

PA420CE The Call, Mission and Spirituality of the Permanent Deacon
STANDARD SYLLABUS

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course offers the students an opportunity to examine the diaconate by examining its biblical, patristic and canonical roots, its decline and ultimate renewal authorized by the Second Vatican Council. The emergence of contemporary theologies of the diaconate will also be explored, based on a spirituality of the diaconate which is grounded in the deacon's sacramental initiation and ordination, coupled with an approach to diaconal ministry which is at once similar yet distinct from the sacerdotal orders of the episcopate and presbyterate.

REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS AND THE USE OF OTHER SOURCES

1. The Documents of the Second Vatican Council (any translation, including Tanner, Flannery, and Abbott. The documents are also all available at www.vatican.va.)
2. *National Directory for the Formation, Ministry and Life of Permanent Deacons in the United States* (Washington: USCCB, 2004).
3. Congregation for Catholic Education and Congregation for Clergy, *Basic Norms for the Formation of Permanent Deacons* [BNFPD] and *Directory for the Ministry and Life of Permanent Deacons* [DMLPD] (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana), 1998. Available on-line at www.vatican.va.
4. William T. Ditewig, *The Emerging Diaconate: Servant Leaders in a Servant Church* (Mahwah: Paulist Press, 2007).
5. W. Shawn McKnight, *Understanding the Diaconate: Historical, Theological, and Sociological Foundations* (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2018).

Other resources on the diaconate, although NOT required for this course are found in the attached Bibliography.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

1. To understand the renewed ministry of the diaconate in a more systematic and comprehensive way, moving beyond a functional understanding of the diaconate.
2. To see how the diaconate may be integrated into a “*communio* of service” with lay ecclesial ministers and the other ordained ministries of presbyter and bishop.
3. To understand the history behind the contemporary renewal of the diaconate, and to appreciate more completely the vision of the bishops at the Second Vatican Council in reaching its decisions on the diaconate.
4. To explore the challenges of articulating a contemporary theology of the diaconate which respects the foundational sacramental theology of initiation along with the unity and diversity found in the sacrament of Orders. The development of a theology of the diaconate is a new phenomenon, and the students will examine the struggle involved in developing a “new way of thinking” (*novus mentis habitus*) about the diaconate.
5. To understand the development of the *National Directory for the Formation, Ministry and Life of Permanent Deacons in the United States* by the bishops of the United States, especially in its understandings of diaconal history, theology, spirituality, formation and ministry.

This course addresses specific “Model Standards” from the *National Directory for the Formation, Ministry and Life of Permanent Deacons in the United States*.

<i>Appreciation/Knowledge of</i>	<i>Demonstrated Ability/Skill</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The necessity for ongoing spiritual and academic development • The Sacraments of Christian Initiation and the Sacrament of Holy Orders, especially the Order of Deacon • Theological sources that ground, interpret, and guide the activity that constitutes the pastoral life of the Church • How to approach theological study from within the context of his pastoral experience and ministry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To use his knowledge to encourage others to reflect and share their experiences in dialogue and action • To demonstrate the use of appropriate resources for his physical, emotional, and spiritual development; to take initiative in self-study and in completing home assignments • To be a good listener, respect each person, and be accepted as a trusted participant who keeps confidences; to be open to change through reflective growth in understanding; to express his position candidly in sharing for study and dialogue, neither intimidating nor being intimidated in doing so • To speak informally on Christian vocations and ordained ministry, particularly the Order of Deacon and its threefold ministries of word, liturgy, and charity; to relate this knowledge to personal and communal vocation discernment • To name appropriate theological resources useful to ministerial study and service • To communicate effectively in spoken and written word • To effectively use different cultural communication patterns whenever appropriate, and to use and guide others to appropriate multicultural resources • To discern how God is calling him into ministry and to link, in reflection, his pastoral and personal experiences to theology— apprehending God’s presence through touching the needs

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The theology of Holy Orders • The role of the deacon in the life and mission of the diocesan and parochial Church and the esteemed tradition of deacons in the Church • The background of the restoration and the implementation of the diaconate in the context of the Second Vatican Council, the writings of Paul VI, the teachings of John Paul II, the <i>Basic Norms and Directory for the Ministry and Life of Permanent Deacons</i> (published by the Congregations for Catholic Education and for the Clergy) and the <i>National Directory</i> of the U.S. bishops • His call to the diaconate and a commitment to living the Gospel in all aspects of life 	<p>of the poor or afflicted; to be an advocate for people in need and a facilitator of the community's resources in response to human needs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To articulate a theology of diaconate, in the context of the other orders, Tradition, history, the restoration at the Second Vatican Council, and the Rite of Ordination of Deacons • To effectively proclaim the Gospel; to be recognized at the altar as the sacrament of Jesus, the Deacon-Servant, in the midst of the community, and as herald of the word, sanctifier in liturgy, and advocate for the poor as minister of charity and justice • To instruct and catechize others about the diaconate and its mission as "the Church's service sacramentalized" • To witness to Christ in living, giving, and empowering ways; to articulate his call to diaconate as vocation; to identify, call forth, affirm, and support the gifts and talents of others
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The dynamics of the role of leadership in today's Church as a member of the clergy and participant in the hierarchy • The deacon's mission in the marketplace in society 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To help others to grow in their knowledge of the faith and personal holiness; to animate, facilitate, and motivate the whole Church ministry of charity and justice; to collaborate with others in leadership in diocesan and parochial ministries; to mediate or manage conflict; to make decisions and monitor outcomes; to witness to The Gospel of Life by an exemplary life and service • To witness to the Gospel in his place of employment; to understand the implication of political decisions in view of the Gospel and the social justice teaching of the Church; to sensitize God's people with an informed social consciousness; to evangelize non-Christians and Christians.
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ASSIGNMENTS

1. There will be weekly reading assignments.
2. 3 Essays (3 – 4 pages each, typed, double-spaced, standard fonts/margins). The first essay will be on some facet of the historical development of the diaconate; the second essay will deal with a theological issue on the diaconate, and the third will address a topic related to the spirituality of the diaconate. The essays are ***not*** simply personal reflection papers; they are, in fact, short research assignments. As such, documentation and proper citation of sources is expected.
3. Substantive participation in online discussions. Each week discussion questions will be posted.
4. In addition, for those students pursuing this course for graduate credit: a 10-12 page research paper on a particular aspect of diaconal ministry. The topic for this paper must be approved by the instructor.

GRADE EVALUATION

Final grades will be determined by student performance in the three assignments (four assignments for graduate students).

Incomplete grades will be assigned for compelling reasons only, and at the discretion of the instructor.

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TENTATIVE CLASS SCHEDULE

WEEK 1	<p>Introductory Lecture: What is the Diaconate?</p> <p>Discussion Question: Discuss several facts from the lecture that were new to you?</p>
WEEK 2	<p>Scriptural Roots of the Diaconate. Lecture.</p> <p>Read Ditewig, Ch. 2 and McKnight, Ch. 1.</p> <p>Discussion Question: Which scriptural references to <i>diakonia</i> and deacons were most meaningful to you?</p>
WEEK 3	<p>Early History of the Diaconate. Lecture.</p> <p>Read Ditewig, Ch. 3.</p> <p>Discussion Question: How was the diaconate understood in the writings and of the Fathers of the Church? Specifically, what do you make of the consistent reference to the deacon as being “in the ministry of Christ”?</p>
WEEK 4	<p>Preparing for the Renewal of the Diaconate: The Council of Trent and the 1917 Code of Canon Law. Lecture.</p> <p>Read Ditewig, Ch. 4.</p> <p>Discussion Question: The Council of Trent suggested a form of “permanent diaconate”: how might this have affected the Church if it had been implemented?</p> <p>Discussion Question 2: The lecture refers to the “apprentice diaconate” presented in the 1917 Code of Canon Law. Discuss the impact of such an experience of diaconate (“apprentice”)</p>
WEEK 5	<p>Vatican II and the Renewal of the Diaconate. Lecture.</p> <p>Read Ditewig, Ch. 5.</p> <p>Discussion Question: The majority of the supporters of a renewed diaconate came from Europe (Eastern and Western). Why do you think this was the case?</p> <p>FIRST ESSAY DUE</p>

<p>WEEK 6</p>	<p>Theology. The nature and ministries of the permanent diaconate. Read <i>National Directory</i>, Ch. 1; DMLPD, Ch. 1 and 2. Discussion Question: How do you envision a balanced and well-integrated diaconate in your own ministry?</p>
<p>WEEK 7</p>	<p>Theology. Charting a Theology of Diaconate. Read Ditewig, Ch. 6. Discussion Question: What are some shared elements of a theology of the priesthood and a theology of the diaconate? What are some differences?</p>
<p>WEEK 8</p>	<p>Theology. Foundational Theological Themes: <i>Kenosis</i> and <i>Theosis</i>. Lecture. Read Ditewig, Ch. 7. Discussion Question: What is the impact of St. Paul’s admonishment to “treat others as better than yourselves”?</p>
<p>WEEK 9</p>	<p>Theology. Meaning of Diaconal Ordination. Read Ditewig, Ch. 8. Discussion Question: What is the “matter” of diaconal ordination?</p>
<p>WEEK 10</p>	<p>Spirituality. Read <i>National Directory</i>, Ch. 2. Discussion: What are some of the elements of a diaconal spirituality that you want to work on in your own life? SECOND ESSAY DUE</p>
<p>WEEK 11</p>	<p>Spirituality: Matrimony, Celibacy, Orders. Lecture Discussion Question: How would you respond to the unmarried deacon candidate referenced in the Lecture?</p>

WEEK 12	Recurring Questions on the Diaconate. Lecture Read Ditewig, Chapter 9. Discussion Question: What other issues do you see with regard to the future of the diaconate? THIRD ESSAY DUE. FOR GRADUATE STUDENTS: FINAL PAPER DUE.
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