



The Diaconate
Diocese of Green Bay

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES PERTAINING TO PERMANENT DEACONS FOR THE DIOCESE OF GREEN BAY

Updated November 20, 2023

APPLYING FOR SENIOR STATUS

At the age of 70, a deacon may apply for senior status which releases him from a parish assignment. At the age of 75, a deacon must send a letter requesting senior status.

If senior status is granted, the deacon retains his faculties unless he is unable to perform them due to health or other circumstances. He is released from his parish assignment and the parish at which he ministers is released from the annual deacon assessment. A deacon can request senior status by completing the following:

1. The deacon writes a letter addressed to the bishop requesting senior status. This includes a reference to having spoken to his pastor/pastoral leader about it and that he/she approves of the request. *The letter is sent to the Diaconate Director, not to the bishop.*
2. The Diaconate Director reviews the letter and makes a courtesy call to the pastor/pastoral leader to verify that he is aware of request.
3. The Diaconate Director sends a memo to the bishop with a recommendation to accept or deny the request for senior status. This includes a sample response.
4. The bishop sends a letter to the deacon, either accepting or denying his request to enter senior status.
5. Copies of the letters are filed in the deacon's record.
6. The diaconate directory is updated to reflect senior status.
7. The Diaconate Director sends a letter of thanks to the deacon and congratulations on his retirement.
8. The diaconate community advised of his retirement via the next newsletter.

REQUESTS FOR LETTERS OF GOOD STANDING FOR A DEACON

1. When a deacon fills out the online form requesting a Letter of Good Standing, the Office of the Diaconate is contacted about the request.
2. The Office of the Diaconate searches the deacon's file and his compliance with the requirements for VIRTUS.
3. The Office of the Diaconate then gets back to the Office of the Chancellor as to the status of the deacon.
4. The deacon is either granted a Letter of Good Standing, or the Office of the Diaconate follows up with the deacon and informs him of why his request has been denied and what he has to do to rectify the situation.
 - o If a Letter of Good Standing is granted, a copy is sent to the deacon, the diocese to which he is traveling, and to the Office of the Diaconate. The Office of the Diaconate places a copy in the electronic file for the deacon.
 - o If a Letter of Good Standing is denied, a copy of the response is sent to the deacon, the diocese to which the deacon is traveling, the Office of the Chancellor, and is kept in the deacon's file.

TUITION ASSISTANCE

A \$650 reimbursement is allowed per year from the parish for professional training or education. This includes coursework, books and course materials, workshops, seminars, and spiritual direction.

Additional funding is available by applying for either a Lumen Christi Grant or an Advancing the Mission Grant from the Catholic Foundation.

Other funding, if needed, can be applied for through the Office of the Diaconate. Funds are set aside each year to assist deacons above and beyond what grants for the Catholic Foundation provide based upon the relevance to the deacon's ministry and availability.

The following are the restrictions for funding from the Office of the Diaconate:

1. Those eligible will be those who have been accepted into Aspirancy, Year I or greater.
2. Should a student fail a course for which tuition assistance has been utilized, the cost of repeating the course is the responsibility of the student.
3. Late fees, withdrawal from course fees, or other fees are the responsibility of the applicant. Books and material expenses are the responsibility of the applicant.

ASSIGNMENT

Upon ordination, the deacon will be assigned to a parish. Parish assignments are at the discretion of the bishop and are based upon need. Though a deacon may have been at a particular parish during his formation, there is no guarantee that the bishop will assign the newly ordained deacon to that parish.

When a deacon is assigned to a parish, he must arrive at a parish agreement with the pastor/pastoral leader about his duties and responsibilities. The deacon's wife must affirm the parish agreement with her signature.

A newly ordained deacon enters a one-year parish agreement with the pastor/pastoral leader in order for him to adjust to his ministry, and he subsequently enters a three-year parish agreement thereafter.

CHANGE OF ASSIGNMENT

The bishop reserves the right to change a deacon's assignment at any time. Before a request for a transfer of assignment, the pastor/pastoral leader of the deacon's current parish must agree and the pastor/pastoral leader of the parish to which the deacon wishes to transfer must also agree to the transfer. The process to request a transfer is as follows:

1. The deacon writes a letter addressed to the bishop requesting a transfer of assignment. This includes a reference to having spoken to his pastor/pastoral leader about it and that he approves of the request. *The letter is sent to Diaconate Director, not to the bishop.*
2. The Diaconate Director reviews the letter and makes a courtesy call to the pastor/pastoral leader to verify that he is aware of the request.
3. The Diaconate Director sends a memo to the bishop with a recommendation to accept or deny the request for a transfer of assignment. This includes a sample response.
4. The bishop sends a letter to the deacon, either accepting or denying his request.
5. Copies of the letters are filed in the deacon's record.
6. The deacon, the deacon's wife, and the pastor/pastoral leader of the new parish will complete a new Parish Agreement.

CONTINUING FORMATION

Deacons in active status in the Diocese of Green Bay are required to participate in 20 hours of continuing formation and participate in a retreat once per year. This requirement for continuing formation can be partially satisfied by participating in the bi-annual diaconate gatherings, which will include two hours of ongoing formation per gathering. The requirement to participate in a retreat once a year can be satisfied by participating in the annual diaconate retreat organized by the Office of the Diaconate.

Each year, the deacon is required to complete a Continuing Formation Form, which can be found on the Office of the Diaconate website at www.gbdioc.org/office-of-the-diaconate

Deacons in senior status and deacons with inactive status are not required to fulfill this requirement; however, they are more than welcome to participate in the bi-annual diaconate gatherings and the annual diaconate retreat. Aspirants and candidates in formation are required to participate in the bi-annual diaconate gatherings and may participate in the annual diaconate retreat.

Participation in the annual diaconate convocation does not fulfill the requirement for continuing education unless otherwise noted.

VIRTUS & SAFE ENVIRONMENT REQUIREMENTS

All deacons participating in ministry, regardless of active or senior status, and those in the diaconate formation program are required to maintain all requirements for VIRTUS and Safe Environment. In order for a deacon to receive a Letter of Good Standing, he must be in full compliance with all VIRTUS & Safe Environment requirements.

INCARDINATION INTO THE DIOCESE OF GREEN BAY

The following are instructions for the Formal Process of Incardination as listed and described in the 1983 Code of Canon Law, canons 267-270

Definitions:

- *Excardination: Diocese of origin, coming from...*
 - *Incardination: Diocese of intention, going to...*
1. A formal letter must be sent by the deacon to his own bishop requesting excardination to another diocese. In this letter, the deacon should list the reasons (both personal and ecclesial) for his request. Also, as part of this letter, the deacon should humbly request that testimonials be sent to the bishop of incardination concerning his life, behavior, and work as a deacon.
 2. At the same time, a letter must be sent by the deacon to the bishop of the diocese he hopes to incardinate into. In this letter, he should list the reasons (both personal and ecclesial) for this request. He should make reference to the letter he has sent to his own bishop and the forthcoming testimonial letters.
 3. In this process, the bishop of excardination acts first. After review and discernment, a letter from the bishop of excardination will be sent to the deacon granting the excardination. An identical letter will be sent with testimonials to the bishop of incardination.
 4. If the bishop refuses to permit excardination, he must have a grave cause to do so. A deacon who thinks himself wronged by such a denial has the right to present recourse against this decision.
 5. Only if the bishop of incardination agrees to accept the deacon and does so in writing is the incardination valid. He must have the letter granting excardination from the deacon's bishop, as well as the testimonial letters beforehand. His incardination into the new diocese becomes effective at the signing of this letter. A copy of this letter will be sent to the bishop of excardination.

CLERICAL GARB FOR PERMANENT DEACONS (Currently Under Review)

It has been a long-standing practice in the Diocese of Green Bay (affirmed again in November 2014) that permanent deacons do not wear the Roman collar. In the early days of the permanent diaconate, back in the 1970s, the wearing of the Roman collar was permitted for a short time. It was at that time that Bishop Wycislo established the practice that permanent deacons would not wear the collar because of the confusion it caused among many of the faithful as to who were priests and who were permanent deacons. There was also some resistance from priests who did not feel that permanent deacons should wear the Roman collar. Each bishop since that time has affirmed the current practice.

The *National Directory for the Formation, Ministry, and Life of Permanent Deacons in the United States of America* has the following standard regarding garb, "The *Code of Canon Law* does not oblige permanent deacons to wear an ecclesiastical garb. Further, because they are more prominent and active in secular professions and society, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops specifies that permanent deacons should resemble the lay faithful in dress and matters of lifestyle. Each diocesan bishop should, however, determine and promulgate any exceptions to this law, as well as specify the appropriate clerical attire (94).

Bishop Ricken has asked that deacons serving as an emcee during a liturgy with him wear the Roman collar for the liturgy.

CLERICAL TITLE AND ADDRESS

In all forms of address (written or oral) for permanent deacons, the appropriate title is "Deacon". According to the *National Directory for the Formation, Ministry, and Life of Permanent Deacons in the United States of America*, "the Congregation for the Clergy has determined that in all forms of address for permanent deacons, the appropriate title is 'Deacon'" (93).

MINISTRY OUTSIDE OF APPOINTED PARISH

If a deacon wishes to minister outside of the parish(es) to which he is assigned, he must first obtain the permission of the pastor/pastoral leader at the site at which the liturgy/function is to occur. If the ministry is outside of the Diocese of Green Bay, the deacon must request a Letter of Good Standing.

CHANGE OF RESIDENCE WITHIN THE DIOCESE

If a deacon moves, he must inform the Diaconate Director. If a deacon wishes to move outside of the Diocese of Green Bay, even seasonally, and wishes to continue to exercise his office in the diocese to which he will reside, he must contact the Diaconate Director of the Diocese of Green Bay and the diocese to which he will reside in order to be granted faculties outside the Diocese of Green Bay. If the deacon wishes to move permanently, he should pursue the process of excardination from the Diocese of Green Bay and incardination in the diocese to which he is moving.

CONTINUING FORMATION POLICY (Currently Under Review)

The Church expects that each deacon will take seriously his personal responsibility to continue his development and formation beyond ordination. Continuing development and formation remain the lifelong responsibility of the individual deacon. The diocese and the parish or institution he serves will support him in that responsibility.

A deacon's continuing formation activity must include the elements of study, prayer, and community. Building on his formation process prior to ordination, he is expected to continue to develop new skills and sharpen present talents following ordination. The needs of the people of God call for qualified servants. Those ministering in the Church today must pursue a regular schedule of ongoing development.

A deacon makes such a commitment in his Agreement for Diaconal Ministry:

I agree that I will pursue my continuing development and formation as outlined in the Continuing Formation Policy for Deacons.

GENERAL GUIDELINES

- Active deacons in the Diocese of Green Bay are expected to complete a minimum of 20 hours of continuing formation each year. Retired deacons and deacons on medical leave are encouraged to continue involvement with the diaconate community and with continued formation as their situation allows.
- The Office of the Diaconate will provide periodic diaconate gatherings and the annual diaconate convocation. Since these events are diaconate focused and include elements of prayer, study and community sharing, every effort should be made to have these events be the foundation of the deacon's continuing formation. The deacon is also encouraged to pursue other courses, seminars, workshops, and independent study to enhance his ministry and spirituality.
- The spouse of a deacon is encouraged to participate in all diaconate community events and to pursue her own continuing personal and spiritual formation.
- An annual report of continuing formation efforts by each deacon is to be submitted to the Office of the Diaconate by January 31 for the preceding year. A reporting form will be provided. Deacons are encouraged to keep an ongoing log of their continuing formation activities during the course of the year to facilitate the completion of the annual report.
- A deacon has access to an annual continuing formation allowance from his parish as set forth by diocesan policy.

TYPES OF PROGRAMS

- In addition to the diaconate convocation and other gatherings, a variety of possibilities may be included to fulfill the minimum 20 hours per year. This could include workshops, seminars, academic courses, specially designed programs for personal study, etc. Well-rounded continuing formation should address human, intellectual, spiritual, pastoral, and diaconal vocation dimensions over time.
- Topical areas which may be pursued over time include Scripture, theology, Christian ethics, spirituality, liturgy, homiletics, catechetics, behavioral sciences, social justice issues, pastoral skills, evangelization, administrative skills, communication skills, etc.
- In addition, consideration may also be given to personal, theological, and spiritual growth through books, professional journals, audio and video materials, discussion and sharing groups, and other resources.

SPIRITUAL

- It is recommended that every deacon have a spiritual director and that they receive regular spiritual direction.
- All deacons are expected to make an annual retreat. Spouses are strongly encouraged to participate in an annual retreat. Diaconate community retreats are provided that focus on topics of interest to the diaconate and provide opportunities to experience diaconal community within the retreat. Deacons may also utilize any of the retreat houses in the area for retreats designed for the individual or offered for various groups.

ACCOUNTABILITY

- Each deacon is responsible for developing his own personal continuing formation plan and sharing that plan as requested with the Diaconate Director. The deacon should consult with his pastor/pastoral leader (or supervisor of his ministry assignment if he is assigned to ministry outside the parish setting) regarding his continuing formation needs and share the plans he has developed for continued formation.
- The Diaconate Director will review each deacon's continuing formation report annually and make recommendations as needed.
- Deacons who are behind in their continuing formation commitment two years in a row will meet with the Diaconate Director to review the status of their continuing formation and to develop a plan to meet the requirements. Longer lapses in continuing formation may be reviewed with the bishop to determine the status of the deacon's assignment and faculties.