



CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF
PITTSBURGH
NEWS

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**BISHOP ZUBIK ISSUES CALL FOR NEW CLASS TO BEGIN
FORMATION PROGRAM FOR PERMANENT DEACONS**

PITTSBURGH—The Catholic Diocese of Pittsburgh is calling for a new class of interested and qualified Catholic men to begin formation to serve the Church as permanent deacons, according to an announcement today by Bishop David A. Zubik.

In addition, the bishop said he intends to resume admitting additional classes into the Deacon Formation Program every other year, which was the practice of the diocese before the COVID-19 pandemic.

“Recognizing the vital role of our deacons—along with our bishops, priests, religious and laity—in making the Church of Pittsburgh a vibrant manifestation of *The Church Alive!*, I am pleased to call for another class of men to enter the Deacon Formation Program,” the bishop said.

“In doing so, I highlight the fact that service, which is the defining characteristic of the diaconate, has always been at the heart of the Church’s ministry,” he added.

Three information sessions for prospective applicants are planned at the Diocesan Pastoral Center, 2900 Noblestown Road, Pittsburgh 15205 from 9 to 11:30 a.m. Saturday, July 24; 6:30 to 9 p.m., Thursday, July 29; and 6:30 to 9 p.m. Tuesday, August 3.

“For anyone who’d like to learn more about the formation experience and diaconal ministry, I’d suggest attending one of these sessions; they’ll be informal, and there will be no pressure,” said Deacon Stephen Byers, director of the Deacon Formation Program. “Wives are welcome and encouraged to attend with their spouse.”

Deacons along with bishops and priests constitute the three levels of ordained ministry in the Roman Catholic Church.

“Since 1974, when the first diaconate class was ordained for our diocese, deacons have faithfully served the Church in the liturgy and by their countless works of charity, especially to the sick, elderly, imprisoned, hungry, lonely, and forgotten,” Bishop Zubik said. “We have been richly blessed by their ministry.”

The diocese currently has 96 deacons in active ministry and 37 men in the formation program.

Deacons assist priests at Mass, preach on occasion, and preside as needed at baptisms, weddings, funeral services, and other liturgical functions. They also help provide pastoral care to people in hospitals and nursing homes, jails and prisons, and various other settings, sharing the faith by word and example.

“My hope in calling for another class of deacons is to foster the formation of men who are willing to use their God-given talents to become servant leaders in the Church and embrace the model of Jesus’s humble, loving care others,” Bishop Zubik said.

The ministry of deacons goes back to the time of the apostles. When faced with the need for help in distributing food for a growing number of faithful, the apostles prayed and designated certain men to serve the community, according to the New Testament. “Deacon” derives from a Greek word meaning “servant” or “minister.”

Applicants must be a married or single man between the ages of 30 and 59, a college graduate with a secure job or source of income, and in full communion with the Catholic Church. Additional criteria for application will be discussed at the information sessions.

To begin the process, a nomination by an applicant’s pastor or by another priest or deacon of the Catholic Diocese of Pittsburgh is required by the deadline of September 1.

More information is available from the Catholic Diocese of Pittsburgh Deacon Formation Program: deacons@diopitt.org, 412-456-3124, or diopitt.org/permanent-diaconate.

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