

ARCHDIOCESE OF NEW YORK
Diaconate Formation Program
Prerequisites for Consideration for Admission

The qualities of an Inquirer applying for admission to the Diaconate Formation Program within the Archdiocese of New York include:

- A deep spirituality and prayer life.
- Sound faith and regular participation in the Church's Sacramental life.
- Good Christian reputation and personal integrity.
- Active involvement in the mission and ministry of the Church.
- Participation in faith enrichment opportunities such as Bible study, retreats, adult education, etc.
- Have a priest spiritual director.

At times the Archbishop, in consultation with the Rector of the Seminary, Director of Diaconate Formation, the Director of Diaconate Ministry and Life and the Vicar for Clergy, may choose to accept a candidate who may not meet certain requirements for acceptance. In such cases the Archbishop's direct acceptance of a candidate results from specific diocesan and pastoral needs.

There are additional mandatory requirements in the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of New York before admission to the diaconate formation program, including freedom from all and any canonical irregularities and impediments to ordination.

Personal Requirements:

- The Inquirer must be a Roman Catholic male who is fully initiated; that is, having received the Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist.
- The Inquirer must be in full communion with the Roman Catholic Church. If the Inquirer converted to, was received in, or returned to the Catholic Church, no fewer than five (5) years must have elapsed between his conversion, reception or return to the Catholic Church before acceptance into formation. If the Inquirer has renounced the Catholic faith in the past, he must receive the proper dispensation before he can be accepted into the formation program.
- The Inquirer must be a U.S. citizen or a legal permanent resident at the time of admission. Permanent residency or naturalized citizenship shall have been obtained legally.
- The Inquirer must have fluency with the English language.¹
- The Inquirer must be at least thirty-two (32) years of age at the time of admission to the formation program.
- The maximum age for men being ordained to the diaconate within the Archdiocese of New York is sixty-five (65) years. Therefore, if a man is considering a call to diaconate, he must begin his Inquiry period no later than his sixtieth birthday.
- The Inquirer must enjoy good physical and mental health, with no conditions that would impede his diaconal ministry as determined by a physician and a psychologist or a psychiatrist.
- As a norm, the Inquirer must have successfully completed an undergraduate degree program. Those who have not successfully completed an undergraduate degree program must have completed high school or have received a Certificate of High School Equivalency and must demonstrate that they are able to master graduate-level course work in theology.
- The Inquirer must possess financial security; with a history of steady employment in a position that does not require frequent travel or reassignment that would interfere with the progress of his formation.
- The Inquirer must be registered in a parish within the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of New York.
- The Inquirer must disclose any prior application to, or participation in another diaconate formation program, seminary, or participation in a religious community.

Family Requirements:

- If married, the Inquirer must be sacramentally married for at least five (5) years prior to the formal application and live in a stable and valid marriage enjoying the full support of his wife. The Inquirer must be willing to remain in the celibate state if after ordination his wife predeceases him or leaves him.
- If widowed, at least three (3) years should elapse prior to the formal application and acceptance into formation.
- If not married, the Inquirer must enjoy a stable, settled life with a history of healthy relationships and understand the implications of celibacy, which will be required of the single candidate.
- The Inquirer and his family must enjoy a good reputation within his parish and broader community.
- The Inquirer must be able to give the time required for study and service without detriment to his family or employment.

Ministry Requirements:

- The Inquirer must be willing to commit to a lifestyle of daily prayer. He must be committed to praying the Divine Office daily; attending Mass frequently and receiving the Eucharist, not just on Sunday and Holy Days.
- The Inquirer must be willing to make a life-long commitment to serve the people of God and the Church of New York as determined by our Archbishop.
- The Inquirer must be willing to promise obedience to the Archbishop of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of New York and his successors, accepting any pastoral assignments that may be given to him.
- The Inquirer must be active in the Church and be recognized and accepted as a leader by his parish community.
- The Inquirer must have the full support of his pastor and be recommended by those who have worked with him in ministry and who can attest to his potential to become an ordained minister for the Church.

Procedural Requirements:

- The Inquirer must participate in a year-long period of directed discernment before being admitted to the Diaconate Formation Program.
- The Inquirer must be free of any canonical irregularities or impediments to the reception of the Sacrament of Holy Orders.
- Inquirer must present full documentation of his initiation in the faith (Baptism, Confirmation and Holy Eucharist) and if applicable documentation of a Canonical marriage. If there was a prior marriage of either the Inquirer and/or his wife, he must present documentation of a valid annulment.
- Inquirer must present a satisfactory physical examination with evidence of no serious illness or disability that would impede or prevent the Inquirer from performing the ministry of a deacon.
- The Inquirer must complete a satisfactory psychological assessment by a psychiatrist or psychologist provided by the formation program.
- The Inquirer must demonstrate that he has a sound financial base, that he has a source of steady income and that he is free from any excessive debt.
- The Inquirer must receive satisfactory results from an interview by members of the admissions committee.
- Inquirer must meet the requirements of St. Joseph Seminary for admission to the Master of Theology Program either for credit or audit.
- The Inquirer must receive a satisfactory review of his application by the Rector of St. Joseph Seminary and the Director of Diaconal Formation.

ⁱ The St. Joseph Seminary Master of Arts Program Student Handbook (2016-2017) at page 7 provides: 2. For ESL applicants, successful completion of the TOEFL *iBT* with a score of 80 or higher (90 or better is recommended); applicants scoring lower than 80 can be accepted on condition they take remedial English courses during their first academic year at SJS. The TOEFL *iBT* has not yet been used for Diaconate students.

Revised: 03MAR2021