



Formation for the Permanent Diaconate

Final Information Inquiry Session
March 11, 2010



Background and Perspective



- Formation for the Permanent Diaconate is not...
 - Just educational classes
 - All about what you know
 - External to the participant
- Formation is a journey that in many ways...
 - Is transformative
 - Is an extension of faith
 - Demands service of others



Background and Perspective

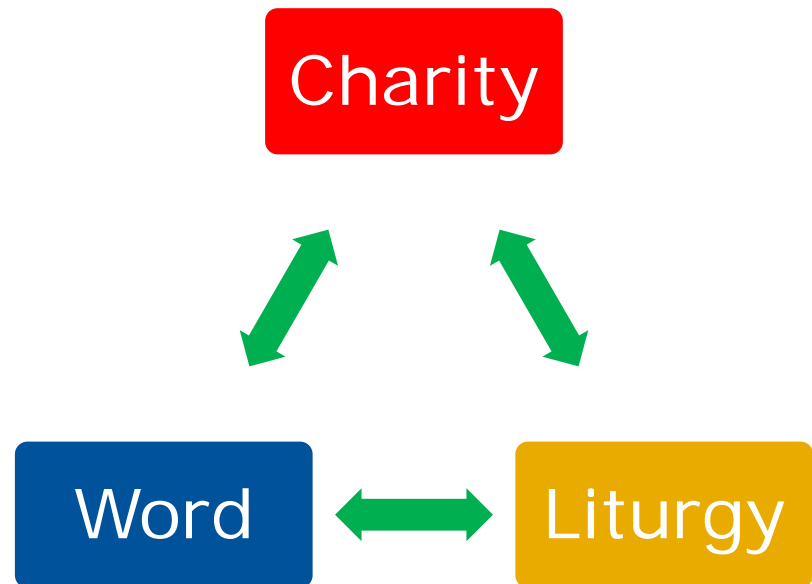
- On this journey...
 - Not everyone starts with at the same place
 - Each man has great support but the journey isn't a "team" effort
 - Some will probably decide to change and take a different path
 - Listening and discerning the God's will is paramount





Background and Perspective

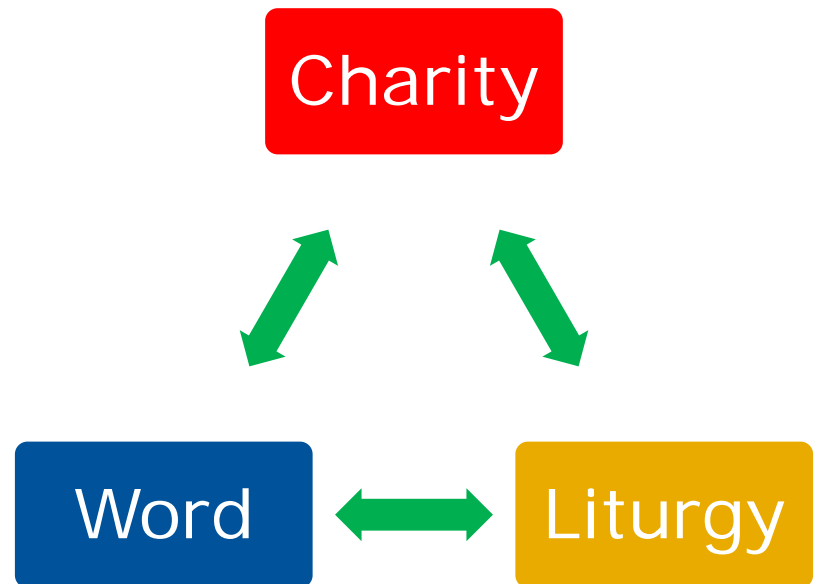
- The Formation Process...
 - Keeps the end in mind who is the Deacon rather than what a Deacon does
 - Helps men discern if the vocation of the Permanent Diaconate is right for them
 - Keeps in mind the unique sacramental nature of the Deacon's ministry





Background and Perspective

- “The Deacon’s ministry of service is linked with the missionary dimension of the Church embracing
 - Ministry of the Word
 - The Liturgy
 - Works of Charity”¹
- These three must support and inform one another for the Deacon’s ministry to be effective

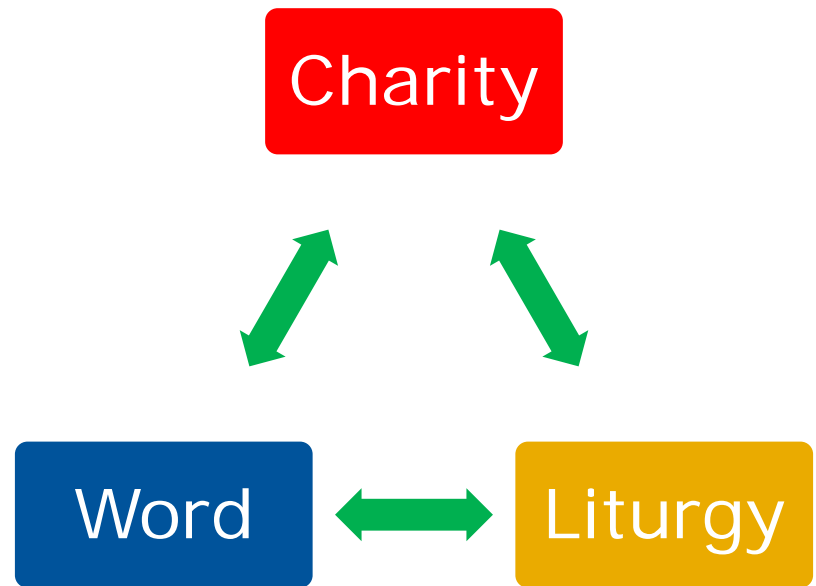


¹ *National Directory for the Formation, Ministry, and Life of Permanent Deacons in the United States*



Background and Perspective

- The linkage between Word, Liturgy and Charity doesn't begin at Ordination
- Living a life of service in these three areas before formation begins is useful
- Living them during formation is essential





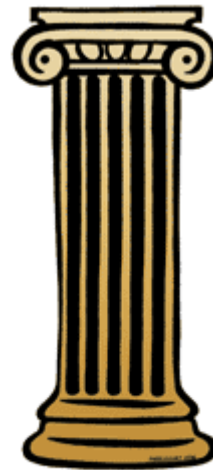
Background and Perspective

- Along the way each man is changed and “formed” into something different, into...
 - A man with his life firmly planted in a secular world, in his family, his work, his social activities and interests
 - A man with his life firmly planted in Christ’s Church and service to others in Word, Liturgy and Charity
 - A man in which these two “worlds” are one – an intrinsic unity of the two worlds into one person
 - A man who brings the reign of Christ to every stratum of society

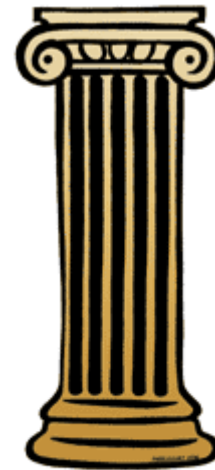


Background and Perspective

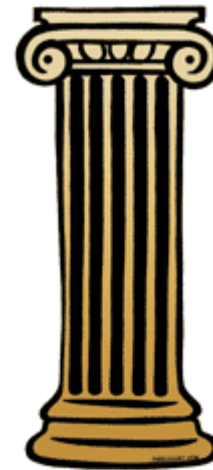
- Formation promotes the development of the whole person
- Formation occurs across four important dimensions
- These are to be interrelated in a way that achieves complete integration into the life of the Aspirant/Candidate



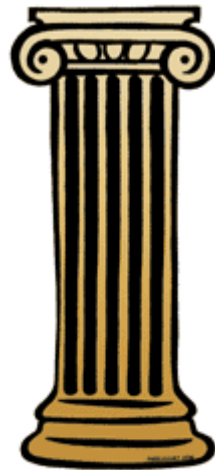
Human



Spiritual



Intellectual



Pastoral



Formation for the Diaconate



- The responsibility for formation is shared
 - Archbishop
 - Formation team
 - Pastor
 - Aspirant/Candidate
 - Wife and Family
- Everyone has to do their part



Stages in the Formation Process

- Initial Inquiry
- Application and acceptance into Aspirancy
- Aspirancy year followed by acceptance into Candidacy
- Candidacy over four or more years
 - Institution of Reader
 - Institution of Acolyte
- Ordination to the Permanent Diaconate
- Post-Ordination formation and ongoing requirements

You are here....



Application to Aspirancy

- Applications information will be provided after today's meeting
- Applications and other associated paperwork must be completed in full and returned by the specified deadlines
- The overall application process also includes interviews of the applicant and wife
- Psychological evaluation of the applicant
- Wife participates in the psychological evaluation process
- Support of the pastor
- Notification of acceptance will occur in the late fall 2010



Aspirancy

- The Aspirancy Year is intended to provide a time for...
 - Spiritual growth
 - Discernment of the vocation to the Diaconate
 - Some academic background and preparation for formation
 - Introduction to the Church's Social Justice mission
 - Field work to see and experience the ministry of the Deacon
- The Aspirancy Year is part of the overall formation process yet it is...
 - Separate, so that initial discernment can take place
 - Under the direct oversight by a separate team



Aspirancy

- The Aspirant Community gathers
 - On a monthly basis from January to June and then again from August to November
 - Generally meet the 3rd Saturday of the month (with a few exceptions)
 - Day begins with Mass at 8:00am
 - Reflections, journals, classes, small group meetings throughout the day
 - Day ends at 5:00pm
- Classes are held at the St. Stephen Center just off Camp Creek Parkway near the Atlanta Airport



Aspirancy

- Spiritual development and direction
- Academic classes include
 - Introduction to Philosophy
 - Introduction to Scripture
 - Introduction to Social Justice – JustFaith™
- Field assignment for direct ministerial involvement
- Day of Reflection with Candidate community
- Retreat at St. Bernard Abby with Candidate community (September 17th – 19th)



Aspirancy

- Aspirancy Team
 - Sr. Margaret McAnoy
 - Fr. Steve Yander
 - Deacon Kevin Tracy
 - Mrs. Phyllis Wigton
- Evaluation at end of Aspirancy year
 - Pastor, formation team, peer, self
- Admission to Candidacy
 - Occurs at the discretion of the Archbishop
 - Takes place in February



Candidate Formation

- The formation journey
 - Begins with the Admission to Candidacy following the Aspirancy year
 - Requires the active participation of the candidate – formation is not compartmentalized like college
 - Occurs in several environments and with numerous people
 - Parish and community ministry
 - Class days and weekends
 - Retreats and days of reflection
 - Meetings with pastor, mentor, spiritual director
 - In the daily family and work life of the candidate



Formation Class Schedule

- Classes are held at the St. Stephen Center
- The formation class schedule is published over a year in advance and generally is comprised of
 - Classes on the 2nd and 4th Saturday of each month from January through June and August through November
 - In January and August we only gather on the 4th Saturday
 - Three weekend class dates during the year requiring attendance Friday evening through Sunday noon
 - Adjustments to the 2nd and 4th routine are made out of necessity (Easter, Eucharistic Congress, Christmas, etc.)



Formation Attendance

- Attendance on class days is mandatory for all candidates and participation by the wives is encouraged, but not required
- Excuses from class attendance are required and will be granted for a variety of valid reasons
 - Candidate is sick or seriously ill family members
 - Attending Sacramental events in the life of family members
 - Other major family events (i.e. college graduation)
- What about work? How does that fit in?
- The “how many can I miss” question



Formation Day Schedule

Morning

8:00am – 9:00am – Mass
9:00am – 10:05am – Class 1
10:05am – 10:15am – Break
10:15am – 11:20am – Class 2
11:20am – 11:25am – Break
11:25am – 12:30pm – Class 3

Afternoon

12:30pm – 1:30pm – Lunch
1:30pm – 2:35pm – Class 4
2:35pm – 2:40pm – Break
2:40pm – 3:45pm – Class 5
3:45pm – 3:55pm – Break
3:55pm – 5:30pm – Class 6

- Class building is opened at 7:30am
- Class stays in one room, instructors move around
- Class building is closed at 5:30pm



Current Areas of Study

Year One

- Fundamental Theology
- Trinity
- Moral Theology
- Reading Scripture in Context
- Patristics
- Intro to Catholic Spirituality
- Lector Practicum
- Missiology and Evangelism

Year Two

- Ethics of Human Life and Sexuality
- Liturgy
- History of the Hebrew People
- The Synoptic Gospels
- Church History to Trent
- Diaconal Spirituality
- Acolyte Practicum
- Baptism Practicum



Current Areas of Study

Year Three

- Ecclesiology
- Social Doctrine of the Church
- Christian Anthropology
- Sacraments
- Prophetic Nature of Scripture
- Intro to the Gospel of John
- Church history after Trent
- Marriage Practicum
- Sacramentals and Pastoral Care
- Homiletics

Year Four

- Mariology
- Protology and Eschatology
- Theology of Ordained Ministry
- Wisdom of Scripture
- The Epistles of the NT
- Canon Law
- Marriage Law
- American Church History
- Mass Practicum
- Homiletics
- Ecumenism



Retreats and Days of Reflection

- Formation community retreat occurs annually and is for the candidates only
- The retreat is the 3rd weekend of September each year
- Location is St. Bernard Abbey – Cullman, Alabama
- Key retreat information
 - Fr. Tim Hepburn is the retreat master
 - Retreat includes Holy Hours, Conferences, Mass, Reconciliation, time for prayer and reflection
 - We are housed at the retreat center – meals are included
- Pre-retreat activities
 - Project at the Abbey
 - Golf tournament



Retreats and Days of Reflection

- Days of reflection for candidates and wives occur annually and meets certain requirements
 - Prior to Admission to Candidacy
 - Prior to Institution to Reader
 - Prior to Institution to Acolyte
 - During final year of formation
- Pre-Ordination retreat
 - For candidates only and is for a full week
 - Usually second week of January prior to February ordination
 - Held at St. Bernard Abbey in Cullman, AL
- Day of reflection for wives prior to ordination
- Considering other retreats and days of reflection



Social Justice Ministries

- The Church is committed to the Preferential Option for the Poor and that commitment was confirmed by the Fathers at Vatican II
- By doing so, the Church is imitating Jesus
- Service to the poor and seeking justice in our society are linked to the person of the Deacon





Social Justice Ministries

- Diaconate formation includes
 - Early exposure to Social Justice and Catholic Social Teaching
 - Consideration of the wide range of ministries in this area
 - Selection of a Social Justice ministry during formation
 - Assignment to a Social Justice ministry upon ordination





Other requirements/opportunities

- Spiritual Direction Meetings
- Deacon Mentor Meetings
- Involvement in Deacon Mentor Ministry
- Involvement in Home Parish
- Case Sponsor Workshop
- Pastoral Care Training
- FOCCUS
- Trip to work with Missionaries of the Poor in Kingston



Who Pays?

- Tuition for formation (and aspirancy) is directly billed to the parish
- Most books are provided
- Retreats and Reflection Days are covered
- What should you expect to have to pay for
 - Any additional books that you want
 - Travel expenses
 - Vestments



Other information

- *National Directory* - USCCB
- *Deacon Reader* – Dcn. James Keating
- *Emerging Diaconate* – Dcn. Bill Ditewig
- Formation web site
 - www.AtlantaDiaconateFormation.com
- Permanent Diaconate web site
 - <http://www.archatl.com/vocations/deacons/>
- Meetings with pastor



Major Steps Along the way

- As formation progresses the Archbishop confers on each man...
 - Admission to Candidacy
 - Marks the end of the Aspirancy year
 - Makes the man a Candidate for the Permanent Diaconate
 - Requires the written consent of the man's wife
 - Institution of Reader
 - Usually occurs following the first year of Candidacy
 - Confirms on the man the minor office of Reader to proclaim God's word in Liturgy



Major Steps Along the way

- As formation progresses the Archbishop confers on each man...
 - Institution of Acolyte
 - Usually occurs following the second year of Candidacy
 - Makes the man an Acolyte – able to assist at the table of the Lord during liturgy as well as handle and purify sacred vessels
 - Ordination to the Permanent Diaconate
 - Usually occurs following the final year of Candidacy
 - It is the Sacrament of Holy Orders



Post Ordination Matters

- Parish Assignment
- Social Justice Assignment
- Parish Agreement
- Mandatory, ongoing formation
- Continuing Education Requirements
- Annual Retreats



Evaluations

- Part of the formation process involves regular, formal evaluations
- These evaluations are intended to assess
 - Each Candidate's formation
 - Faculty effectiveness
 - The overall program for adjustment
- The evaluation process is intended to be open, pastoral and collaborative
- Regardless of the outcome/nature of each evaluation, the basic content is shared with the person being evaluated



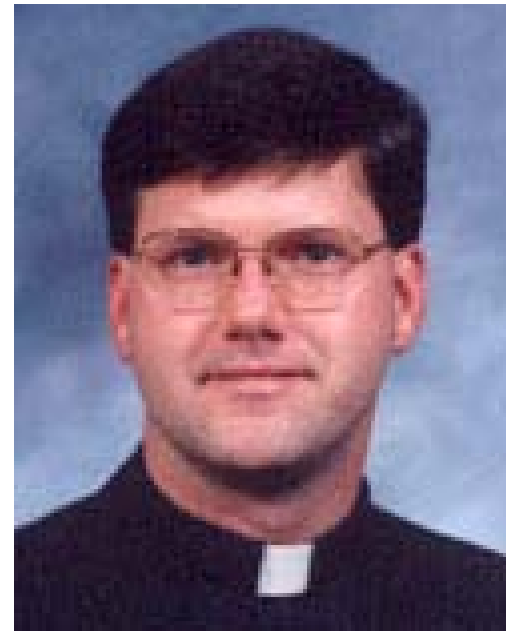
Candidate Evaluations

- Candidates are evaluated each year (including the Aspirancy year)
- We solicit evaluations from the candidate and candidate's
 - Pastor
 - Deacon mentor
 - Spiritual director
 - Applicable faculty
 - Peers
 - Other formation team members
- The overall evaluation of a candidate's formation is drawn from the composite these all produce



Pastor Evaluation

- Most heavily relied on evaluation
- Examines the pastor's impression of the candidate's
 - Growth and life related to works of Word, Liturgy and Charity
 - Interaction with parishioners, staff and local community
 - Areas of excellence and improvement
 - Formation and readiness for ordination
- A close relationship with the Pastor and regular meetings are essential to a meaningful evaluation





Deacon Mentor & Spiritual Director

- Evaluations are focused on meetings taking place
- Spiritual director answers no other questions
- Mentor evaluation asks if there are areas requiring specific attention
- Mentors comment on suitability for continuation in formation and ordination





Faculty Evaluation



"BUT YOU CAN'T BLAME EVERYTHING ON GLOBAL WARMING!"

- Provided by each faculty member
- Assesses the academic performance of the candidate regarding the specific class
- Indicates levels of
 - Class preparedness
 - Assignment completion
 - Participation
- Indicates successful progress or completion of the specific course



Peers and Others

- Peer evaluations are anonymous
- Gather general impressions about classmates
- Others may include:
 - Associate Director of Formation
 - Guest presenters
 - Aspirancy team
- All of these evaluations focus on formation progress
- Ad-hoc evaluations may be solicited if specific problems or concerns arise during the course of formation



Questions



Application Process

- Application package contains:
 - What I Need to Know Before Applying
 - CD Containing the Application
 - Word 2007 format
 - Word 2003 format
 - Return Envelope
- Application must be filled out in electronic form
- Copy the appropriate file to your PC
- Click on each question and fill in the blanks – they will expand to accept your entire response



Application Process

- Your wife must complete one section of the application
- Answer each and every question
- Read the entire appendices
- Don't forget to answer the final appendix relating to canonical matters
- Save the entire application using your name as the filename
- Email the application to Diaconate@ArchAtl.com
- Print and sign the application
 - You and your wife – Confidentiality and Psychological Consents
 - You – Appendix 2 – Appendix 6
- Mail the entire application back



Application Process

- Completed applications must be received by April 16th
- Sacramental Records – can arrive later but start on them right away
- References
 - We will contact the people that you list
 - We will contact your pastor
- Health exam we will contact your doctor



Application Process

- Application and Admissions Committee review
- Canonical review of applications (April and May)
- Interviews (May through July)
 - Interview applicant and wife by three people (deacon, religious and lay) in your home
 - Second interview of applicant and wife is at the St. Stephen Center by three people (priest, deacon, religious or lay)
- Psychological evaluations (June through September)
- Final review of applications (October)
- Notification of acceptance (or not) in early November
- Aspirant Year begins last Saturday of January 2011