

Presentation on the Diaconate

Requesting that all Deacons make parish presentations



2018 is the 50th anniversary of the approval by Blessed Pope Paul VI in 1968 giving bishops of the United States permission to renew the permanent diaconate as an active, permanent order of ministry.

During the months ahead we will be asking our deacons to make presentations at Masses in their parish about the diaconate. In addition, we will be asking you to announce a new class for the formation of permanent deacons in the Spring of 2019.

We have developed two talk outlines that may be given in your parishes. Feel free to utilize either that you believe will work best in your parish.

So, please take some time to discuss this with your pastor, requesting that he give you the opportunity to speak during Masses in March/April to begin spreading the word about

our next class and help educate our parishioners on the diaconate and on the 50th anniversary!

For those parishes without deacons, we will be asking deacons from nearby parishes to make the presentations when possible. We will reach out to all pastors shortly, so that they are all aware that this request will be coming their way.

So many of our parishioners do not understand the role of the deacon. This is a perfect opportunity to get the word out. More importantly, this is an opportunity to let those, who may be considering a vocation to the diaconate, know that the next class will begin Aspirancy in April 2019.

We are looking for consistency in our message and request that the same announcements be read by all deacons. We have provided two announcements that may be used for reaching out to men who may have a calling to enter into the Class of 2024. Please select the one that work best in your parish.

Thank you for your assistance,

Deacon Frank Lucca

Father Bob Oliveira

Diocesan Co-Directors

Deacon Presentation Talk Version One

My brothers and sisters, my name is Deacon_____and as you all know I am a deacon for the Diocese of Fall River. I was ordained in 19xx/20xx and I serve at (Church Name and location). I want to thank Father/Msg. ___ for allowing me to speak to you for a few minutes this morning/evening. I am here to announce that Bishop Edgar da Cunha has approved the formation of a new deacon class. The class that will be formed, after a period of discernment, will begin academic study in September 2019 and the ordination date will be May 2024.

I would like to share a few important points about the ministry of deacon. We are clergy and through sacred Ordination the deacon becomes a herald of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. This "clerical state" occurs during ordination by the laying on of hands by the bishop, a tradition handed down from the Apostles. As a result of the sacramental grace received at that moment, the newly ordained deacons are empowered to effectively fulfill their ministry to serve the people uniquely in the service of liturgy, word, and charity.

The deacon administers Baptism, he protects and distributes the Eucharist at Mass and brings Eucharist to the homebound, he witnesses marriages, he proclaims the gospel, he preaches and encourages the people, and he presides over prayer and officiates at funeral rites.

I know that many men present here today may not be interested in pursuing this ministry and that's OK! However, there might be one or two who have had their interest level peaked and that's good! Because experience shows that for men whose calling is sincere and truly based on a desire to serve, the Holy Spirit provides the charism required to meet the demands of formation. A prayerful approach brings men into an increasingly beautiful experience throughout formation, Ordination and beyond.

For those men who are married, the reception of Holy Orders has enhanced the sacrament of marriage that both he and his wife share.

Progressing through the Rites of Candidacy, Lector, Acolyte and Ordination is a journey. A splendid, yet humbling journey, preparing the way for what Pope Paul II observed about the deacon: "You are meant to be living signs of the servanthood of Christ's Church".

So where do we go from here? Additional details and a preliminary application is available on our website – fallriverdeacons.com. An information meeting will be held in June 2018 and will be announced on the website and in the Anchor. The General Information meeting will delve even further into the process of becoming a deacon for the Diocese of Fall River. I will be available after Mass if anyone would like to discuss this with me. I would like to leave you with one thought. Do you know someone who you think would make a good deacon? If you do, tell him. That is what the Holy Spirit may want you to do to get his attention.\

May God continue to guide each and every one of you as you prayerfully discern where God is calling you to serve His Church.

Deacon Presentation Talk Version Two

Good morning/Evening,

As many of you know, I am Deacon _____. I was ordained in _____ and have been assigned to this parish since _____. I am very excited to announce that the next Diaconate class will begin the process in the Spring of 2019. Today, I'd like to spend a few minutes introducing the diaconate to all of you. Perhaps it is the first time you may have heard much of this. My hope is that for some of you, it may serve as a call to consider a vocation to the diaconate.

the origin of deacons was recorded in the sixth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles. The Apostles told the people to select seven upstanding men "filled with the Spirit and wisdom" to help them in works of charity. After the men were selected, the Apostles "prayed and laid hands" on them. Among them was Stephen, a man "filled with grace and power," who was soon to become the first Christian martyr.

By the fifth century, deacons were doing little except performing liturgical functions. For over 1200 years, the diaconate was simply a step on the way toward priestly ordination. In 1957, Pope Pius XII spoke favorably about the possibility of restoring the permanent diaconate, but eventually concluded that "the time is not yet ripe."

The Second Vatican Council decided that the time was ripe and reinstated the permanent diaconate fifty years ago this year.

In the Catholic hierarchy, the Pope is at the top, followed by cardinals, bishops, priests and deacons in that order. There are two types of deacons in the Catholic Church today: permanent deacons and transitional deacons. Only men can be deacons; it is an ordained position and only men can be ordained in the Catholic Church.

Permanent deacons are ordained to the Catholic Church and have no intentions of becoming a priest. Deacons may be married or single. However, if they are not married at the time they are ordained, they cannot marry after and are expected to live a life of celibacy. Should a deacon's wife pass before he does, he is not permitted to remarry. If divorced, a deacon must receive an annulment from the church before he can be ordained.

Transitional deacons are seminary students in the process of becoming ordained priests. They serve as deacons for one year and are then ordained by the bishop as priests.

Both permanent and transitional deacons perform the same duties in the church. Deacons aid priests in their parish duties by visiting the sick, providing spiritual guidance in the community and acting as a servant of God. In addition, deacons can witness marriages, perform baptisms, preside over funeral and burial services outside of Mass, distribute Holy Communion and preach the homily (a sermon given after the Gospel of Mass).

Deacons are also expected to pray the Liturgy of the Hours each day. These are the 150 Psalms and Scriptural readings from the Old and New Testament that every cleric is expected to pray daily. Deacons hold secular jobs to provide for themselves and their families.

There are several requirements a deacon must meet. Deacons must be at least 35 years old and practicing, baptized members of the Roman Catholic Church. If baptized as an adult, a deacon must have belonged to the church for at least five years prior to being ordained.

Talk 2 (continued):

As mentioned deacons must satisfy certain marriage requirements. Deacons must meet education requirements, as well. They must have earned a high school diploma or GED. Deacons should be in good health and be able to dedicate time to the formation program, a five-year course of study for prospective deacons.

If a man believes he has a call to this vocation, he should discuss the decision with God, his family and his pastor. He should pray for guidance to ensure the path is sanctioned and discuss the desire to join the diaconate with his family. If married, a deacon must receive the consent of his wife to proceed. Speaking with his pastor will help a man decide if the life of a cleric is right for him.

Once a man has met these requirements, he may submit an application to the diocesan diaconate office through his pastor. There is a preliminary application online at the diocesan diaconate website – fallriverdeacons.com.

The pastor will send a letter of recommendation, confirming that the applicant is in good standing with the Church.

The application process includes intensive screening. Prospective candidates can expect several rounds of interviews. If married, a candidate's wife will also be interviewed, as will any children the couple has still living at home. Applicants are required to submit to a psychological evaluation.

Applicants must also submit a multitude of paperwork along with their applications which will be explained during the inquiry phase of the process.

Once all the required documents have been submitted and the candidate and his wife have attended the initial aspirancy classes, the diocesan diaconate office, and aspirancy committee will review and come to a decision during the aspirancy period that precedes admission to the four year academic formation program. If the applicant is deemed ready by the committee, office and himself, the bishop will then make the final decision.

I will be around after Mass today should anyone have questions. Please seriously consider if you are being called to the permanent diaconate.

Thank you for your attention.