the Gospel)?
- Is he growing adequately in his prayer life?
- Is he participating sufficiently in the Church's life and ministry?
- Does he show interest in sharing faith with and serving others?
- Is he open to the growth of formation?
- Can he articulate the call he is attempting to answer?
- Does he give assistance to his pastor?

Does the aspirant show evidence of interior conversion:

- Is he docile to the Holy Spirit acting in the Church and in his heart?
- Does he show in some measure the diaconal virtues of humility, prayer, devotion, generosity, simplicity, zeal, etc?
- Does he show interest in each of the three duties of liturgy, word, and charity?

Does the aspirant's wife (and family) support his Aspirancy:

- Is she open to her role ("consent and support") in the formation process?
- Is she willing to be formed as well?
- Is her faith life strong enough to bear the growth of formation?
- Does she show some attempt to articulate the relationship of her baptismal and marital identity to her husband's putative Holy Orders?
- Is she participating adequately in the Church's life and ministry?
- Is she docile to the Holy Spirit acting in the Church and in her heart?
- Does she give assistance to her pastor?

V.4.b: Aspirant Scrutiny II: for consideration for admission to Candidacy

Throughout the Aspirancy Path, has the aspirant shown adequate human growth:

- Does he have a deep (or sufficiently deeper) capacity for theological reflection?
- Can he share some fruits of his interior growth with others usefully?
- Does he have sufficient initiative and self-motivation for the Candidacy Path?
- Has he been open to interior change, and to change in attitudes and behavior?
- Does he listen thoroughly and respectfully to others?
- Does he benefit appropriately from mentoring and spiritual direction?

Throughout the Aspirancy Path, has the aspirant shown adequate spiritual growth:

- Has he developed a solid prayer life, including Liturgy of the Hours, lectio divina or other meditative prayer, silence, and devotions?
- Does he identify well with the baptismal call to holiness, and with baptismal ministry?
- Can he support others' holiness and ministry?

Formation Handbook for Permanent Deacons

- Does he clearly love the Church in his actions and attitudes?
- Can he make an informed, realistic intention to marital chastity and possible celibacy?
- Can he lead public prayer at appropriate opportunities?
- Has his formation deepened his marriage and family living?

Throughout the Aspirancy Path, has the aspirant shown adequate intellectual growth:

- Does he know the core doctrines of the faith, and can he explain them to others at a basic level? (Doctrine of the Trinity and the Person of Jesus Christ; Sacraments; Sin and Grace, Heaven and Hell; Ten Commandments and Beatitudes; Mary, the communion of saints, intercession; Church, ecumenical relationship with other denominations and religions)
- Does he show love for Truth in his actions and attitudes?

Throughout the Aspirancy Path, has the aspirant shown adequate pastoral commitment:

- Does he support the parish in both liturgy and service?
- Does his pastor believe him to have a vocation to the Permanent Diaconate?

Throughout the Aspirancy Path, has the aspirant shown adequate vocational growth:

- Has he worked to overcome at least some of his areas of weakness? Has he been at all successful?
- Is he as certain as he can be of his calling to the Diaconate?
- Can he articulate the reasons why he feels so called?
- Has he shown some integration of the four areas of formation?

Do the aspirant's wife and family:

- Show some growth in their spiritual and human formation?
- Benefit from the formation process, and articulate how and why?
- Share the Aspirant's certainty of vocation, and support him in this?
- Love the Church?
- Show zeal for the faith?

V.4.c: Candidate Scrutiny I: for Years 1 and 2 (consideration for Rites of Lector and Acolyte)

Throughout his formation, has the Candidate continued to show growth in human qualities:

- Are he and his wife accepted by his peers in formation, and by current deacons?
- Does he set healthy and responsible goals in all areas? Does he pursue these goals with dedication and responsible maturity?
- Is he dependable and trustworthy?
- Does he consult and support his local pastoral team, and his family, in his life and ministry? Does he share ministry? Is he willing to follow and lead as necessary?
- Does he communicate with and relate to a wide variety of people?
- Is he active at the diocesan as well as the parish level? Is he active in civic life as well as Church life?
- Has he shown concretely a grasp of *diakonia* (i.e., ecclesial service of the Word, Sacraments, and Charity) and his relationship to his pastor and other Church ministers?
- Is he respectful of the labor of others? Is he respectful of his pastor, of the Bishop, and of the Bishop's representatives?
- Does he maintain his personal health well, including physical, mental, and spiritual?
- Does he balance family, work, and ministry successfully, without neglect to any area?

Formation Handbook for Permanent Deacons

Throughout his formation, has the Candidate continued to show growth in spiritual qualities:

- Can he model holiness for others (including personal virtue, commitment to the Church and the sacramental life, and interior and public devotions)?
- Can he lead the Church's *diakonia*?
- Can he speak of his faith with zeal, compassion, and obvious love for Jesus Christ and His Church?
- Can he address in all three areas of *diakonia* the relevance of faith for diverse issues (human rights, sexuality, economics, peace, ecology, solidarity, preferential option for the poor)?
- Is his family vocation deepened by his formation for the diaconate? Is his diaconal vocation deepened and sustained in his family life?
- Has he shown a commitment to growing in all human areas (physical, spiritual, emotional, intellectual, psychological, moral, social, cultural)?
- Does he have a personal commitment to prayer (Liturgy of the Hours, silent prayer, devotional prayers, Scripture/lectio divina, and leading public prayers?)
- Can he make an informed, realistic intention to marital chastity and possible celibacy?

Throughout his formation, has the Candidate continued to show growth in intellectual formation:

- Is he developing a personal, spiritual, and theological relationship with God in His Word?
- Can he expound on the Scriptures?
- Does he have a faithful grasp of the *sensum fidelium* (i.e., the "instinct of faith" of the faithful, always and everywhere the same) for the major areas of theology (Trinity, Christology, Christian Anthropology, Ecclesiology, Morality, Sacraments, Eschatology)? Can he apply this knowledge pastorally?
- Has he shown the capacity for good liturgical practice and judgment?
- Can he catechize well for different groups (children, adults, different cultures)?
- Does he support ecumenical efforts with other Christians, while upholding a properly Roman Catholic identity and ethos?

Throughout his formation, has the Candidate continued to show growth in pastoral qualities:

- Can he relate real-life experience and the abstractions of theology?
- Has he shown a strong capacity for theological reflection? Can he teach others the techniques and the importance of theological reflection?
- Has he shown the capacity for a proper degree of empathy and sympathy in ministry?
- Does he have good communication skills?
- Does he have the capacity to help others assume leadership in ministry?
- Can he discuss the dynamics of conversion?
- Does he respect the limits of his own diaconal capacities?
- Does he show hospitality in ministry?

Does the Candidate show consistent growth in vocational discernment:

- Is he eager to serve?
- Does he love the poor (including material, spiritual, intellectual, moral poverty)?
- Does he proclaim the kerygma in word and deed?
- Does he love the Church?
- Does he live sacramentally?
- Does he animate the faith of others?
- Is he a witness to Jesus Christ?

Formation Handbook for Permanent Deacons

- Does he evangelize in word and deed?
- Does he preach with power?
- Does he show a solemn, sacred, joyful liturgical presence?
- Is he certain of his diaconal vocation?
- Are his wife, his peers, and his pastor certain of his diaconal vocation?

Do the Candidate's wife and family:

- Show sufficient growth in their own spiritual and human formation?
- Benefit from the formation process, and articulate how and why?
- Love the Church?
- Show zeal for the faith?

V.4.d: Candidate Scrutiny II: for consideration for Ordination

Throughout his formation, has the Candidate continued to show growth in human qualities:

- Does he show a desire and a capacity for full participation in the deacon community? Is he accepted by his peers in formation, and by current deacons? Is his wife likewise an accepted participant?
- Does he set healthy and responsible goals in all areas? Does he pursue these goals with dedication and responsible maturity?
- Is he dependable and trustworthy?
- Does he consult and support his local pastoral team, and his family, in his life and ministry? Does he share ministry? Is he willing to follow and lead as necessary?
- Does he communicate with and relate to a wide variety of people?
- Is he active at the diocesan as well as the parish level? Is he active in civic life as well as Church life?
- Has he shown concretely a grasp of *diakonia* and his relationship to his pastor and other Church ministers?
- Has he shown some discernment of changing pastoral needs? Does he respond appropriately?
- Can he successfully recruit and train volunteers in the areas of ministry in which he is active?
- Is he respectful of the labor of others? Is he respectful of his pastor, of the Bishop, and of the Bishop's representatives?
- Does he maintain his personal health well, including physical, mental, and spiritual?
- Does he balance family, work, and ministry successfully, without neglect to any area?

Throughout his formation, has the Candidate continued to show growth in spiritual qualities?

- Can he model holiness for others (including personal virtue, commitment to the Church and the sacramental life, and interior and public devotions)?
- Can he develop a detailed plan for, and sustain a long-term commitment to, ongoing formation and growth in faith and holiness?
- Can he lead the Church's *diakonia*?
- Can he speak of his faith with zeal, compassion, and obvious love for Jesus Christ and His Church?
- Can he address in all three areas of *diakonia* the relevance of faith for diverse issues (human rights, sexuality, economics, peace, ecology, solidarity, preferential option for the poor)?
- Is his family vocation deepened by his formation for the diaconate? Is his diaconal vocation deepened and sustained in his family life?

Formation Handbook for Permanent Deacons

- Can he make an explicit commitment to marital chastity, and the possibility of celibacy; or to life-long celibacy, if unmarried?
- Has he shown a commitment to growing in all human areas (physical, spiritual, emotional, intellectual, psychological, moral, social, cultural)? Can he assist others in growing at different stages (childhood, adolescence, adulthood) in each human area?
- Does he have a personal commitment to prayer (Liturgy of the Hours, silent prayer, devotional prayers, Scripture/lectio divina, and leading public prayers?)

Throughout his formation, has the Candidate continued to show growth in intellectual breadth and depth?

- Has he developed a personal, spiritual, and theological relationship with God in His Word?
- Can he expound on the Scriptures?
- Does he have a faithful grasp of the *sensum fidelium* for the major areas of theology (Trinity, Christology, Christian Anthropology, Ecclesiology, Morality, Sacraments, Eschatology)? Can he apply this knowledge pastorally?
- Has he shown the capacity for good liturgical practice and judgment?
- Can he catechize well for different groups (children, adults, different cultures)?
- Does he grasp the main points and themes of Canon Law, and can he apply this pastorally?
- Does he support ecumenical efforts with other Christians, while upholding a properly Roman Catholic identity and ethos?

Throughout his formation, has the Candidate continued to show growth in pastoral qualities?

- Can he relate real-life experience and the abstractions of theology?
- Has he shown a strong capacity for theological reflection? Can he teach others the techniques and the importance of theological reflection?
- Has he shown the capacity for a proper degree of empathy and sympathy in ministry?
- Does he have very good communication skills?
- Does he have the capacity to help others assume leadership in ministry?
- Can he discuss the dynamics of conversion, and relate this to *diakonia*?
- Does he respect the limits of his own diaconal capacities, and show willingness to refer needs to others? Does he show appropriate knowledge of what other resources are available?
- Does he show hospitality in ministry?

Does the Candidate show consistent growth in vocational discernment:

- Is he eager to serve?
- Does he love the poor (including material, spiritual, intellectual, moral poverty)?
- Does he proclaim the kerygma in word and deed?
- Does he love the Church?
- Does he live sacramentally?
- Does he animate the faith of others?
- Is he a witness to Jesus Christ?
- Does he evangelize in word and deed?
- Does he preach with power?
- Does he show a solemn, sacred, joyful liturgical presence?
- Is he certain of his diaconal vocation?
- Are his wife, his peers, and his pastor certain of his diaconal vocation?

Do the Candidate's wife and family:

- Show sufficient growth in their own spiritual and human formation?

Formation Handbook for Permanent Deacons

- Benefit from the formation process, and articulate how and why?
- Love the Church?
- Show zeal for the faith?

V.5: DOCUMENTS OF EVALUATION

This section simply lists the forms actually used in application and annual evaluation. Samples of any of these forms may be obtained from the Office of Deacons.

V.5.A: APPLICATION FORMS:

- Applicant's application form
- Pastor's initial evaluation of applicant
- Letter of Recommendation form
- DFRB interview guideline for application

V.5.B: ANNUAL REVIEW FORMS:

- Pastor's annual evaluation
- Pastor's pre-ordination evaluation (in the last annual review prior to ordination)
- Spiritual Director's attestation
- Deacon Mentor evaluation
- Self-assessment questionnaire
- Self-assessment of pastoral practicum
- Practicum director's assessment of practicum
- Instructor's evaluation
- DFRB interview guideline for annual evaluation

VI: PREROGATIVES OF THE BISHOP

Every Roman Catholic male of suitable age has the right to request that the Church discern with him a possible call to Holy Orders. The program of inquiry, discernment and formation described above accomplishes this for the permanent diaconate in the Diocese of Sioux City. No one has a right to be ordained, nor is there any obligation on the Church to ordain any given man, even if a man has completed all the classes and fulfilled all the requirements of our program of discernment and formation. The Bishop of the Diocese of Sioux City always has **sole authority** in this Diocese to call a man to Holy Orders, or to refuse to call a man to Holy Orders.

According to Canon Law, the Sacrament of Holy Orders, by which one is ordained a Deacon of the Roman Catholic Church, whether permanent or transitional, makes one a cleric. Therefore, an inquirer, aspirant or candidate in formation for the Permanent Diaconate in this program is not a cleric, nor has he any of the rights or responsibilities of a cleric; and thus is not an agent of the Diocese of Sioux City, even when engaged in formation activities.