

Permanent deacons are not ordained for any particular parish, even their own. They are ordained for service to the Church, a service exercised in the Diocese of Marquette under the authority of the bishop.

Ministry agreements

When a permanent deacon is assigned to a particular ministry in a parish, mission or on the diocesan level, a ministry agreement will be drawn up which will outline the expectations of the deacon's ministry.

The permanent deacon and preaching

In the Diocese of Marquette, unless the faculty has been limited in a particular case, permanent deacons possess the faculty to preach anywhere in the diocese with the consent of the pastor of the parish. It is to be noted that preaching is not a canonical *right* of the deacon, but...a *faculty*.

Preaching on the part of the permanent deacon, taken in the broadest sense, encompasses many things. A permanent deacon "preaches" first of all by the witness of his life, especially in his marriage



and family life. He also has the opportunity to "preach" in the marketplace though his teaching and witness to those he encounters in the daily regimen of his life and work. Finally he exercises his role as teacher in the various catechetical roles that he fulfills within the Church.



Two diocesan norms for permanent deacons will regulate the preaching of the homily at Mass:

1. The permanent deacon may be entrusted with the homily at Mass on certain occasions, in other words from time to time, as circumstances suggest. This should not occur, however, on a routine or regularly scheduled basis.
2. According to paragraph #66 of the General Instruction to the Roman Missal, it is for the priest celebrant of the Mass to make the determination as to when the permanent deacon may be entrusted with the homily. This determination should be made under the direction of the pastor of the parish where the homily is delivered.

Conclusion

Candidates for the permanent diaconate in the Diocese of Marquette must have certain qualities and qualifications. (These are outlined in the pastoral letter)

To assist the bishop in the process of accepting potential candidates, a Permanent Diaconate Screening and Admissions Committee will be established.

*For the complete text of this pastoral letter,
visit www.dioceseofmarquette.org*

DIOCESE OF MARQUETTE
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The Deacon: Icon of Jesus Christ, the Servant



**A Pastoral Letter on the
Permanent Diaconate
by
Bishop Alexander K. Sample**



The following includes excerpts from Bishop Alexander K. Sample's pastoral letter on the diaconate.

Preface

A Diaconate Study Committee was formed in January of 2008 to lay out a vision for the future direction of the permanent diaconate in the Diocese of Marquette. The fruit of the committee's work is presented here.

Introduction

It is essential to understand that the diaconate is first and foremost completely about service – *diakonia*.

That is why there are special ministries that are particularly suited to the deacon as servant. These



include ministry and service to the poor, to the imprisoned, to the sick and to those who are abandoned and lonely, the modern day “widows and orphans.” (cf. Acts 6)

The call to diaconate ordination, though a personal one, is authenticated by the Holy Spirit through the bishop to meet a specific “need and desire of the Christian community” for service in the diocese. (Paul VI, *Ad Pascendum*)

A Brief History of the Permanent Diaconate

The institution of the Order of Deacons by the Apostles arose from an early necessity of service in

the Church that was too demanding for the Apostles to manage alone.

Many factors contributed to a chain of events that, by 800 A.D., resulted in the diaconate being reduced to a transitional step toward the priesthood in the Latin Church.

The permanent diaconate was formally restored by Pope Paul VI in 1967, and it has grown steadily since.

Theological Reflections on the Permanent Diaconate

Ordination to the diaconate confers an outpouring of the Holy Spirit, which configures the deacon to Christ, who made himself the servant of all. The deacon is therefore “a cleric who is ordained to diakonia, namely a service to God’s People in communion with the bishop and the body of priests.” (*National Directory on the Permanent Diaconate - NDPD*)

Because the deacon sacramentalizes service, by virtue of ordination he will proclaim the Gospel and preach in such a way that he first witnesses its empowerment in his own life.

The heart of diaconal ministry is the inseparable link between the deacon’s liturgical service at the altar and his service to the poor in the community.



The deacon is to witness in his own life and labor the truth of the dignity of the human person and human work.

Of his threefold ministries of the Word, the liturgy and charity, the deacon’s distinctive call is to charity.

Toward a Diaconal Spirituality

A man who presumes to hear a call from God to the diaconate must answer first to God’s call to personal holiness.

The Role of the Permanent Deacon’s Spouse and Family

“The married deacon must always remember that through his sacramental participation in both vocational sacraments, first in Matrimony and again in Holy Orders, he is challenged to be faithful to both. With integrity he must live out both sacraments in harmony and balance.” (*NDPD*)

Particular Issues of Importance

Recognition of permanent deacons as clergy and the relationship with the pastor

The pastor and all priests serving in the parish or mission must recognize the deacon as a collaborator in ministry and as one who shares with them in the Sacrament of Holy Orders.

The deacon, for his part, must remember that the pastor is the one whom he helps and serves under the authority of the bishop.

The permanent deacon’s role within the pastoral team

The permanent deacon may very well be called to exercise his ministry in collaboration with others who are hired, appointed or called to work within the formal structures of a particular parish or mission.

The permanent deacon’s pastoral assignment

A man will not be ordained to simply “be the deacon” at a particular parish or mission. There must be a specifically identified need in the community, authenticated by the bishop in consultation with the local pastor, for which a man will be called forth to minister as a permanent deacon.