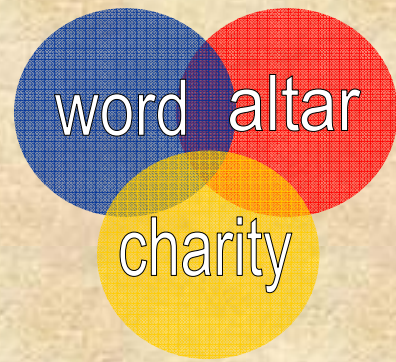


The Deacons of Santa Fe



Formation of those men who seek diaconate service in the Church falls into four dimensions:

Human
Spiritual
Intellectual
Pastoral

We know and appreciate that the vast majority of the men who approach formation to the permanent diaconate already have some background in one or more of these areas. It is in the integration of these categories from which we see the deacon emerge.

Let's take a look at each of these four dimensions.

The human dimension of formation builds on the qualities, capabilities, and character already present in the candidate, shaping and forming him into an effective instrument at the service of the Gospel. In formation, the candidate is challenged to become molded into the image of Christ so that he becomes "a bridge and not an obstacle for others in their meeting with Jesus Christ" (National Directory, p.53)

The deacon lives and works in the modern world. His ministry represents a call to carry the Gospel into everyday circumstances and situations in order to bring "light" to bear on whatever personal and social problems he encounters.

Consequently, human formation nurtures the development of the virtues, enhances the participant's ability to relate to and work with others, promotes maturity, and molds the development of the candidate's moral reasoning and conscience.

The spiritual dimension recognizes that it is the Holy Spirit who brings to fruition the graces received in Baptism. Each candidate's path to full life in the Spirit is unique, however, to assist in the work of the Holy Spirit, the formation program seeks to establish practices and habits that will build the foundation of a lifetime of spiritual discipline.

To be molded in the image of Christ the Servant, the candidate must encounter and incorporate the attitudes of Christ into his own nature. A partial list of these attitudes and dispositions includes "simplicity of heart, total giving of self..., humble and helpful love for the brothers and sisters, especially the poorest, the suffering and the most needy ..." (National Directory, p. 53).

To assist the candidate in developing these attributes, the formation program promotes and includes opportunities for regular participation in Holy Eucharist and the Sacrament of Reconciliation, spiritual direction, a deepening prayer life, spiritual reading and reflection, and practical experiences of service to God and his people.

The intellectual dimension of formation is geared toward forming a "knowledgeable and reliable witness to the faith" (National Directory, p.55). To accomplish this, the Archdiocese of Santa Fe has developed a partnership with Notre Dame University and their Satellite Theological Education Program (STEP). STEP through Notre Dame is a four year series of on-line classes which combine both real-time group activities as well as individual study. The courses are graded and candidates will write a series of integration papers on the courses.

In addition to STEP the candidates also meet once a month over a weekend to reflect on their studies as well as work with deacons, priests and laypeople who have special skill sets that those who are to be ordained must also have.

The pastoral dimension of formation is designed to create an awareness of what it means to follow and imitate Jesus as a minister of charity and justice. Jesus “came to serve and not to be served” and so the candidate who is being molded into the image of Jesus is challenged to develop and enhance his sensitivity to the needs of others, especially the poor.

Through pastoral field education, the candidate will have the opportunity to grow in leadership ability, awareness of his skills, abilities, and limitations so that he may confidently minister to others in charity and justice.



Interested in knowing more? Contact:

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