The “Permanent” Diaconate
(Who are these guys?)

Deacon Brian Diehm
Director, Office of the Diaconate
The Boilerplate Description

• First of three degrees of ordination: **deacon, priest, bishop**
  – Hence, deacons are clergy, not laity
  – Participate in the apostolic succession to their appropriate degree

• Have faculties to perform some sacraments:
  – Baptism
  – Matrimony
  – Funerals (though that’s not a sacrament)
History

• Acts 6:1-6: Distribution to Hellenist widows
• ~130 AD: Ignatius of Antioch: *diakonos, presbyteros, episcopos*
• Into the middle ages: “deacons as eyes and ears of the bishop”
• By the Council of Trent (1545-63), diaconate simply “a step” to priestly ordination
• Second Vatican Council: Order revived as a permanent charism
One Order of Deacon

• No difference between (transitional) deacon preparing for the priesthood and (permanent) deacon “out in the field”

• *Only* difference is in the ordination rite: permanent deacon takes no vow of celibacy

• *All* deacons report to the Bishop, *all* are ordained for the entire diocese
Layered Charisms

• All bishops are first priests
• All priests are first deacons

• Priests continue their diaconal charism into their priesthood
• Bishops continue their diaconal and priestly charisms into their episcopacy
THE Diaconal Charism

Service!

Three primary forms:

• Church’s Ministry of the **Word**:
  *Deacon as **Evangelizer** and **Teacher***

• Church’s Ministry of **Liturgy**:
  *Deacon as **Sanctifier***

• Church’s Ministry of **Charity and Justice**:
  *Deacon as **Witness** and **Guide***
The Formation Process

Inquiry
~6 months
Intro classes, e.g. sanctity of marriage. Emphasis on support of self and couple discernment and magisterial authenticity. Some classes of intellectual depth and character of degree program. "GTK" Program. Inquirers encouraged to meet with pastor and a spiritual director.

Aspirancy
~6 months
Couple classes continue, e.g., LOH, prayer, faith, spirituality, and diaconal vocation information.

Formation
3 years

Candidacy
1 year
Continuing spiritual formation. Rite of Call to Candidacy. Practical classes, e.g., rites, special ministries, homiletics and parish visits.

Application
Formal Application submitted. Pastor contacted by Diaconate Office.

Acceptance to Formation
Interview team recommendations to Archbishop. Archbishop's approval to move to Formation.

Acceptance to Candidacy
Interview team recommendations to Archbishop. Archbishop’s approval to move to Candidacy.

Ordination
Discernment

• The man (and wife!) discern a call to orders
• The Church discerns the man’s (couple’s) call as well
• Discernment encompasses the entire person, but concentrates in four dimensions:
  – Human
  – Spiritual
  – Intellectual
  – Pastoral
When it Works Well

- When the deacon understands that the charism of deacon is in *Service*
- When the deacon remembers his diaconate is anchored in *who he is called to be*, not in what he does
- When the deacon honors the charism of *sacrifice* unique to the priest
- When the deacon understands the charism of the deacon as anchored in, but larger than, the Parish
- When the deacon remembers that his work in service is what makes legitimate his service at the altar
- When the priest remembers that he is *first* a Deacon
- When both deacon and priest understand that in serving the bishop, they together serve all the Church and all the World
Contact Information

Deacon Brian Diehm

• Pastoral Center
  2838 E Burnside St
  Portland OR  97214

• 503 233-8337

• bdiehm@archdpdx.org