

Diocese of Amarillo Diaconate Office



A WIFE'S GUIDE TO DIACONAL FORMATION and MINISTRY

1. WHAT IS THE DIACONAL MINISTRY?

A Permanent Deacon is described in the "Dogmatic Constitution – Lumen Gentium" as follows:

{29. At a lower level of the hierarchy are deacons, upon whom hands are imposed "not unto the priesthood, but unto a ministry of service." For strengthened by sacramental grace, in communion with the bishop and his group of priests they serve in the diaconate of the liturgy, of the word, and of charity to the people of God. It is the duty of the deacon..., to administer baptism solemnly, to be custodian and dispenser of the Eucharist, to assist at and bless marriages in the name of the Church, to bring Viaticum to the dying, to read the Sacred Scripture to the faithful, to instruct and exhort the people, to preside over the worship and prayer of the faithful, to administer sacramentals, to officiate at funeral and burial services. Dedicated to duties of charity and of administration, let deacons be mindful of the admonition of Blessed Polycarp: "Be merciful, diligent, walking according to the truth of the Lord, who became the servant of all."}

Canon Law allows Permanent Deacons to be married or single. Married deacons do not make a commitment to celibacy, unless the wife would pre-decease him and then he would assume the commitment to celibacy and not be eligible to remarry.

2. DIACONAL MINISTRY SUMMARIZED AS:

WORD: Deacons proclaim the gospel of Christ by lifestyle in words & deeds – with family, on the job, in the parish, and in the community.

LITURGY: Deacons assist at the altar by serving in various liturgical/sacramental functions.

CHARITY: Deacons exercise the Corporal Works of Mercy.

Service: Deacons serve and support their Bishop, Pastor, Parish Body of Christ, and the Community as needs require. They do so from the heart with no expectation of financial remuneration or social-status elevation.

Bridge: Deacons are often the bridge between the secular and the sacred especially in areas such as marriage, social justice, language, cultural diversity, integration, and evangelization.

Partnership: A deacon should be in partnership with the Bishop and his pastor as helper, assistant, collaborator, and friend.

Commitment: A deacon's personal commitment should be: God, Family, Job, & Church. He must be able to maintain a reasonable balance remembering he received the Sacrament of Matrimony prior to Holy Orders.

Two-for-one: Ordination is conferred upon the husband, while you will not be ordained, often wives are very involved in the ministry, be it their own or sharing with their deacon husband. In order to ensure that you have an understanding of what constitutes diaconal ministry and the commitment being considered, your full participation in the formation process is essential.

Blessing: The diaconal ministry should be a wonderful – spiritual blessing for you, your husband and family.

3. ADMISSION QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

Do you have a relationship with Jesus Christ?

Does he have a relationship with Jesus Christ?

Do you have a viable prayer and spiritual life?

Does he have a viable prayer and spiritual life?

Is he committed to live out Gospel values of justice, charity and service?

Does he fully accept Church teachings?

Is your marriage and family life stable and happy?

Have you prayed together about this ministry?

Will you be able to attend monthly Deacon Formation Weekends (Friday evening - Sunday afternoon) and a 2 hour a month prayer study group during the next 4 ½ years?

Does he have an agreeable disposition and a pleasant/ friendly personality?

Is he open to people of other cultures?

Is he a person who is involved in parish and community ministry?

Do you believe that he has a calling to the vocation of Deacon?

Has anyone from your parish community suggested that he has such a calling?

Will your husband make a good deacon and will he be able to reasonably subject himself to the direction of the pastor and bishop?

Do you both realize that diaconal ministry does not offer any financial compensation for diaconal services?

The formation classes will be conducted primarily in English. Do you both have a working knowledge of English? {Some allowances will be made to assist those whose English skills are limited.}

How many hours is he away from home each month?

Will he be able to allocate the necessary time for diaconal ministry without impacting negatively on his marital, family, and employment responsibilities?

As a deacon, his ministry will require that he assist the Celebrating Priest during Mass. Will you be comfortable with him not sitting next to you and the family during Mass?

Has your husband discussed with you the impact of diaconal ministry will have upon you and the family?

Are you open to your husband being assigned to another parish or diocesan ministry?

Have you discussed with your husband, from your perspective as an equal partner, in an open and honest manner, the obligation and impact of diaconal ministry will have upon you and the family?

Have you had an opportunity to discuss with your pastor the diaconal ministry?

4. YOUR OBLIGATION:

You must fully support your husband's entry into the Deacon Formation Class.

You must submit a letter supporting your husband and acknowledging that you understand the commitment both of you are making during the formation process.

No married applicant is accepted without his wife's recommendation and full support.

Part of your responsibility is to be not only his wife and confidant but also his mentor and aid as you provide spiritual & emotional support for him and vice versa.

The Ordination Rite does not confer upon you any ministerial role thus no obligation for you to have an assigned ministry.

By the same token, there are many ministries available to you on your own or combined with your husband that will prove to be a blessing.

You must be able to attend monthly Deacon Formation Weekends (Friday evening - Sunday afternoon) and a 2 hour a month prayer study group during the next 4 ½ years.

5. ENDORSEMENT:

The Diaconate Director must be able to declare to the Bishop and attest, as to the aspirant's readiness for entry into the deacon formation program and when the time comes the candidate's readiness for ordination.

This is in part possible when you, as his wife, truly believe that your husband is ready and worthy of diaconal ministry and you yourself are ready for being the wife of a deacon.

**For further information contact the
Diaconate Office at 806- 383-2243 Ext. 117
or visit the Diocesan Website: www.amarillodiocese.org**

