

I. Initial Inquiry Process

Begin discerning your call in pursuing a possible vocation to the Permanent Diaconate through prayer and an in-depth discussion with your wife (if married), family, and parish priest.

Then, ask your pastor to forward your inquiry in writing, along with your name and contact information, to the Director(s) of the Permanent Diaconate Formation Program at: diaconal.formation@archwinnipeg.ca.

One of the Directors will arrange a time for an initial conversation between you and your Archbishop, suggesting actions to engage in the discernment process, and outline the next steps.

For additional information, please contact the Director(s) of the Diaconate Formation Program at: diaconal.formation@archwinnipeg.ca.

II. Aspirancy - One Year

The Aspirancy is a time of guided discernment during which “you will be introduced to a deeper knowledge of the spiritual life and diaconate ministry and will engage in supervised pastoral experience among the poor and marginalized.” The Formators will help you in discerning your spiritual readiness, intellectual capacity, and pastoral abilities. (*National Directory for the Ministry, Formation, and Life of Permanent Deacons in Canada*)

III. Candidacy - Four Years

You, as the candidate, will engage in a time of continued growth and discernment of how Christ may be calling you to serve as a member of His Church by delving into the Permanent Diaconate's threefold mission of service: the Ministry of Charity, the Ministry of the Word, and the Ministry of the Liturgy.

Through a combination of online studies and in-person weekend formation sessions, the four pillars of formation—Spiritual, Pastoral, Theological, and Human Dimensions—will develop and prepare you to potentially serve as a living icon of Christ the Servant.

IV. Discernment and Evaluations

The mutual discernment of your progress in formation, carried out by you and the Church, culminates in yearly assessments to determine whether you will be invited to continue your discernment process into the subsequent year of formation.

Your continuation in the program and the potential final call to ordination by the Archbishop, will be decided based on these yearly evaluations.

Tridieocesan Permanent Diaconate Formation Program in the Archdioceses of:

- Winnipeg
- St. Boniface
- Keewatin-Le Pas



Jesus came
"not to be served,
but to serve."
– Mark 10:45

History of the Diaconate

The origins of the diaconate can be traced back to the Acts of the Apostles (6:1-6). Stephen and his six companions, “*full of the Spirit and wisdom,*” were called forth by the apostolic community to serve the needs of the marginalized among them.

Deacons have always been associated with the ministry of the Bishop (Father of the Poor), in whose name they serve. In the *Apostolic Tradition* of Hippolytus, it is recorded that deacons are “*not ordained to the priesthood but to the service of the bishop...*”



After the 5th century, however, the diaconate experienced a gradual decline in the West, such that by 800 AD, it had become merely a “*transitional*” stage for candidates on the path to priestly ordination.

However, at the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965), the diaconate was restored as an **equal and distinct order** within the Church and was opened to both single and married men as a permanent ministry.

In 1969, the Canadian Catholic Conference of Bishops approved the establishment of the Permanent Diaconate in Canada.

How The Permanent Deacon Serves

In whatever he does, the permanent deacon serves not only as an ordained minister of the Church but must also be an effective living icon of *Christ the Servant*.

Ministry of Charity

The **pre-eminent ministry of a deacon is to serve the poor**, the elderly, the sick, the imprisoned, etc. He brings the Gospel to those most in need. At all times, he preaches, lives, and breathes the message of charity.

Ministry of the Word

Deacons share in the Church’s mission of evangelization by proclaiming the Gospel, preaching at liturgical celebrations, providing catechetical instruction, adult faith formation, sacramental preparation, and teaching the Word to the world.

Ministry of the Liturgy

The permanent deacon assists the priest at Mass and may preside at Liturgy of the Word with Distribution of Communion. He may baptize outside of Mass, witness the vows of marriage outside of Mass, preside funeral services, officiate at adoration/benediction, and lead community prayer services.

Diaconate Mission Statement

“The permanent diaconate manifests, through its threefold ministry of Word, Liturgy and Charity a preferential love for the poor, and so serves as both exemplar and animator for the Church’s own baptismal mission of compassion and loving service (diakonia) in the world.”

Admission Requirements

- Canonically, males who have attained the age of 35 or older when accepted into Formation may be considered.
- A candidate must be a practicing Catholic for at least 5 years in a parish within his Archdiocese of residence.
- A candidate must provide a written recommendation from his pastor and a parish representative.
- A candidate who is single must make a solemn public commitment to celibate life before ordination.
- A candidate who is married must have been married for at least 7 years and obtain spousal consent for ordination. If his wife predeceases him, an ordained deacon is not normally permitted to remarry and must commit to celibate life.
- A candidate must be in sound physical and psychological health, with the intellectual ability to complete the formation study program.
- A candidate should demonstrate a history of service in the Church and/or community beyond liturgical ministries. Evidence of works of charity is highly desirable.
- A candidate must be free from canonical impediments to the reception of Holy Orders.
- A candidate must be economically stable and self-sufficient. Permanent deacons are not paid for their diaconal services.