

Called to be a Deacon?

The Church needs more Deacons to carry out the 'mission' of the Church and meet pastoral needs of the people



“A disciple of Jesus cannot take a road other than that of the Master. If he wants to proclaim him, he must imitate him.”

(Jubilee for Deacons, May 2016)

The Mission

“Receive the Book of the Gospels whose herald you now are:

Believe what you read (Altar);

Teach what you believe (Word);

Imitate what you teach. (Charity)”



To be a **driving force** for enabling the Church to carry out her mission of charity



To be a **visible icon of Christ the Servant** in the world



Who are we looking for?

- Married men aged 35-60 or celibate men aged 30-60.
- Engaged in prayerful reflection on their vocation.
- Concerned for others, stable and mature in their way of life, committed to the Church's mission, able and available to learn, grow and serve.
- If married, supported by their wife and family in journeying towards diaconate.

What Formation involves ...

Prayer



Study



Community



The 'Enquiry' period

- Time (6 months to a year)...
 - for you and your family to find out about diaconate
 - for you to think, pray and consult others as to whether God might be calling you to this ministry
 - for us to get to know you and help with your discernment through occasional meetings
 - ends with an assessment process (application, references, personality profile, medical report, interviews with selection panel and bishop)

The 'Introductory' period

- A year of further discernment and introduction to formation within the diocese and with other Northern dioceses:
 - Up to 5 residential weekends in Leeds
 - (from Friday evening to Saturday afternoon)
 - 1 residential weekend retreat (St Beuno's)
 - Several Saturday mornings with Diaconal Students
 - Spiritual Accompaniment
 - Opens the path to 'Candidacy'

The 'Formation' period

- A 3 year programme of study, prayer and practice of the ministry of Word, Altar and Charity (Servant Leadership):
 - Up to 6 residential weekends in Leeds (from Friday evening)
 - Online study with Loyola University, Chicago
 - 6 additional Saturday mornings within the Diocese
 - Spiritual Accompaniment
 - Additional practical experiences within parishes
 - Confirmation of Ministry of Lector and Acolyte

Ordination:

‘Receive the Book of the Gospels whose herald you now are’

- Appointment to a parish and/or ministry within the diocese:
 - **Parish work:** visiting, baptisms, weddings, preaching, viaticum to the dying, funerals, catechesis, retreats
 - **Chaplaincy** in hospitals, schools, university, prisons, hospices, sea-farers, the armed forces etc.
 - **Caritas** – work for social justice among those in need
 - **Ongoing formation** / learning

What about the Ordination of Women as Deacons?

- Discussion on the question is open and on-going.
- There is evidence the women deacons in the early church, but the practice of women deacons died out? Fears about “impurity”, misogyny?.
- The demand for the ordination of women to the diaconate has risen as the number of male deacons has risen
- Pope Francis Commission 2016 – Report submitted in 2019, - It was inconclusive and Pope Francis said of it:
' some members thought the church “must go forward” and reinstitute an order of women deacons.' Others, he said, 'say we must stop here'. 'We must study this', 'I cannot make a sacramental decree without a theological, historical foundation'
- The debate continues

NEXT STEPS.....

- If you are interested in pursuing or following up any of the issues introduced here or yourself feel possibly drawn to service as a Permanent Deacon you are most welcome to email me
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- or phone me on 07742418979
- Thank you for your time and interest.

Deacon David Arblaster