NORMS

FOR THE FORMATION OF
PERMANENT DEACONS IN SCOTLAND

COMMISSION FOR THE PERMANENT DIACONATE
BISHOPS CONFERENCE OF SCOTLAND
N. 296/2002

CONGREGATIO
DE INSTITUTIONE CATHOLICA
(DE SEMINARIIS ATQUE STUDIORUM INSTITUTIS)

DECRETUM

Ratione habita augescentis numeri diaconorum permanentium apud plurimas nationes praebentium, Congregatio de Institutione Catholica (de Seminariis atque Studiorum Institutis) textum elaborandum censuit, nempe *Rationem fundamentalem institutionis diaconorum permanentium*, ut maiori unitati eorum formationis coram tertii millennii christiani provocacionibus caveretur. Hoc documentum non solum quaedam principia directionis de formatione diaconorum permanentium vult offerre, sed etiam aliquas directorias normas unitarias, quae ab Episcoporum Conferentia ob oculos haberis debeat in elaboratione suarum *Rationum* nationalium ad normam CIC can. 236.

Pari ratione quod Concilium Vaticanum II de *Rationibus institutionis sacerdotalis* statuit, exigitur ab Episcoporum Conferentia quae diaconatum permanentem instauraverunt, ut proprias *Rationes* nationales recognitioni atque approbationi Sanctae Sedis submittant.

Conferentia Episcoporum Scotiae, obtemperando illi praecepto, necessitates definitas specificasque condicio suarum Ecclesiarum particularium prae oculis habens, hanc quoque novam compositionem *Rationis institutionis diaconorum permanentium* eidem Congregationi ad obtinendam praescriptam approbationem supposuit.

Omnibus rite consideratis et perspexit, haec Congregatio de Institutione Catholica (de Seminariis atque Studiorum Institutis), ad normam n. 15 *Rationis fundamentalis institutionis diaconorum permanentium* praebentem *Rationem institutionis diaconorum permanentium*, cui titulus *Norms for the Formation of Permanent Deacons in Scotland*, ad sexennium experimenti gratia approbat, necnon ab ipsis ad quos pertinent fideliter observari iubet; servatis ceteris de iure servandis, contrariis quibuslibet minime obstantibus.

Roma, ex Ædibus Congregationis de Institutione Catholica (de Seminariis atque Studiorum Institutis), d.d. X m. Martii a. D. MMVI.

[Signature]

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A SECRETIS
Norms for the formation of Permanent Deacons
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January 2007
Norms for the formation of Permanent Deacons
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Norms for the formation of Permanent Deacons
FOREWORD

The NORMS FOR THE FORMATION OF PERMANENT DEACONS IN SCOTLAND were approved by the Congregation for Catholic Education in March 2006.

The COMMISSION ON THE PERMANENT DIACONATE in Scotland is grateful to all who were involved in the drafting of the Norms. This document is the result of close collaboration with the Bishops’ Conference, the Commission on the Permanent Diaconate itself, Deacons and candidates for the Diaconate, and many people engaged in the field of personal formation.

The Bishops’ Conference of Scotland approved the publication of this document in April 2006.

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October 2006
Norms for the formation of Permanent Deacons
1. **Introduction**

From the apostolic age the diaconate has had a clearly outstanding position among the ministries which Christ the Lord instituted for the nurturing and constant growth of the people of God. St. Paul in his letter to the Philippians and in the First Letter to Timothy draws our attention to the existence of deacons and the standards by which they should live. Recognising this important aspect of the apostolic heritage, and conscious that laws and customs in force in the Latin Church has sometimes made it difficult to fulfil extremely necessary functions for the service of the people of God, the Fathers of the Second Vatican Council recommended the restoration of the diaconate as “a proper and permanent rank of the hierarchy”. At the same time, the Fathers of the Council recognised the prudence of allowing Episcopal Conferences to decide whether and where, with the approval of the Supreme Pontiff, “it is opportune that such deacons be appointed.”

The present Norms for the Formation of Permanent Deacons in Scotland are the fruit of prayerful discernment and some years of experience in the dioceses of Scotland. They set out the agreed policy of the Bishops of Scotland with regard to the selection, initial and ongoing formation of permanent deacons in Scotland, in accordance with the Basic Norms for the Formation of Permanent Deacons and the Directory for the Ministry and Life of Permanent Deacons.

1. **PERMANENT DIACONATE IN SCOTLAND**

1.1 The restoration of the permanent diaconate as “a proper and permanent rank of the hierarchy” provides the Church in Scotland with an opportunity not only to rediscover the value of this ministry to the Church but also to deepen the appreciation of the whole community of faith of the role of the hierarchy in the Church.

1.2 By restoring the permanent diaconate the Bishops of Scotland wish to associate with themselves in the pastoral care for the local Churches, not only the ministry of priests and deacons but also the apostolate of non-ordained religious men and religious women, as well as the many men, women and young people, who with such great generosity, offer themselves in various ways as witnesses to the Kingdom of God and in the service of His holy people.

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1 See Paul VI, the Motu Proprio Containing Norms for the Order of Diaconate, Ad Pascendum, 15 August 1972.
2 Lumen Gentium, 29.
3 Lumen Gentium, 29.
4 Congregation for Catholic Education, 1998
5 Congregation for the Clergy, 1998
1.3 The restoration of the permanent diaconate requires as well as the encouragement given to men, both in the married and celibate state, to consider whether God may be calling them to serve the Church as deacons, a broader catechesis of the whole community to establish a climate of prayer for vocations to the permanent diaconate and a readiness to welcome these ministers in the exercise of their office. Vatican II proposed an understanding of the deacon as an ordained member of the hierarchy, entrusted with many important tasks, exercising authority in the community and contributing to the apostolate.

1.4 The diaconate should once more come to be understood by the whole people of God “as a sign or sacrament of the Lord Christ himself, who ‘came not to be served but to serve’. The very word ‘deacon’ is derived from the Greek ‘diakonia’, meaning service, especially service done for the sake of the gospel in the name of Christ. Although every baptised person shares in the office of Christ the Shepherd, who lays down his life for the flock, deacons are “strengthened by sacramental grace and dedicated to the people of God, in conjunction with the bishop and his body of priests, in the service of the liturgy, of the Gospel, and of works of charity.”

1.5 The selection and formation of deacons for service in the Church in Scotland today will take account of the teaching and tradition of the Church, the life of the diocese for which they will be ordained and the circumstances of the communities where they will exercise their ministries. As has been noted elsewhere, the virtual disappearance of the diaconate from the Church in the west for over a thousand years means that the theology that underlies this office has had to be rediscovered and renewed. It is of great value to recall that the theology of the diaconate sheds further light on the great mystery of communion and mission, by which the Triune God brings the Church not only to share in the divine life but, as it were, to reflect this truth into the world by the witness of faith. That this should be the case responds in a most appropriate fashion to the appeal of the Holy Father, John Paul II, that the Church at the beginning of the new millennium should become more and more the home and school of communion. The call for the Church to be the home and school of communion is especially urgent in Scotland today, where the bishops have recognised, in dialogue with Pope John Paul II, that Scotland is no longer a Christian country.

1.6 Another factor, not without significance in regard to the Catholic community’s perception of and attitude towards ordained ministry, is the possibility, even the likelihood, that the permanent deacons with whom they will come into contact will be married. Although we live in a situation where those who minister to the other Christian denominations are usually married, the

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6 “The almost total disappearance of the permanent diaconate from the Church of the West for more than a millennium has certainly made it more difficult to understand the profound reality of this ministry.” Ratio Fundamentalis Institutionis Diaconorum Permanentium, (hereafter referred to as “Basic Norms”) 3.
7 See Ad Pascendum.
8 Ad Pascendum
9 Lumen Gentium, 29
10 Basic Norms, 16
11 See Basic Norms, 4.
12 Novo Millennio Ineunte, 43.
experience of being ministered to by one who is a married man and often a father will be something new. This will inevitably present its own challenges for the deacon himself, for his wife and children and for the community. Particular attention needs to be given to all these aspects and this is something that is taken into account at the appropriate place in these norms.

1.7 The restoration of the permanent diaconate is, therefore, an important contribution to the task of embarking on a new evangelisation. The deacon’s dedication to the people of God, service of the liturgy, of the Gospel and of works of charity provide the opportunity to embody central aspects of the teaching and renewal of the Second Vatican Council with its rich reflection on the nature of the Church, the Liturgy, the Scriptures, and the place and role of the Church in the modern world. In a variety of ways deacons will be able to contribute, taking their place alongside the other members of the hierarchy and with their baptised brothers and sisters, to the renewal of Christianity in Scotland today.

14 Lumen Gentium
15 Sacrosanctum Concilium
16 Dei Verbum
17 Gaudium et Spes
2. SCOTLAND AS IT IS TODAY

2.1 In describing Scotland today we find much that is similar to other places in Western Europe and the western world generally. A declining birth-rate and an ageing population is a cause of concern for the future. There are levels of prosperity which previous generations could never imagine alongside levels of poverty which we might have hoped would by now have been consigned to the past. Child poverty continues to be a problem and although there would seem to be sufficient educational provision for all children and young people, there continues to be evidence that attendance at school does not prevent illiteracy in later life. In the main cities and larger towns, especially Edinburgh, Glasgow, Aberdeen and Dundee, there are significant social problems associated with drug and alcohol abuse. Even in small rural communities, as well as the larger towns and cities, there are concerns over youth disorder and levels of delinquency, often associated with the abuse of drugs and alcohol. Marriage and family breakdown, the demands placed by many employers on their workforce, the disintegration of communities, a disrespect and distrust of those in positions of authority and leadership, the attraction of an almost infinite array of consumer goods, a drift away from religious practice and the influence of a secular-humanist media are all signs of significant and epochal change in Scottish society. The individualism that this breeds and even encourages undermines every effort to promote a shared system of values that would provide a sure foundation for communities. Alongside this breakdown of institutions and systems that were familiar to us in the past, many civil, political and even religious leaders propound views and propose or support legislation that are sometimes philosophically incoherent, and frequently at odds with the values of the Gospel and Christian Tradition.

2.2 Nor is Scotland immune from the influences of globalization. As Pope John Paul II has noted, “Today we must courageously face a situation which is becoming increasingly diversified and demanding, in the context of ‘globalization’ and of the consequent new and uncertain mingling of peoples and cultures.” Although less affected than other parts of the world by the current mass movement of peoples, Scotland, nevertheless, faces challenges brought about by the influx of immigrants and asylum seekers. Encouragingly, this has called forth a strongly ecumenical response from many of the communities that have been asked to welcome families and individuals from other parts of the world. At the same time there are still those, both within the different traditions and outside of them who are suspicious and even sometimes openly hostile. As well as the present need for charitable works on behalf of “the stranger in our midst”, the future presents many opportunities for greater ecumenical cooperation in this field and opens new possibilities in the area of inter-faith dialogue.

2.3 Within the Catholic community a declining birth-rate, the breakdown of marriages and couples entering into second or third relationships, all militate against the traditional Christian understanding of society and empty communities of what would at one time have been the seed-bed of vocations to the priesthood and religious life. A tenuous, what one might call “ethnic”

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18 Novo Millennio Ineunte, 40.
19 See Leviticus 19:33-34; Deuteronomy 24:14
Catholic identity, involving the desire to have children baptised, confirmed and receive First Holy Communion and a willingness to have children attend the state-funded Catholic school, as well as an expectation that the priest will be available in times of difficulty and bereavement all point to the need for a new evangelisation and a creative process of adult catechesis. Despite this, and in a context of fewer vocations to the priesthood or religious life than in the past, there are already signs of a generous response by many men to the invitation to consider serving the Church in the permanent diaconate.

2.4 Despite the confusion and lapse in religious practice, there are other signs of hope. A widespread commitment to social justice and democratic principles, a growing desire to consign past prejudices to history, the hope that our children will have nothing but the best, a global awareness of the plight of so many who are less well off than ourselves and a readiness to try to do something about it are all evident in Scotland today. Even though these attitudes and aspirations are often rooted in a shallow and inadequate anthropology they, nonetheless, indicate an openness to the Spirit of God and an opportunity for a fruitful proclamation of the Gospel.

2.5 Both among the baptised and in Scottish society at large the Holy Spirit is calling for the new evangelisation. The service of deacons will play an important part in this work. It is with this conviction that the Bishops of Scotland set out these norms, confident that the generosity of so many men will be pleasing to God and benefit the people and the Church in Scotland as we undertake something new, in response to the encouragement of the Holy Father Pope John Paul II who invited us to hear again the words of our Lord and Master, “Duc in Altum!”

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3. THE PERMANENT DIACONATE

3.1 The Sacred Scriptures themselves give us the basis for our understanding of the diaconate. The Acts of the Apostles describe how “the Twelve” discerned the need for assistance in their care for the community so they could continue to devote themselves “to prayer and to service of the word”. The seven men were presented to the Apostles “who prayed and laid their hands on them”. As is known, from the earliest times, the deacon’s witness to the faith has included the crown of martyrdom: “As they were stoning him, Stephen said in invocation, ‘Lord Jesus, receive my spirit’, then he knelt down and said aloud, ‘Lord, do not hold this sin against them’; and with these words he fell asleep.” In his letter to the Philippians, St. Paul makes particular mention of the deacons, greeting them along with the other members of the community’s hierarchy. From these earliest indications it is clear that the deacon is regarded as having a “special attachment to the bishop in the tasks of his diakonia”. This understanding of the diaconate in terms of a special relationship to the bishop is further underlined when St. Paul sets down the Church’s expectations for deacons alongside what is required of “presiding elders”. “In the same way deacons must be respectable men whose word can be trusted, moderate in the amount of wine they drink and with no squalid greed for money. They must be conscientious believers in the mystery of the faith. They are to be examined first and only admitted to serve as deacons if there is nothing against them .... deacons must not have been married more than once, and must be men who manage their families and children well.”

3.2 The tradition among the Fathers speaks of St. Stephen as the first deacon. The Shepherd of Hermas and St. Cyprian both speak of deacons who have abused their office. St. Ignatius of Antioch speaks of the responsibilities of deacons extending beyond a service involving food and drink – they are servants of the Church of God. In about 95AD St. Clement of Rome refers to the institution of deacons being the work of the Apostles themselves. There also seems to have been a respect in the Church at Rome for the discernment described in the Acts of the Apostles which led for a long time to the number of deacons being restricted to seven. The Council of Neo-Caesarea (325) extended this restriction to the whole Church out of respect for the precedent reported in the Acts of the Apostles. The deacon’s duty of serving at table was soon extended to the privilege of ministering at the altar, instructing catechumens and in some cases administering the sacrament of baptism (for which the precedent is found in the Acts of the Apostles 8:38). Deacons were natural intermediaries between

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21 Acts 6:4
22 Acts 6:6
23 Acts 7:59-60
24 Philippians 1:1
25 Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC) 1569
26 1 Timothy 3:8-10, 12.
27 See, for example, (St. Irenaeus Adv. Haer., III, xii, 10 and IV, xv, 1)
28 Hermas, Sim, IX, 26 and Cyprian, Ep. xl, ad Cornelium
29 Ep. ii to the Trallians
30 Ep. Clem., xlii
31 Eusebius, Hist. Eccl., VI, xliii. The number of deacons in Rome at the time of Pope Cornelius was seven and remained at this number until the eleventh century when it was increased to fourteen. Even so, there is evidence of variations in the number in different parts of the Church, for example in Alexandria.
the celebrant and the people. Among others, St. John Chrysostom speaks of the deacon having a function of ensuring and preserving order in the assembly.\(^{32}\) This ancient understanding of the deacon's responsibility in the liturgy is reflected in the instructions to be announced by the deacon in the liturgy today: “Let us kneel”; “Let us stand”; “Let us offer each other a sign of peace”; “The Mass is ended go in peace”. These two aspects of the deacon’s role – service at the altar and carer of the poor maintained the deacon’s close relationship to the bishop.\(^{33}\) They were to be his "ears and eyes and mouth and heart", or, put another way, "his soul and his senses."\(^{34}\) The people often passed alms to the bishop through the deacon and the deacon distributed alms in the name of the bishop from what was received in this way and what was left over from the offerings given by the faithful at Mass. St. Jerome refers to the deacon as minister of the table and of widows.\(^{35}\) One patristic text speaks of how the deacons “sought out the sick and the poor, reporting to the bishop upon their needs and following his direction in all things”.\(^{36}\) Given the dignity of the task, the deacon’s duty of reading the Gospel was not universally recognized in the patristic era. In some places the Gospel could only be read by more senior members of the hierarchy, although one source describes how during the ordination of bishops deacons were to hold the book of the Gospels over the head of the candidate.\(^{37}\) Even in those places where the reading of the Gospel was considered part of the deacon’s office it was rare for the deacon to preach. Although priests were expected to preach in their own parish, deacons were instructed to read an appropriate homily from one of the Fathers.\(^{38}\) The deacon is also seen to have a very special role in regard to the sacred vessels and to the host and chalice both before and after the consecration, although there is strong opposition to any suggestion that the deacon could fulfil any aspect of the celebrant’s role in the offering of the Holy Sacrifice or the consecration of the host or the chalice, whether the celebrant be a bishop or a priest.\(^{39}\) A constant feature of the deacon’s ministry is care for the chalice, especially in the distribution of the Precious Blood to the faithful. Although deacons were closely associated with the administration of the sacrament of baptism, it was only in time of serious need that the bishop gave permission to the deacon to baptise. Their close association consisted in the preparation and examination of the candidates, the care of the chrism and the good order of the assembly.\(^{40}\) Deacons also assisted in the preparation of the Sacrament of Penance and although mention is made of the “confession of sins” to a deacon in the absence of a priest when there is danger of death this is not considered to have involved the deacon giving sacramental absolution. St. Isidore of Seville sums up the duties of deacons as follows:

\(^{32}\) Hom. xxiv, in Act. Apost
\(^{33}\) Apost. Const., II, xxvii
\(^{34}\) Apost., Const II, xlviv; III, xix
\(^{36}\) Apost. Const. III, xix, and xxxi, xxxii
\(^{37}\) Apost. Const. VIII, iv
\(^{38}\) Second Council of Vaison (529AD)
\(^{39}\) See Justin Martyr, Apol., I, lxv, lxvii; Tertullian, De Spectac., xxv; Cyprian, De Lapsis, xxv and Apost. Const., VIII, xxviii, xlv
\(^{40}\) See St. Jerome, Dial. Contro Luciferum, iv
"To the deacons it belongs to assist the priests and to minister in all that is done in the Sacraments of Christ, in baptism, namely, in the holy chrism, in the paten and chalice, to bring the offerings to the altar and to arrange them, to lay the table of the Lord and to dress it, to carry the cross, to proclaim the Gospel and Epistle, for as the charge is given to lectors to read aloud from the Old Testament, so it is given to deacons to proclaim the New. To him also belongs the office of prayers and the recital of the names. It is he who gives warning to open our ears to the Lord, it is he who exhorts with his cry, it is he also who announces peace." 41 Both Fathers of the Church and Councils pay some attention to the liturgical dress to be work by deacons, especially giving instruction about how the stole and the dalmatic, originally in the case of deacons in Rome, should be worn. 42 From the Middle Ages in the Latin Church the deacon as a permanent service in the Church increasingly disappeared. The Council of Trent demonstrates a concern that there could be a denial of both of the sacramentality of diaconate as one of the degrees of the sacrament of orders and of existence of other orders leading to priesthood. 43 When the bishop calls down the Holy Spirit by the laying on of hands the Holy Spirit is truly handed on. At the same time, although the Council of Trent made provision for the restoration of the permanent diaconate as it existed in ancient times, in the implementation of the council attention continued to be focused on the transient diaconate as an intermediate step on the way to priesthood.

3.3 From this brief historical overview we are able to see, as the Basic Norms for the diaconate observe, that “The apostolic legacy to the Church of a ministerial structure which is also hierarchical and includes the diaconate is clearly evident in the writings of the Fathers of the Church during the patristic era. St Ignatius of Antioch considers a Church without bishop, priest or deacon, unthinkable. He underlines that the ministry of deacons is nothing other than “the ministry of Jesus Christ, who was with the Father before time began and who appeared at the end of time”. They are not deacons of food and drink but ministers of the Church of God. The *Didascalia Apostolorum*, the Fathers of subsequent centuries, the various Councils as well as ecclesiastical praxis all confirm the continuity and development of this revealed datum. Up to the fifth century the Diaconate flourished in the Church as whole, but after this period, it experienced in the West, for various reasons, a slow decline which ended in its surviving only as an intermediate stage for candidates preparing for priestly ordination. The Council of Trent disposed that the permanent Diaconate, as it existed in ancient times, should be restored, in accord with its proper nature, to its original function in the Church. This prescription, however, was not carried into effect.” 44 As has already been noted, the restoration of the permanent diaconate has once more been stated as the will of the Church in the teaching of the Second Vatican Council. Lumen Gentium 45 “outlines the specific theological identity of the deacon as a participation in the one ecclesiastical ministry, he is a specific sacramental sign,  

41 Epistle to Leudfredus, Migne., P.L., LXXXII, 895  
42 Council of Laodicea (4th century); Council of Toledo (633); St. John Chrysostom, Hom. in Fil. Prod.  
43 Sess. XXIII, can. ii  
45 Lumen Gentium 29
in the Church, of Christ the servant.”46 These Scottish norms are drawn up, in accordance with what has been laid down by the Holy See47, with the express intention of promoting, encouraging and regulating this restoration of the permanent diaconate in all the dioceses of Scotland.

3.4 The understanding of the permanent diaconate as proposed by the Church today is rooted in both the ancient understanding of this ministry and the dispositions set down in various post-conciliar documents. The Directory for the Ministry and Life of Permanent Deacons, draws together these strands of tradition and present teaching and has been presented to the Church with juridically binding force where its norms “recall disciplinary norms of the Code of Canon Law” or “determine with regard to the manner of applying universal laws of the Church, explicitate their doctrinal basis and inculcate or solicit their faithful observance”. In these specific cases, it is to be regarded as a formal, general, executory Decree (cf. canon 32).48 The Basic Norms identify the three reasons put forward by Vatican II for restoring the permanent diaconate: “(i) a desire to enrich the Church with the functions of the diaconate, which otherwise, in many regions, could only be exercised with great difficulty; (ii) the intention of strengthening with the grace of diaconal ordination those who already exercised many of the functions of the Diaconate; (iii) a concern to provide regions, where there was a shortage of clergy, with sacred ministers. Such reasons make clear that the restoration of the Permanent Diaconate was in no manner intended to prejudice the meaning, role or flourishing of the ministerial priesthood, which must always be fostered because of its indispensability.”49 In calling this to mind the Basic Norms also point out that “the ministry of the deacon is characterised by the exercise of the three munera proper to the ordained ministry, according to the specific perspective of diakonia50, namely, teaching, sanctifying and governing. The exercise of these offices finds its expression in the fulfilment of a number of functions and responsibilities in the Church.

3.5.1 In accordance with the mind of the Fathers of the Second Vatican Council, Pope Paul VI indicated the functions that would be carried out through the ministry of permanent deacons under the direction of the bishop.51 The functions or duties are as follows:

- assisting the bishop and the priest during liturgical actions by carrying out whatever they are competent to do according to the prescriptions of the different rituals;

- solemnly administering baptism and supplying the ceremonies when these have not been carried out in the case of both children and adults;

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46 Basic Norms 5.
47 See Basic Norms 13 - 15
49 Basic Norms 2
50 Basic Norms 9
51 Pope Paul VI, Apostolic Letter Motu Proprio, Sacrum Diaconatus, 18 June 1967
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reserving the Eucharist, distributing it to himself and others, taking it as viaticum to the dying and giving the people the eucharistic blessing with the sacred pyx;

assisting at marriages and blessing them in the name of the Church when delegated to do so by the bishop or parish priest;\textsuperscript{52}

administering sacramentals, presiding at funeral and burial rites;

reading the sacred Scriptures to the faithful and instructing and encouraging them;

presiding in devotional services and prayers when the priest is not present;

directing celebrations of the word of God, especially when there is no priest;

exercising in the hierarchy’s name the works of charity and administration;

leading scattered Christian communities in the name of the bishop and parish priest

promoting and supporting the apostolic activities of the laity.

doing everything in perfect communion with the bishop and his presbyterate, under the authority of the bishop and the priest who has pastoral care for the people in a particular place;

as far as possible to taking their place on pastoral councils;

being an outstanding example to the community of faith by the way they conduct themselves in the liturgy, in their love for prayer, in the exercise of obedience, in charity and chastity.

3.5.2 They are to take advantage of the opportunities provided for them to nourish their spiritual life, whether they be celibate or married, through reading and meditating on the word of God, to take an active part as frequently as possible in the sacrifice of the Mass and be nourished by the Holy Eucharist, which they should visit often; they should celebrate the sacrament of Penance and examine their consciences daily; they should foster in themselves the devotion of true sons of the Virgin Mary, Mother of God.

Deacons should recite daily at least part of the divine office as laid down by the Episcopal conference; (The Bishops’ Conference of Scotland has established that deacons are obliged to recite Morning and Evening Prayer).

They should make a spiritual retreat at least once every two years.

They should maintain a commitment to study, particularly the sacred sciences, reading the Scriptures and attending meetings where they can deepen their

\textsuperscript{52} See the provisions of Canon Law regarding the deacon’s authority to officiate at marriages (CIC, IV.,I, VII,V)
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understanding of Catholic doctrine so they can more effectively instruct and strengthen the faithful.

Due to the particular nature of the deacon’s ministry, he must promise respect and obedience to the bishop, who for his part will hold these ministers of God’s people in high regard before the Lord, and should a deacon find himself for a time outside of his own diocese, he is to place himself under the authority of the bishop in whose diocese he finds himself in all those matters that concern the duties and tasks that belong to the diaconal state.

The rules of dress for deacons are established by the Bishops’ Conference. (In Scotland the Bishops’ Conference has established that each Ordinary will determine what is appropriate in his own diocese but that care is to be taken to avoid confusion between deacons and priests.)

3.6 These norms will address in due course those aspects of what has been set down in the Apostolic Letter which is to be legislated for by the Bishops’ Conference of Scotland.
4. VOCATIONS TO THE PERMANENT DIACONATE: PROMOTION, DISCERNMENT AND DIRECTION

4.1 The universal law of the Church envisages that men in both the celibate and married state may be ordained to the permanent diaconate. In some cases men may have discerned the call to serve the Church as deacons from an early age, in which case they would be expected to minister in the celibate state. In other cases the call may only be discerned later in life. Those who are unmarried when they recognise God’s call are also called to remain celibate. Others, however, already married are called to fulfil the ministry of deacon in the married state.

4.2 The bishop, sharing with the whole Church, the desire of the Council Fathers “to enrich the Church with the functions of the diaconate”\(^{53}\), will take care to promote vocations to the permanent diaconate, providing support to those who show an interest, helping them to discern whether or not God may be calling them to serve the Church in this way and ensuring that they are guided during a period of prayerful reflection by skilled and experienced spiritual directors. In this work the bishop will be assisted by the priests of the diocese who will from time to time identify and approach individuals who appear to have the necessary dispositions for the diaconate. In other cases a priest may alert the bishop or others in the diocese with responsibility for the diaconate programme to someone who may seem suitable to him.

4.3 Alongside the diocesan director of priestly vocations the bishop will appoint a diocesan director of diaconal vocations who will work in the name of the bishop to promote vocations to the diaconate and co-ordinate a programme of discernment as well as the propaedeutic year for deacons, the assessment process and the programmes of initial and on-going formation for deacons. The diocesan director of diaconal vocations will contribute to and co-operate with those responsible for programmes and processes established by the Bishops’ Conference, regarding the assessment of applicants, the propaedeutic year and the programmes of initial and on-going formation.

4.4 At a national level, the Bishops’ Conference establishes a National Commission for the Permanent Diaconate with a Bishop President. The national commission, without prejudice to the rights and responsibilities of local ordinaries, co-ordinates those matters that are of concern to the Bishops’ Conference as a whole and any others which the Bishops’ Conference consider it convenient and appropriate to organise on a national basis. In the first place this means the drawing up of national norms for the permanent diaconate, and in accordance with the expectations of the Holy See, to update the norms at the required intervals to reflect the changing circumstances of history. The national commission will also be responsible, from time to time, for the publication and distribution of material and information to explain and promote vocations to the permanent diaconate. The commission will also monitor and as necessary oversee procedures nationally for the acceptance of candidates for the permanent diaconate to ensure a uniform approach. It will be the responsibility of the commission to ensure that the norms for the permanent diaconate, once

\(^{53}\) Basic Norms 2, see also Lumen Gentium 29.
approved by the Holy See are fully implemented throughout Scotland, especially with regard to the propaedeutic year and the programme of initial and continuing formation of permanent deacons. The national commission will submit an annual report to the Bishops’ Conference. Members of the National Commission will be appointed by the Bishops’ Conference and seek to draw on experience from the different dioceses in Scotland.

4.5 With a view to co-ordinating at a national level, the programme of initial and on-going formation for permanent deacons, the Bishops’ Conference will appoint a national director of the permanent diaconate. This man, who will be either a priest or a permanent deacon, is accountable to the Bishops’ Conference through the Bishop President of the National Commission for the Permanent Diaconate. The national director will work with the Bishop President and other members of the commission to ensure the day-to-day implementation of the norms for permanent diaconate.

4.6 As has previously been noted, the New Testament itself already described the dispositions of those who could be considered for service as deacons in the Church. They must be “respectable men whose word can be trusted, moderate in the amount of wine they drink and with no squalid greed for money. They must be conscientious believers in the mystery of faith.”54 This same text also expects that applicants for the diaconate “are to be examined first and only admitted to serve as deacons if there is nothing against them.”55 The bishop is responsible, in the name of the Church, for ensuring that the necessary examination of applicants takes place and that “there is nothing against” those who are accepted. Since the ministry of the deacon has implications regarding life-style, especially as this impinges on the deacon’s availability to carry out the bishop’s wishes in serving the needs of the diocese, in the case of married applicants, consideration must be given to the attitudes of wives and any children who may still be living in the family home. Where an applicant for the diaconate intends to remain in full-time employment after ordination to ensure financial security for himself and his family, the bishop must be satisfied that his employment will not impede his ability to fulfil his ministerial responsibilities. Financially also, although wherever possible, deacons are encouraged to make use of their own means to support themselves and their families, the diocese accepts responsibility, where necessary, to support those who are incardinated members of the diocesan clergy. All that applies regarding the support and sustenance of priests applies equally to permanent deacons. The Conference of Bishops will, from time to time, examine the arrangements that are in place to make sure they provide adequately for the support of deacons and their families giving the necessary financial security to meet the obligations that come with family life.56

4.7 To ensure that the requirements of canon law are fulfilled, once the necessary dispositions appear to be present and the other circumstances seem favourable, the following conditions must also be met before an applicant can be admitted to serve as a deacon:

54 I Timothy 3:8-9
55 I Timothy 3:10
56 Sacrum diaconatus, 19 – 21, see also CIC 281
in the case of permanent deacons who will exercise the ministry in the celibate state, they must be men who have completed their twenty-fifth year before ordination can take place;

in the case of permanent deacons who will exercise the ministry in the married state, they must be men who have completed their thirty-fifth year;

after an initial period of discernment in the context of the local Church and under the vigilance of the bishop and his advisors, suitable applicants are admitted to the national propaedeutic programme for diaconate;

the propaedeutic programme, which lasts for one year, must be completed by all applicants before they embark on the formal course of preparation for ordination;\(^{57}\)

at the end of the propaedeutic year a formal assessment of the applicant will take place, the results of which will be sent to the bishop who will decide on whether or not to accept the applicant onto the formal course of preparation for ordination;

after the successful completion of the propaedeutic year and acceptance by the bishop the candidate embarks upon the course of preparation for ordination.

4.8 In seeking to promote vocations to the permanent diaconate attention should be paid to the “communities of origin of aspirants” since these “can exercise some influence on their formation. For younger aspirants and candidates the family can be an extraordinary help. ... As far as married aspirants and candidates are concerned, their commitment must be such that their married communion might contribute in a real way to inspiring their formation journey towards the goal of the diaconate.” \(^{58}\)

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\(^{57}\) The programme for the propaedeutic year is described in an appendix to these norms.

\(^{58}\) Basic Norms, 27.
5 THE ORDINATION COURSE FOR PERMANENT DEACONS

5.1 “The formation of deacons, like that of other ministers and all the baptised, is a duty which involves the whole Church.”\textsuperscript{59} Continuing on from what has been discerned, learned and decided during the propaedeutic period, the bishop continues to be chiefly responsible for the process of discernment and formation of permanent deacons. Ordinarily, while making every effort to know the candidates personally, the bishop will exercise his duty through the assistants who have been chosen by himself for his own diocese or by the other members of the Bishops’ Conference to assist at the national level.\textsuperscript{60}

5.2 The members of the Bishops’ Conference of Scotland have determined that in addition to the responsibility they themselves have in their own dioceses, the following persons will assist them in the formation of permanent deacons at national and diocesan levels: the National Director of the diaconal programme to liaise with the bishops and those they appoint to assist them in the eight dioceses of Scotland; the National Director of the Propaedeutic Year; the National Director of Studies to co-ordinate the programme of academic formation; the National Director of On-going Formation; the Diocesan Director or Co-ordinator of the diaconal programme; the approved spiritual directors; those to whom the candidates are entrusted for diaconal placements; the approved academic tutors and course teachers co-ordinated by the National Director of Studies.\textsuperscript{61}

5.3 The National Director and Diocesan Directors or Co-ordinators will themselves be either priests or permanent deacons. They should have a strong sense of the Church and make every effort to establish fraternal relationships with applicants, candidates, the diaconal community and the families of applicants, candidates and deacons. They should be capable of being a sign of the support and encouragement of both the bishops and the wider community of faith. Working together, the National and Diocesan Directors have the responsibility of placing before the bishop “the judgement of suitability on applicants for their admission among candidates and on candidates for their promotion to the order of diaconate after having heard the opinion of the other formators, excepting the spiritual director.”\textsuperscript{62} In this work the director will be able to bring to bear his own pastoral experience and wisdom. His willingness and capacity to work with others will be an important aspect of what he brings to his task. He “must have acquired a solid theological and pedagogical competence.”\textsuperscript{63}

5.4 The non-residential ordination course for permanent deacons lasts for four years. It has spiritual, theological, liturgical and pastoral dimensions. “The man preparing for diaconate “ ... is a necessary and irreplaceable agent in his own formation: all formation ... is ultimately a self-formation.”\textsuperscript{64} The spiritual formation continues the work begun during the propaedeutic year, with support

\textsuperscript{59} Basic Norms, 18
\textsuperscript{60} See Basic Norms, 19
\textsuperscript{61} This group of persons responds to what is outlined in the Basic Norms, 20
\textsuperscript{62} Basic Norms, 21
\textsuperscript{63} Basic Norms, 21
\textsuperscript{64} Basic Norms, 28
being offered by the candidate’s spiritual director and parish priest. The academic formation of permanent deacons is currently provided on behalf of the Bishops’ Conference by the Maryvale Institute under the direction of the National Director of Studies. During this time the candidate will study from home, following a distance learning model that is supported through a network of tutors and a number of brief residential modules. A combination of continuous assessment and examinations will ascertain both the capacity and the willingness of the candidate to apply himself to the study of theology and other disciplines in preparation for the ministry of deacon.

5.5 The candidate’s formation will also require him to be involved in the local Church at both parish and diocesan level. The community of candidates for the permanent diaconate form a community of their own that influences the formation process. This community must reflect the values that the Church expects of deacons themselves, namely to be shaped by the spirituality of communion, a sense of belonging to the Church, having “a spirit of service and missionary thrust and .... a definite rhythm of meetings and prayer.” This will ensure some measure of liturgical and pastoral formation. However, a formal aspect to this dimension of formation is also required and its elements are set down below.

INTELLECTUAL FORMATION

5.6 Since the deacon is a minister of the word, the study of and meditation of Sacred Scripture will be at the heart of his formation. A respect and love for the word of God in both the Old and New Testaments must accompany a growing understanding of how to read and interpret the sacred books in accordance with the Tradition of faith and the Church’s Magisterium. This study will provide the indispensable foundation for the deacon’s own life of prayer and for the more practical work of learning how to prepare and deliver the homily. Opportunities for catechesis and leading the people in prayer and devotion also require a solid grounding in the study of the bible.

5.7 Next to the study of Sacred Scripture, crucial to the deacon’s formation is a thorough knowledge of Catholic doctrine. Courses in fundamental and dogmatic theology will provide a systematic and comprehensive understanding of the teaching of the faith and give the deacon the ability to instruct the faithful in the ways of truth. This aspect of his preparation for ordination will also be the basis of his on-going study of Church doctrine during the course of his ministry, so that by constantly updating himself he will, under the direction of the bishop and priests, be able to help the laity to benefit from the Church’s insights into the various questions that arise in the changing circumstances of life today.

5.8 As is clearly recognised, there is a great need for the faithful to understand and embrace the Church’s teaching regarding moral and social questions. To do this, ministers of the Gospel must themselves have grasped that the tradition of faith in these matters is not a series of impromptu responses to questions that from time to time emerge, but is rather rooted in the teaching of our Lord and

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65 Basic Norms, 26
able to call upon an “expertise in humanity” that is without parallel. Those who aspire to the diaconate, therefore, must be properly versed in the Church’s tradition in these matters and be capable of giving responses to the questions they are likely to face concerning moral and social issues, that convey the teaching of the Church.

5.9 A good awareness of Church History and Canon Law is important for the deacon, giving him a proper sense of the Church both in terms of her history and her structures, especially those that concern the historical background, rights and obligations of deacons themselves.

5.10 Since the deacon will be able to enhance the dignity with which the liturgy is celebrated, the study of liturgy is an important part of the deacon’s formation, not only providing him with a familiarity with the rites as they are celebrated today but also giving him a realisation of the rich and ancient traditions which the present celebration of the mysteries of faith embrace.

5.11 In recognising that the restoration of the permanent diaconate enriches the Church, candidates for the diaconate must be encouraged in studying the rich spiritual tradition of the Church, to discover and develop their own “spiritual theology of the diaconal ministry”. This will complement the spiritual formation that is required for every deacon as part of his preparation for ordination.

5.12 An adequate study of theology is not possible without a proper grounding in philosophy, especially that philosophical tradition that has stimulated faith to seek understanding down through the centuries. Candidates for the diaconate will accordingly become familiar with those aspects of philosophy that serve as a foundation for the study of theology, give a sense of the history of philosophy, paying attention to the main schools of thought that are influential in Scotland today and assist them in developing a critical and systematic way of thinking and examining the questions they are required to consider.

5.13 Taking account of the information given to him by the National Director of Studies, the candidate’s bishop will discern whether or not he has achieved a sufficient standard in his studies to permit him to progress to the next stage of the course and eventually to ordination. This will normally mean that the candidate achieves a pass in the different assignments and examinations and has been judged by his tutors to have shown a real interest in the material he is required to study and a capacity to be a man of study who is willing to use his own initiative to keep up to date with anything that will assist him in the exercise of his ministry.

LITURGICAL AND PASTORAL FORMATION

5.14 The academic study of liturgy and sacramental theology must be complemented by an adequate and appropriate practical liturgical formation. The candidate’s own parish community will normally provide many of the necessary opportunities to deepen his awareness and experience of the liturgy celebrated with dignity in accordance with the mind of the Church. This is where the candidate will see the unfolding of the liturgical year, the cycles of the
lectionary, the celebration of the sacraments and the sacramentals, funerals and devotions. As soon as possible, an applicant should be introduced to the divine office and encouraged to make it a central aspect of his own life of prayer, where possible as part of the liturgy of the parish community, as well as in the “private room” where he goes to pray. As well as this regular celebration of the liturgy, the bishop will ensure that at gatherings of deacons, especially when he himself presides, the standard and quality of the celebration will inspire applicants and candidates and give them an example which they will want to follow. The bishop will impress on priests who are likely to have a particular influence on those aspiring to the diaconate, the importance of assisting them by word and example to deepen their love of the Church’s liturgy and come to know more fully what it is it is doing when it celebrates the sacred mysteries.

5.15 Applicants and candidates for the diaconate are expected to attend those diocesan celebrations that take place in the course of the Church’s liturgical year at which the bishop presides, especially, for example, the Rite of Election, the Mass of Chrism, the Feast of the Patron of the Diocese and the Dedication of the Cathedral. They should also be present at ordinations to the diaconate and priesthood in their own diocese, not to mention the installation or ordination of a new bishop. Through these celebrations of the Church’s liturgy they will be brought to a deeper experience of the local church and the relationship of the deacons with the bishop.

5.16 The bishop will also ensure that applicants and deacons are instructed in the meaning of the major celebrations of the Church’s year and are brought to understand the liturgy of the great seasons of Advent, Lent and Eastertide.

5.17 What the deacon celebrates in the liturgy, especially in the Mass, is the source and summit of all he does in the pastoral work to which he will be appointed after ordination. The ability to find the meaning of *diakonia* in the Eucharist demonstrates that the deacon’s role in the Church is ministry, not simply good works or social work, despite the valuable contribution that these latter make to the community and society at large. As has already been seen, the Church from earliest times, has recognised that the ministry of the deacon is rooted in the example and teaching of our Lord himself. His concern for the poor and needy, his willingness to stay with the outcast, the sinner and the marginalised, the loving service he rendered to his own disciples, his declaration that he came “not to be served but to serve”.

5.18 At the heart of the deacon’s pastoral ministry is the sign he gives of the charity of the Church in the name of the bishop. Accordingly the pastoral formation of the deacon will prepare him for the service of those who are most in need, even if their neediness is not always of the material kind. Jesus himself identified some of those who are most in need when, in the words of the prophet Isaiah, he began to proclaim the kingdom of God and announce the Good News: “The Spirit of the Lord has been given to me, for he has anointed me. He has sent me to bring the good news to the poor, to proclaim liberty to captives and to

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66 See Matthew 6:6
67 John 13:1-15
68 Matthew 20:28 (and parallels)
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the blind new sight, to set the downtrodden free, to proclaim the Lord’s year of favour.”69 Also of special concern to the deacon in view of the ministry he exercises in the name of the Church are those in need identified by our Lord in his description of the last judgement.70 In Scotland today, many of the needs of the poor and destitute are met by the statutory authorities. There are also a number of religious communities and lay associations who devote themselves to the alleviation of poverty. Nevertheless, the deacon, perhaps by helping to coordinate charitable efforts at diocesan and parish level or by working with the National Commission for Justice and Peace, the Scottish Catholic International Aid Fund, Pro-life initiatives and other agencies, can bear witness to the ancient tradition of the Church in seeking to ensure practical assistance rooted in our Lord’s own teaching for those in any kind of need. The visitation of the sick and housebound, those in hospital or prison, refugees and asylum seekers are all ways in which the deacon can manifest the charity of Christ to those in need.

5.19 Working alongside parish priests, the deacon can assist those preparing for sacraments, through the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults, the Rite of Christian Initiation of Children and programmes of sacramental catechesis both before and after the celebration of the sacraments. Married deacons can bring a special richness to the work of preparation of couples who are preparing for marriage and in supporting couples after marriage and at the various stages of married life. The deacon is also able to bring his ministry into schools and universities and other work with young people.

5.20 During the period of formation the deacon will be given the opportunity to explore, experience and reflect upon the rich variety of ways in which he will be able to exercise his ministry. It is crucial that the deacon is prepared to exercise his ministry in a collaborative way, in the first place with the bishop, then with the priests of the diocese and his fellow deacons. Even a cursory overview of the many areas in which deacons minister in the Church will make it clear that a collaborative style will also be important as they work alongside the laity and assist them to take their place in the Church and give Christian witness in the world as is envisaged in the documents of the Second Vatican Council and subsequent Papal and Magisterial pronouncements.71 Preparing for pastoral ministry will involve the deacon learning something about educational principles and methods that are suitable for children, young people and adults. It will also be useful for them to learn how to lead groups and meetings and direct other fora in which the organisation of the parish or diocese is conducted.

5.21 From time to time the deacon will be required to provide some spiritual counselling and even spiritual direction. The initial training for this will be included in the diaconal ordination course. However, it is also important that on the one hand the deacon’s ministry in this respect is not confused with the Sacrament of Penance and on the other hand that, unless he is specifically trained to do so, he is not seen as providing a professional counselling service.

70 Matthew 25:31-46
71 See, for example, Lumen Gentium, Gaudium et Spes and Apostolicam Actuositatem from the Second Vatican Council and Laborem exercens, Familiaris Consortio, Mulieris Dignitatem, Christifideles Laici and Novo Millennio Ineunte.
Through his ministry, the deacon is able to bring the light that originates in the charity of Christ into the situations and circumstances of the lives of those he is sent to serve.

SPIRITUAL FORMATION

5.22 As one who receives the Holy Spirit through the Sacrament of Order for the building up of the community of faith, the ministry of the deacon involves offering spiritual leadership to God’s holy people. To be faithful to this ministry the deacon must in the first place be responsive to the call to holiness in his own life. It will be through the exercise of his ministry and faithfulness to his vocation that the permanent deacon will encounter God in his life. In the case of those who exercise this office in the celibate state, the gift of celibacy and its acceptance will be an important aspect of the deacon’s spiritual growth. For those who are married, their vocation to married life will complement their ministry as deacons and the sacramental love that they express for their wives and that they receive in return will also find expression in the love they show to those whom they are privileged to serve as deacons.

5.23 As members of the diocesan clergy, deacons share a responsibility with the bishop and priests of the diocese for creating that sign of communion which results from the reception of the Sacrament of Holy Order. If the whole Church is called to be “the home and school of communion”72, then the diocesan clergy must in a particular way live out the spirituality of communion that brings it into existence. “Communion is the fruit and demonstration of that love which springs from the heart of the Eternal Father and is poured out upon us through the Spirit which Jesus gives us (cf. Rom 5:5), to make us all "one heart and one soul" (Acts 4:32). It is in building this communion of love that the Church appears as "sacrament", as the "sign and instrument of intimate union with God and of the unity of the human race".73 The deacon’s own spirituality must be rooted in and an expression of the pastoral planning of the diocese that seeks to promote the holiness of the whole people of God.74

5.24 The chief locus of the spirituality of communion is the celebration of the Eucharist. The deacon will find in the Eucharist the main source of sustenance for his spirituality. In preparing for ordination he will be given frequent opportunities to take part in the celebration of the Eucharist, above all the Sunday Eucharist, which brings together the whole community of faith to be nourished at the table of God’s word and the Body and Blood of Christ. By praying the divine office, “a kind of necessary complement to the Sacrifice of the Eucharist ... extending this worship into the different hours of daily life”75 the deacon takes his place in the universal Church, offering the “Canticle of Praise, unceasingly hymned in heaven and brought into this world of ours by our High Priest Jesus Christ”76. Reflection and meditation on the word of God both alone and with others, as well as spiritual reading that draws on the great traditions of

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72 Novo Millennio Ineunte, 43 & 45
73 Novo Millennio Ineunte, 42
74 Novo Millennio Ineunte, 31
76 The Canticle of Praise.
prayer in the Church and the insights of recent and contemporary writers provide important sources of nourishment for the spiritual life. Devotion to Mary the Mother of God and the saints is a further expression of the mystery of communion which should be an inspiration and support to the deacon in his work. The time leading up to ordination provides sufficient opportunities for the candidate for diaconate to establish a daily pattern of prayer, by which he relies on the experience of the Church and inserts himself into that communion where heaven is joined to earth in offering an unending hymn of praise.

5.25 Those exercising the ministry in the celibate state will bring with them the experience of different ways in which they can join with others in prayer, through Scripture prayer groups, faith-sharing groups, small communities of the faithful who gather regularly to reflect and pray together, membership of approved associations. In many cases it will be highly appropriate to continue benefiting from these experiences after ordination. In addition to these opportunities, those who will exercise the ministry in the married state will be able to grow in the life of prayer together with their wives and families.

5.26 In the work of discernment that candidates need to undertake prior to ordination, the assistance of a spiritual director is essential. The bishop should ensure that suitable and experienced priests are available to assist the candidates in his diocese to grow in prayer and be able to discover the will of God. The practice of spiritual direction, initiated during the time of preparation for ordination, if not before, should continue for the whole of the deacon’s life, as a sure help to him in the discernment he is required to undertake daily to live and minister according to the will of God.

HUMAN FORMATION

5.27 The Mystery of the Incarnation transforms human nature into the means whereby God brings salvation to this people. In the Person of our Lord Jesus Christ the divine nature is joined to human nature and the pathway to wholeness is opened up for humanity. By associating men with himself through the ministry conferred on them by the laying on of hands, the Saviour continues to make the Father’s love present in the world in human ways. In the exercise of his ministry the deacon’s humanity becomes a vehicle for the grace that God bestows on his people. It is important therefore that deacons are as fully aware as possible of their own humanity and of the humanity of those they serve. As St. Irenaeus has said, “the glory of God is man fully alive”. God manifests his own glory by assuring our beatitude. Irrespective of their particular gifts and abilities God uses human agents to further his plan of salvation. This is especially true of ordained ministers who are made able to offer the grace God makes available through the Church to his people. In describing the qualities of deacons the New Testament described what might be called human qualities. The programme of human formation that is part of the ordination course for deacons seeks to ensure that these qualities are refined and developed so that the deacon can be a more effective channel of divine grace.

77 Adv. Haeres. 4, 20, 7: PG
78 See Ad Gentes, 2 and CCC 294
79 1 Timothy 3:8-10, 12; see also Basic Norms, 32.
5.28 In many respects the qualities of the deacon can be developed and refined through prayer and other spiritual exercises, especially frequent recourse to the Sacrament of Penance and the advice of his spiritual director. Nevertheless, a familiarity with some of the basic insights into human behaviour can benefit the deacon himself and those he will minister to. This will entail reflection on and consideration of what is to be understood by moderate behaviour; an awareness of the power of human emotions; the psychological implications of a proper understanding of free-will. Human formation is enhanced by the expertise of Catholic psychologists whose work is informed by a sound Christian anthropology. The use of various instruments of self-awareness, in conjunction with informed, expert advice can provide helpful pointers for candidates who wish to enhance their own qualities and gain knowledge and experience that will assist them in their future ministry. At the same time, it is important, as was already pointed out\(^80\), that the deacon should not be seen or consider himself to be a provider of professional counselling services, unless he has proper training in that field. Nor should the normal dimension of human formation he receives require him to subject himself to programmes or procedures that might be considered therapeutic.

5.29 Depending on whether the deacon is to minister in the celibate or married state, the human formation he receives in preparation for ordination should provide opportunities to consider what this will mean and indicate the support that is presently available and will be available in future. Since in both cases the state in which the diaconal ministry is exercised is primarily an issue of spirituality, the understanding and the support comes from the deacon’s own sense that his state of life determines to a large extent how his ministry will be perceived and will express in a concrete way his response to Christ. It is important that those providing human formation and support to the deacon both understand and are sympathetic to the nature of this response.\(^81\)

5.30 Since many permanent deacons will be responsible for providing for their own livelihood and, in some cases, that of their family, the bishop must be satisfied that, on a human level, the candidate for the permanent diaconate will be capable of achieving a healthy balance between the time he has to devote to earning a living and ministering as a deacon. On the one hand he will need to be in a position where he can meet his own needs and those of any dependents he may have, and devote a sufficient amount of time to the work the bishop will entrust to him. The questions that this raises will need to be fully aired with those who are in charge of his formation so that the candidate is able to reach a fully informed decision when the times comes for him to commit himself to the service of the Church as a deacon.

5.31 The married deacon’s wife and family should be able to benefit from the support of the community of families of permanent deacons. The deacon’s natural concern for the well-being of his family should have a positive influence on his service of the wider community. The more reassured he is that his wife and children are themselves supported in their support for him in his work the freer he will be to serve the Lord with gladness. During a married candidate’s

\(^80\) See above 5.18
\(^81\) See Basic Norms, 36 & 37
time of preparation for ordination there will be opportunities for wives and families to become part of that community of families so that they too can discern whether or not they will be able to rely on the level of support they might be looking for either now or in the future.

5.32 In the field of human formation it is acknowledged that well adjusted men, whether celibate or married, will, with the grace of God, be able to meet the challenges of the diaconal ministry. The initial formal assessment procedures taken with the recommendations of priests and other people of sound judgement will in most cases be able to establish if an individual is likely to be able to fulfil the responsibilities of his ministry and meet the challenges he is likely to face. Accordingly, the programme of human formation will largely be concerned with confirming the good qualities already present and suggesting how these might best be put at the service of the Gospel. As is clear from the New Testament, the early Christian communities were encouraged to choose for the ministry of deacon those who already possessed the necessary qualities.

5.33 It is not envisaged that the programme for formation will prepare the deacon to be a specialist in every field of pastoral ministry. In some cases, however, the bishop will ask a permanent deacon to undertake a specific and to some extent specialised ministry. When this happens, the bishop will ensure that the necessary training and appropriate preparation is provided to make sure the deacon is adequately equipped for the task he is asked to undertake. Account should also be taken, in the case of a married deacon, of any implications the ministry or the commitment required to prepare for it may have on the individual's married life or family circumstances. It will often happen that preparation of this kind will take place after ordination.
6. REQUIREMENTS FOR ORDINATION TO THE PERMANENT DIACONATE

6.1 “The history of every priestly vocation, as indeed of every Christian vocation, is the history of an inexpressible dialogue between God and human beings, between the love of God who calls and the freedom of individuals who respond lovingly to him.” This mysterious dialogue of love is the fundamental and basic requirement for ordination to the permanent diaconate. However, alongside this the “public call of the Church” is also required. The call of the Church does not stand outside the call of God but is rather “the sign and instrument for the personal intervention of God, which is realised with the laying on of hands.” The programme of formation that is required of permanent deacons is at the service of this call of the Church so that the applicant’s and candidate’s willingness to submit himself to the demands and challenges of the programme is in itself an indication of the generosity with which he is prepared to respond to the call of God.

6.2 In addition to what has already been said about the character and outlook of aspirants, applicants and candidates, especially as these are set out in the New Testament, it should be noted that they must have reached a minimum age of 25 years in the case of those who will be celibate and 35 in the case of those who are married. Widowers may not enter into marriage and “must have already provided, or have shown they are capable of providing adequately for, the human and Christian upbringing of their children.”

The vocations’ directors should also try to ascertain whether applicants will have the necessary academic background and intellectual capacity to pursue successfully the required course of studies. Moreover, vocations’ directors should also, at this stage, and prior to the acceptance of the applicant onto the propaedeutic year, ensure that all other necessary requirements are in order by checking a recently issued copy of his certificate or baptism and confirmation and, in the case of a married applicant, his marriage certificate and the good will of his wife.

6.3 Aspirants must first be accepted by the bishop on to the propaedeutic year. “During this period the aspirants will be introduced to a deeper knowledge of theology, of spirituality and of the ministry of deacon and they will be led to a more attentive discernment of their call.” However, it is not intended that this year be a time of serious academic study, but rather a period of prayer and discernment when the applicant is given the opportunity to learn more about the service of God and the Church in the diaconate. During this year the bishop and vocations’ director have the opportunity to ensure they are satisfied that applicants are healthy in mind and body and are not excluded from ordination because of any criminal activity. When the propaedeutic period has been completed to the bishop’s satisfaction, he may accept the candidate onto the

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82 Basic Norms, 29 quoting Lumen Gentium 29b
83 Basic Norms, 29
84 Basic Norms, 29
85 Basic Norms, 38
86 Although these requirements are to be met before the candidate can be ordained (Basic Norms 61) it is prudent for the vocations’ director to enquire about these matters at this stage.
87 Basic Norms, 41
88 Applicants are required to present certificates establishing their physical and psychological health and to give consent to have a check made on the Scottish Criminal Records (or those of any other place where they may have lived).
programme of formation for permanent diaconate, which lasts for four years. At the appropriate time, during a special liturgical rite, he will be formally accepted as a candidate for the permanent diaconate. If the candidate is willing to take this next step in his preparation for ordination, he will formally petition his bishop in writing and state that he is ready to commit himself in complete freedom to continue to prepare for the service of God and the Church as a permanent deacon. The bishop’s acceptance and the candidate’s offer are celebrated during the rite when the candidate “publicly manifests his will to offer himself to God and the Church, so that he may exercise sacred orders. The Church, accepting this offering, chooses and calls him to prepare himself to receive a sacred order, and in this way he is rightly numbered among candidates for the diaconate.”

This rite will normally be celebrated towards the beginning of the second year of the course of preparation. “Enrolment among the candidates does not constitute any right necessarily to receive diaconal ordination. It is a first official recognition of the positive signs of the vocation to the diaconate, which must be confirmed in the subsequent years of formation.”

6.4 After his formal acceptance as a candidate for the permanent diaconate at the beginning of the second year of his course, if the candidate’s progress continues to be satisfactory, he will be installed as a lector at the end of the second year. In the early part of the third year he will be installed as an acolyte. “Before anyone may be promoted to the diaconate, whether permanent or transitory, he must have received the ministries of lector and acolyte, and have exercised them for an appropriate time”, so that he may “be better disposed for the future service of the word and the altar”. There must be an interval of at least six months between the conferring of the ministry of acolyte and ordination to the diaconate.

6.5 Having completed these steps of preparation and having satisfied those concerned with his training, towards the end of the third year of his course, the candidate will be presented to the bishop for ordination as a permanent deacon. Before this can happen the candidate must once again petition the bishop in writing requesting that he be ordained and stating his freedom in offering himself for ordination, believing that he is properly prepared to undertake the responsibilities of the office. The bishop must also receive the testimony of those concerned with his training that they are satisfied that he is ready for ordination. “With this request the candidate must enclose the certificate of baptism, of confirmation and of the ministries mentioned in can. 1035, and the certificate of studies duly completed in accordance with can. 1032. If the ordinand to be promoted is married, he must present his marriage certificate and the written consent of his wife.” In addition, the bishop must be satisfied as to the physical and psychological well-being of the candidate and ensure that he
should not be excluded from ordination due to any criminal activity.95 “Before ordination, unmarried candidates must assume publicly, in the prescribed rite, the obligation of celibacy... All candidates are bound personally, before ordination, to make a profession of faith and an oath of fidelity, according to the formulae approved by the Apostolic See, in the presence of the Ordinary of the place or his delegate.”96

6.6 Once the candidate has completed the prescribed course of studies and fulfilled the requirements of Canon Law, as outlined above, and has been found worthy by those concerned with his training and the clergy of the diocese, as well as those members of the community of faith who know him either through personal contact or from encountering him pastorally during his time of formation, the bishop has the responsibility for making the final decision. “After having verified the suitability of a candidate and having been assured that he is aware of the new obligations which he is assuming, the bishop ... will promote him to the order of the diaconate.”97 “Each candidate is to be ordained...to the diaconate by his proper bishop, or with lawful dimissorial letters granted by that bishop. ... The ordination, carried out according to the rite of the Roman Pontifical, is to be celebrated during solemn Mass, preferably on a Sunday or holyday of obligation, and generally in the Cathedral Church. However, for pastoral reasons the bishop may decide to hold the celebration at another time and in another place.98 The ordinands prepare themselves for it by making “a retreat for at least five days, in a place and in the manner prescribed by the Ordinary”.99 During the ordination rite special attention should be given to the participation of the wives and children of the married ordinands.”100

95 Basic Norms, 62. The checks done when the candidate was being accepted at the beginning of the course of preparation should be adequate for this purpose unless the bishop or those concerned with his training have reason to think other wise.
96 Basic Norms, 63
97 Basic Norms, 62
98 CIC, 1010 & 1011
99 C.I.C. 1039
100 Basic Norms 64 & 65.
7. CONTINUING FORMATION OF PERMANENT DEACONS

7.1 Although in certain circumstances post-ordination formation will involve specialised study for some permanent deacons, continuing formation is to be understood in a much wider way and is incumbent upon all ordained ministers, permanent deacons included. The deacon himself is the primary agent of his own continuing formation. He will, however, be supported in his commitment by his own ordinary and by the national commissions and agencies of the Bishops’ Conference. The approach is holistic, aiming to provide continuing formation in all those areas which have been described in the programme of preparation for ordination. “Ongoing formation must include and harmonize all dimensions of the life and ministry of the deacon. Thus, as with the permanent formation of priests, it should be complete, systematic and personalized in its diverse aspects whether human, spiritual, intellectual or pastoral.”\(^{101}\) In the case of married permanent deacons, their continuing formation is linked to on-going support provided for their wives and families. In the light of the teaching of the Second Vatican Council we can identify two important themes that provide, as it were, the leitmotif for the on-going formation of permanent deacons, namely the new evangelisation and the spirituality of communion.

7.2 Although each bishop is responsible for the permanent deacons in his own diocese, the Bishops’ Conference will appoint a National Director of On-going Formation for Permanent Deacons who will co-operate and liaise with the different dioceses to ensure that adequate and appropriate opportunities are given to both celibate and married deacons. It will be the responsibility of the National Director to assist permanent deacons to take responsibility for their own on-going formation by designing useful and imaginative programmes in consultation with the bishop of each diocese and the deacons themselves. The National Director will give special attention to those who minister in more isolated circumstances and in the case of all permanent deacons seek to ensure that whether in the daily exercise of their ministry or at gatherings the deacons experience the support of the Church.

7.3 The deacon’s on-going spiritual formation is greatly assisted by the support of his spiritual director and his confessor. Through an honest and comprehensive dialogue the spiritual director will encourage the deacon to make the daily Eucharist and celebration of the Liturgy of the Hours the irreplaceable foundation of his continued spiritual growth.\(^{102}\) Devotion to Mary, Mother of God and Mother of the Church, and to the saints, is also an indispensable aid to assist the deacon’s growth in holiness. The deacon should make a retreat lasting a minimum of five days, at least once every two years and more often if possible. The bishop’s guidance concerning what he regards as suitable regarding the place and manner of the retreat is to be taken into account by the deacon when planning his retreat. It is also desirable that the deacon’s retreat will be, at least on some occasions, an opportunity for fraternity, expressing his communion with his fellow deacons and even where possible with the bishop. The deacon should make available time for spiritual reading to help deepen his life of prayer and imitate more closely the example of Christ and the saints. The on-going spiritual

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\(^{101}\) Directory for the Ministry and Life of Permanent Deacons, 68

\(^{102}\) See Directory for the Ministry and Life of Permanent Deacons, 56
form of the deacon allows him to give shape to the “diaconal spirituality” which “[in] addition to helping the deacon to fulfil his functions [this] also affects his deepest being, imbuing it with a willingness to give his entire self over to the service of the Kingdom of God in the Church.”

7.4 The Church’s recognition that celibate men, widowers and married men may be admitted to the order of deacons draws attention to the way that the spirituality of the deacon finds expression according to his state of life. On the one hand it will be an expression of gratitude to God for the gift of celibacy “accepted and lived for the sake of the Kingdom of God (cf. Mt 19:12), directs the whole person of the deacon towards Christ who devoted Himself in chastity to the service of the Father so as to bring man to the fullness of the Kingdom. Loving God and serving the brethren by this complete choice, so far from impeding the personal development of deacons, fosters man’s true perfection which is found in charity.” Marriage too is a gift from God and the married deacon is also a sign of service to the Church in the intimacy of his own family. “In marriage, love becomes an interpersonal giving of self, a mutual fidelity, a source of new life, a support in times of joy and sorrow: in short, love becomes service. When lived in faith, this family service is for the rest of the faithful an example of the love of Christ. The married deacon must use it as a stimulus of his diaconia in the Church.”

Conscious that for deacons these two gifts of celibacy and married love need to be encouraged and helped to flourish, the bishop will ensure that this is provided as part of the programme of on-going formation for permanent deacons. It should be noted, also, that although there may be some circumstances when elements of on-going formation can be provided together with priests and with lay people, it is necessary to make specific provision for permanent deacons both celibate and married.

7.5 The initial formation in Sacred Scripture and Catholic doctrine that takes place during the ordination course for permanent diaconate must be deepened and continually updated in various ways. The deacon’s personal study can be supported by study days and conferences sponsored at diocesan and national level. Bishops should encourage deacons to participate in such initiatives by ensuring that time and resources are made available. By creating a climate in which the clergy of the diocese are expected to devote time and energy to their on-going formation, the bishop will more easily demonstrate that the new evangelisation driven by the spirituality of communion is what shapes the pastoral priorities of the diocese. The permanent deacons, along with the priests, are in this way able to assist the bishop in the work of renewing the diocese as signs and instruments of this renewal. In this way, the on-going formation of the permanent deacon is recognised on the personal level as that “continuing conversion” to which the whole post-conciliar Church has been called. This way of understanding on-going formation is clearly broad in its scope and profound in its consequences; “… formation cannot be reduced merely to participating at courses or study days or other such activities: it calls for every deacon to be aware of the need for ongoing formation and to cultivate it with

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103 Directory for the Ministry and Life of Permanent Deacons, 44
104 Directory for the Ministry and Life of Permanent Deacons, 60
105 Directory for the Ministry and Life of Permanent Deacons, 61
106 Directory for the Ministry and Life of Permanent Deacons, 63
interest and in a spirit of healthy initiative.”107 “Ongoing formation cannot be confined simply to updating, but should seek to facilitate a practical configuration of the deacon’s entire life to Christ who loves all and serves all.”108

7.6 Whether he exercises his office in the celibate or married state, the deacon’s humanity becomes God’s instrument, and the more truly human he is the more clearly will he be able to minister in the name of God and the Church. For this reason human formation must be a dimension of the deacon’s on-going formation. “The deacon, aware that he is chosen as a man among men to be at the service of the salvation of all, should be open to being helped in developing his human qualities as valuable instruments for ministry. He should strive to perfect all those aspects of his personality which might render his ministry more effective.”109 There will be aspects of human formation that overlap with pastoral formation, since pastoral skills that concern, for example, relationships, group dynamics, communication and cultural awareness are founded on the individual’s personal and social qualities. At the same time, although the human sciences have much to contribute in the area of human formation, it should never be forgotten that the ministry of the deacon is first and foremost a work of grace that builds upon nature and surpasses the achievements of human effort because the grace of Christ is operative. Nevertheless, from time to time it can enhance the deacon’s own humanity and skills if he is able to learn from the insights of the human sciences and it is time well spent if experts with a sound grasp of Christian anthropology are able to make a contribution to the on-going formation of permanent deacons. In this regard the deacon, whether celibate or married, should not underestimate the extraordinary impact his life-style can have in demonstrating the profound humanity of a life lived in conformity with the Gospel. At the heart of our Lord’s own message is his willingness to enter into human friendships with those he came to save.110 In his service of the Gospel the deacon should seek to embody the friendship that Jesus offers. It is no exaggeration to say that friendship, as Jesus understands it, is the greatest measure of our humanity.

7.7 During the course of preparation for ordination the pattern of the deacon’s spiritual life should become established. His spirituality should nourish and be nourished by his ministry. The aspects of the life of the community for which the deacon has a responsibility according to ancient tradition, namely word, liturgy and charity, provide the foundation for his spiritual life and indicate with what his on-going spiritual formation should be chiefly concerned.111 Bishops and the priests with whom the deacon works should offer him every encouragement to deepen his relationship with God and the Church and help him to avoid any dualism between spirituality and ministry.112 By taking part in spiritual gatherings in his own diocese, those organised at a national level or even internationally, the deacon will find the support he needs to carry out the work entrusted to him. He should also find that by choosing what he will read wisely

107 Directory for the Ministry and Life of Permanent Deacons, 65
108 Directory for the Ministry and Life of Permanent Deacons, 67
109 Directory for the Ministry and Life of Permanent Deacons, 69
110 See John 15:13 - 15
111 See the Directory for the Ministry and Life of Permanent Deacons, 70
112 See the Directory for the Ministry and Life of Permanent Deacons, 66
and prudently his spiritual development will also be supported by reading works of biblical, theological, liturgical and pastoral scholarship as well as philosophy and the human sciences.

7.8 The goal of on-going formation is that the deacon’s ministry and life become, as it were, more and more a “seamless garment” of prayer, study, human interaction, ministry and witness to Christ who came not to be served but to serve. The commitment to on-going formation is one of the signs of the permanent deacon’s commitment to his ministry. Even though this will involve “coming apart” to be by themselves with the Lord, this too is service of the people of God for the servant is nothing without the Master and the permanent deacons must constantly return to Christ to be restored and renewed by him. From these important moments in the rhythm of his ministry the deacon returns to the community of faith, bringing with him the fruits of what he has pondered in his heart. In his willingness to devote time to his on-going formation the permanent deacon follows the example of Mary, Mother of God, Mother of the Church and teacher of deacons, who shows us how to hear the word of God and proclaim it faithfully.\footnote{See the Directory for the Ministry and Life of Permanent Deacons, Prayer to the Blessed Virgin Mary.}
APPENDIX 1 – THE PROPAEDEUTIC PERIOD

Introduction

In the spirit of the Basic Norms for the Formation of Permanent Deacons, the propaedeutic period provides an opportunity for the applicant to engage in “a free and self conscious discernment based on the requirements necessary for the diaconal ministry, without allowing themselves to be conditioned by personal interests or external pressures of any sort”\(^\text{114}\). It also gives the bishop of the applicant’s sponsoring diocese the opportunity to examine the applicant more closely before deciding whether or not to accept him formally for the course of preparation for ordination.

Vocations’ Director

Each Diocese has its own process for inviting men to consider offering themselves for the Permanent Diaconate. How this is done is the responsibility of the bishop who will develop the process with the Vocations’ Director.

Enquiry

Anyone wishing to enquire about the Permanent Diaconate should apply in writing to the Vocations’ Director, giving contact details, some information about marital status, home parish, present involvement in the local Church and some indication as to why he is drawn to the Permanent Diaconate. The Directorate of Diaconate Vocations will contact the enquirer’s parish priest directly.

The Pre-acceptance Discernment Process

This covers a period of time which allows the applicant and his family to explore more fully the implications of the call to the Permanent Diaconate. In the case of a married man his wife and family will also be involved at this stage. It is also a time when the Director of the Diaconate Programme establishes a working relationship with the applicant. The process is one of discernment to discover if an applicant should be admitted into the Permanent Diaconate Propaedeutic Period (formal discernment process). The process will last for at least one year and is characterised by prayerful reflection about God’s call and the applicant’s awareness of himself.

Application Form

The process begins with the completion of the nationally approved application form. In the case of married applicants an important aspect of the application is to explore the attitude of the applicant’s wife (and family).

The application form contains a statement under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act (1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975 (Exceptions) Amendment) Order 1986. Applicants are also required to give their consent for the appropriate Police and/or Social Services, and Health checks.

In addition to the completed Application Form the applicant must provide a recently issued copy of his Certificate of Baptism and Confirmation, where

\(^\text{114}\) Basic Norms for the Formation of Permanent Deacons, 44
Norms for the formation of Permanent Deacons

applicable, a Marriage Certificate, and a written medical statement from his G.P. stating he is in good health. The application form also invites the nomination of two people to provide character references and a reference from the applicant’s Parish Priest.

The Process
Normally the process will last for a year during which there will be five weekend meetings. The applicant must attend all five weekends. If he is married his wife will be invited to weekends three, four and five. During each weekend a different theme will be explored and developed as follows:

Weekend One: Focus on the Call to Ministry (ministry in general, and the Diaconate in particular). This weekend is facilitated by the Diocesan Directors of the Permanent Diaconate programme. The Weekend includes an individual interview with each candidate conducted by his own Diocesan Director. The Sunday programme may also include a visit by a bishop, or with the applicant’s own ordinary should his bishop decide to arrange such a meeting.

This weekend is followed up by a meeting between the Diocesan Director, the applicant and, where applicable, his wife.

Weekend Two: Prayer and Spiritual Direction. The aim of the weekend is to reflect on spiritual formation. This weekend provides an opportunity to explain Spiritual Direction and present the list of approved Spiritual Directors. Provisional arrangements are made for the applicants to meet the Spiritual Director. The weekend is followed up by the applicant’s first monthly visit to his Spiritual Director. Spiritual Direction is conducted in accordance with the tradition and law of the Church. The Director of Formation will confirm that Spiritual Direction is taking place on a regular basis. Bishops will ensure that those who are included on the list of approved Spiritual Directors have the necessary preparation to carry out this ministry.

Weekend Three: Ministry, Celibacy and Marriage. Married applicants attend this weekend with their wives. For married applicants the weekend is an opportunity to look at the implications of Ministry as a Permanent Deacon in relation to the candidate’s marriage and family life. For married applicants this weekend is facilitated by Scottish Marriage Care and is followed up by couples making three visits to a Marriage Care Counsellor to continue exploring the themes touched on during the weekend. Time will also be taken during this weekend to reflect on the Church’s discipline of celibacy.

The Director will confirm that the three follow-up sessions had been attended.

Celibate applicants should attend this weekend but instead of follow-up sessions with marriage care counsellors the commitment of celibacy should be explored in spiritual direction which includes widowed deacons.

Weekend Four: Personal Awareness and Development. Married applicants attend this weekend with their wives. This weekend is intended to help the participants look at their personal strengths and areas for continued formation.
Experts in the area of human formation will facilitate this weekend. This weekend will be followed up with a meeting between the Diocesan Director and the applicant.

**Weekend Five: Interview.** Married applicants attend this weekend with their wives. Arrangements for this weekend are the responsibility of the applicant’s own diocese. Having been furnished with a report on the applicant from those responsible for the propaedeutic year, the bishop will convene an interview board, on which he himself may sit. The wives of married applicants should also be formally consulted by the bishop or his delegate. The bishop will inform the applicant if he has been accepted to embark upon the ordination course for the Permanent Diaconate.

**Follow-up.** The applicant’s parish priest will be informed of the bishop’s decision so that together with the Diocesan Vocations’ Director he is able to offer appropriate support to both successful and unsuccessful applicants. The Diocesan Vocations’ Director will ensure that successful applicants are given all the necessary information about what lies ahead.
APPENDIX 2 – THE ORDINATION COURSE FOR THE PERMANENT DIACONATE

MARYVALE INSTITUTE
B A I N A P P L I E D T H E O L O G Y
I N D I A C O N A L M I N I S T R Y
by Part-Time Distance-Learning

This course aims to provide, over four years, the appropriate formation in preparation for ordination to the permanent diaconate. It presents Catholic doctrine in a comprehensive way, together with diaconal practice in all areas of the ministry. It is specifically designed for men who have been accepted by their bishop to go forward for diaconal ministry and who can show evidence of a capacity to study at degree level.

Each year consists of the following elements:

- 3 residential weekends per year
- 6 coursebook modules per year
- 6 written assignments per year, increasing progressively in size
- development of a portfolio of resources
- formation in the areas of ministry in which a deacon is involved
- assessed participation in liturgical and other aspects of diaconal ministry
- tutorials and continuous assessment of assignments and activities
- homiletic, catechetical and liturgical planning and practice with each module
- end of year exams

The course is designed to take 15 hours of study a week for 10 months of the year over a four-year period. This involves studying coursebooks at home and inter-active work, preparing resources, practical sessions, liturgical planning and spiritual reflection.

Maryvale provides continuous support throughout the duration of the entire course.

There are regular tutorials, guidance through assessment of written work, local practical support from trained mentors and a telephone helpline with the course director.

The Institute will also co-operate with the local Diocesan Director of Formation for the Permanent Diaconate so that additional support may be provided for personal and spiritual formation.

No previous qualifications are required but evidence of ability to undertake the course successfully will be sought.

**Year 1**
Introduction to the diaconate
Foundations of Faith
Christ & Redemption
Norms for the formation of Permanent Deacons

The Church
Introduction to Old Testament
Introduction to New Testament

**Year 2**
Homiletic Method & Lectionary
Prayer & Spirituality
Introduction to the Sacraments
Introduction to the Liturgy
Introduction to Moral Theology
Mary in the Mystery of Christ & the Church

**Year 3**
Liturgical & Sacramental Celebration
Sacrament of Marriage & Canon Law
Applied Ecclesiology & Canon Law
Collaborative Ministry, Leadership & Management
Christian Anthropology
Special Moral Issues

**Year 4**
Special Pastoral issues
Special Biblical Issues
Trinity & Incarnation, Development of Doctrine
Christian Europe: 400–1500
Reformations & Revolutions
Ecumenism