

*A Working Paper of*

Guidelines  
for  
Deacon Programs  
2<sup>nd</sup> Edition

Edwin F. Hallenbeck  
Editor



North American Association for the Diaconate

© 2002

# 277

\$ 3.00

## North American Association for the Diaconate

NAAD is an association of persons and dioceses working for the diaconate and servant ministry within the Episcopal Church and Anglican Church of Canada. NAAD's mission is to promote the diaconate, educate the church, and support deacons in ministry. It encourages the development of diocesan diaconate programs to select, train, deploy and support deacons.

The diaconate in the Episcopal Church and the Anglican Church of Canada is an historic, ordained ministry, open to men and women. It includes a ministry of the liturgy, a ministry of care to those in need, and a ministry of leadership in service.

Current NAAD activities include:

- Establishing and facilitating communications among deacons and all ministers.
- A bimonthly newsletter *Diakoneo*.
- National, Provincial and international conferences on the diaconate.
- Sharing information on diocesan diaconate programs.
- Providing leadership and resources for diocesan and parish workshops and conferences on the diaconate.
- Maintaining active links among national churches and the Standing Commission on Ministry Development of the Episcopal Church.
- Publishing, gathering and selling resource materials on the diaconate.

The NAAD Working Papers are one implementation of the objective of making available resources to further insight and understanding of God's call for the ministry of deacons.

Deacon Edwin F. Hallenbeck, Editor

Centre for the Diaconate  
271 North Main Street  
Providence, Rhode Island 02903

# FORWARD

## Sixth New Orleans Conference... Works in Progress

NAAD's Sixth Deacon Directors Conference gathered at the Dominican Conference Center in New Orleans, site of five previous Conferences. Held March 15-17, 2002 this gathering not only continued the development of educational and formation structures begun in 1997 but looked seriously at additional matters of concern for deacons with a special emphasis on how deacon training programs are organized and carried out. The Vision Statement proposed and adopted by the NAAD Board in 1997 remains as a guide for the Conference and its work. You will find it on the back cover of this Working Paper.

The 2002 Conference was attended by 50 persons; 41 deacons, 7 presbyters and 2 laypersons. Of increasing importance were the 16 deacon Archdeacons present. Archdeacons provide support and oversight to the deacon community for the bishop in their respective dioceses. Altogether 33 Dioceses from the United States and three from Canada were represented.

It is clear that the work of the Conference is broadening. The fourth working group addressing concerns of *Administration and Support* has prepared a revised framework, which may be further expanded in future. Other groups are working on ideas that may be reflected in future reports. Statements are included from earlier task groups: *Guidelines for Formation of Deacons* addressing deacon training programs; *Spirituality* statement is unchanged, as is *Continual Learning*. With similar contents the title remains the same for this Working Paper, *Guidelines for Diaconal Programs, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition revised*.

These "working papers" are shared with the NAAD membership and others in order to encourage discussion and additional input as we seek to publish this important information for the benefit of the whole Church. Please direct your comments to the Centre for the Diaconate, or to the Facilitators of the Task Groups listed on the next page.

Edwin F. Hallenbeck  
Editor

The Task Groups reporting in this Working Paper represent works in progress. Your comments and input are welcome as the work continues. Please direct your comments to the leaders identified below.

Deacon Directors Conference

The Ven. Nancy B. Foote, Conference Coordinator  
1 Holmes Ave  
Baltimore, MD 21228  
Tel: 1-800-443-1399

e-mail— [n-a-foote@att.net](mailto:n-a-foote@att.net)

The Formation of Deacons

Deacon Keith McCoy  
312 Copperfield Lane  
Metuchen, NJ 08840  
Tel: 732-767-1733

Page 4  
e-mail— [kmccoy1@optionline.net](mailto:kmccoy1@optionline.net)

The Ven. P. Joyce Hardy, Diocese of Arkansas program  
PO Box 164668  
Little Rock, AR 72216  
Tel: 501-372-0294

Page 11  
e-mail— [jhardy@arkansas.anglican.org](mailto:jhardy@arkansas.anglican.org)

Deacon Spirituality

Deacon Lauren Welch  
7 Overpark Court  
Baltimore, MD 21234  
Tel: 410-668-4565

Page 21  
e-mail— [lmwelch@erols.com](mailto:lmwelch@erols.com)

Administration and Support

The Ven. David Nard  
14 Red Oak Road  
Asheville, NC 28804  
Tel: 704-254-0103

Page 26  
e-mail— [David.Nard@msj.org](mailto:David.Nard@msj.org)

Continual Learning

Dr. Roderick B. Dugliss  
1760 Pacific Ave. #10  
San Francisco, CA 94109  
Tel: 415-441-4140

Page 30  
e-mail— [rdugliss@sfd.edu](mailto:rdugliss@sfd.edu)

Centre for the Diaconate

Deacon Edwin F. Hallenbeck, Editor  
271 North Main Street  
Providence, RI 02903  
Tel: 401-737-6681

e-mail— [teddeacon@aol.com](mailto:teddeacon@aol.com)

## Introduction

A Work in Progress, by Susanne Watson  
Past President, NAAD

Let our lives and teaching so reflect God's commandments, that through us, many may come to know and love God. As Jesus came not to be served, but to serve, may we share in Christ's service, and come to the unending glory of him, who with God and the Holy Spirit, lives and reigns, one God, for ever and ever.

—*adapted from* The Book of Common Prayer  
p. 545, Ordination of a Deacon

In this we present our most current edition of *Guidelines for Deacon Programs*. As the title here suggests, the document is indeed a work in progress. From the first gathering of Formation Directors in 1997, through what has become an annual gathering, the directors of programs from the United States and Canada have attempted to listen to each other carefully about formation for the diaconate.

They have struggled to ensure, while creating meaningful guidelines, that flexibility in contact hours and forms of study remain flexible. In this edition, I have asked, in order to keep a dialogue going, and in order to honor the good work of those engaged in competency based learning, that we include an example of such a program.

The guidelines presented here, on behalf of the work done at formation directors' workshops, is reflective of the majority of those in attendance. We are aware, however, that as God continues to transform this church, there are dioceses where circumstances are dramatically different than those sometimes reflected in those gatherings. And we are aware that while we have begun to build consensus, we do not have unanimity.

Consistent with who we are as deacons, I believe it is extremely important to ensure that we are sensitive to the voices that are not easily heard, dioceses where there are not financial resources to send representatives to such meetings.

I believe as well that the church at large is looking to us for leadership in this area. So it is important to present, not only the models we know can provide meaningful guidelines, but that we show the importance of dialogue among many, along with ongoing assessment and fine-tuning of the programs we create.

We hope you find this helpful.

## The Formation of Deacons: Definitions, Guidelines, and Models

### *Introduction*

In 1995, a resolution was presented at the biannual NAAD conference asking that a survey of existing deacon formation programs be conducted, and following that, a conference of program directors be held. The impetus for the resolution was a sense of frustration among those involved with diaconal formation that every diocese was reinventing the wheel due to the lack of a common body of knowledge.

By 1997, a study had been conducted and the first meeting of program directors was held in New Orleans that February. Based on the discussion there, the outlined tasks were divided among three committees, one being Formation Guidelines. That committee's work continued by mail and at four subsequent New Orleans conferences.

What follows represents the work of the past five years. The questions that we are attempting to answer are: What does a deacon need to know? How does the church test that knowledge? Can we have programs which reflect the diversity of our dioceses, yet which provide commonalities so that a deacon with this knowledge and these skills can move into a new setting? How do we assure that a deacon in one place is much like a deacon in another place? These questions must ultimately be answered through the diaconal lens, which is a different perspective from that of priests, bishops, and laity. What has become clear is that the national canons related to the formation of deacons are inadequate to the task. The experiences of many people in diaconal formation has led not only to this committee's work but also to the request that the national canons be revised. That request was again brought to General Convention in 2000. It is hoped that this report, or a more refined version of it, will be a major part of those revisions. Before that point, however, we need to know if the wider community of deacons is in agreement with what we propose. We therefore invite your comments.

### *Philosophy of Diaconal Formation*

Diaconal ministry is an extension of the ministry of Christ, who came not to be served but to serve, and who commissioned the apostles to continue his work: "As the Father sent me, so I send you." The institution of the diaconate in the New Testament church was intended to maintain and expand the ministry of apostolic proclamation and to exhibit its inseparability from concern for the material, social, and economic needs of the people.

The New Testament records that the first deacons assumed social responsibilities on behalf of the apostles. In the patristic church deacons were the managers of the church's property and finances, and exercised pastoral care by taking the Eucharist to the sick and to those far away. By the Middle Ages, however, the office of deacon had become a transitional one towards priesthood but the diaconal function of assuming social responsibility was fulfilled instead by monastic orders, godly princes, and faithful bishops who were expected to

alleviate the burden of the poor. In Anglican tradition, churchwardens have been assigned a diaconal task in collecting alms for the poor. With the rise of the secular state the government took over diaconal functions, though no longer seeing it as a ministry. The consequence was that the church came to see its ministry as centered only on the gathered community.

In recent times, however, the church has recommitted itself to reclaiming the original wholeness of its ministry. The diaconate connects service with proclamation and worship. Ordained deacons personify, sacramentalize, and enable the ministry of service to which all are called at baptism. Therefore, deacons must be educated, accountable leaders who identify and facilitate servant ministry.

Deacons “interpret the church to the world and the world to the church”. Their translator / interpreter / linking function lies at the heart of diaconal ministry. Deacons are trained to understand, speak and explain the sacred and the secular in both realms. Deacons ask the probing questions in the world and the church, drawing each out of their places of complacency and comfort. Such challenging questions point to the life-giving presence of Christ eternally connecting the world and the church. It is essential that training under these guidelines occur through this probing “lens of diakonia”.

### *Study Areas*

The study areas listed below include the canonical subjects along with other subjects which would be of particular use to a prospective deacon. Also listed with each title is the suggested time frame — expressed both in hours and as a percentage of the total program — that area should be given in a formation program.

Program hours equal any combination of the following:

- teaching contact hours
- directed study
- student preparation
- formation and experiential events (as determined by each program)

### ***Diakoneo: Introduction, Theory, and Practice*** **160 hours/20%**

A foundational area, on which the rest of a formation program is based. The introduction should review the history and development of the diaconate, looking at the first centuries of the church, and the changes seen in this and other denominations from that time to the present. Integrated into this is a discussion of how changing needs have affected the use of deacons in different settings and times. This area should also explore: various areas that deacons minister in; the call of all Christians to serve others, and the role of the diaconate in that call; how to look at issues for the application of Christian belief and assistance; seeing the deacon as a bridge between the church and the world.

Through this, the student will demonstrate knowledge of group process in organizing and developing programs in ministry; will be able to identify needs in church and community; will be able to recruit, motivate, and inspire lay participation by communicating effectively, and foster continuity in these ministries; develop skills in the implementation and evaluation of projects; and model servant leadership in the congregation, the workplace, and the wider community.

**Spiritual Formation****80 hours/10%**

A student will develop, live, and be able to articulate a rule of life, which will include :

- a daily office;
- regular involvement in public worship;
- regular reading, meditation, and personal prayer;
- being under spiritual direction on a regular basis.

A student will also demonstrate knowledge of the history of spiritual formation in the church, including identification of major figures and spiritual classics through the centuries. S/he will participate in an on-going formation group for study, reflection, and support, and continue a group relationship after ordination. A deacon will demonstrate the ability and willingness to help other persons form and nurture their own spiritual growth, through support and study groups.

Most of all, this area of study should help a deacon learn to balance their secular vocation, their ministry, and their family in a spiritually healthy manner.

**Scripture****160 hours/20%**

After completing the program in this subject area, a student in diaconal formation will: have comprehensive knowledge of the Old and New Testaments; be able to outline the history of the biblical record, and identify the historical, social, and geographic context of the Bible; be able to describe the process of canonization of scripture, including the reasons for the development of the Canon; be familiar with various approaches to scriptural interpretation, and be able to identify and defend his/her approach in the context of his/her tradition; be able to identify and use exegetical tools, and be able to teach lay persons to do and evaluate exegetical work; be able to identify prophetic and servanthood themes in both testaments, and relate those themes, in preaching and daily ministry, to the needs of the world and the church's response to those needs; be aware of significant differences in the themes and approaches in the four Gospels, and know how to model the message of the Gospels in his/her servant and liturgical ministries.

**Theology and Doctrine**

*Theology and Doctrine contains three separate canonical areas: Christian Theology; Moral Theology and Ethics; and Contemporary Social Issues.*

**Christian Theology****40 hours/5%**

This is the study of classical theology, with emphasis on Trinitarian, incarnational, and sacramental Anglican or Lutheran theology (depending on the communion using these guidelines). This foundation is meant to enable diaconal students to articulate Christian theology and to "do" theology, i.e.; to bring theology to bear on the human situation. In addition, an overview of contemporary theological exploration should be included.

**Moral Theology and Ethics****40 hours/5%**

Deacons are called on regularly to wrestle with -- and to help others wrestle with -- issues of ethics and morality. Therefore, their knowledge of the

range of ethical and moral thought should be broad, encompassing both historical and contemporary moral theologians and ethicists, particularly within the Anglican tradition. Their education should include learning and practicing ways to integrate and apply moral theology to ethical praxis within the church and its ministry. Practical issues of ministry to those whose moral choices conflict with one's own should be faced and addressed within this study area.

### *Contemporary Social Issues* **40 hours/5%**

We seek to form deacons who: are sensitive to cultural contexts for ministry; have been exposed to diverse ethnic, social, gender, and economic backgrounds, and to our post-modern culture; and can minister in a variety of situations within the church/ world continuum. Deacons should be able to minister with openness, flexibility, and curiosity, and yet be willing to risk what is comfortable for what Christ calls us to. Contemporary Social Issues will involve students in learning situations which challenge their understanding of the different issues arising in today's society.

### *Church History* **80 hours/10%**

The foundational area of church history is designed to be both broad and exemplary in scope. It presents basic historical components of the Christian faith, from its origins through today, paying particular attention to political and social context, and the ways in which the church has challenged, celebrated, and reflected contemporary culture. This area should provide a deacon with the hermeneutical tools for understanding Christian life, community, and the call to ministry in partnership.

A deacon should be well grounded in the development of her/ his own tradition. Since ministry to the poor and the oppressed is inherently ecumenical, and indeed interfaith, a deacon must be formed with an understanding and appreciation of the traditions of other Christian communions, and of world religions.

### *Worship* **120 hours/15%**

The deacon is to bring the needs, concerns, and hopes of the world to the Church. This is exemplified by the deacon's role in the liturgies of the Church, as outlined in the rubrics. Primary to this area of instruction is the history, theology, and use of the church's principal liturgical books (especially from one's own tradition), with particular attention to the deacon's traditional functions in all the liturgies of the Church. In addition to a general introduction to liturgics, this area is also to include church music, vestments, homiletics (including public speaking), and ceremony. Instruction in the leadership of worship in the absence of a bishop/ presbyter, and the preparation and leadership of non-sacramental worship for a variety of contexts, is strongly encouraged.

### *Christian Evangelism and Education* **40 hours/5%**

In response to the threefold directive of the Great Commission, a deacon needs to integrate the areas of scripture, doctrine, theology, spirituality, ethics, pastoral care, worship, and the lessons of church history. The outcome should enable the deacon to form, educate, and support the people of God for the ministries to which they are called at baptism. Areas in which the deacon might

empower others include: the catechuminate; confirmation; Holy Eucharist; lay eucharistic ministers and visitors; youth and adult Christian education.

Since a deacon's ministry of evangelism is primarily a ministry of service to the world, we seek to form deacons who, in their public ministry, serve as spokespersons for the apostolic faith by working to alleviate poverty, misery, and ignorance, and by actively seeking peace and justice.

### ***Diocesan Requirements***

***40 hours/5%***

This refers to that part of training and formation which is contextual in nature. Every diocese has unique requirements for ministry and may wish to add other areas of study to this list. Examples might include orientation to specific support systems (i.e., Social Security, welfare), or ministry with particular ethnic groups, language cohorts, or geographical communities.

*The above sections represent the canonical requirements and "academic" portion of a program. A complete deacon formation program should also include the following areas.*

### ***Pastoral Training***

***one unit/400 hours***

This area is defined as a development of self-awareness, pastoral skills, and a ministry of presence through a special training program, in a peer group setting, under the guidance of an experienced supervisor. Such a program would offer a ministry-with-reflection, the outcome being the formation of deacons with pastoral skills, and the self-awareness to work comfortably with people very different from themselves.

### ***Field Work***

***200 hours***

Field work takes place in a parish or institutional setting outside a student's home parish, when possible, and with a supervisor skilled in supervision and committed to the diaconate. It includes a period of integration into the new setting, the design of a carefully articulated learning plan in conjunction with the supervisor and lay persons, and regular supervisory appointments. Through this the student will receive the experience of participating in a new style, form, and context for ministry. This time does not include Sunday worship.

The student will also be able to demonstrate a capacity for being integrated into a variety of settings for ministry, especially at different comfort levels, also showing flexibility, the ability to learn, interaction with peers, mentors, and those ministered to. Skills evidenced will be the ability to accept authority, to work within guidelines, and to be proactive.

Further, this will be an opportunity to demonstrate the capacity to encourage, nurture, and support lay persons in their ministries.

### ***Study Hours***

There are many ways to structure a deacon formation program within these guidelines. In the development of a program, a balance among the various study areas is recommended. What is outlined above is based on the experience of several diocesan programs.

We recognize that there are a variety of avenues for learning, especially in this electronic age. A deacon formation program should employ those techniques which are the most effective for its particular circumstances. While these guidelines may follow an academic outline, they are designed to be flexible enough to accommodate innovations. What is important is the content, not the delivery format.

Given that, the study areas listed above, and the hours and percentages assigned to them, should take into account the following learning experiences:

*Teaching Contact Hours:* typically, a gathering of students with a teacher. Traditionally, this occurs in a classroom setting, but today it can also be accomplished through conference calls, or video or computer conferencing. This route implies a group setting, with group discussion.

*Directed Study:* the time spent by a student in contact with a teacher or mentor, in a one-on-one exploration of a particular topic. This definition would also include such follow-up activities as assigned reading / viewing / listening of specific works, and analysis of what has been explored for further discussion and discovery.

*Student Preparation:* the time spent by a student in preparation and/or follow-up to classroom or other learning experiences. This would include study groups.

*Formation and Experiential Events:* these learning experiences would include retreats, conferences, parish activities (if directed by the formation program and designed to be a growth experience), placement for ministry exploration in new settings, supervised chaplaincy experiences, and the like.

Overall, any time spent in the education of a potential deacon through direction and supervision should be counted towards the recommended study areas above.

### *Potential Models for Deacon Formation Programs*

These guidelines do not recommend any one method for forming deacons. Rather, they are only concerned with providing a potential deacon with the tools to embark on an effective ministry. No one's education is ever complete, however, and all deacons are strongly encouraged to continue their learning after ordination, see Section on *Continual Learning*, page 31.

Many formats have been developed over the past few years, and other methods have been employed in other fields. Below are seven models for deacon formation program, suitable for most every size diocese. Variations on, or combinations of, these models might also be developed.

#### *A) Large group\* / Class Style*

In this model, a program is developed which includes a set schedule of classes. Students are admitted as a group, and attend all classes and activities together during the program. Succeeding groups of students would start in

---

\* Large is defined as eight or more, small being seven or fewer.

subsequent years and go through an identical program. This model helps to create a close community, but persons who are ready to begin formation and who miss the start of one series of classes must wait for the next group to accumulate.

*B) Large group / rolling admissions*

Here, a series of courses is scheduled over a period of several years (much like a mini-academy), with the object that a student can enter at any time and, in the course of approximately three years, complete all the required courses, in any order. This creates a broader community, but requires more administrative oversight to track the variety of start dates.

*C) Small group / tutorial*

This could be run like either A or B above, but on a more informal basis. More individualized instruction could be designed into such a program

*D) Individual instruction*

Similar to "reading for orders", a student would work with a supervisor to develop a schedule of readings, projects, and meetings with specified tutors, and report back to the supervisor regularly.

*E) Independent study*

Unlike D, a student in this model would not necessarily meet directly with a supervisor, but would communicate by video or computer with a supervisor at a remote site. Instruction would take place the same way. While heavily dependent upon technology, this would allow students in remote locations to take advantage of teachers in any location, and perhaps even participate in a range of diocesan programs, based on need and interest. A diocese might support such a program by loaning the necessary equipment to a student for the duration.

*F) Semi-annual / intensive*

Two week-long retreats would be scheduled each year, during which students from a diocese or several dioceses would gather with faculty at a center for an intensive series of classes, tutorials, demonstration, and the like. Assignments would be given at the conclusion of each retreat, to be mailed to a program coordinator according to a calendar. Approximately half the program hours could be satisfied during three years of semi-annual retreats, the remaining hours being met with directed study, readings, conference calls, etc.

*G) Experiential or Competency Based*

The national canons require that persons being ordained be certified as proficient in seven areas. Certification, however, is not further defined. Dioceses which prefer to emphasize the skills a deacon needs in preference to information may set up a program where a student spends less time in an academic setting, and more time exploring actual opportunities for service. In this type of a program, learning would be more concerned with how to apply particular skills to a variety of ministries, with less emphasis on classroom work. See Diocese of Arkansas program, following.

## A Competency-Based Deacon Formation Program

The Diocese of Arkansas

In the Diocese of Arkansas, there are learning outcomes in each of the canonical areas. Because people have had different experiences and educational backgrounds and because people have different learning styles, how competency is demonstrated may vary from one person to another. It is up to the participant and the examining chaplain in each area to determine how and when competencies will be demonstrated.

At any time, a postulant may contact any of the seven examining chaplains and ask to meet with them to propose how they will demonstrate competency in their canonical area based on the learning outcomes. For example, a person might contact the Theory and Practice Examining Chaplain. One of the learning outcomes in this area is *the ability to describe the ministry and the role of the laos and each of the three orders*. One person might write a paper, one person might teach a class and videotape it, one person might have a discussion with the examining chaplain. When this is done and how this is done is decided upon by the postulant and the examining chaplain. When all of the learning outcomes have been achieved (competency demonstrated), the examining chaplain writes a letter to the bishop and copies it to the participant and the Deacon Formation Director.

In reality, no one ever *fails* a learning outcome; they're just asked to do some more work: read a book, take a course, work with a mentor. Most of the examining chaplains love to teach and are most willing to help direct or teach so that the participants do become competent.

Two Examining Chaplains are in attendance at each of the quarterly Deacon Formation Weekends to make presentations, to teach classes, to lead seminars, and to meet with the participants.

Before a postulant can apply for candidacy, she/he must have demonstrated competency in at least three areas. This was done to have some kind of report similar to the seminary evaluation. Before a candidate can apply for ordination, he/she must have demonstrated competency in all seven areas.

Since those who begin the Deacon Formation Program may be on different time lines and working in different areas, they may not all be ordained at the same time. The Bishop announces two ordination dates each year, in the spring and in the fall. People can make plans accordingly.

## Deacon Formation Program Diocese of Arkansas Competency Expectations

Before a candidate is ordained as a deacon, she/he must demonstrate the following skills and competencies. *An understanding* does not imply mastery; it does mean that the Candidate understands the information/concept well enough to be able to use it in her his ministry in the church and in the world.

### General Learning

The Candidate will demonstrate:

- the ability to integrate knowledge and experience.
- an awareness of the implicit connections between all canonical areas of study.
- an awareness of the impact of the deacons' ministry on those with whom he/she is in relationship.
- skills in conflict management.
- skills required to empower individuals and groups.
- skills for raising awareness about contemporary issues.
- an understanding of the deacon as interpreter and catalyst.
- skills in community coalition-building.
- skills in working with volunteers.
- skills in group dynamics.
- skills in communicating the presence of Christ.

### Contemporary Society\*\*

The Candidate will demonstrate:

- the ability to identify and to analyze social justice issues facing the Church today.
- the ability to discern the local language and/or cultural speech and customs.
- an understanding of the principles and methods of social ministry.
- a working knowledge of referral sources.
- the ability to articulate a range of viewpoints about at least two contemporary issues.
- an understanding of the dynamics of advocacy in social ministry.
- the ability to distinguish the differences between a *crisis*, and an *emergency*, and a *problem*.
- knowledge of Episcopal Church's policy on a variety of social issues and/or the knowledge of how to find the policy.

---

\*\* one of the required canonical areas.

- a commitment to the dynamics of non-violent social change (i.e., political action, grassroots organizing, and economic action).

## Ethics and Moral Theology\*\*

The Candidate will demonstrate:

- an awareness of steps and issues in the process of making ethical decisions.
- the ability to articulate her/his own belief system of personal conduct as it relates to the ethical standards of a Christian in society today.
- the ability to articulate the ethical issues of authority.
- the ability to articulate the ethical issues of ministry.
- the ability to articulate the relationship between ethics and contemporary social issues.
- knowledge of resources for making ethical decisions.
- the ability to articulate the several understandings of Christian ethics and responsibility for taking action on any social issue.
- an understanding of the history of Christian spirituality.

## Church History\*\*

The Candidate will demonstrate:

- an understanding of and an ability to integrate major themes of Church history.
- an understanding of how the historical events preceding and throughout Jesus' ministry affected his life and teachings.
- an understanding of the historical issues and causes of change in the Church.
- the ability to articulate the development of the Anglican Church beginning with its Celtic roots and continuing through other periods such as the Reformation and Oxford Movement.
- the ability to articulate the development of the Episcopal Church in the United States.
- the ability to articulate the development of the Episcopal Church in Arkansas.
- the ability to explain the roles and significance of church centers such as Rome, Alexandria, Antioch, and Constantinople in the missionary expansion into Western Europe.
- knowledge and context of the Historical Documents in *The Book of Common Prayer*.
- an understanding of the governance of the Episcopal Church on the local, convocational, diocesan, provincial and national levels.

---

\*\* one of the required canonical areas.

- the ability to articulate how revisions of *The Book of Common Prayer* have influenced changes in ministry and liturgical practices.
- the ability to identify and explain the significance of the development of Scripture, creeds, ministry, and early Christian practices.
- the ability to define *heresy*, and demonstrate an understanding of the major heresies throughout Church history.

## **Liturgy\*\***

The Candidate will demonstrate:

- an understanding of the role of the deacon in a variety of liturgical settings.
- an understanding of the role of the deacon in these settings.
- facility with *The Book of Common Prayer, Lesser Feasts and Fasts, Book of Occasional Services, Supplementary Liturgical Text, Hymnal 1982* and other appropriate resources.
- the ability to identify the ministries of all four orders and their appropriate roles in the liturgy.
- skills in sermon preparation, delivery, and public reading.

## **Pastoral Care\*\***

The Candidate will demonstrate:

- an understanding of the dynamics of pastoral care.
- a knowledge of the family systems theory and its applications for pastoral care.
- an ability to be an effective pastor during life transitions and in a variety of settings, including the institutional setting.
- an understanding of the components of interpersonal communications.
- skills in providing pastoral care in issues surrounding ethical decision-making.
- an understanding of self-care and self-awareness in the role of pastoral care-giver.
- an understanding of boundaries, with the use of personal limits and appropriate referrals.
- an understanding of the dynamics of *expectations* in both the giver and the receiver roles of a pastoral care relationship.

---

\*\* one of the required canonical areas.

## Scripture\*\*

The Candidate will demonstrate:

- an understanding of events, figures, and themes in the Bible and how they relate to each other.
- an understanding of what the Bible says about doctrine.
- knowledge about the Law codes.
- the ability to work with different forms of biblical literature.
- the ability to identify books of the Bible and the Apocrypha.
- the ability to explain the dating of biblical materials.
- the ability to explain the source theory of biblical development.
- the ability to identify and articulate the major themes and the importance of the Pentateuch, the 12 books of the prophets, the Writings, the Gospels and the epistles.
- an understanding of the evolution of prophecy from Hebrew scripture through the New Testament.
- the ability to exegete a passage of Scripture for use in ministry and sermon preparation.
- the ability to explain the historical and theological relationship between the Hebrew Scriptures and the New Testament.
- the ability to identify the Synoptic Gospels and their relationship with the Gospel of John.
- the ability to explain the development of the early Church, using the Book of Acts and the epistles.
- a knowledge of available reference resources.
- the ability to use the Bible as story in diaconal ministry.
- learn to use Scripture in personal life and spiritual formation.
- a sensitivity to the ways in which persons of other traditions come to the Christian story.

## Theology\*\*

The Candidate will demonstrate:

- the ability to articulate how Scripture, tradition, and reason form the foundation for Anglican theology.
- a basic knowledge of the traditional areas of systematic theology.
- the ability to articulate a method for discerning the theological implications of a contemporary issue.
- an understanding of the historical development and theological meaning of the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds.

---

\*\* one of the required canonical areas.

- the ability to articulate how contemporary theology has been affected by feminist, liberation, creation, African American, and Native American theologies.
- knowledge of the theological positions taken in the Catechism of *The Book of Common Prayer*.
- the ability to articulate some of the unique contributions of Anglican theology.
- the ability to articulate a personal theology including personal preferences and biases.
- an understanding of the theological foundations of one's own spirituality.

### **Theory and Practice of Ministry\*\***

The Candidate will demonstrate:

- the ability to describe the ministry area and role of each of the four orders.
- the ability to describe a program of pastoral care for the local congregation.
- knowledge of the outreach ministries within the community, how to access their services, and what volunteer opportunities they provide.
- an understanding of how each of the canonical areas impacts his/her personal ministry and diaconal ministry.
- a contextual understanding of the internal dynamics of a congregation within a community and the differences in the roles of the priest, the laity, and the deacon.
- a knowledge of national and diocesan canons.

### **Personal Spiritual Formation**

The Candidate will be expected to develop an accountable plan for spiritual formation. This might include spiritual direction (not with one's Mentor) and/or the development of a rule of life.

---

\*\* one of the required canonical areas.

## Deacon Formation Program Formation Requirements Diocese of Arkansas

In order for an individual to be ordained to the diaconate in the Diocese of Arkansas, she/he will:

- meet all canonical requirements.
- Participate in two-five years of the Deacon Formation Weekends.
- Complete at least two units of field education.

Other recommendations:

- The Aspirant/Postulant/Candidate will keep the Bishop informed of his/her process through Ember Day letters.
- The Aspirant/Postulant/Candidate will resign from all positions of governance within her/his congregation and diocese.

### *Editors Note:*

To assist the reader in understanding how the Diocese of Arkansas Deacon Formation Program actually works, there follows the framework for the skill/competency area of *Theory and Practice of Ministry*, one of the canonically required areas of competence.

Deacon Joyce Hardy, Examining Chaplain for *Theory and Practice of Ministry*, states for each competency requirement how it may be explored and ways by which each skill/competency might be demonstrated. As noted in the introduction to the Diocese of Arkansas program, ongoing conversation between persons in the program and Examining Chaplains is expected so that appropriate assessment may be designed for each skill.

**Theory and Practice of Ministry**  
**Deacon Formation Program — Diocese of Arkansas**  
**Examining Chaplain: Joyce Hardy**

The Candidate will demonstrate:

- the ability to describe the ministry and role of the four orders
- A. Prepare an Inquirer's Class that would include the ministry of the baptized and the orders within that ministry. Either videotape the presentation of this lesson or present this lesson to a group. Be sure to include materials for all the learning styles (eg. Visuals, reflections, experience, metaphors, spoken word, etc.)
- B. You are asked by someone at a church conference to explain what a deacon is. How would you answer this person briefly and clearly?
- the ability to describe a program of pastoral care for the local congregation
- A. Visit an Episcopal congregation and another local congregation. How does each congregation respond to the needs of its members who are: a) hospitalized, b) chronically ill, c) grieving, d) going through a divorce, e) being terminated from a job, f) new members, g) other? Using this information, develop a comprehensive pastoral care program for your congregation or for another congregation.
- knowledge of the outreach ministries within the community, how to access their services, and what volunteer opportunities they provide.
- A. Research what the outreach ministries within your community are. Make a directory. Be sure to include those who provide shelter, meals, food, clothing, utility assistance, medical assistance, transportation assistance, child care, job training/referral, youth ministry, etc. Make visits to a majority of these ministries. Find out:
  - a. Who is eligible to receive their services?
  - b. What services are provided?
  - c. Where is the outreach ministry located?
  - d. What proof of eligibility and/or identity is needed?
  - e. Where does the funding for this ministry come from?
  - f. What are the hours/days of operation?
  - g. What are this ministry's special/seasonal projects?

h. What are the volunteer opportunities available at this ministry's programs?

You may work with others to develop this directory, but each candidate should be able to refer a person with particular needs to the appropriate agency/organization.

- an understanding of how each of the canonical areas impacts his/her personal ministry and diaconal ministry.

Explain how a deacon will use the knowledge and skills from each of the canonical areas in the formation of her/his identity as a deacon and in his/her ministry. What does a deacon need to know in each of these areas? Why?

- a contextual understanding of the internal dynamics of a congregation within a community and the differences in the roles of the priest, the laity, and the deacon.

Either write a paper or give a presentation to describe the following, keeping in mind the leadership, how decisions are made, and how programs are planned and implemented: family sized church, pastoral size church, program size church, and corporate size church.

Interview the priest, senior warden, a member of the lay staff, one other leader, and the deacon of at least one congregation from at least three of the following categories of church size: family, pastoral, program, and corporate.

Consider the following questions:

- a. What are your expectations of a priest as a minister? As a person?
- b. What are your expectations of lay leadership in their role as ministers? As people?
- c. What are your expectations of a deacon as a professional? As a person?
- d. What are your expectations of a bishop as a minister? As a person?
- e. How would ministry be hindered if any of these ministers were not able to use their gifts?
- f. How would ministry be enhanced if these ministers were better able to use their gifts?

Be prepared to discuss expectations of others and of yourself for ministers/those in authority. Reflect on the ways that these expectations will make a difference in your own ministry.

□ a knowledge of national and diocesan canons

A written exam and discussion will ensure that the candidate knows the basic structure of canon law and particularly canons which affect a deacon's ministry, ordination, and authority.

### **Bibliography**

*Are All Christians Ministers?* J.M.Collins, Dwyer and Lovell, 1992

*Many Servants: An Introduction to Deacons.* Ormonde Plater, Cowley, 1991

*Servanthood.* Bennett J. Sims, Cowley, 1997

*The Diaconate: A Full and Equal Order.* J.M. Barnett, Trinity Press, 1995

*Deacons in the Liturgy.* Ormonde Plater, Morehouse, 1992

*The Diaconate as Ecumenical Opportunity: The Hanover Report.* Anglican Communion Publications, 1996 (I will distribute copies)

*Ministry in Daily Life: A Guide to Living the Baptismal Covenant.* Episcopal Church Center, 1996

Additional resources as appropriate

## Deacon Spirituality

*The Working Committee on Deacon Spirituality has functioned as a repository for shared information and a vessel in which all participants could pool their experiences. The work of the committee has been to share the journeys of deacons as individuals as well as corporate entities. It is a consensus of the participants that the essence of the deacon is in her or his spiritual relationship with God and an understanding of the nature of the unique call that is already present within. At the 2000 Conference a section on deacon burnout was added.*

### Definitions:

#### **The vocation of a deacon is to dance on the edge:**

- To bear light in the midst of darkness.
- To proclaim truth in the midst of dishonesty and indifference.
- To blur the boundaries between sacred and profane.

#### **The spirituality of a deacon is marked by:**

- Compassion for oneself and others.
- Belief that Christ [the divine] is to be found in the depths of humanness.
- Conviction that unity overcomes estrangement.
- Hope that joy conquers despair.

#### **The [dormant] spirituality of diakonia may be enlivened by:**

- Calling forth the servant ministry from the community of the baptized.
- Discovering Christ in the outsider and/or outcast.
- Experiencing Christ in those on the periphery.
- Encountering Christ in one's deepest self.
- Embracing Christ in the Exile.

#### **The spirituality of diakonia may be informed by:**

- Theology of ministry rooted in baptism.
- Our life in the community of the People of God.
- Being surprised by joy.
- Reading Scripture [and the lives of the saints].
- Communing with Christ as encountered apart from Word and Sacraments.
- Remembering and interpreting the story of God's people.

## **The Spiritual Formation of Deacons Includes:**

Recognizing the needs of deacons to mold the inner spirituality, the group has discussed guidelines for growth and expansion that enables self-creation and further opens the deacon to new possibilities without repressing nor understating the importance of the individual's journey.

### **Developing a Disciplined Prayer Life**

Experiencing a variety of liturgical expressions and traditions of prayer to aid the deacons in finding the places of their restoration

Broadening definitions of "Prayer" to include:

- Humor and laughter.
- Body movement.
- Singing and music making.
- Simplifying one's life style.
- Re-creation and creativity.

Programs and Deacons need to Develop and Attend to Support Structures through:

- Work with a Spiritual Director
- Colleagues
- Friends and Family
- Learning techniques of time and stress management [stress is not the same as distress]
- Field Work and Theological Reflection of those experiences need to be met in the context of a community, not as individuals.
- Increased self-awareness — Asking "Who are You?"
- Utilizing Twelve Steps/Oxford Group type discussions.
- Enabling each other to bring to light and make friends with the shadow.
- Becoming able to recognize [and articulate] one's encounter(s) with the Holy.
- Reflecting on what one's experiences say about that one's own relationship with God.

While from the outside the spirituality of diakonia appears to be Lukan with its preferential option for the poor; for those living the spirituality of diakonia, it is actually Johannine with its emphasis on the interconnectedness / interrelatedness of all things.

## Discernment Process and Spiritual Formation

The group has specific recommendations as well as some areas of concern for programs dealing with the issue of spiritual formation.

### Definitions:

**GIFTS:** God gives to each individual unique gifts (talents and skills) for service to one another. The Baptized community is called to identify and affirm the gifts of each person. All gifts are essential to establish community and require nurture and preparation for the service that is desired. As each gift is nourished, new gifts become apparent at the time the community is in need of particular gifts.

**CALL:** God calls all of us out of our baptism. Call is a continual experience of enlightenment that opens one to hear a new way to use and develop ones gifts. Call is being open to risk, turning the world upside down, stepping into the unknown. Call comes from within oneself and /or community and is affirmed by both self and community.

**DISCERNMENT:** Discernment is an ongoing lifelong faith journey involving: the individual; the community; praying; retelling the story and finding one's own place in it; affirmation of present gifts and skills; exploring and pondering ways to risk change/resurrection. Discernment is a process of risking, growing and searching for new ways to use our God given gifts in service to God's world.

### Elements/Components of the Discernment Process and Spiritual Formation include opportunities for:

- Spiritual Direction
- Spiritual Disciplines
- Prayer and Meditation
- Scripture Study
- Experiential Learning
- Opportunity to live in ambiguity

1. The impact of the vocation of deacon on the self of the deacon (i.e. the need to live in ambiguity and to be able to fluctuate sensitively between servant leadership and prophetic ministries.)

2. The specific needs of deacon spiritual life. (i.e. The need to work under spiritual direction, to be intentional about spiritual discipline, to engage in regular meditation and prayer--especially intercessory prayer and to work to understand what it means to live out our Baptismal Covenant and to operate from a theology of abundance.)

3. There are Programmatic components of diaconal spiritual discernment and formation in the light of 1 & 2. We talked about the need to engage in experiential learning within the context of a safe community environment that would be provided programmatically. (via, the use of groups, course work, individual work, intentional exercises which would push / expose the students to a variety of spiritual and theological traditions and encourage the students to question and reflect critically on their own belief system.) We talked about the fact that often our belief systems are driven more by psychological and emotional factors than by theological /religious systems or beliefs. Those psychological factors might be the particular personality type of the student driving, for instance, her/his prayer preference; or, it might be a psychological or emotional problem driving a belief system

4. Psychological / emotional impact on spirituality / theology is both positively and in some cases negatively.

5. Sometimes, unfortunately, our spiritual and theological beliefs are the result of pathology. The points being that our programs need to watch and challenge these.

### **What Refreshes / Renews Deacons? Where do Deacons go for strength and nurture?\***

Deacons find refreshment, renewal, strength and nurture:

Within a community of deacons, sharing mutual ministry. It is very important to gather deacons together as often as possible to share what is happening in the deacon's ministry and life.

Places in community where:

- the deacon is a *person* not a role. The deacon is renewed, strengthened and nurtured when known for diakonia rooted in Baptism of the Christian Community.
- the deacon is given *positive affirmation* and *constructive criticism*.
- the deacon sees positive changes (no matter how small) or that things have not gotten worse within the situation the deacon is working.
- there are new ideas, new ways that are creatively being shared.
- the deacon senses diaconal identity as a deacon in non-liturgical setting.
- the deacon shares the excitement, frustration, commitment of diaconal ministry.

---

\* New section added in 2000

- the deacon travels. Meeting people of different ethnic groups and culture enlarges the world of the deacon. God also becomes bigger for the deacon.
- the deacon participates in 'Spiritually Connected' relationships.
- there is laughter and even in the midst of pain and suffering.
- the deacon is involved in a hobby like camping, stamp collecting or needle point.
- the deacon is doing something involving closure. Much of the ministry a deacon does not come to closure.

Places of Solitude:

- Gardening.
- Woodworking.
- Quiet times alone.

How do we encourage the deacon to take time to renew, strengthen and nurture his/her ownself?

- Ask—What do you do to refresh / renew / strengthen / nurture yourself?
- Model —refreshing /renewing / strengthen / and nurturing ourselves.
- Give permission to refresh / renew / strengthen / nurture.
- Make time in curriculum to refresh/ renew / strengthen / nurture.
- Do an Inventory:
  - What is going right?
  - What is going wrong?
  - What is there to celebrate?
  - What is there I do not want to do again?

## Administration and Support of the Diaconate

*Based on the work of the Committee on Administration and Support of the Diaconate, called together at the 1999, 2000 and 2001 NAAD Deacon Directors Conferences, the following suggested guidelines are offered for use in Diocesan structures for the support of Diaconate programs. In all areas the relationship to the Bishop needs to be clear.*

The group identified four areas of concern for discussion and development:

- Administration and Supervision.
- Deacon Assignments and Deployment.
- Vocation and Recruitment.
- Church structure and Ministry.

These areas were affirmed at our year 2001 meeting, and the following is a compilation of these three initial meetings where we agreed to focus on discussion and information development rather than on problem solving. What follows is an outline identifying items appropriate for inclusion in describing how a diaconate program might function. We further recognize that there will be wide variations in these matters from one diocese to another.

### Administration and Supervision:

#### A. Job description of Archdeacon or Director-

##### 1. Administrative Duties:

- Includes specifics of:
  - Chain of authority
  - Number of hours expected to work
  - Which committees or commissions to serve on
  - Input and process for deacon assignments and deployment
  - Expectation for communication to deacons and the diocese
  - Annual reports and evaluations
  - Covenants and Letters of Agreement
  - Oversight of Diaconate budget

##### 2. Pastoral Duties:

- Includes responsibilities for:
  - Consulting with the Bishop about pastoral concerns
  - Having a regular structure for communicating with the deacons
  - Keeping in communication with deacon's supervisors
  - Informing the Bishop about any conflicts or concerns relative to deacons or diaconal ministry

3. Relationship to the Formation Process:
    - Includes details of the formation structure:
    - Who is in charge of diaconal formation
    - How does the Archdeacon or Director relate to the structure
    - Role with inquirers, lay committees, and the COM
  4. Liturgical Duties:
    - Includes expectations for diocesan liturgies and parish assignment:
    - Role in Diocesan Liturgies
    - Role in Diaconate Ordinations
    - Celebration of Deacon's New Ministry assignment
    - Parish assignment, if one required, and details
- B. Description of a Deacon's Council or Committee on the Diaconate–
1. Purpose of the council or committee
  2. Areas of the council or committee
    - Membership and structure
    - Appointment or election process
  2. Membership and structure Appointment or election process
  3. Development of Guidelines or a Manual and Customary for Deacons
  4. Diaconate programming responsibilities
    - Annual meeting
    - Deacon's retreat
    - Social functions
    - Education and training events–
  5. Avenues for exploring diaconal ministry concerns
  6. Budget suggestions
- C. Formation Process–
1. Director of Formation
    - Authority structure
    - Relationship to Archdeacon/Director
  2. Outline of methods and expectations \*
  3. Outline of subjects, competencies, and instructions \*
  4. Time and expense expectations
    - \* (*consistent with NAAD guidelines*)

### **Deacon Assignments and Deployment:**

- A. Diocesan policy on assignments–
1. Home parish or other
  2. Length of assignments

3. Deacons process for participating in assignment
  4. Policy when a Rector or Priest in Charge vacancy occurs
- B. Annual reporting–
1. Policy on reporting
  2. Process for evaluation of the deacon's ministry
- C. Ministry needs–
1. Process for identifying ministries needed in the diocese
  2. How responses to ministry needs occur
- D. Transfer to a new Diocese–
1. Process of accountability until transfer is complete
  2. Guidelines for:
    - receiving
    - licensing a deacon
    - transferring
  3. Letters Dimissory
- E. Retirement–
1. Canonical requirements
  2. Bishops policy
    - Continued licensing and agreements

### **Vocation and Recruitment:**

- A. Guidelines for the ordination process–
1. How to inquire
  2. Requirements for eligibility
  3. Special diversity/minority concerns
- B. Identifying Deacon Vocations–
1. Qualities sought in a Deacon
  2. Discernment questions
  3. Parish Lay committees

### **Church Structure and Ministry:**

- A. The Community of Deacons–
1. Provisions for the community of deacons to gather
  2. How the deacons live out the Bishops ministry of outreach
  3. Special ministries and expectations of the deacons –

- 
- B. Relationship to the church at large–
    - 1. Developing a program that is consistent with the National Canons and is acceptable to other dioceses
    - 2. More standard competencies in deacon formation and performance
    - 3. Working for consensus among Bishops about the Diaconate
    - 4. Encourage consideration of deacons for election/appointment to National Church bodies.
  
  - C. Empowerment for ministry–
    - 1. Consistency in voting practices
    - 2. Representation of the Diaconal voice
    - 3. Requirements for continuing education
    - 4. Outlines for facilitating lay ministry
  
  - D Accountability–
    - 1. Clear expectations about diocesan participation
    - 2. Attendance at diocesan and clergy meetings and events
    - 3. Appropriate use of clergy privileges and responsibilities

As stated in the beginning, we realize that this framework is limited to an outline at this stage, but we hope to continue, and begin a process that leads to the development of some standards and norms for those responsible for assisting the Bishop with the administrative oversight of diaconal programs.

## Continual Learning

After intense discussion the Work Group on Continual Learning adopted the following statement concerning the imperative for deacons to be involved in continuous learning and growth regarding their faith and ministry:

**Being deacons demands that we intentionally and continually respond to God's shaping of our identities, knowledge, skills, and attitudes as it is experienced in relationships within the Church and the world.**

This statement is commended to NAAD, to Program Directors and to all deacons as acknowledgment that the formation process does not end, and may really only begin, at the point of ordination. Like all who are baptized into the mystery of Christ's Body, we must strive to continuously grow in our knowledge and acceptance of this gift. As ordained persons we are further required to work to enhance our effectiveness in the carrying out those vows which we made at our ordinations.

Undergirding this statement the Work Group makes the following four recommendations:

**1. That NAAD needs to take an affirmative position with regard to the need for parishes and dioceses to make provision for continual learning for deacons by providing resources, finances, planning and encouragement. Such support should be a part of the covenant relationship between individual deacons and the parishes or dioceses where they serve.**

*Rationale:* Not only is it incumbent on deacons to maintain their skill, knowledge and competencies to carry out their ministries, but the Church which set them apart for this ministry and provided for the initial formation should also participate in their continual learning. Such participation should include the conscious creation of learning opportunities, provision of financial resources to allow deacons to participate in regional and national conferences, and willingly allowing time away from parochial and diocesan duties for the deacon to pursue growth opportunities.

**2. In addition to addressing the learning necessary to promote the specific servant-ministry which a deacon might be involved in at any given time, each deacon's learning plan should include the following elements:**

- continuation of the formation process which existed prior to ordination.
- maintenance and enhancement of the basic competencies which were required for ordination (including those subject areas contained in the Canons).
- provision for ongoing spiritual development.
- attention to what it means to be a deacon and the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary to provide servant-leadership.

*Rationale:* A certain level of foundational knowledge along with progress in spiritual development are expected of those seeking ordination to the diaconate. As in all fields of endeavor it is not reasonable to assume that "once learned, always retained." It is important, therefore that those involved in diaconal ministry, work at maintaining and going beyond what was expected for ordination. As members of the clergy, deacons are responsible for seeing that their level of knowledge and spiritual practice is appropriate for their roles on the life of the Church.

**3. NAAD could have an important role in developing a norm for continual learning for deacons which can be recommended to dioceses. Inherent in this role would be assistance in the development and dissemination of learning materials and resources.**

*Rationale:* Although canonically resident in a diocese and serving in a specific locale, deacons were ordained to represent Christ and the whole Church. It is very possible that moves to other dioceses and locales may occur. It is reasonable, then, that a national norm for continual learning be established much as the canons provide a norm for preparation for ordination. NAAD as the national association representing deacons would be the obvious body to work for the establishment of such a norm.

It is also apparent that many of the smaller dioceses and those without diocesan schools for diaconal formation, lack the financial and human resources to carry out an adequate program of continual learning for deacons. NAAD could both serve as a clearinghouse to make resources developed in one diocese available to others as well as fostering the development of continual learning materials which could be made available for local adaptation.

**4. NAAD should promote an expectation that all deacons will be involved in a program of continual learning throughout their ministries which includes a significant commitment of time and energy.**

*Rationale:* Although it is tempting to suggest some quantitative standard for continual learning similar to the Continuing Education Units (CEUS) required by many professions, the Work Group was not prepared to recommend such an action. There is some doubt as to whether such requirements have really worked to motivate those who would not otherwise have engaged in continual learning. Additionally, the needs of individuals vary considerably, and a quantitative standard may serve to either demand more of some than is needed or for some to stop at a point which has not met their individual needs. There is also the problem of the bureaucracy required to administer a program of mandatory CEUs.

By far the preferred course is for a respected body such as NAAD to use its stature to persuade members of the diaconate of their need and obligation to participate in a meaningful program of continual learning. Such an expectation could be communicated in NAAD publications and at NAAD sponsored events.

Ultimately, the responsibility for continual learning rests with each individual deacon and their commitment to the vows they took and the ministry to which they dedicated themselves. Program Directors can do a great deal within their diocese to promote this commitment among the deacons and the support of continual learning by diocesan and parochial leadership. On a broader level, NAAD can strongly and affirmatively advocate with both deacons and church leadership to build a consensus of expectation and support for continual learning by those who have committed themselves to diaconal ministry. To the extent that effective formation programs have served to establish the credibility and effectiveness of the diaconate, a commitment by all who are interested in diaconal ministry to continual learning by deacons will help to maintain the integrity of these ministries.



# North American Association for the Diaconate

## Working Papers

NAAD publishes from time to time Working Papers on topics of interest to the community of deacons and others concerned with the ministry of deacons. These papers are not intended to be definitive statements, rather they are offered as ideas and material available to the community for discussion, use and comment.

Please make use of working paper material and give us your thoughts and views. Please send us your comments addressed either to the author(s) or NAAD at the address on the inside of the front cover.

## Working Paper Series

Edwin F. Hallenbeck, *Trial Liturgy for Celebration of Deacon's Ministry*, 1996.

Edwin F. Hallenbeck, ed. *Guidelines for Diaconal Formation*, 1999. *out of print*

Edwin F. Hallenbeck, ed. *Guidelines for Deacon Programs*, 2002, revised edition.



## **New Orleans Vision Statement**

A deacon is a baptised person called and empowered by God and the Christian community to be an icon illuminating Christ as a model of servanthood for all people.

The role of the deacon in liturgy mirrors the role of deacon in church and world.

The personal gifts the church looks for in a deacon include spiritual maturity, compassion and flexibility. Under the authority of the bishop and church the deacon serves as evangelist and catalyst with others.

The deacon fulfills this calling through action and example as servant leader, witness, intercessor, facilitator, visionary, nurturer, and interpreter among diverse people. The deacon is messenger and proclaimer of Christ's presence among us.

*Proposed at the Deacon Directors Conference and edited by the Board of Directors of North American Association for the Diaconate.*

*February 1997*

**NORTH AMERICAN ASSOCIATION FOR THE DIACONATE**

Centre for the Diaconate  
271 North Main Street  
Providence, Rhode Island 02903  
401-455-0521

Write or call for a list of other publications and materials relating to deacons and diaconal ministry.