The Diaconate

In the Diocese of Salina

What is a Permanent Deacon?

- An ordained ministry
  - One of three Holy Orders in the Church:
    - Deacon
    - Priest
    - Bishop
  - Not a “little priest,” but an ancient order, dating from the very early Church
  - Out of practice for several centuries, but restored by Vatican II

Deacons in History

- St. Stephen and the 7 original deacons from the Acts of the Apostles
- St. Lawrence
- St. Francis of Assisi

What do deacons do?

- A ministry of SERVICE:
  - To the Word of God (preaching and teaching)
  - To the poor (love and justice)
  - To the liturgy (sacramental role)

Who is eligible?

- Catholic men, between the ages of 35 and 65, who are interested in witnessing, sacramentally, to service.
- Men must be age 35 or no older than 65 by June 1, 2025, in order to be ordained. (The bishop may approve an age older than 65 but the candidate will be required to pay part of the formation cost.)
- Not doing all the Church's service themselves, but witnessing to it and "ordering" it, structuring it and calling it forth from others.

Admission Guidelines

- Have a good spiritual life and a positive sense of Church. Be committed to the teachings of the Church and to human dignity.
- Work well with others, be sensitive to persons with problems and be generous with time and energy in serving others.
- Be a man in good standing in the Church for at least 3 years and be an active member of his parish.
- Have a stable employment and financial history.
- Be a citizen of the US or have evidence of currently being in legal immigration status, and able to maintain such status for the duration of the formation program.

- Be without a criminal record.
- Possess a high school diploma or GED and be capable of college level studies.
- If married, be married in the Church and be in a stable marriage.
- If single, be committed to celibacy.
- Be able to commit to Saturdays during aspirancy program .
- Be able to commit to one full weekend (Friday – Sunday) 11 months a year for four years for the formation program; to attend 8-day homiletics course at St. Meinrad, Indiana, at your expense in the second or third year; and be able to devote 10 hours a week for study throughout years 2-5.

What are the requirements?

- Human formation
- Spiritual formation
- Academic formation
- Ministry formation

How long will the training take?

- Four (4) years after discernment.
  - At least one year of discernment
  - Four years of formation
  - A total of 5 years of formation

What is discernment?

- Discernment is a time of prayerful consideration about whether one feels called to the diaconate.

The Church will be discerning, too.

- Diaconate is a vocation.
- Like the ordained priesthood, one does not decide entirely on one's own.
- The Church, through the bishop, must call a man to ordination.
- A minimum of 4 candidates between the dioceses of Salina and Dodge City will be needed for formation to proceed.

St. Meinrad, School of Theology

St. Meinrad, Indiana

www.saintmeinrad.edu/permanent-deacons

- 23 required courses in:
  - Theology
  - Scripture
  - Canon Law
  - Sacraments
  - Homiletics (Required travel to St. Meinrad, Indiana for one summer week).

EVALUATION OF CANDIDATES

- These courses must be taken for credit.
- The criteria for selection and ongoing participation in the program are developed and applied at the diocesan level. Saint Meinrad lecturers evaluate the academic performance of candidates in each course.
- Evaluations of candidate interest and performance are also provided by leaders of theological reflection groups and supervisors of ministry assignments.
- These evaluation instruments provide information to the diocese that can be used to determine if candidates should be invited to continue formation and if they should be admitted to orders.
- In addition, several events will take place, designed to:
  - help answer questions regarding the diaconate and discernment
  - teach some prayer techniques
  - explain further how the vocation to diaconate might look/feel.

How is formation done?

- Year of Discernment (1).
  - 1 Saturday for 9 months from September 2020, through June 2021, in a centralized location to be determined, approximately 10am to 4pm.
  - 1 weekend retreat (Friday evening – Sunday noon) in summer of 2021.
- Formation years (4).
  - 1 weekend a month from September 2021, through May 2025, in a centralized location to be determined. .
  - 1 weekend retreat each summer.
  - 1-week Homiletics Course at St. Meinrad, Indiana, during one summer. The candidate incurs this cost of approximately $650.
  - Multi-day canonical retreat Spring 2020, preceding ordination.
  - Ministerial internships/clinicals.

How are the weekends structured?

TYPICAL WEEKEND SESSION

FRIDAY

6:45 - 7 p.m.	Evening Prayer
7:30-9:00 p.m.	Class
9:00 p.m.	Social (Optional)

SATURDAY

7:40 a.m.	Morning Prayer
8:00 a.m.	Breakfast
8:30-11:30 a.m.	Class Session
12:00 p.m.	Lunch
1:00-2:00 p.m.	Class Session
2:00-2:15 p.m.	Break
2:15-4:00 p.m.	Formation Session
4:00-5:00 p.m.	Break – Confession @ St. Fidelis
5:00-6:00 p.m.	Mass @ St. Fidelis
6:00 p.m.	Dinner
6:45-7:00 p.m.	Evening Prayer
7:00-9:00 p.m.	Class Session
9:00 p.m.	Class Social

Sunday

8:00 a.m.	Breakfast
9:00-9:15 a.m.	Morning Prayer
9:15-1:15 a.m.	Class Session

At the completion of the formation program, St. Meinrad will award 18 hours of graduate credit towards a 36-hour credit Master of Arts (Theology) degree at St. Meinrad (for those admitted to St. Meinrad, School of Theology graduate program).

What is the financial cost?

- The diocese assumes the cost of tuition for the program administered by St. Meinrad.
- Candidates will be responsible for travel and lodging costs at St. Meinrad for 1-week homiletics course.
- Candidates will be responsible for mileage to all events and any required textbooks.
- Candidate's room and board are paid by the diocese. If a wife attends, the cost is paid by the candidate.
- The candidate's parish will pay a $2000 fee, per year, of formation ($8000 total).

Is the ministry full time?

- No, not under normal circumstances
- Diaconate is a volunteer ministry
- It is a ministry of men living and working in the world, with a special dedication to prayer and ministry.
- Deacons are clergy, but they form a link between clergy and laity.

What about marriage?

- If a man is ordained after he is already married, he remains married.
- If his wife dies, he will not be free to marry again.
- If he is single when he is ordained, he must take a vow of celibacy.

What is the wife's involvement?

- For many deacons, their first vocational call was to marriage. Diaconate should not interfere with that but, rather, becomes a particular living-out of the marriage commitment.

- Therefore, wives must agree to this ministerial call.

Are wives invited?

- Candidates' wives are invited to everything:
  - Discernment events
  - Formation events
  - Retreats
  - Continuing education events, after ordination

- Wives are strongly encouraged, but not required, to attend events.
- Throughout the program, it is important to maintain the distinction between the ordained ministry of the deacon and the ministerial activities of his wife, which she carries out as a lay person in her own right.

Application Process

1. Pray and think yourself
2. If married, confer with wife and obtain her consent.
3. Fill out application papers and submit – **Mailed to Deacon Steven Frueh by July 24, 2020.** Request application today and leave email address or email deaconsteve@stmsalina.org and the application will be forwarded to you. Many documents need to accompany your application!
4. Background/Reference/etc., checks.
5. Formation team reviews and makes recommendation to bishop, who makes the final decision – July 31st.
6. Acceptance into discernment process – letters go out August 7th.

7. Discernment process.
8. Psychological Evaluation at diocesan expense.
9. Acceptance into formation studies.
10. Follow-up interviews throughout formation process.
11. Successful completion of all aspects of the formation.
12. Call to Holy Orders by Bishop.
13. Ordination.