



A permanent deacon is, in most cases, a married man with secular employment. His main concerns are his family, his job and his ministry, in that order.

May permanent deacons be either married or single?

Yes. A permanent deacon may be married or single. The Second Vatican Council decreed that the diaconate, when it was restored as a permanent order in the Church, could be opened to “mature married men.” This is in keeping with the ancient tradition of the Church, in which both single and married men were ordained into diaconal ministry. Also in keeping with ancient practice, if the wife of an ordained permanent deacon should die, he may not marry again. All single men who are ordained as permanent deacons must remain single, chaste and celibate.

Is a permanent deacon ordained for the parish or the diocese?

Whenever a man is ordained, he is to serve the Bishop in the diocesan church. Permanent deacons are assigned by the Bishop to parishes or institutions according to the pastoral need of the diocese. Normally, the deacon will be assigned to a parish/ institution within an approximate 25 mile radius of his place of residence. During the ensuing years his assignment may be changed in light of the particular needs of the diocese and the permanent deacon.

To ask a question or schedule an appointment, email newdeacons@rcbm.org or call 603.663.0142.



Who is a permanent deacon/what does he do?

Ministry is a tapestry. We need all the threads to appreciate the richness and diversity of the whole, and each of these threads is woven together in Christ. We are a diocese that encourages all ministries, lay and ordained, for the building up of the Body of Christ.

God calls some men through the Church to ordained ministry: bishops, priests, and deacons. Bishops and priests are ordained to the ministerial priesthood; deacons are ordained for a ministry of service. All receive the Sacrament of Holy Orders.

Thus, the deacon is an ordained minister of the Church. He is neither a layman nor a priest. The deacon is a cleric ordained for the service of God's people in communion with the Bishop and his body of priests. He works collaboratively with bishops, priests, and existing staff members of a parish or institution. They work together to build up the Body of Christ.

The Ministry of the Permanent Deacon

All ordained ministers in the Church are called to serve through Word, Sacrament, and Charity, but they exercise this service in various ways. As minister of Word, a deacon proclaims the Gospel, preaches, and teaches in the name of the Church. As minister of Sacrament, a deacon baptizes, leads the faithful in prayer, witnesses marriages, and conducts wake and funeral services. As minister of Charity, a deacon is a leader in identifying the needs of others and in calling God's people into service to meet these needs.



A Minister of Word

Ordination bestows a permanent character on a person. Once ordained, the deacon is always a deacon, regardless of where he is or what he is doing, just as a bishop or a priest is always a bishop or a priest, regardless of where he is or what he is doing. The title "deacon" comes from the Greek word diakonos, which means "servant." The deacon is an "icon," or sacramental sign of Christ, who came "not to be served but to serve" (Mark 10:45). Once the Bishop ordains the deacon he enters into a new set of relationships: he

A Minister of Sacrament

is permanently and publicly configured to Christ the Servant; he shares in the overall responsibility of the Bishop to care for the people in the diocese, and he becomes an integral part of the clergy of the diocese, assisting the Bishop and the priests in serving the needs of the diocese.

The Deacon as Icon of Christ

Deacons, both married and celibate, serve God's people by their witness to the gospel value of sacrificial love. In their secular employment, deacons witness to the dignity of human work. In their lives of service, deacons can often enable and empower others to exercise their own diaconal responsibilities, and witness more effectively to the Gospel of life. The deacon, as an ordained minister, has a permanent and a public responsibility for a ministry of Word, Sacrament, and Charity. Through ordination, he becomes an icon of Christ the Servant. When a person sees the deacon, the person ought to see and experience Christ in service to the world.

A Minister of Charity

For more information and to download an application, visit catholicnh.org/newdeacons.



Requirements for becoming a Permanent Deacon

To become a permanent deacon, the applicant must approach formation convinced of his call by God to serve the Church as an ordained deacon. His response to a call to the diaconate is the primary consideration for eligibility. The Deacon Formation Policy Board will assist each applicant in the initial discernment of that vocation.

The Church is deeply concerned about supporting marriage and family life. Therefore, due to the serious commitment of time that formation and ministry will involve, applicants with young children may be asked to re-examine their decision to pursue formation for the permanent diaconate until a later time.

Church law requires that the applicant be no younger than thirty-five years of age at the time of ordination and therefore, no younger than thirty-one years of age at the time he is accepted as a candidate for formation.

While there is no maximum age established for a candidate, the applicant's health and suitability must be such that there is a good probability he will be able to serve in assigned ministry as permanent deacon for a period of fifteen years. Therefore a candidate should be no more than about sixty years of age upon ordination.