

# Deacon Formation Program

## *The Journey to the Diaconate*

*“The lay faithful, as members of the Church, have an obligation and right to share in the commission and mission of the church. The Deacon is ordained to nurture, foster, and coordinate the commission and mission of the laity, especially in coordinating their response to human needs.”*

*Pope John Paul II, General Audience  
“Deacons have Many Pastoral Functions” (Oct. 13, 1993)*

## Diocese of Stockton Schema - Deacon Formation

Introduction to Theology and Ministry - Inquiry

### **Prerequisite – Inquiry**

Introduction to Leadership and Theology (ITM) in the Diocese of Stockton School of Ministry, or its equivalent, is a pre-requisite for anyone seeking admission to the Diaconate Program. Having completed the ITM successfully, one may apply to the Diaconate Program.

Theology of Leadership and Ministry - Process of Formation – Process of Discernment

### **Period of Aspirancy**

It is important to note that entrance into the period of aspirancy is in no way an acceptance for candidacy for ordination. Rather, this period is a time of learning, prayer and discernment. Its purpose is to provide opportunity for acquiring knowledge of the theology and mission of the diaconate, further advancement in the knowledge of the faith and growth in the spiritual life. All are components of an intense discernment involving the individual, the educators, the formators and the diocese.

### **TWO DISTINCT PATHWAYS**

#### **Year 2 & 3**

ACADEMICS – School of Ministry

Study of Theology – Four semesters (2years)

- Psychological testing (second year)
- Mentor Couple assignment (second year)

At the end of the period of aspirancy, the director of formation, in collaboration with the Deacon Advisory Committee, presents to the Bishop a comprehensive assessment of the suitability of the

aspirants for candidacy. The Bishop then “enlists among the candidates for the diaconate only those about whom he will have reached a moral certainty of suitability.”

### **Assessment of Readiness**

Each aspirant will meet on an individual basis with the Director of Formation on a quarterly basis. This meeting is for the purpose of assessing progress, sharing evaluations and setting the direction for the coming quarter.

The conclusion of the aspirant path of formation is determined through a formal assessment conducted by the Deacon Advisory Committee. Recommendation is then made to the Bishop and the Deacon Board as to the suitability of the aspirant for candidacy for the Diaconate.

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### **Year 4**

YEAR OF DISCERNMENT – acquiring knowledge of one’s parish, the diocesan offices, historical background of the diaconate, basic knowledge of Spanish/English according to one’s personal needs. This year will be an intense year of prayer.

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Diaconal Practicum and Training Formation for Pastoral Leadership and Practice
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### **Year 5 (Continued Spiritual Direction and Mentor Assignment)**

Curriculum for Rites, Preaching, and Practicum  
Order of Reader  
Order of Acolyte

### **Year 6 (Continued Spiritual Direction and Mentor Assignment)**

Curriculum for Rites, Preaching, and Practicum  
Call to Candidacy (September)  
(Publicly expressing a desire to offer themselves to God and to His church in sacred orders).

During the last two years, all candidates will be involved in Internships to further their knowledge and personal growth in social justice and service to others. These internships are determined and assigned by the Office of Deacon Formation.

Final evaluations from Director, DAC, Pastors and Mentors.  
Five Day Canonical Retreat  
Final meeting with Bishop

<b>Ordination to the Diaconate</b>
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